

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/03253/23

Jack Sargeant MS  
Chair - Petitions committee

23 January 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 1 December requesting additional information in relation to petition P-06-1380 ('Make Blue Badge applications lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis'). Please find my response to the questions below.

*Have the Welsh Government undertaken any research as to whether... training in relation [to the] social model of disability is working?*

The Welsh Government's guidance for local authorities on how to deliver the Blue Badge scheme recommends that all members of staff who deal regularly with applicants and badge holders should receive disability and equality awareness training, which should include the social model of disability: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/6/4/1686820783/blue-badge-scheme-wales-guidance-local-authorities-2021.pdf>

However, this guidance is non-statutory and we are unable to direct local authorities to provide specific training for individual staff. In 2020, my officials held a workshop on the social model of disability for local authority staff dealing with blue badge applications, led by a trainer who shared their own personal experiences of daily life living with an impairment.

*Can the system be simplified for those who are reapplying who have lifelong conditions?*

Eligibility for the Blue Badge Scheme is based on mobility and not on specific medical conditions. For all eligibilities it is based on permanent and substantial impairments apart from under the temporary eligibility criteria, which is for a 12-month period to help mobility recovery.

The Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS), launched in February 2019, has already delivered a significantly faster, simpler experience for most blue badge applicants and reapplicants. In the first four months of the BBDS' operation, digital take-up across the UK rose from 37 per cent to 57 per cent and processing time was reduced from 29 to 19 days.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales)

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.

We continue to work with our partners at the Department for Transport, the Scottish Government and the BBDS contractor to refine the operation of the digital service. The contractor has hosted a series of innovation workshops to understand what would improve users' experience and they are working with us and the local authorities to further streamline the application and reapplication process.

*What assessments have been carried out to ensure that there is [consistency] within local government in processing blue badges?*

Local authorities administer the Blue Badge scheme and are responsible for deciding who is eligible for a badge in their area. The Welsh Government provides non-statutory guidance to promote consistency across Wales and funds an independent assessment service (IAS), to which local authorities can refer more challenging cases. We also maintain a regular dialogue with local authorities through frequent working group meetings, which provide an opportunity to share knowledge and best practice.

Over the last 20 years the Blue Badge scheme has been subject to a number of reviews looking at various aspects of the programme including eligibility, administration and enforcement. As a result, we have made a number of changes in conjunction with stakeholders and healthcare professionals. We remain committed to ensuring that disabled people with the greatest need can benefit from parking concessions and that the process of obtaining a badge is as efficient, effective and stress-free as possible.

*The legislation is broadly worded in relation to cognitive disability and will often depend upon the individual's own interpretation of 'danger' etc. What training is provided to ensure that councils have real life understanding of what this means to individual families whose children have learning difficulties?*

As noted above, our Blue Badge guidance for local authorities recommends that members of staff who deal with applicants and badge holders should receive disability and equality awareness training. However, local authorities are responsible for providing their officers with suitable training.

Blue badge applications should where possible include supporting information from healthcare professionals involved with the applicant's care. Local authorities can seek advice from health professionals in determining applications and can refer an application to the IAS, which can carry out a further assessment if necessary and provide a recommendation to the local authority.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

**Lee Waters AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Deputy Minister for Climate Change