

Disabled Parking Badge Statistics

Statistical Release

27 September 2012

Department for
Transport

Blue Badge Scheme Statistics: England 2011/12

This Statistical Release presents information on parking badges for disabled people ("Blue Badges") in England, during the 2011/12 financial year.

The statistics in this publication are derived from the annual Blue Badge survey of local authorities. The survey covers information including the number of valid badges on issue, badge applications, eligibility assessment procedures and badges reported as lost or stolen. Upon issue, a Blue Badge is valid for a period of three years.



Key findings	1
Blue Badges held at 31 March 2012	2
Blue Badges issued in 2011/12	4
Related information	4
Uses and users of these statistics	5
Strengths and weaknesses	5
Background notes	6

The key findings from Blue Badge Statistics England 2011/12 include:

- On 31 March 2012 the estimated number of valid Blue Badges held was 2.62 million, a decrease of 1.1 per cent from the revised figure of 2.65 million for the previous year, which was the highest annual figure recorded. This is the first year to experience a decline since 1997.
- Of this total, 37 per cent were issued under the 'without further assessment' criteria, 62 per cent were issued under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria and 1 per cent were issued to organisations. These proportions have remained broadly similar since 1997.
- On 31 March 2012, 5.0 per cent of the English population held a valid Blue Badge, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points from 2011.
- In 2011/12 the estimated number of Blue Badges issued in England was 905 thousand, a decrease of 3.4 per cent from the previous year.
- The overall reduction in number of badges held between 2011 and 2012 has been driven by a decline of 4.3 per cent in the number of badges issued under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria in the last year.

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN

Fahmeeda Rao
020 7944 3556

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Enquiries:
020 7944 3066

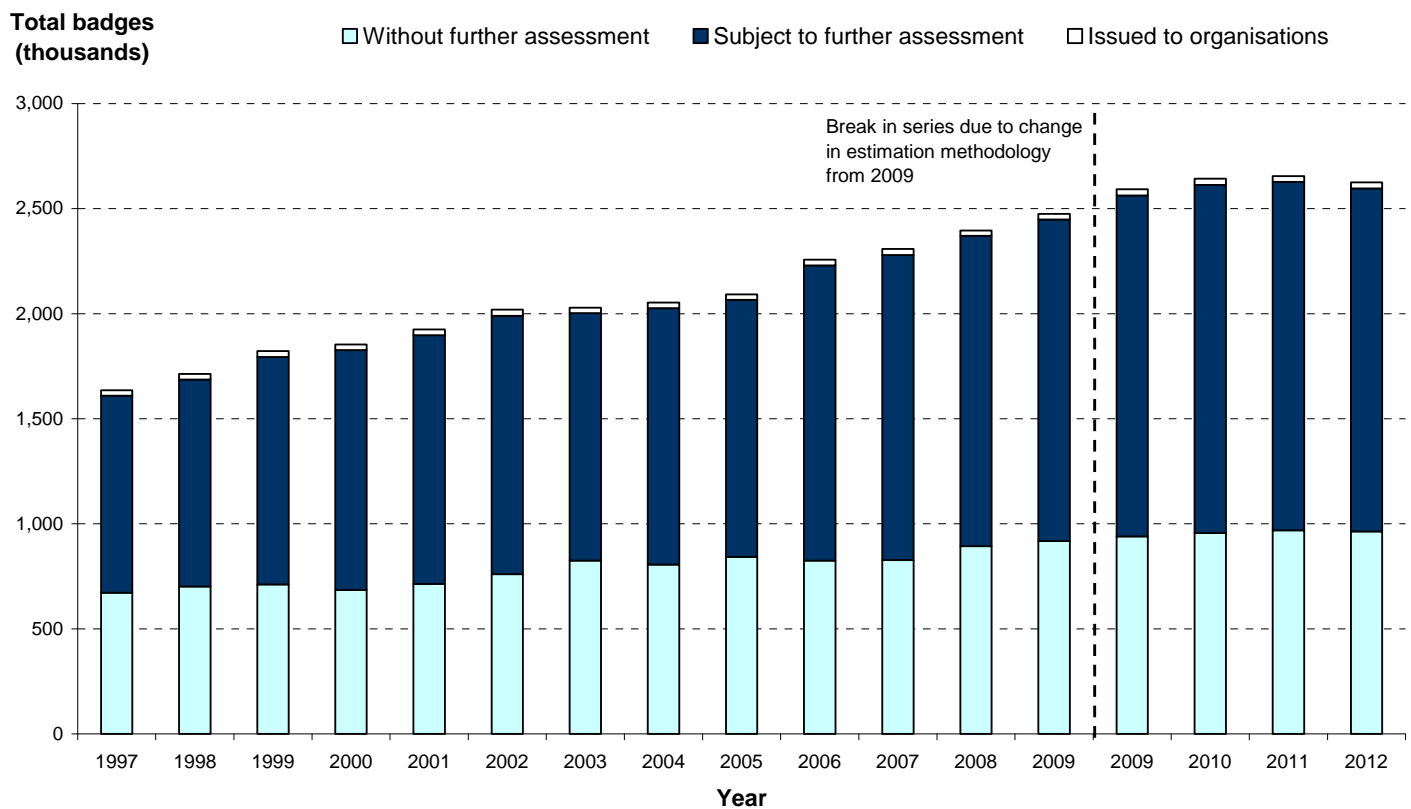
Public Enquiries:
020 7944 3094
parking.data@dft.gsi.gov.uk

