

Blue Badge Scheme Statistics: England 2013/14



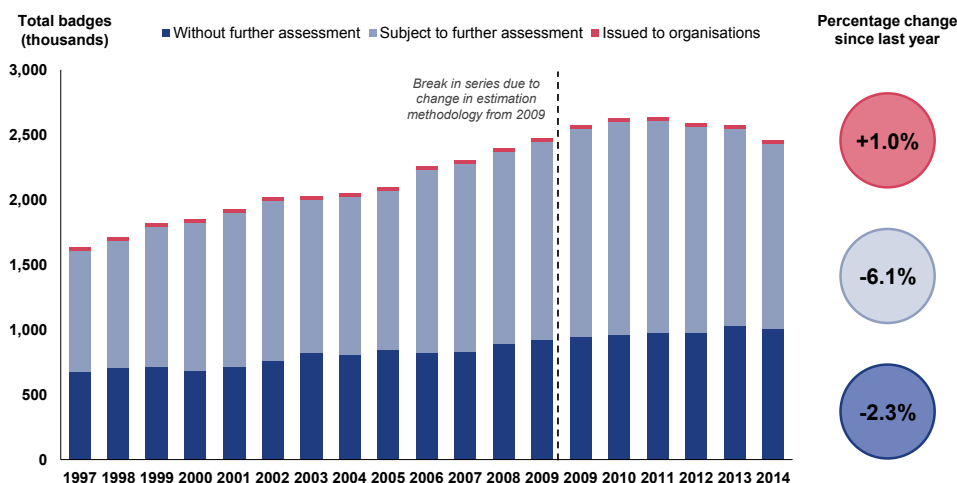
Department
for Transport

There were an estimated 2.45 million valid Blue Badges held on 31 March 2014, a decrease of 4.5% compared with the previous year. This was the largest annual decrease since 2011, when the declining trend started.

- ▶ Out of the 2014 total, 58% of badges were subject to further assessment, 41% were issued without further assessment and 1% to organisations.
- ▶ The overall decline in the total number of Blue Badges held between 2013 and 2014 was driven by a decline of 6.1% of badges held subject to further assessment.
- ▶ The declining trend in badges subject to further assessment can be related to reforms of the process of applying for a badge introduced in 2011/12.
- ▶ Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014, 874,000 Blue Badges were issued, a decrease of 2.6% from the previous year.

Chart 1: Blue Badges held in England, annually from 1997

(DIS0101)



What is a Blue Badge?

'Blue Badges' are parking badges for disabled people. They are issued by local authorities to individuals, with or without further assessment, and to organisations.

About these statistics

The statistics in this publication are derived from two sources of data:

- The annual Blue Badge survey of local authorities covers information on the number of valid badges on issue, and prosecution for abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme
- The Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) online database covers information on the number of badges on issue and issued each year from 2012/13 and badges reported as lost or stolen.

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Badges held on 31 March 2014

There were an estimated 2.45 million valid Blue Badges held on 31 March 2014, a decrease of 4.5% compared with the previous year¹. Compared with March 2013, there was a decrease of 116,000 Blue Badges on issue.

This was the largest annual decrease since 2011, when the declining trend in the number of badges on issue started (see chart 1). Overall, the number of Blue Badges on issue has decreased by 6.9% since 2011.

The overall decline in the total number of Blue Badges held between 2013 and 2014 was mostly driven by a decline of 6.1% in badges held subject to further assessment (see chart 1).

Out of the 2014 total, 58% of badges were subject to further assessment, 41% were issued without further assessment and 1% to organisations (see chart 1).

As shown in chart 2, the regions with the highest proportions of badges held without further assessment were the North West (50%), the North East (49%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (47%). The proportion of badges held without further assessment was lower in the South West (33%), the South East (34%) and the East of England (34%).

