

BLUE BADGE

Guidance Notes



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

MERTHYR TUDFUL

MERTHYR TYDFIL

County Borough Council

Blue Badge Guidance Notes

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Section 1 – Information about you

This section must be completed by all applicants for a Blue Badge. All mandatory fields are with an asterisk (*).

Please note that the 'first names', 'surname' and 'surname at birth' fields can only hold up to 20 characters due to badge printing restrictions.

If you are applying on behalf of someone under the age of 16, or who cannot complete the form themselves, please put their details down in this section, and indicate your relationship to the applicant when signing the declaration.

If you have previously been awarded a Blue Badge and it is due to expire, you are still required to provide up to date evidence to confirm your eligibility. Please ensure that you apply in good time, at least one month before the badge expires as it is an offence to use an expired badge, even if you have applied for a new one. It is the badge holders responsibility to ensure that it is valid.

Section 2 – Proof of identity and residency

You must provide proof of identity and address before we will process your application. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has a duty to process applications only for people whose sole or principle address is within the borough. If you are not a resident of Merthyr Tydfil, you will need to contact your own local authority. If you own more than one property, you are classed as residing at the property for which you pay Council Tax as your main place of residence, rather than as a second home.

Any proof of identity and address which you provide must be in the form specified in this section. We will not process your application without the specified proof. If you are providing original documents, please be aware that you will be expected to collect these from the Council offices and they will not be sent back.

One of the following must be submitted with your application:

- birth/adoption certificate
- marriage/divorce certificate
- civil partnership/dissolution certificate
- valid driving license
- passport or
- Concessionary Travel Card

A certified photocopy is a photocopy of a document that has been verified as being true by a person, other than your partner or family member, who has known you for a minimum of two years and is 18 years or over.

The individual certifying the documents should include the text: "This copy is a true likeness of the original" alongside their signature. They should also print their name, contact details and occupation alongside this information. The local authority may contact them to verify your identity.

These are examples of the type of person that would be suitable:

accountant	Justice of the Peace	police officer
bank/building society official	licensee of public house	social worker
barrister	local government officer	solicitor
councillor (local or county)	nurse (RGN and RMN)	surveyor
civil servant	officer of the armed services	teacher, lecturer
dentist	optician	trade union officer
fire service official	pharmacist	

Proof of address should be in the form of an original Council Tax bill bearing your name and address.

You will not need to submit your Council Tax bill if you have ticked the appropriate box in Section 1, which gives your consent for the local authority to check your address on their Council Tax records or electoral register.

If you are completing the application form on behalf of someone under the age of 16, you should give your consent for the local authority to check school records to confirm their address.

Photograph

The photograph can be provided electronically to the local authority in the form of a jpg. The photograph must have a strong definition between face and background and must, *as far as practicable*, be;

- in colour;
- 45 millimetres in height and 35 millimetres in width (passport size);
- taken **within a month** prior to the date of the application;
- against a light grey or cream background;
- undamaged;
- free from "red eye", shadows, reflection or glare from spectacles;
- of the full head of the holder (without any other person visible or any covering, unless it is worn for religious beliefs or medical reasons);
- facing forward;
- with nothing covering the face;
- looking straight at the camera;
- with a neutral expression and mouth closed;
- with eyes open and clearly visible (without sunglasses or tinted spectacles and without hair or spectacle frames obscuring the eyes);
- in sharp focus and clear;
- printed professionally or in digital format;
- a true likeness, without amendment.

Blue Badge Issue Fee

There is no charge to the Blue Badge holder upon first issue of a badge, however, a fee of up to £10 may be charged for badges issued as replacements in the case where a badge has been lost, stolen or damaged to an extent it cannot be read by people who will be checking the badge when used for parking or other concessions.

Your local authority may request credit/debit card details and/or a cheque to be included with the application form in readiness for payment to be taken if your application is successful. Your local authority will only issue successful applicants with a Blue Badge once payment of the required fee has been received.

