



Department for Transport

# Blue Badge Scheme Statistics, England: 2019

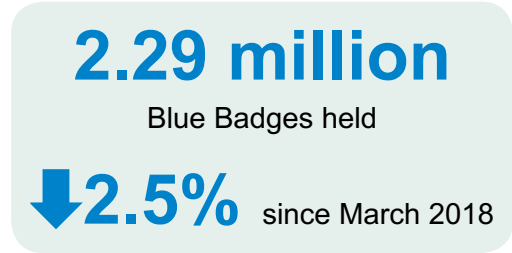
## About this release

Blue Badges are parking badges, issued by local authorities to disabled individuals with severe mobility conditions. Badges can also be issued to organisations who care for and transport people with disabilities. Upon issue, a Blue Badge is valid for a period of up to 3 years. Blue Badges held refers to badges on issue as at 31 March 2019.

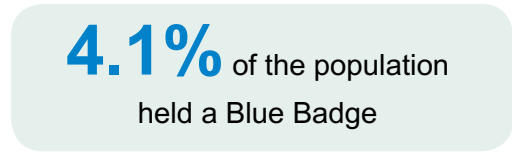
These statistics are derived from the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) online database and are based on the number of badges held as at 31 March 2019 and issued each year. Statistics regarding the number of prosecutions for misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme are derived from the Annual Blue Badge Survey.



There were 2.29 million Blue Badges held in England as at 31 March 2019, a decrease of 59,000 Blue Badges (2.5%) since 2018.



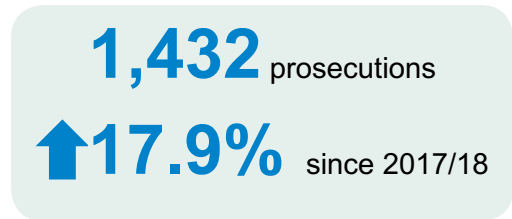
As at 31 March 2019, 4.1% of the population held a Blue Badge, compared with 4.2% in 2018.



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There were 1,432 prosecutions for misuse of Blue Badges between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019.



## Availability of Blue Badge data

The system and provider for the Blue Badge Improvement System (BBIS) database changed on 5 February 2019. The number of Blue Badges held at 31 March 2019 may be a slight underestimate due to the cut of data being taken later in the year than usual. Data on the number of Blue Badges issued during 2018/19 are not available, but data on issuance will be available in future years. See page 7 for more details.

## Blue Badges held as at 31 March 2019

Table 1 shows the number of badges held as at 31 March 2019 in each region and change in badges held since the previous year.

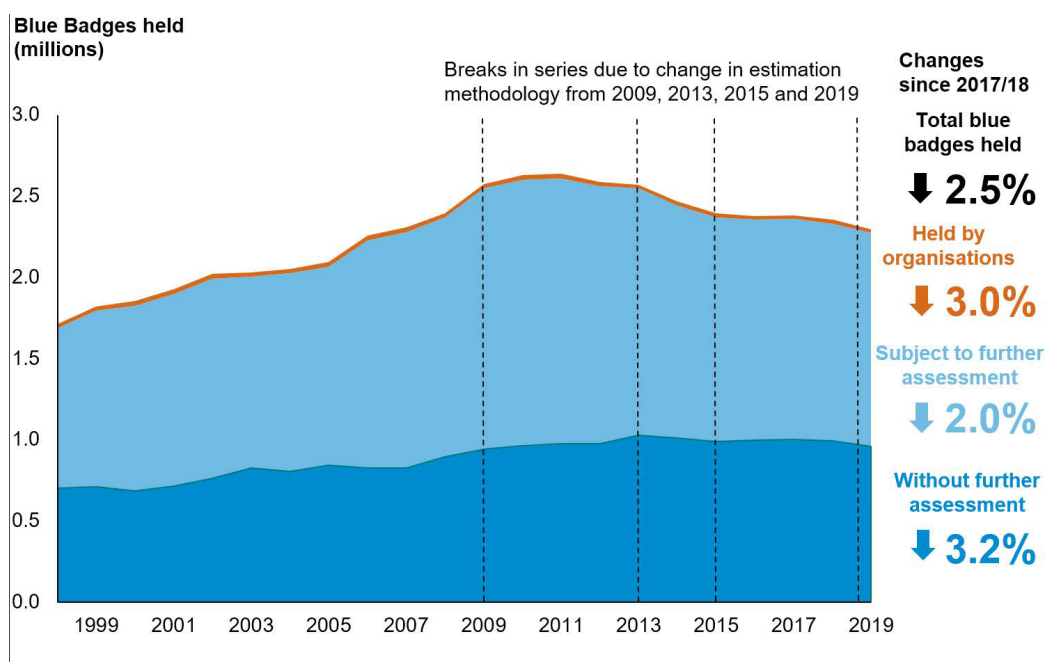
**Table 1: Summary of Blue Badges held (2018/19) compared with the previous year (2017/18)**