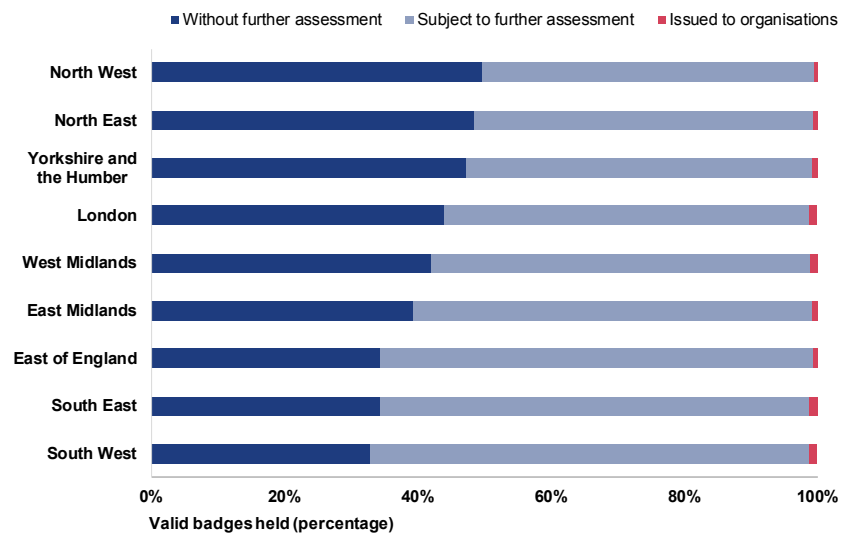
In 2014, 2.9% of the population in England was automatically entitled to a Blue Badge, a proportion which has been stable since 2009. Out of the 1.6 million people who were automatically entitled to a Blue Badge in England in 2014, 64% were issued one without assessment. This proportion varies across regions, from 61% in the West Midlands to 68% in the South East.

¹ Figures for 2013 have been revised. For further details, please see background information on page 6.

Eligibility for a Blue Badge

There are two main categories for eligibility for a Blue Badge, those that are eligible “**without further assessment**” (previously known as the automatic criteria) and those that are eligible “**subject to further assessment**” (previously known as the discretionary criteria). Badges are also issued to organisations for use in vehicles when used to carry disabled people who would themselves be eligible for a badge. Upon issue, a Blue Badge is valid for a period of three years. For further details, please refer to the notes and definitions

Chart 2: Blue Badges held by category and by region, March 2014 (DIS0104)



Automatic entitlement

Persons meeting one of these criteria are **automatically entitled to a Blue Badge**:

- receiving the higher rate of the Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment;
- receiving a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement;
- being registered blind; or
- being on the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation scheme.

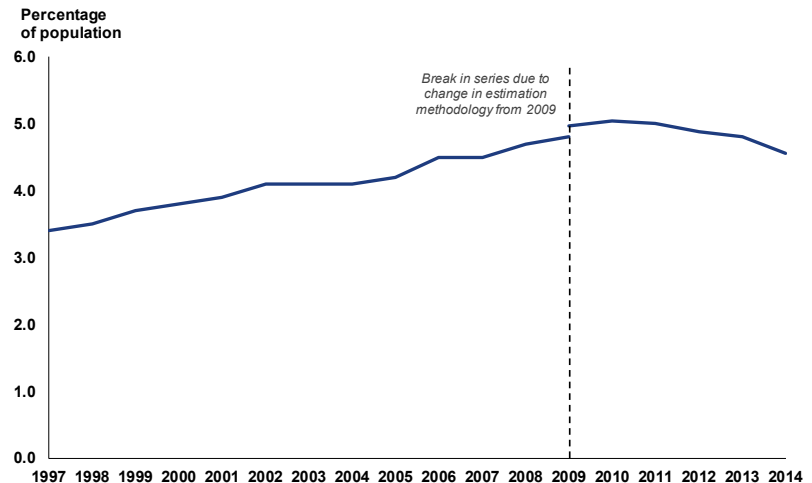
For further details, please refer to the notes and definitions

On 31 March 2014, 4.6% of the population in England held a valid Blue Badge. This proportion has been declining since 2011, when 5.0% of the population held a Blue Badge. Between 2013 and 2014, there was a decrease of 0.2 percentage points in the population holding a Blue Badge (see chart 3).

