

1. The practical implementation and consistency of the Blue Badge scheme across Wales, including assessments, fees and enforcement

A fee to the applicant should be introduced for the issue of the Blue Badge and be kept in line with the rest of the UK. This is alongside the fees already in place for Organisational badges and Replacement/Lost Badges. A fee should be determined at an appropriate level to support the administration and delivery of the service, and applying necessary improvements to the scheme. Due to the recent changes to the online provision by the Department for Transport, it was necessary for Conwy County Borough Council to procure additional software for officers to access the Central Register and provide case management support. These associated costs to the authority are in addition to the employment of 2 officers within the Blue badge team and customer service support provided by our Information Assistants.

A fee for issuing a Blue Badge could also deter some fraudulent applications being made.

Introduce the ability for a parking attendant/traffic warden to scan a barcode on the front of the badge to be able to access the Badge Holders information immediately. This could be in the form of a 'smart card' that could be linked to the Central Register to determine whether a badge had expired, reported lost/stolen, or not returned following a death. It may also assist to identify whether a Blue Badge holder is in attendance of the parked vehicle. This would improve enforcement to prevent people using Badges fraudulently and taking the parking spaces that vulnerable Badge holders need.

2. The support and information that is available to Blue Badge applicants in Wales

There should be more information, training and publicity about the Blue Badge Scheme for existing Blue Badge holders and non-Badge holders. It should be clear who the scheme is meant to benefit, and how Badges should be used.

The penalties associated to the misuse of the Badge should be widely publicised. Guidance for appropriate penalties for abuse of the Blue Badge should be issued, with the ability to recommend points on driving licences as a further deterrent to misuse of disabled parking spaces by non-Badge holders and the misuse of Blue badges by non-Badge holders.