	Thousands, % change since 2017/18		
	Badges held as at 31 March 2019		
<b>England</b>	<b>2,294</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>
North East	132	↓	-2.0%
North West	344	↓	-4.1%
Yorkshire and The Humber	236	↓	-3.0%
East Midlands	229	↓	-1.4%
West Midlands	257	↓	-1.3%
East of England	262	↓	-0.2%
London	227	↓	-3.7%
South East	344	↓	-2.8%
South West	265	↓	-3.4%

There were 2.29 million valid Blue Badges held as at 31 March 2019, a decrease of 2.5% (59,000 badges) when compared with the previous year. This decrease continues the declining trend in the number of badges held since 2012, with the exception of a small increase in 2017.

**Chart 1: Blue Badges held: England, annually since March 1998**

(DIS0101)



## 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 up to three years. For further details, please refer to the [notes and definitions](#).

## Without further assessment

(previously known as the automatic criteria)

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

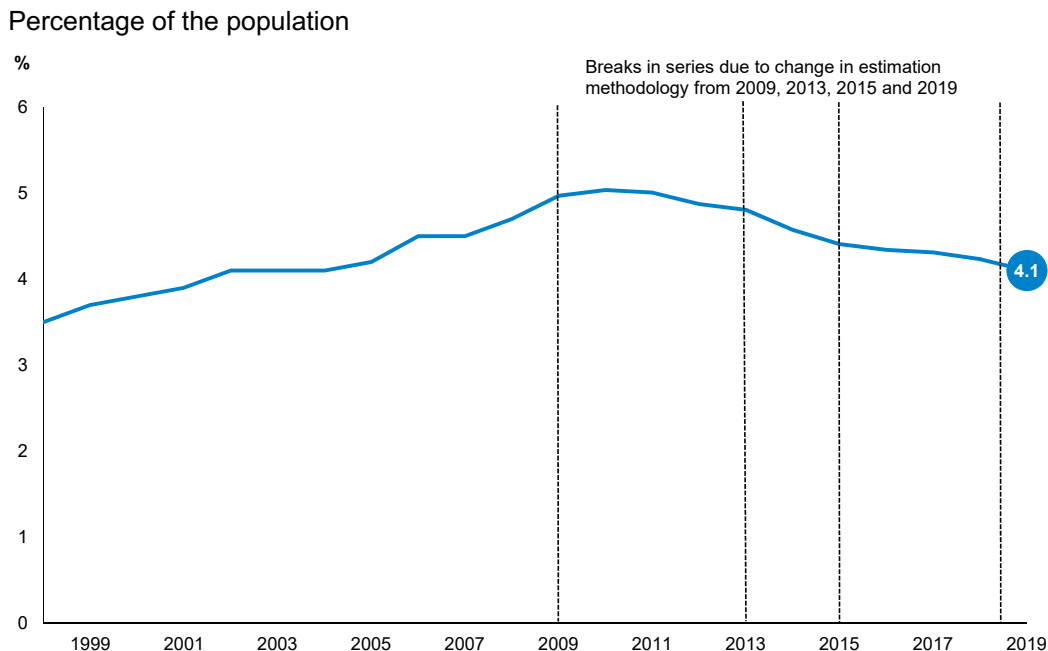
- ▶ receiving the higher rate of the Disability Living Allowance/ scores 8 points or more under the “Moving Around” criteria of the Personal Independence Payment;
- ▶ receiving a War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement;
- ▶ being registered blind; or
- ▶ being on the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation scheme.

For further details, please refer to the [notes and definitions](#).

## Proportion of the population holding a Blue Badge as at 31 March 2019

On 31 March 2019, 4.1% of the population in England held a valid Blue Badge, down from 4.2% the previous year. In 2010, the proportion was 5% (see chart 2).