Other information

You should also provide the Vehicle Registration Numbers of up to three vehicles in which you are most likely to use a Blue Badge if your application is successful. This information helps local authorities with their enforcement of the Blue Badge scheme rules.

Section 3 –Eligibility

You will be automatically eligible for a badge if you are more than three years old, can satisfy residency and identity checks, and meet at least one of the following eligibility criteria:

- You are registered blind or sight impaired
- You are in receipt of the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- You are in receipt of the qualifying level of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- You are in receipt of the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- You receive a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8

You will need to provide the appropriate documentation to prove eligibility under one of the criteria. Please be aware that if you provide original documents, you will be expected to collect them in person as they will not be returned via post.

Registered Blind or Sight Impaired

You will be required to name the local authority with which you are registered and your registration number. In many cases, you will be registered with the same authority to which the application for a badge is being made. If this is not the case, local authorities will check with the named authority that you are registered with.

The current formal notification required to register as blind (sight impaired) is a Certification of Blindness or Defective Vision (BP1 (3R)), or a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI), signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist, which states that you are blind (sight impaired). Previous equivalents are also acceptable, however, registration is voluntary.

Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance

You will need to provide your award notice letter you received from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). You will also have been sent an annual uprating letter stating your entitlement. This uprating letter can be used as proof of receipt of HRMCDLA if your award letter is more than 12 months old. If you have lost your HRMCDLA award letter or your uprating letter, then please contact the DWP for a current award letter by:

- Telephone: 0345 712 3456
- Textphone: 0345 722 4433
- Email: DCPU.Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

This helpline is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and further details can be found online at:

Blue Badges issued in these circumstances will be issued for the duration of the award of HRMCDLA or for three years, whichever is the shorter period.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

To qualify under PIP, you must have been awarded PIP at the level detailed:

- Mobility Activity 1, descriptor f; or
- Mobility Activity 2, descriptors c, d, e or f.

Mobility Activity 1 relates to 'Planning and following a journey'. Descriptor f is the definition within the activity that is awarded to a person who has the greatest difficulty following any route or journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid. You will need to have scored 12 points to qualify for a Blue Badge under this descriptor.

Mobility Activity 2 relates to 'Moving around'. Descriptor c is the definition within the activity at which a person has difficulty standing and moving, being unable to move more than 50 metres. Descriptors d and e identify increasing levels of difficulty moving around with identifying people with the greatest difficulty with either standing or moving more than a metre aided or unaided. You will need to have scored 8 points or more to qualify under this descriptor.

You should have an award letter with details of your award issued by DWP. You must enclose the original of this letter.

War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement

You should have an official letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency demonstrating receipt of the grant. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement.

If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0808 191 4218.

Lump Sum Benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme

You will need to be in receipt of a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8 (inclusive) and have been assessed and certified by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency as having a permanent and substantial impairment which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You will have been issued with a letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency confirming the level of your award and also confirming that you have been assessed as having a permanent and substantial impairment which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement.

If you have lost this letter, then the agency can be contacted via the free-phone enquiry number: 0808 191 4218.

If you are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, you may still qualify for a Blue Badge under the discretionary criteria and will be subject to further assessment.

Section 4 – Applicants with mobility impairment and/or cognitive impairment

It is important that this section is completed fully. Where you feel a question may not apply, please briefly indicate why. Failure to complete all questions may result in the form being returned to you and if you should be assessed as eligible, the issue of your Blue Badge may be delayed. This is particularly important where a current Blue Badge holder is applying for a new badge.

A permanent impairment is one that is likely to last for the duration of your life. Medical conditions such as asthma, Crohn's disease / incontinence conditions and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) are not in themselves a qualification for a badge. People with these conditions may be eligible under this criteria, but only if they are unable or have considerable difficulty walking, in addition to their condition.

Having considerable difficulty walking means being unable to walk very far without experiencing difficulty, such as;

- Excessive pain
- Breathlessness
- Speed of walking
- Use of walking aids
- Outdoor walking ability

It is important that you provide evidence to support your application and that this is recent, within the last 12 months. Options include evidence from health professionals such as;

- Consultants,
- Hospital specialist,
- Physiotherapists,
- Occupational therapists,
- Pain clinics,
- District nurse,
- Community psychiatric nurse,
- Social services.

