



THE EUROPEAN BLUE BADGE SCHEME FOR DISABLED AND BLIND PEOPLE

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Definition

The disabled parking badges are issued to people who have a permanent and substantial physical disability which affects their walking and mobility. The definition of this is:

“**Permanent**” - there is no possibility of development or rehabilitation.

“**substantial**” - where you are only able to walk with extreme difficulty and at an extremely slow pace or with excessive pain and generally no more than 50 metres in distance. This affect on your mobility must significantly limit your ability to carry out essential activities needed for daily living.

Being frail through old age does not make you eligible for a disabled parking badge.

Disabled parking badges are issued for three years. If we gave you your previous badge we will write to you approximately six weeks before your badge is about to expire to remind you to reapply for a new one.

Automatic entitlement

You are automatically entitled to a disabled parking badge if you:

- are getting the **higher** rate of the mobility component of DLA.
- are registered blind (**NOT** partially sighted),
- are in receipt of a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.

You must show proof that you receive these benefits when you apply for the badge.

Discretionary badges

If you do not have an automatic entitlement to a Blue Badge you may be able to have a discretionary badge.

You may be eligible for a discretionary parking badge if you:

- Have a permanent and substantial disability which means you can not walk, or have very considerable difficulty in walking.
- Have Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease, terminal cancer or any other obvious physical or degenerative physical disability.
- Have a severe disability in both arms which may stop you being able to use parking meters and pay & display machines.
- Have a child under two suffering a medical condition requiring immediate access to a vehicle so that they can be treated or be taken quickly to a place they can be treated.

If any of these apply to you we will need medical information to support your application.

Conditions of use

You must be unable to visit shops, public buildings, etc. without being able to park nearby. You are not eligible if you have difficulty carrying shopping or parcels.

The badge holder must be a passenger or driver of the vehicle at all times when a disabled parking badge is displayed. Carers cannot use the badge when carrying out business on behalf of the badge holder.

People with behavioural problems are not considered for a badge. Those with what could be considered a mental disability, such as Alzheimer's disease and who experience considerable difficulty in walking and require close supervision when out, will be given serious consideration for a badge.

For a discretionary disabled parking badge we will need medical information to support your application. If the medical information does not confirm you are eligible we cannot give you a Blue Badge. It is your responsibility to make sure your doctor responds to our request for further information.

Your Doctors opinion is only used as part of the evidence used to make the final decision.

We cannot give you a Blue Badge if your disability is temporary or intermittent.

Photograph

We need **two** recent colour passport size photographs. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. major facial deformity) we may not need a photograph. If you think this applies to you, you must contact us for advice before you send your application form.

The photograph should be less than 2 years old. New photographs are required for duplicate badges. You need to sign your name on the back of your photographs.

Proof Required

You must include a photocopy of **two** of the following as proof of your identity.

- Birth certificate/adoption certificate
- Medical card
- New style driving licence
- Passport

Fee

There is a £2 administration fee per disabled parking badge. (please make cheques payable to SMBC)

We can only wait three months to receive your photographs or fee. If after three months we have not received these, you will need to fill in a new application form.

Appeals

If your application has been refused we will send you a letter explaining the reasons for this decision. If you are not happy with this decision you can appeal to the Corporate Director of Customer Services against the decision.

You must appeal in writing within 28 days of the date on the letter. In your letter you need to tell us why you disagree and include any evidence you have to support your appeal.

Who may use the Blue Badge?

The Blue Badge is issued to a person, not a vehicle. This means the badge holder may use the badge whenever they travel as a driver or passenger, regardless of who owns the vehicle.

Only the person to whom the badge has been issued to may use it. The badge holder must be in the vehicle when the badge is being used.

Note: -The only time that someone else may use the badge, without the holder being in the vehicle, is if they are dropping off or picking up the badge holder. The badge must be removed from display as soon as the vehicle leaves the area which is accessible only to vehicles displaying the badge.

Misuse of disabled parking badges

Warning - it is a **criminal offence** for someone other than the badge holder to use the Blue Badge concessions. If they do, they are liable to a fine up to £1,000. The Blue Badge can be withdrawn if the holder misuses it or allows others to misuse it.

What happens if I move home?

If you are moving home and stay in the borough you will need to tell us you are moving so we can keep our records up to date and send you any letters or reminders before your badge expires.

If your blue badge was previously issued by us and you have moved out of borough you may continue to use your badge until it expires. You would then need to contact your new local authority for a new badge when yours expires.

Re-applying for a badge

It is your responsibility to re-apply for a badge. You do not need to return your badge until it has expired or you receive your new badge.