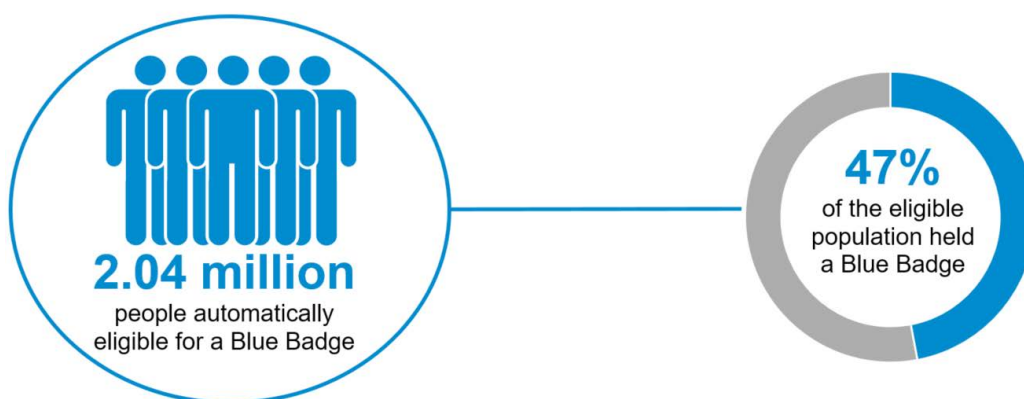
**Chart 2: Percentage of population that hold a Blue Badge: England, annually since March 1998 (DIS0102)**



### 2011/12 Blue Badge application process change

An individual applying because of a 'permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or considerable difficulty in walking' (in the badges issued subject to further assessment category) requires confirmation by an independent medical assessor and not the applicant's GP in cases where it is not clear as to whether an applicant may qualify for a badge.

In 2018/19, 2.04 million people (3.6% of the population in England) were entitled to a Blue Badge without further assessment (previously known as automatically entitled). Out of the 2.04 million people who were eligible for a Blue Badge without further assessment, 47% held a Blue Badge.



### 2019 change in Blue Badge criteria

This statistical release includes data up to end March 2019. This is prior to the change in criteria relating to non-visible disabilities or conditions which came into force on 30 August 2019.

The number of people automatically eligible for a Blue Badge has been rising since 2015, but this has not been matched by an increase in the number of people holding a badge for which they are automatically eligible.

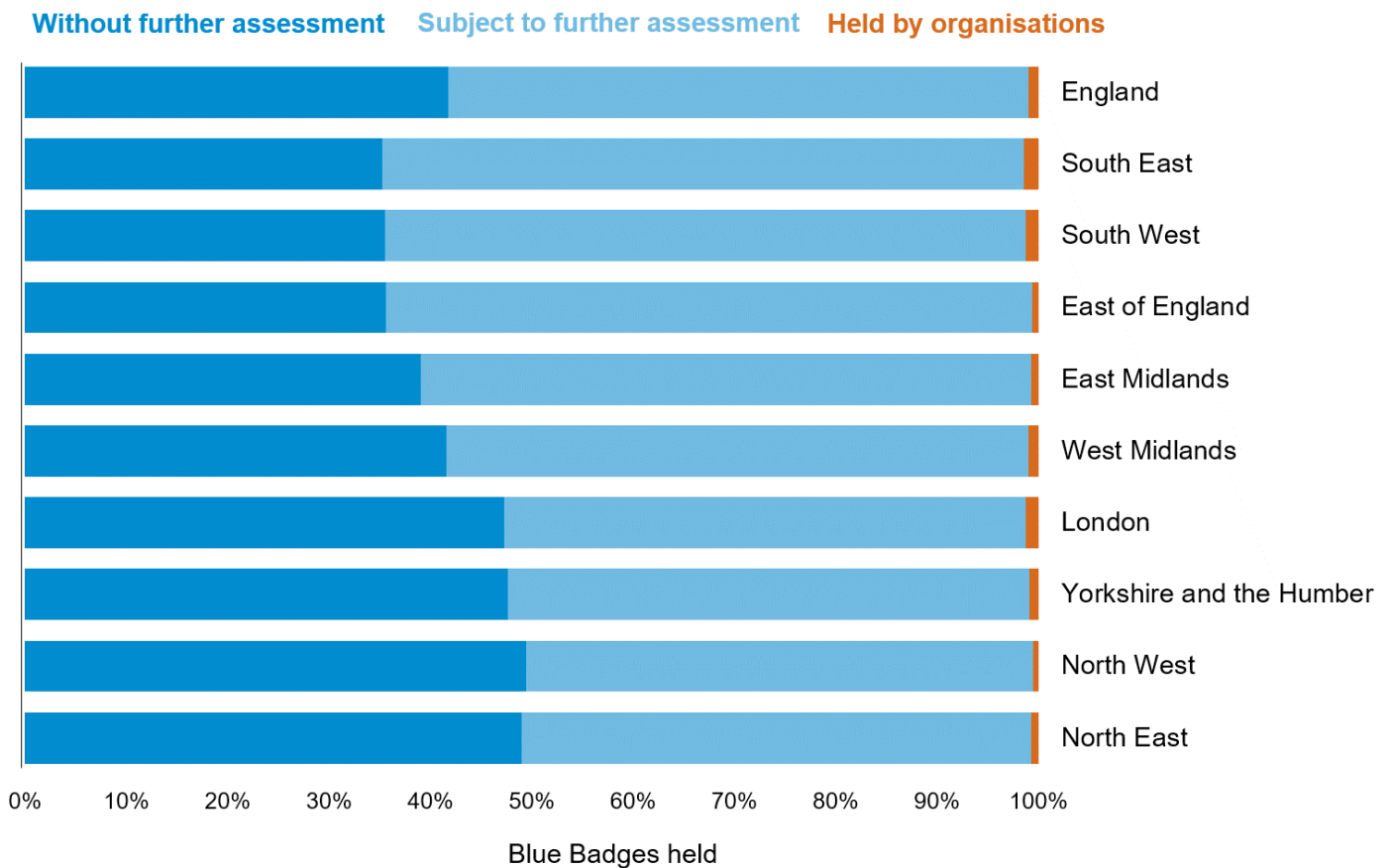
## Blue Badges held by type and region as at 31 March 2019