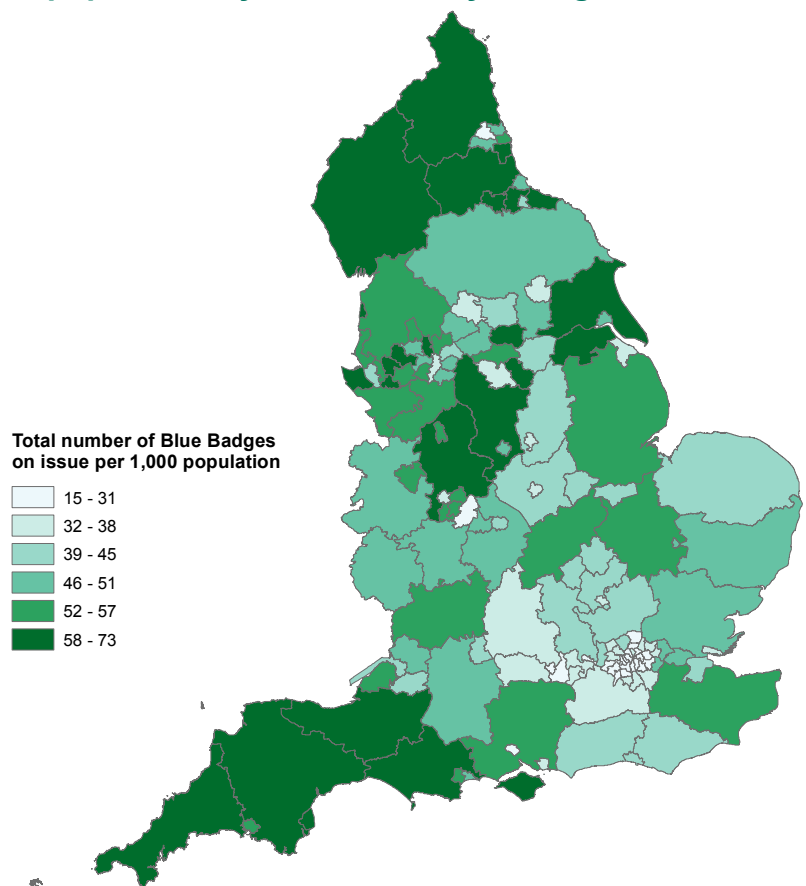
The regions with the most Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their population were the North East (5.4%), the South West (5.4%) and the North West (5.3%). The region with the smallest proportion of badge holders was London (3.0%), which also had the lowest proportion of retired people.

As shown in map 1, local authorities with large proportions of Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their population were mainly found in the North East, North West and South West regions. Local authorities in London and the South East regions had lower proportions of badge holders. Metropolitan areas such as Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle had comparatively low proportions of Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their population.

Chart 3: Blue Badge holders as a percentage of the population in England, annually from 1997 (DIS0102)



Map 1: Blue Badges on issue as at 31 March 2014 per 1,000 population by local authority in England



Note: Local authority level figures used for this map are calculated from estimates of badges on issue based on survey and BBIS data, and from ONS 2013 mid-year population estimates.

Detailed statistical tables...

are available online as part of the [Disabled Parking Badges statistical series](#):

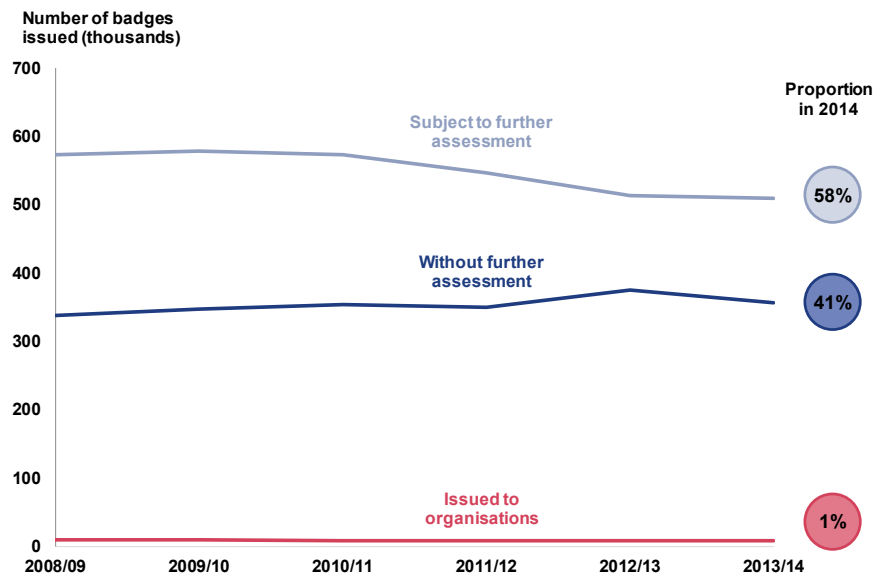
- Badges held by assessment category and region can be found in tables DIS0101 to DIS0106.
- Badges held by category and local authority can be found in tables DIS0108 to DIS0110.

Badges issued in 2013/14

Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014, 874,000 Blue Badges were issued.

Out of these, 356,000 were issued without further assessment (41%), 509,000 subject to further assessment (58%) and 9,000 to organisations (1%), as shown in chart 4. The proportion of badges issued subject to further assessment has declined since 2008/09, when they made up 62% of badges issued.