This list is not exhaustive but it has been recognised that the applicant's GP is not best placed to supply objective evidence because of their role as an advocate on behalf of the patient.

An applicant may also qualify for a Blue Badge if they have been diagnosed with a cognitive impairment and are unable to plan or follow any journey, to such an extent that they require constant supervision.

This may include people with conditions such as autism, Alzheimer's disease or dementia, stroke survivors, learning disabilities or head injuries. A letter of support from a relevant healthcare professional will also need to be provided. If the applicant is in receipt of the Highest Rate Care Component of Disability Living Allowance, a copy of the DLA Award letter must also be provided.

Section 5 – Applicants with impairment in both arms

Section 5 should be completed by applicants who have an impairment in both arms. You will need to show that you are a driver and have an impairment in both arms and that you are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of on street parking equipment.

A driver's license number is requested for enforcement purposes as you will only be eligible to use the badge if you are the driver of a vehicle.

Section 6 – Applicants under the age of three

Section 6 should be completed on behalf of:

- children under three years of age who have a medical condition which means that they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty; or children under three years of age who have a medical condition which means that they need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, either for treatment, or for transportation to a location where treatment can be performed.

A parent or guardian must apply on behalf of a child under the age of three.

The list of bulky medical equipment referred to above may include:

- ventilators;
- suction machines;
- feed pumps;
- parenteral equipment;
- syringe drivers;
- oxygen administration equipment;
- continuous oxygen saturation monitoring equipment; and
- casts and associated medical equipment for the correction of hip dysplasia.

Examples of highly unstable medical conditions that mean children who have them may need quick access to transport to hospital or home are:

- tracheostomies;
- epilepsy/fitting;
- highly unstable diabetes; and
- terminal illnesses that prevent children from spending any more than brief moments outside and who need a quick route home.

Please note that the above lists are not exhaustive, to allow for new advances in technology and treatment equipment.

You must enclose a letter from a healthcare professional that has been involved in your child's treatment (for example your paediatrician) giving details of the child's medical condition and the type of medical equipment they need, or provide the healthcare professional's contact information. The letter should include a reference to your child's home address to provide your local authority with proof of residence.

Section 7 – Declarations and signatures.

- The relevant mandatory declarations must be completed by all applicants, since they underpin the terms of applying for a Blue Badge. Please take the time to read and understand these declarations. By not ticking those that are relevant to your application may result in your local authority being unable to accept your Blue Badge application
- Checklist of documents. It is important that you provide all relevant documents/information
- You may wish to tick the optional declarations in order to speed up your application and improve the service you receive from your local authority. In doing so, you will be providing specific consent to your authority to allow them to share information about you with relevant departments and service providers within the authority
- All applicants must sign and date the form prior to submitting it

A local authority may refuse to issue a badge if they have reason to believe that the applicant is not who they claim to be or that the badge would be used by someone other than the person to whom it has been issued.

If your badge application is successful, the leaflet "The Blue Badge Scheme - Rights and Responsibilities in Wales" will be sent to you with the badge. This leaflet explains the rules of the Scheme and how you should use the badge properly. It is most important that you read the leaflet on receipt of your new Blue Badge, even if you have held a Blue Badge previously as there may be new rules on how you must use the badge. Failure to comply with the rights and responsibilities could result in:-

- the badge being withdrawn
- fixed penalty notice for a parking offence
- prosecution for various offences where the rights and responsibilities have been incorrectly or fraudulently applied.

Other information

Blue Badges are normally issued for three years and you will need to return your badge if your condition improves and you no longer need the badge. After three years you will have to apply for a new badge if you wish to continue in the scheme.

When a Blue Badge is no longer needed due to bereavement the 'Tell us Once' service provided by the local authority will provide a reminder of the duty to return the badge.