1. Blue Badges held at 31 March 2012

- The estimated number of valid Blue Badges held at 31 March 2012 was 2.62 million, a decrease of 1.1 per cent from the previous year which saw the highest annual figure recorded of 2.65 million. This figure had been steadily increasing since 1997 and this is the first year to experience a decline. This fall may be due to the introduction of reforms to the process of applying for a badge (see section 2 for further details).
- 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).
- Of the 2012 total, 37 per cent were issued without further assessment, 62 per cent were subject to further assessment and 1 per cent were issued to organisations. These proportions have remained broadly similar since 1997.
- The reduction in number of badges held has been driven by a decline of 1.6 per cent in the number of badges held under the ‘subject to further assessment criteria’ since 2010/11.

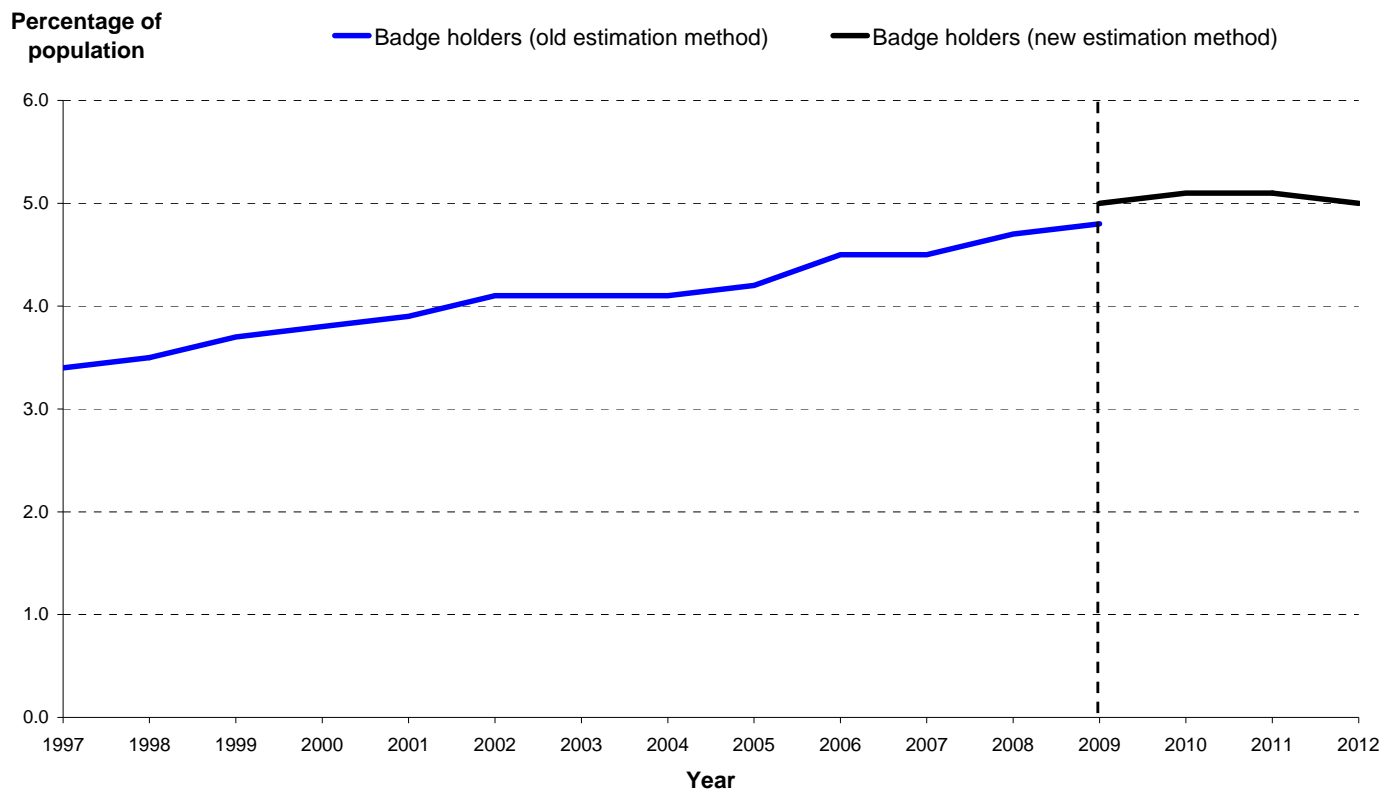
Blue Badges held: England, annually from 1997

(Table DIS0101)



- On 31 March 2012, 5.0 per cent of the English population held a valid Blue Badge, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points from 2011. This proportion had been steadily increasing since 1997, and this is the first year to experience a decline.

