

**P-06-1380 Make Blue badge Applications Lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis - Petitioners to Committee, 19 February 2024**

Please see email that I sent to petitions committee on 23/01/24 which includes our FOI findings

We received a response from Lee Waters answering questions from Jack Sargeant letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 24,

Mark Isherwood MS wrote to Lee Waters on 6<sup>th</sup> February 24 on our behalf requesting further information, please see below. We are still waiting for a response

*The letter states that the government recommends (Not statutory) that all members of staff who deal regularly with applicants and badge holders should receive disability and equality awareness training which includes the social model of disability. It also states that in 2020, his officials held a workshop on the social model of disabilities, facilitated by a person with an impairment,*

*How many staff from each LA attended workshops?*

*Could you clarify who attended the training workshops, how many from each Local Authority ?*

*Do you think it is enough for one workshop in 3 yrs ?*

*Do you think awareness training is sufficient? as some disabilities are quite complex?*

*Why is training not a statutory requirement?*

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**Further response to Lee Waters letter**

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

Lee claims that the training is only a recommendation and that the training is just 'awareness' training. ALN and disabilities can be complex, and we feel that an awareness training cannot equip someone to make such crucial decisions

Lee Waters has not confirmed to whether research has been carried out, we too would like to see the outcome of this research, please provide

We have carried out our own FOI investigation across North Wales and found inconsistencies among the counties. We also discovered that the desk based assessors lack medical expertise or training in ALN or disabilities.

In response to simplifying those who are reapplying, please see previous email dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

As stated from our findings across North Wales counties there are very mixed views on the 'Life award 'and 'Life Awards are only mentioned once in the Local Authorities Guidance.

There is no clear header 'Life Award'. We believe that it is being referred to in the section 'Streamlined processes'

*This will be the case where a person clearly meets the criteria and their impairment will not improve, such as a double amputee. In such cases the applicant will have a simplified renewal process, only needing to supply evidence of their identity, residence and a photograph. They will still be expected to sign the declaration form.*

This isn't happening, and the process needs to be in a simpler format, for example, when we are renewing a driving licence you do not have to complete lengthy forms to prove who you are or where you reside

A concerning statement within the Local Authority Guidance is 'The provision of parking for disabled people is limited and if Blue Badges are issued to people who do not meet the criteria, that limited provision will be in greater demand' A limited provision should not be in question if an individual requires a blue badge

Please see below link, these recommendations were put in place 2019 it shows the lack of progress made since the task and finish group highlighted such problems in its 2015 report.

Have any of these recommendations carried out?

<https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12631/cr-ld12631-e.pdf>

- Highlighted concerns about the inconsistencies across counties
- Highlighted concerns that assessors are not qualified to make medical assessments and they lack knowledge about the effect of certain medical conditions on everyday life
- It stated more could be done to "raise the profile" of
- Concerns raised at the lack of a legal requirement on local authorities to have an appeals process procedure and recommended that one should be introduced. Welsh Government Leaflet states "The local authority's decision on eligibility is final. There is no appeals process.
- It proposed that the renewal process for individuals with life-long or deteriorating conditions should be a paper-based exercise and that badges should be issued for longer than three years, decreasing the burden on assessors and avoiding causing distress to individuals.
- Missuse/abuse, we did not receive strong evidence of such problems from stakeholders. Whilst it is important to maintain the integrity of the system by reducing misuse, it is crucial that this does not lead to those with hidden disabilities being targeted because their disability or impairment is not obvious

Lee states 'Eligibility for the Blue Badge is based on mobility and not on specific medical conditions, yet an extension of the policy is to include people with cognitive impairments. Is

there sufficient awareness of this change and should more be done to raise the profile of this?

Please see supporting letter from MS Gareth Davies with information requested from Lee Waters

As stated in previous communications parents would be happy to share their stories and experiences and what having a blue badge means to the individuals and families