Of the badges held, 57% were subject to further assessment, 42% without further assessment and 1% held by organisations (see chart 3). The region with the highest proportion of badges held without further assessment was the North East (49%), and the lowest was the South East (35%), as shown in chart 3.

### Further Statistics

These statistics cover England only. Statistics on disabled parking badges held by individuals living in Scotland can be found [here](#).

Chart 3: Blue Badges held by category: English regions, March 2019 ([DIS0104](#))

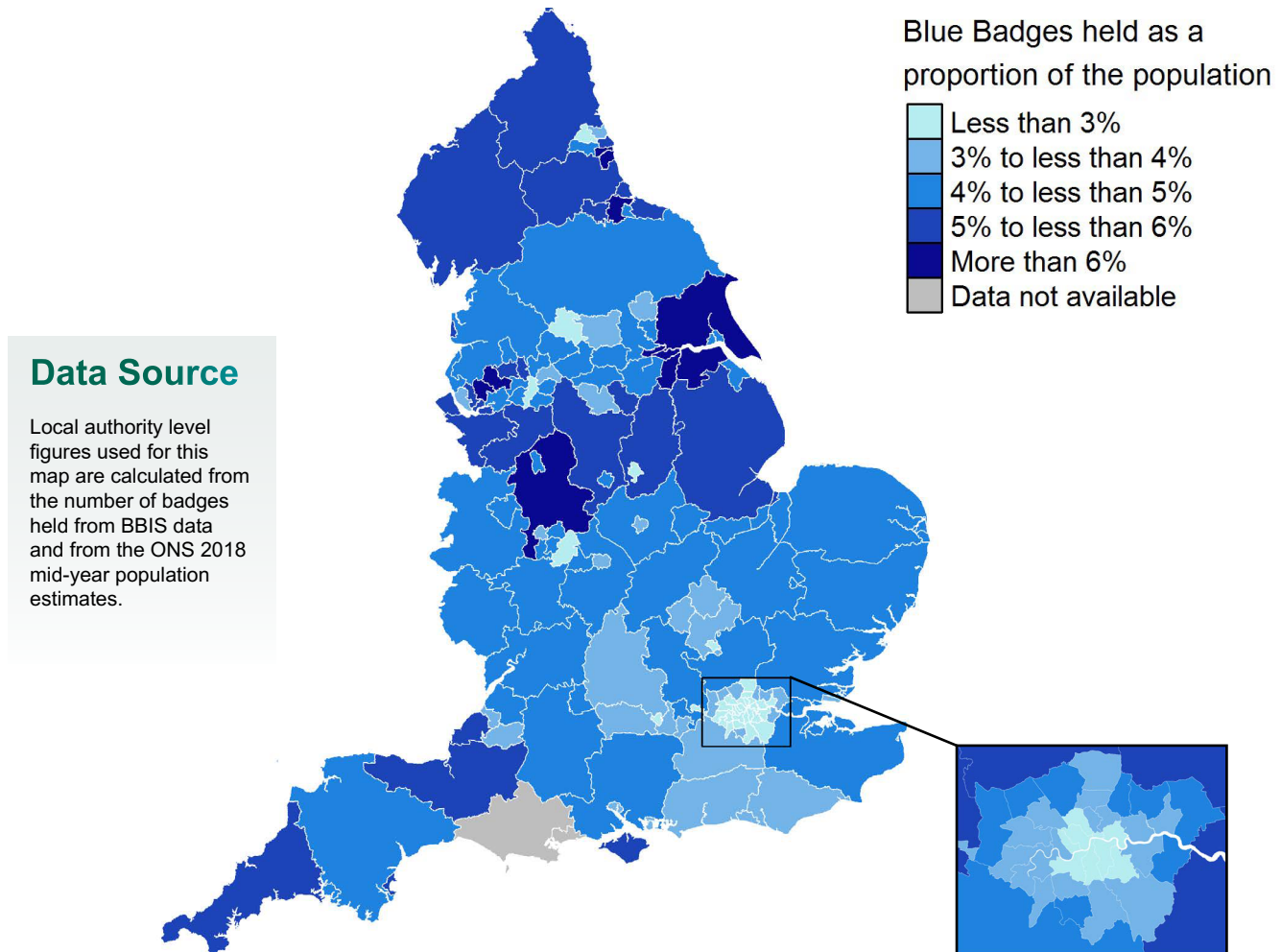




## Blue Badges held by region and local authority as at 31 March 2019

Map 1 shows the number of Blue Badges held as a proportion of the population in each local authority in England. The region with the most Blue Badge holders as a proportion of their population was North East (5.0%). The region with the lowest proportion was London (2.5%), which also had the lowest regional proportion of retired people. Similarly, metropolitan areas such as Birmingham (2.9%) and Manchester (2.9%) also had comparatively low proportions of Blue Badge holders. See Table 2 for the highest and lowest proportions of Blue Badges held by local authority.