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



- The regions with the most Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their entire population were North West and South West (both 5.7 per cent) and North East and East Midlands (both 5.6 per cent). The region with the smallest proportion of Blue Badge holders was London (3.1 per cent), which is also the region with the least retired people as a proportion of overall population.
- Amongst all the age groups, Blue Badges are more likely to be granted to older people. Given that there is a well-established and continuing increase in the elderly population in England, we would expect the number of Blue Badge holders to increase year-on-year providing other factors remain the same.
- On 31 March 2012, 3.0 per cent of the English population were automatically entitled to a Blue Badge, similar to previous years. Of those, the proportion holding a badge at 31 March 2012 was 60 per cent, a decrease of 1 percentage point from the previous year. This proportion varies across regions, from 51 per cent in the North East to 66 per cent in both the South East and East Midlands.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on “Blue Badges held overall” can be found in the Blue Badge web tables¹, table numbers [DIS0101 to DIS0106](#), and [DIS0108ii to DIS0110](#).

2. Blue Badges issued during 2011/12

- The estimated number of Blue Badges issued during the year 2011/12 (1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012) was 905 thousand, a decrease of 3.4 per cent from the previous year. This is continuing last year's downward trend which saw a decrease of 0.2 per cent between 2009/10 and 2010/11 (based on revised figures).
- Of the total badges issued in 2011/12, 38 per cent were issued without further assessment, 61 per cent were issued subject to further assessment, and 1 per cent were issued to organisations.
- The reduction in number of badges issued has been driven by a decline of 4.3 per cent in the number of badges issued under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria since 2010/11.
- Reforms to the process of applying for a badge under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria were introduced through legislation in 2011. 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. Although these came into effect from 1 April 2012, some local authorities reported having adapted their processes in anticipation during the 2011/12 year. There may, therefore, already be some effect of these reforms on this year's trends.

Detailed statistics (tables and charts) on "Blue Badges issued within the year" can be found in the Blue Badge web tables¹, table numbers [DIS0107](#), [DIS0108i](#) and [DIS0111](#)

3. Related information

Information on prosecution for Blue Badge abuse over the period 2011/12 were collected along with the number of lost, stolen and withdrawn 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/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j205779-36.htm>

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.

4. 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.

Request for feedback

We endeavour to make this publication relevant and helpful to all users and would welcome any feedback on the content, format or timing of the statistics. Your views and comments will aid the design of future statistical releases. A short survey form is available here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KX3YPNH>

5. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

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. In 2012, 130 authorities (out of 152) provided a full or partial return of the survey, giving an 86% response rate. 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.

Data supplied are 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. Inconsistent figures are queried with data suppliers where possible, and data are cleaned to remove anomalous figures where no explanation is received. Where data are not available for an authority, or where data cleaning is necessary, data are estimated to produce aggregate totals at the England or regional level. This estimation uses figures provided in previous or future years, or is based on partial data supplied by an authority in the current year. Around a third of the estimate of valid Blue Badges was accounted for by imputation rather than direct measurement for 2011/12.

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. For certain topics in 2011/12, such as application data, we have been unable to produce the aggregate totals that were possible last year, due to data quality issues. This may be partially due to changes in the questionnaire design and will be investigated further.

Revisions to figures and future changes to the collection of Blue Badge statistics

This year changes have been made to the imputation method and figures have been revised as far back as 2008/09, which was the first year in which information on badges issued in year was collected. The trends have not been affected substantially, though the estimated total blue badges on issue has increased slightly (by around 0.1 million). 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.

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:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/disabled-parking-badges/blue-badge-stats-from-2012.pdf>

6. Background notes

1. The web tables give further detail and regional breakdowns of the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. They are available here:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=disabled-parking-badges

2. Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found in the 'technical information' section here: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/disabled-parking-badges/>

3. 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. These statistics are currently being assessed by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) to determine their compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. An assessment report was published in June 2012 (Report 221) which can be found here:

[Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics \(PDF – 151 KB\)](#)

4. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/disabled-parking-badges/pre-release.pdf>

5. The next Blue Badge Scheme Statistics is due to be published in Autumn 2013.