

# P-06-1258 Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 25 Ebrill 2022  
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Reference: SR22/2236-4

**Petition Number:** P-06-1258

**Petition title:** Make individuals in Wales with Hidden disabilities eligible for the Blue Badge

**Text of petition:** Living with a Chronic illness on a daily basis and could be of a benefit of having a Blue badge Card due to needing a quick, easy parking spot when in need of a toilet urgently.

Individuals with Hidden disabilities such as Crohn's and Colitis should be supported in having easy, quick accessible parking spots such as disabled parking as needing the toilet urgently.



## 1. Background

The Blue Badge (Disabled Persons' Parking) scheme was introduced in 1971 under section 21 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. In 2000 the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Wales) Regulations 2000 introduced the Blue Badges scheme for disabled people in Wales.

The Blue Badge scheme provides a national arrangement of parking concessions for people who meet the eligibility criteria, and operates throughout the UK. The Welsh Government is responsible for the scheme, while local authorities are responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of the scheme.

According to Blue Badge scheme guidance an individual in Wales can qualify for a Blue Badge in one of the following categories.

- **Automatic qualification** – an individual may be eligible for a badge, without the need for an assessment, if they receive a listed disability benefit or have sight impairment.
- **Discretionary qualification** – certain circumstances might make an individual eligible even though they do not receive the benefits listed.
- **Temporary qualification** – An individual can apply for a temporary 12 month badge if they are recovering from, or awaiting treatment for serious illnesses or injuries.

The guidance highlights several reasons which alone, do not make an individual eligible for a Blue Badge and includes the example of bladder or bowel problems such as Crohn's or Colitis.

In correspondence to the Committee on 21 March 2022, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change said that eligibility is based on the social model of disability which the Welsh Government adopted in 2002, and 'is not generally linked to diagnosed medical conditions as these can demonstrate a wide range of symptoms'.

## 2. Welsh Government Action

Since 2002 the Blue Badge scheme has been subject to a number of reviews, consultations and reports which have looked at various aspects of the scheme, including eligibility criteria. In correspondence to the Committee, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters listed the following:

- In 2012, the Welsh Government commissioned **research** to consider extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments.
- The Welsh Government **consulted on an Action Plan** to modernise the Blue Badge Scheme in Wales which was published in 2010.
- **Public consultations** on changes to the scheme were carried out in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2016.
- Two specific **expert groups** were set up in 2013 and 2015 to consider issues, including extending eligibility for people with cognitive impairments and for temporary mobility impairments.

Research and reviews have resulted in expansions to the eligibility criteria. The Deputy Minister for Climate Change said that ‘Wales has one of the widest eligibility in the UK and has made secondary legislation to extend eligibility to’:

- children under the age of three who have a condition that means they require bulky medical equipment or quick access to a vehicle to provide lifesaving treatment;
- those who receive specific assessments as part of their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to capture physical and cognitive impairments;
- those who due to a cognitive impairment are unable to undertake any journey without assistance; and
- those with temporary impairments that last at least a year and meet the with further assessment walking criteria.

In his reponse, the Deputy Minister also made the point that research has considered a number of specific conditions, but had reached the conclusion that it would not be appropriate to include, for instance:

Bowel and bladder incontinence relies on the availability of a toilet not parking concessions and people with such conditions can access ‘**I can’t wait**’ cards. The national Key scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with NKS locks can be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafes, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. These can be obtained by third sector organisations.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

In April 2019 the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee conducted an inquiry into the eligibility and implementation of the Blue Badge

Scheme in Wales. The report made 19 recommendations, and included calling on the Welsh Government to undertake a review of the eligibility criteria, including whether there are further conditions which should automatically qualify a person to receive a blue badge. The Welsh Government responded to the Committee's report in 2019 accepting this recommendation. The Deputy Minister said that research will be undertaken in the 'near future', and will aim to:

firstly to review the current eligibility criteria for a blue badge, and in so doing, consider whether the eligibility criteria in Wales should be widened. Secondly, to review the robustness of the assessment processes for which Welsh Government has provided guidance to local authorities who administer the scheme

Pending the outcome of the review, the Deputy Minister said changes to the eligibility criteria could be considered.

Specifically on the issue of extending eligibility, the Deputy Minister said it:

is a sensitive issue that requires balancing the needs of current eligible badge holders with those who may benefit from a badge, but whose access to services and facilities is not totally reliant on the scheme.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.