



Blue Badge Scheme Statistics: England 2012/13

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Main findings

The total number of Blue Badges held on 31 March 2013 was an estimated 2.58 million, a decrease of 54 thousand compared with March 2011

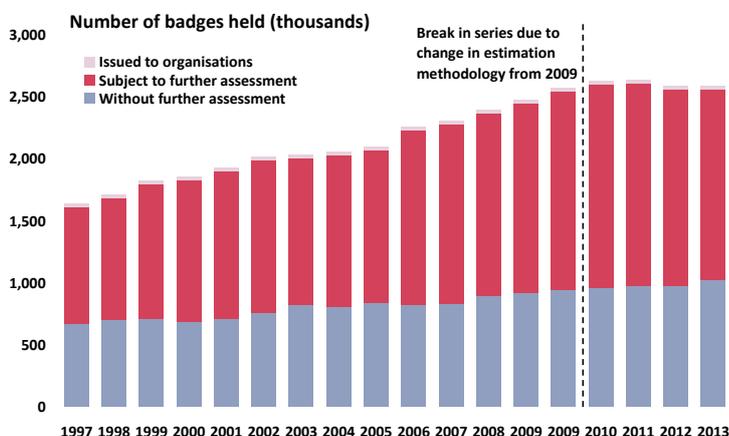
In 2012 the number of blue badges on issue fell for the first time, by 1.8%. In 2013 the number of badges fell again but by a smaller amount (0.2%).

- Of the 2013 total, 40% of badges were issued without further assessment, 59% were subject to further assessment and 1% were issued to organisations.
- The overall decrease in the number of badges held between 2011 and 2013 was driven by a decline of 6.4% in the number of badges held 'subject to further assessment'.
- On 31 March 2013, 4.8% of the English population held a valid Blue Badge, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points from 2012.
- The number of badges issued between 1 April 2012 and the 31 March 2013 was 897,000, a decrease of 0.9% from the previous year.

The number of badges held has declined by 2.1% since 2011. This was driven by a decrease in the number of badges held subject to further assessment.



Total number of Blue Badges held by category: England, annually from 1997 [Table DIS0101]



About these statistics

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 and prosecutions for badge misuse. For the first time in 2012/13 data on badges issued during the year and badges reported as lost or stolen was obtained from the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS)'s online data base.

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). Upon issue, a Blue Badge is valid for a period of three years. For further details, refer to the notes and definitions.

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Badges held on 31 March 2013

- The total number of Blue Badges held on 31 March 2013 was an estimated 2.58 million, a decrease of 2.1% from the highest annual figure recorded in 2011 of 2.64 million. 2013 was the second consecutive year to see a decline although the 2013 decline was smaller than the previous year (6,000 compared to 48,000). Of the 2013 total, 40% were issued without further assessment, 59% were subject to further assessment and 1% issued to organisations.
- There was an increase of 5.5% between 2011 and 2013 in the number of badges held under the 'no further assessment criteria'. This increase was offset by a decline of 6.4% since 2011 in the number of badges held 'subject to further assessment', resulting in an overall decrease in the total number of badges held.

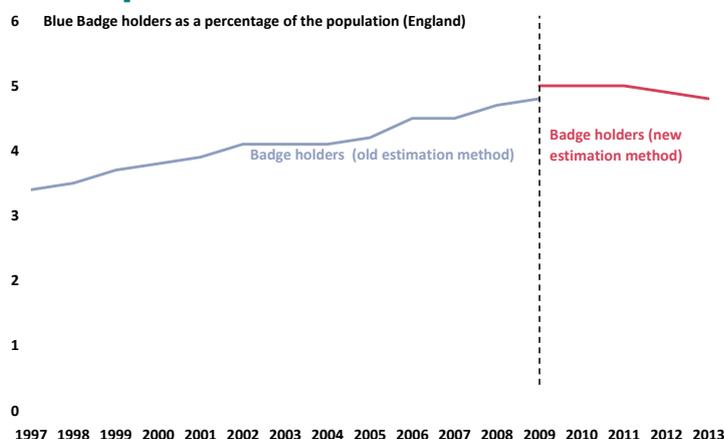
- On 31 March 2013, 4.8% of the English population held a valid Blue Badge, a decrease of 0.1 percentage points from 2012. This proportion has started to decline since 2011 having been constant at 5.0% in the previous two years.

