

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1380
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/02763/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

16 November 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October on behalf of STAND NW CIC regarding Petition P-06-1380 make Blue Badge applications lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis.

As you are aware, the Blue Badge Scheme provides parking concessions for people who experience the greatest barriers to their mobility to enable them to access services and facilities thus enabling them to live independently. The primary legislation is the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 which places duties on local authorities to deliver the scheme in their area. The secondary legislation is the Disabled Persons (Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Wales) Regulations 2000 as amended, which sets out requirements such as the eligibility criteria, form of badge, and issue period.

The statutory eligibility criteria are based on challenges to mobility in line with the social model of disability as adopted by Welsh Government. Eligibility is not generally linked to diagnosed medical conditions as these can demonstrate a wide range of symptoms. Further research on eligibility has been undertaken on a national basis and specifically for Welsh Government since 2012. We also undertook a number of public consultations to seek views on extending eligibility. Wales has one of the widest eligibilities in the UK. The eligibility legislation was last amended in 2017 when the cognitive and temporary impairment criteria were included.

The period of issue of a Blue Badge is stated in the regulations and is for a period of 3 years from date of issue or for the length of time their benefit award has been given up to a maximum of 3 years. If an applicant is applying under the temporary eligibility criteria in Wales the badge will be issued 12 months.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) has the ability for local authorities to flag up on the system if a badge should be awarded for life. Also, if a local authority refers an application to be reviewed by the Independent Advisory Service (IAS), they will advise the local authority of their recommendation and if it should be awarded for life. However, an application would still need to be made every three years, but no further assessment would be needed by the local authority. Applicants would still need to verify their identity and proof of residence which is essential, to protect against fraudulent applications and abuse of the scheme. The three years to re-apply for a badge is stated in regulations and helps to assess and monitor applicants' continued eligibility for the scheme. If badges were valued for a longer period, then there is more opportunity for people to misuse and abuse this scheme, which is a concern Audit Wales have expressed previously.

Welsh Government officials have previously held a workshop for local authorities on the social model of disability to raise awareness of barriers applicants may face. The trainer used their own personal experience of an impairment and barriers they had faced.

If applicants are having difficulties re-applying for a badge, they can either contact their local authority to ask for assistance or a friend/ family member/ advocate could apply on their behalf online if they wish to use the BBDS. Please see the attached link: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge>.

As I have mentioned previously if a local authority decided to award for life, then this can be flagged on the Blue Badge Digital System and future re-applications can then be streamlined helping the applicant.

I hope this information is helpful

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered on a light grey rectangular background.

Lee Waters AS/MS

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