

Blue Badge Scheme Statistics: 2010/11



Notes and Definitions

This document provides information about DfT statistics on parking badges for disabled people ("Blue Badges").

The Department for Transport carries out an annual survey of the number of blue badges issued by local authorities. These badges are issued to disabled people with severe mobility problems, as well as to organisations concerned with the care of disabled people. Data for years prior to 1994 were collected by the Department for Health.

These Notes and Definitions include:

1. Information on the Blue Badge scheme
2. Sources of population data
3. Information about the imputation methods used

The survey covers local authorities in England. The badges may remain valid for a three-year period so the survey shows a rolling total of those on issue.

1. Blue Badge scheme

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).

People who may be issued a badge without further assessment are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following criteria:

- receive the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance;
- receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement; or
- are registered blind.

People who may be issued a badge subject to further assessment by the local authority are those who are more than two years old and fall within one or more of the following criteria:

- drives a vehicle regularly, has severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate or has considerable difficulty in operating all or some types of parking meter;
- has a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

In addition, children under the age of two may be eligible for a badge if they fall within either or both of the following descriptions:

- a child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
- a child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if

necessary, treatment for a condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.

Local authorities are responsible for issuing badges in accordance with the eligibility criteria in the regulations that govern the Blue Badge scheme. Therefore, the assessment procedures adopted by each local authority is a matter for them to decide upon. There are a number of different approaches which have been adopted by local authorities for assessing whether an applicant meets the “eligible without further assessment” criteria. For example, in some local authorities decisions on who is eligible for a badge are made on the basis of an applicants’ self-reported information. In others, a medical assessment of the applicant is carried out by either the applicant’s GP or by an independent medical professional, such as occupational therapists or physiotherapists.

2. Population data

Figures for population and retired population are taken from Office for National Statistics mid-year population estimates. Population estimates at mid-year 2010 are used with the 2010/11 Blue Badge data, and similarly for previous years.

Figures for the disabled population automatically entitled to a Blue Badge come from three sources:

- The population receiving the higher level of the Disability Living Allowance is taken from the Department for Work and Pensions cases in payment Caseload. For 2010/11 these figures are taken at November 2010, for 2009/10 at November 2009.
- The population receiving War Pensioners Mobility Supplement is supplied by Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA), and is the population at 31 March 2011 for the 2010/11 data, and 31 March 2010 for the 2009/10 data.
- The registered blind population is taken from the National Health Information Centre 2011 report of people registered as blind and partially sighted. These figures are updated every three years, and the 2008 data has been used for 2009/10 and 2008/09.

3. Imputation

Data about Blue Badges are collected from local authorities in England. The survey is not compulsory and in each year some authorities do not provide figures.

Data provided by local authorities can vary in quality between authorities and from year to year. 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.

Where no data are available for an authority, or where some individual items of data are not available, data are estimated to produce aggregate totals at the England or regional level. Data are estimated using figures supplied in previous years, or may be estimated from the responses to other questions in the survey where a partial response has been provided by the authority.

On occasion, imputations for earlier years can be improved using directly-reported data for later years. Minor revisions to back-data can occur as a result, although trends are rarely affected substantively. For the number of Blue Badges the proportion of the annual estimates accounted for by imputation rather than direct measurement was around 24 per cent in 2008/09, 22 per cent in 2009/10 and 29 per cent in 2010/11.

Due to difficulties in obtaining and estimating certain items of data, aggregate totals are not currently produced for many of the areas about which local authorities are asked for information. The survey questionnaire was extended in 2008/09 and revised again in 2010/11, and data for many of the newer items is not yet robust enough to produce national aggregates, although it may be possible to publish these in future years.