- The region with the most Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their entire population was the North West (5.9%) and the region with the smallest proportion was London (3.1%), 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.

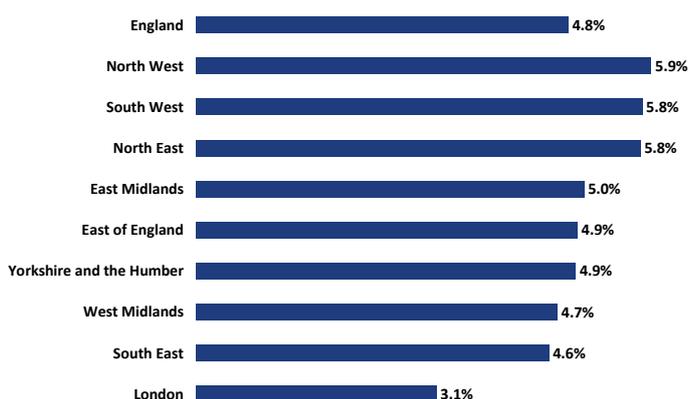
- On 31 March 2013, 3.0% of the English population were automatically entitled to a Blue Badge, similar to previous years. However, of those, the proportion holding a badge increased 3 percentage points from the previous year to 64% in 2013. This proportion varies across regions, from 58% in the East Midlands to 71% the South East.

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



Blue badge holders as a percentage of the population by region: Mar 2013 [Table DIS0105]

Number of badge holders as a % of the population



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

- Badges held by assessment category and region DIS0101 to DIS0106.
- Badges held by category by local authority DIS0108 to DIS0110.

Badges issued in 2012/13

- The number of badges issued between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 was 897,000.
- Of these, 375,000 were issued without further assessment, 514,000 were subject to further assessment and 9,000 were issued to organisations.
- There was a decrease of 0.9% on the number of badges issued in 2011/12. This was driven by a 6.0% fall in badges issued subject to further assessment

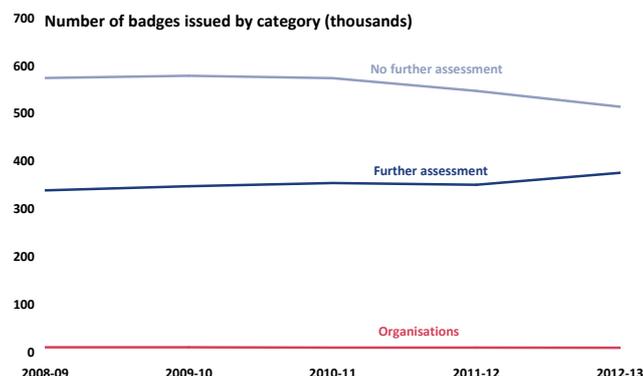
- Since 2011/12, the proportion of badges issued subject to further assessment has decreased by 3 percentage points and the proportion issued without further assessment has increased by the same amount (the proportion issued to organisations has remained at 1%).

- Reforms to the process of applying for a badge under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria 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. 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, have been some effect of these reforms on last year's trends as well as this year's.

- For the first time data on badges issued were acquired from the Blue Badge Improvement Scheme (BBIS) online database; this may have affected the trends shown to some extent.

Number of blue badges issued by eligibility category: England, annually from 2008/09 [Table 0111]



Proportion in 2013

42%

57%

1%

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

- Badges issued by assessment category and region DIS0107.
- Badges issued by category and local authority DIS0108 and DIS0111.

Related information includes:

Information on prosecution for Blue Badge abuse over the period 2012/13 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/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/j251205-036.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.

Background 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 from local authorities in England. The survey is not compulsory and in each year some authorities do not provide figures. In 2013, 139 authorities (out of 152) provided a full or partial return of the survey, giving a 91% 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. In 2013 for the first time data was available on the BBIS online system for the period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013, data on badges issued and lost or stolen badges were acquired for 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>

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. Less than 30% of the estimate of valid Blue Badges was accounted for by imputation rather than direct measurement for 2012/13.

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 10,000 per year). 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/collections/disabled-parking-badges-statistics>

The next Blue Badge Scheme Statistics are due to be published in Winter 2014.