There is currently an administration fee of £2 for renewing your badge

Duplicate badges

If you lose your badge or it is stolen you must tell the police, they will issue a crime or lost number. Badges are valuable in the wrong hands. So we can replace your badge we need this number. We will also need two more signed photographs and a copy of your signature. Badges will only be issued for the remaining time of the original badge.

If you have been given a replacement badge and the original one is then found or recovered, do not use it, it must be returned to us.

Quality standards

- When you ask for a Blue Badge application form we will send it to you the same day or the next working day, It will be sent second class post
- automatic issue – issued and sent within five working days providing application is complete
- If you are automatically entitled to a blue badge, after we receive your completed application (including supporting information, we will send your badge within five working days.
- If we need information from your Doctor we will do this within five working days.

Please Note: The quality standards for the following part of the process depend on when we receive the information from your Doctor. Some times Doctors do not get back to us for several weeks. We can not control or influence how quickly your doctor responds.

- When we get the information we need from your Doctor (and you meet the criteria and we have everything we need from you) we will send you your badge within five working days
- If after receiving further information from your Doctor we refuse your application we will write to you explaining why within ten working days.
- Any complaints or appeals will be given to the appropriate team manager the day we receive it and you will receive a response within 5 working days. (This is in line with our corporate complaints process)

How do I get a Blue Badge?

Everyone applying for a Blue Badge must complete the application form which is included with these guidance notes. When you have completed the form, either post it to us or bring it into one of our Solihull Connect offices or to Chelmsley Wood library.

'Automatic' issue – If you are eligible for this type of badge

You can call into one of our Solihull Connect offices and they will sort your badge while you wait. To do this we need

- ◆ Evidence that you are receiving the benefit.
- ◆ Two recently taken, colour passport size photographs of yourself. Please make sure that you have signed the back of both photographs.

If you do not have these photographs we can take them for you when we issue your badge. There will be a charge further of £2 for this service.

- ◆ The £2 badge issue fee.
- If your badge is an automatic renewal, you must bring the old one along with you.
- Proof of identity (see page 3)

If you decide to post your completed form to us you must send:

- ◆ Photocopies of the evidence that you are receiving the benefit.
- ◆ Two recently taken colour passport size photographs of yourself. Please make sure you have signed the back of both photographs.
- ◆ Cheque or postal order for £2 made payable to Solihull MBC
- Proof of identity (see page 3)

Do not send cash or any original documents to us in the post.

Postal Applications

Solihull Connect Contact Centre
The Bluebell Centre
SMBC Offices
West Mall
Chelmsley Wood
Solihull
B37 5TN
Tel: 0121 704 6000

Where to get your Blue Badge

Solihull Connect Walk-In Centre

Ground Floor, Library Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3RG

Solihull Connect Walk-In Centre

Shirley Police Station, 286 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 3AR

Solihull Connect Chelmsley Wood

The Bluebell Centre, West Mall, Chelmsley Wood, Solihull, B37 5TN

Solihull Connect (Balsall Common Library) Thursdays 10am - 2pm only

Balsall Common Library, 283 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, West Midlands, CV7 7EL

Important Information

Solihull Council is fully committed to the principles of both the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The information that you provide to us on the Blue Badge application form and any other information that may be supplied in support of the application:-

- ◆ May be retained in paper files or computer systems.
- ◆ will only be used by us for the purpose of assessing your eligibility for this concession, the maintenance of our records which we are required to keep and the provision of statistical information.
- ◆ may be passed to other agencies or professionals in order for us to confirm the claims that you have made in connection with your application for a Blue Badge.

If you have any concerns regarding the information that we may hold about you, please contact The Data Protection Officer, The Council House, PO Box 18, Solihull, west Midlands B91 3QY

Reciprocal arrangements in Europe – You can use your Blue Badge in the following countries:

A system of reciprocal arrangements exists, under which disabled visitors from the participating countries can take advantage of the concessions provided in the host country by displaying the badge issued under their own national scheme. As of April 2000 such reciprocal arrangements exist between:

Austria	Germany	Italy	*Norway
Belgium	Greece	Jersey	Portugal
Denmark	Guernsey	Liechtenstein	*Spain
Finland	Iceland	Luxembourg	Sweden
France	*Ireland	Netherlands	

No schemes currently exist in Gibraltar or Yugoslavia. *Although there are no formal reciprocal arrangements with Norway, Spain or the Republic of Ireland, it is understood that they will respect the disabled parking badge of this country when displayed. It is suggested that an application is made to the visiting country and that badge holders take their current badge with them.