**Map 1: Blue Badges held as a proportion of the population: England, Local Authorities, March 2019 ([DIS0108](#))**



Data are not available for Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth due to a change in local authority boundaries on 1 April 2019.

**Table 2: Top and bottom 5 local authorities for badges held as a proportion of the population: England, March 2019 ([DIS0108](#))**

Local Authority	%	Local Authority	%
Sunderland	6.5	Westminster	1.7
North Lincolnshire	6.5	Tower Hamlets	1.6
St. Helens	6.5	Lambeth	1.6
Stockton-on-Tees	6.4	Kensington and Chelsea	1.5
Staffordshire	6.3	City of London	1.4

## Blue Badge prosecutions in 2018/19

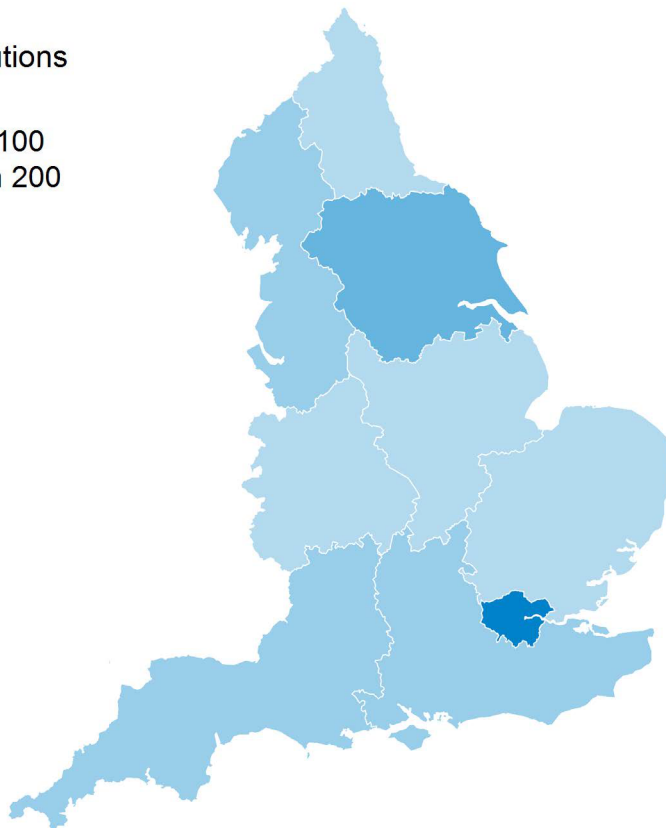
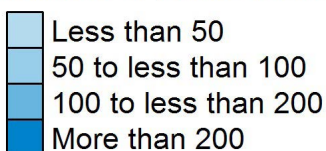
The annual Blue Badge survey, completed by local authorities in England, collates data on whether authorities have a policy for prosecuting misuse of the Blue Badge scheme and the number of prosecutions that occurred between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. 66% of local authorities (101 authorities) in England stated they have a policy, up from 89 authorities the previous year. Of those without a policy, 65% are planning on implementing one in the future.

