

Transport Accessibility and Blue Badge  
**Transport Policy**

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Date:  
20 December 2017

Dear Colleague,

## BLUE BADGE POLICY UPDATE

### Summary:

- Update on mental disorder eligibility criteria provided and corrected application form enclosed
- Information on broader policy and BBIS issues, including summary of points discussed at workshops (see Annex)
- Request for feedback and thanks

1. This update seeks to discuss a number of topics so you are kept informed of latest developments before the Christmas break.

### Mental disorder eligibility criteria

2. A burst of publicity activity took place earlier this week announcing the extension to eligibility criteria. This passed off fairly well, however we were sorry that some elements of the media misconstrued the extension as allowing a badge to be given for the benefit of carers or relatives when the purpose is to safeguard disabled people.

3. We discussed a number of detailed points in BBSL(2017)8 about how cases should be handled now the extension has been made permanent. In that letter we enclosed a revised application

### BBSL(2017)9

#### Addressees

##### For action

Local authority Blue Badge administration teams

Local authority counter-fraud teams

Independent Mobility Assessors

##### For information

Local authority parking enforcement teams

#### Further enquiries

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form for such cases. The form had a number of errors, and we are grateful to colleagues for pointing these out. A corrected version of the form is now enclosed which we hope is more useful.

4. While we don't want to unnecessarily repeat what was said in BBSL(2017)8, we would like to stress the importance of continuing to talk with us about the impact this extension has on you. As those of you who attended the workshops will be aware, the future shape of Blue Badge eligibility criteria is something that will be a continued focus of work over the medium term. Therefore, the more evidence we have of how the scheme is working, the better placed we will be to act.

#### Blue Badge policy: current progress and next steps

5. Since we have taken responsibility for Blue Badge policy in Transport Scotland, we have been trying to be much more open than previously. We have taken pains to find out how the scheme is really working in practice. We have therefore visited as many local authorities' Blue Badge teams as we could, given time pressures, talked to disabled people, spoken at meetings, undertaken workshops and disseminated surveys.

6. We have found a scheme in need of some improvement. This is perhaps unsurprising given the supporting legislation dates back to 1970. We're pleased the workshops we've held over the past month have allowed us to explain current issues and identified broad consensus about the areas we should look to improve.

7. The next year has great potential for the Blue Badge scheme. By the end of 2018 there will be a new Blue Badge service, rectifying many of the shortcomings with BBIS. This will improve the experience of applicants and make the work of Blue Badge teams easier. While we are determined to ensure the next year brings about a safe transition to the new service, we are also keen to work over the coming year to implement a number of other objectives. For example, signpost applicants to other applicable services available for them or to provide a package of travel and independent living help at the same time as making a decision about whether to issue a Badge. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you in order to improve the service.

8. It has been a privilege to work with you over the past months. We have seen the impact of the service you provide in helping those with the most severe impairments become more active and independent in their communities. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**AGA LYSAK AND ROBERT WYLLIE**

## POINTS RAISED AT WORKSHOPS – CONSOLIDATED LIST

Action point	Update
To work with senior managers in local authorities, particularly with respect to the new Blue Badge Service	We're happy to engage with individual senior managers if you want to set something up for us in specific cases. Additionally, we'll work on developing contacting senior managers – but we'll need your help in identifying the right people to contact.
To let you test the new Blue Badge application form	We can't share the current prototype as this is sensitive at the moment. But we're working with DfT to get a model that you can feedback on. This is part of the broader work to communicate the changes to you, subject to the unfortunate constraints we discussed.
To provide guidance about handling the applications of people with a DS1500	This is a sensitive and complex area. We will work on this.
To provide guidance about the length of time for which Badge applications should be retained	We will work on this.
Local authorities to work towards delivering a holistic approach to travel help, rather than just a Blue Badge service	We hope the presentation we gave was useful. We're keen to follow up some of the specific contacts we made where there's already good practice, or where councils are developing their service along these lines. There is a significant prize to be obtained from developing the service in this way.
To develop and improve existing legislation and guidance, for example with respect to eligibility criteria legislation and assessment guidance for cognitive impairment cases	This is a long-term objective.
Training and development for Blue Badge staff	We mentioned proposals for changing legislation so an IMA must be a healthcare professional and (depending on what primary legislation allows us) introducing better accreditation. We'll keep you informed.
Changes in perception about the Blue Badge scheme	We'd be interested if you could forward examples of where you've undertaken local work to publicise the scheme, including with the public and health and social care professionals to dispel myths about the nature of the scheme.
Nature of the concessions that come with Blue Badge	As you're aware, we need to keep a focus on the kind of concessions people get with a badge. We'll keep you informed on this but it's unlikely work will take place without user insight, which is where you come in.
To ensure user feedback is provided in respect of the Blue Badge service	As we mentioned, we would welcome your assistance in building up feedback mechanisms to establish what user experiences and views are. We will work on providing guidance about capturing feedback from users that can help us on policy development. But you can start developing your own work now. We look forward to receiving your examples.
To ask local authorities to provide amendments to our existing Blue Badge contact database	This is attached – please feed in any changes to <a href="mailto:bluebadge@transport.gov.scot">bluebadge@transport.gov.scot</a> as soon as possible as this is the key database we use.
Perth and Kinross Council said they would provide their enforcement training	Thanks to Fiona Reid for offering this. We are keen to get other examples of good practice from local authorities – please share yours with us by dropping us an email.
To re-send previous correspondence	We can send this as requested. It is critical all communications get disseminated across Blue Badge teams.