Chart 4: Blue Badges issued by eligibility category: England, annually from 2008/09 (DIS0111)



Between 2012/13 and 2013/14, there was a decrease of 2.6% in the number of badges issued. The number of badges issued each year has been declining steadily, with an overall decline of 6.6% since 2010/11. This was mainly due to a decrease in badges issued with further assessment, which have decreased by 11.2% since 2010/11 (see chart 4).

The declining trend in badges issued subject to further assessment can be related to reforms of the process of applying for a badge. Modifications were introduced through legislation in 2011 and came into effect from April 2012. These now require that the decision to issue a badge to an individual applying because of a 'permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty in walking' be confirmed by an independent medical assessor and not the applicant's GP¹. This may have impacted the trend as soon as 2011/12.

From 2012/13, data on badges issued were acquired from the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) online database instead of using the survey of local authorities; this may have affected the trends shown to some extent.

Detailed statistical tables...

are available online as part of the [Disabled Parking Badges statistical series](#):

- Badges issued by assessment category and region can be found in table DIS0107.
- Badges issued by category and local authority can be found in tables DIS0108 and DIS0111.

Related information

Information on prosecution for Blue Badge abuse over the period 2013/14 were collected along with the number of lost and stolen badges. These are available at local authority level in the Blue Badge web tables, table [DIS0301](#). The figures in this table fall outside the scope of National Statistics.

These statistics cover England only. Statistics on disabled parking badges held by individuals living in Scotland can be found here: <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/statistics/j285663-04.htm#table121>.

¹ Please see [The Disabled Persons \(Badges for Motor Vehicles\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2011](#) and Chapter 4 of the Department for Transport's 2012 document [The Blue Badge Scheme Local Authority Guidance \(England\)](#) for more information.

Uses and users of these statistics

These statistics are collected to provide information on disabled parking badges within England and allow monitoring of trends in the number of badges held and the number of badges issued in the year. Within the Department for Transport they are used as background information in the development of Blue Badge policy and to answer public enquiries. In recent years the data has been used in modelling the impact of reforms to the system, and they are likely to be used in monitoring the impacts of the changes. Outside DfT, users are likely to include local authorities and organisations representing disabled motorists.

Data sources, strengths and weaknesses

Data about Blue Badges are collected by surveying local authorities in England. The survey is not compulsory and each year some authorities do not provide figures. In 2014, 141 authorities (out of 152) provided a full or partial return of the survey, giving a 93% response rate. Local authorities use different systems to record these data, and follow different procedures and practices. This means that some authorities are unable to provide responses for all of the questions in the survey.

Since 2013, data on badges issued and lost or stolen badges are acquired through the Blue Badge Improvement Service. Data for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 years covered 100% of local authorities. The Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) is a new service that has been available to all local authorities in England since 1 January 2012. It provides a number of core services, including a central database of all Blue Badges on issue. The introduction of BBIS has implications for the future collection of Blue Badge statistics. For further information please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-badge-statistics-from-2012-onwards>.

For 2014, the estimation of badges on issue for each local authority is based on a cross-validation process between the two sources of data. The consistency of the estimation with past figures is then checked and cases of inconsistency are corrected on a case-by-case basis. Data supplied are also validated by comparing related data items (for example, badges issued in one year should be around a third of total badges on issue) and year on year figures for each area. For badges on issue in 2014, 35% of local authorities estimates are based exclusively on survey data, 65% are partially or exclusively relying on BBIS data. In some cases of inconsistency, past figures have also been revised. For badges on issue, figures are displayed at the local authority level only when direct survey data was used for estimation; for the rest of local authorities, data is not displayed at the local level, but totals are estimated to produce aggregate totals at the England or regional level.

Comparing trends shown by aggregate figures with those for areas providing complete and consistent data suggests that these statistics are suitable for monitoring broad trends in badges on issue over time. However, the nature of the data supplied and the estimation process means that regional figures should be

interpreted with caution.

Due to difficulties in obtaining and estimating certain items of data, aggregate totals are not currently produced for some of the areas about which local authorities are asked for information.

Revisions to figures

Due to the nature of the imputation method, previous figures may be revised, this is indicated in the relevant tables. The trends have not been affected substantially, though the estimated total blue badges on issue has decreased slightly (by around 12,000 for 2013). The nature of the estimation process means that figures are subject to further revision in future years, though the impact on trends is not expected to be significant

Background notes

Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found in the 'notes and guidance' section here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-parking-badges-statistics-guidance>.

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-parking-badges-statistics-pre-release-access-list>.

The next Blue Badge Scheme Statistics are due to be published in Winter 2015.