In England, there was a total of 1,432 prosecutions in 2018/19. Of the authorities which had a policy for prosecuting, 61% prosecuted individuals for misuse of Blue Badges. The remaining 39% had no prosecutions despite having a policy. There were 983 prosecutions in London (69% of the total number of prosecutions made in England). Map 2 shows the number of prosecutions in each English region.

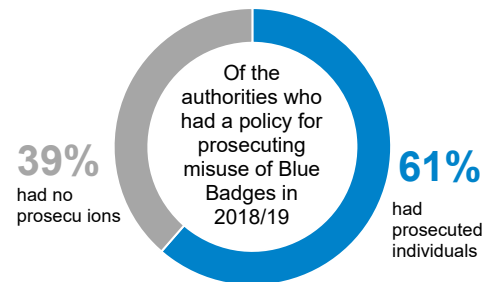
Similar to last year, the majority of prosecutions (99%) in England were targeted at a non-badge holder using another person's badge.

### Map 2: Prosecutions for Blue Badge misuse: English regions, 2018/19 ([DIS0301](#))

Number of prosecutions



**66%** of local authorities had a policy to prosecute misuse of the Blue Badge scheme in 2018/19



**99%** of prosecutions were non-badge holders using another person's badge

### Related information

Information on prosecutions for abuse of the Blue Badge scheme in each local authority in 2018/19 were collected in the annual Department for Transport Blue Badge Prosecution Survey. The data on prosecutions for the abuse of the Blue Badge scheme are in [DIS0301](#). The figures in this table fall outside the scope of National Statistics.

### Uses and users of these statistics

These statistics are collected to provide information on disabled parking badges in England. The statistics are used to monitor trends in the number of badges held and the number of badges issued in the year. Within the Department for Transport (DfT) 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 any changes. Outside DfT, users are likely to include local authorities and organisations representing disabled motorists.

### Data source

In 2019, data about Blue Badges held were collected directly from the Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS). Data covers 100% of local authorities and has done so since 2012/13. BBIS has been available to all local authorities in England since 1 January 2012 and it provides a number of core services, including a central database of all Blue Badges on issue. For further information please see the relevant [guidance note](#).

For 2018/19, the data available was affected by a change in the Blue Badge system and administrator which meant we were not able to collect consistent data on the number of badges issued. For future years we will establish a method which will allow for comparison over time and provide whatever data is possible for 2018/19 as part of this process. This change in system may have also caused the number of Blue Badges held at 31 March 2019 to be a slight underestimate due to the date at which the data was extracted being later in the year than normal – however it is not possible to quantify the impact of this due to the change in system from previous years. This should be clearer when an additional year of data is available from the new system for next year's release.

A secondary data source, completed by all local authorities in England, was collected from the annual Blue Badge Prosecution Survey. This survey collates figures on the number of prosecutions for misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme. For more information please see the [survey guidance](#).

### Validation of figures

In previous years, data about Blue Badges were collected by surveying local authorities in England. This is the fifth year that BBIS was the sole source for data on badges held. Further data validation is carried out for example comparing related data items and year-on-year figures for each area.

### Background notes

Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found in the [notes and definitions](#).

These statistics were [designated as National Statistics in June 2012](#). The continued designation was [confirmed in February 2013](#). 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 in the [pre-release access list](#).

The next Blue Badge Scheme Statistics are due to be published in Winter 2020.



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