



Department for Transport

Blue Badge Scheme Statistics, England: 2020

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 2020.

These statistics are derived from the Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) online database and are based on the number of badges held as at 31 March 2020 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.



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There were 2.44 million Blue Badges held in England as at 31 March 2020, an increase of 149,000 Blue Badges (6.5%) since 2019.

There were 966,000 Blue Badges issued between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, an increase of 39,000 Blue Badges (4.2%) when compared with the previous year.

There were 1,429 prosecutions for misuse of Blue Badges between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

2.44 million

Blue Badges held

↑6.5% since March 2019

966,000

Blue Badges issued

↑4.2% since 2018/19

1,429 prosecutions

↓0.2% since 2018/19

Comment on coronavirus (COVID-19) impact

The period covered by this release includes the first few weeks of nationwide movement restrictions due to coronavirus in March 2020. This may have had a small impact on the trends presented in this release. However, the available data on blue badge issuance and prosecutions for the misuse of blue badges is not granular enough to detect any effect of movement restrictions on the data.

Summary

Table 1 shows the number of badges held as at 31 March 2020 in each region and change in badges held since the previous year.

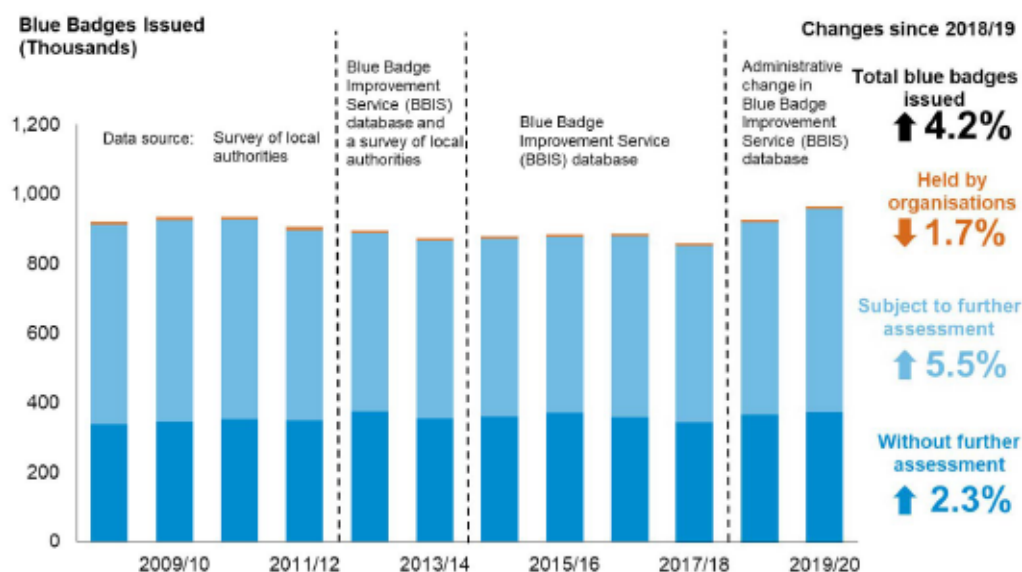
Table 1: Summary of Blue Badge figures (2019/20) compared with the previous year (2018/19)

	Thousands, % change since 2018/19			
	Badges issued in 2019/20		Badges held as at 31 March 2020	
England	966	↑ 4.2%	2,444	↑ 6.5%
North East	55	↑ 3.5%	138	↑ 4.9%
North West	142	↑ 3.5%	361	↑ 4.9%
Yorkshire and The Humber	98	↑ 1.2%	250	↑ 5.9%
East Midlands	96	↑ 2.6%	245	↑ 7.2%
West Midlands	108	↑ 6.2%	277	↑ 7.8%
East of England	107	↑ 3.0%	275	↑ 5.1%
London	100	↑ 9.1%	245	↑ 7.9%
South East	148	↑ 4.3%	369	↑ 7.3%
South West	112	↑ 4.4%	284	↑ 7.4%

Blue Badges issued in 2019/20

There were 966,000 Blue Badges issued in 2019/20, an increase of 39,000 badges (4.2%) on the previous year. Of these, 2.6% (26,000 badges) were issued under the new eligibility criteria for people with non-visible disabilities (introduced in August 2019).

Chart 1: Blue Badges issued annually: England, since 2008/09
(DIS0111)



Dashed lines indicate changes in data source. Care should be taken if comparing periods based on different sources.

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 [background quality report](#).

Without further assessment

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 (PIP);
- ▶ receiving a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement;
- ▶ being registered blind;
- ▶ being on the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation scheme; or
- ▶ receiving the mobility component of PIP and scores 10 points for the "planning and following journeys" activity.

For further details, please refer to the [background quality report](#).

Chart 1 shows that out of the 966,000 Blue Badges issued in 2019/20, 584,000 (60%) were subject to further assessment, 374,000 (39%) were issued without further assessment and 8,000 (1%) to organisations. The proportion of badges issued subject to further assessment is still below the peak of 62% seen in 2008/09.

Out of the badges issued without further assessment, 94% were issued to those who met the relevant criteria under the Disabled Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The remaining badges were issued to those registered blind (5%) and those on War Pensioner's Mobility supplement or Armed Forces and Reserved Forces Compensation scheme (1%).

2019 change in Blue Badge criteria

During the period covered by this release, additional eligibility criteria were introduced which enabled some people with non-visible disabilities to receive a Blue Badge. The new criteria came into force on 30 August 2019.

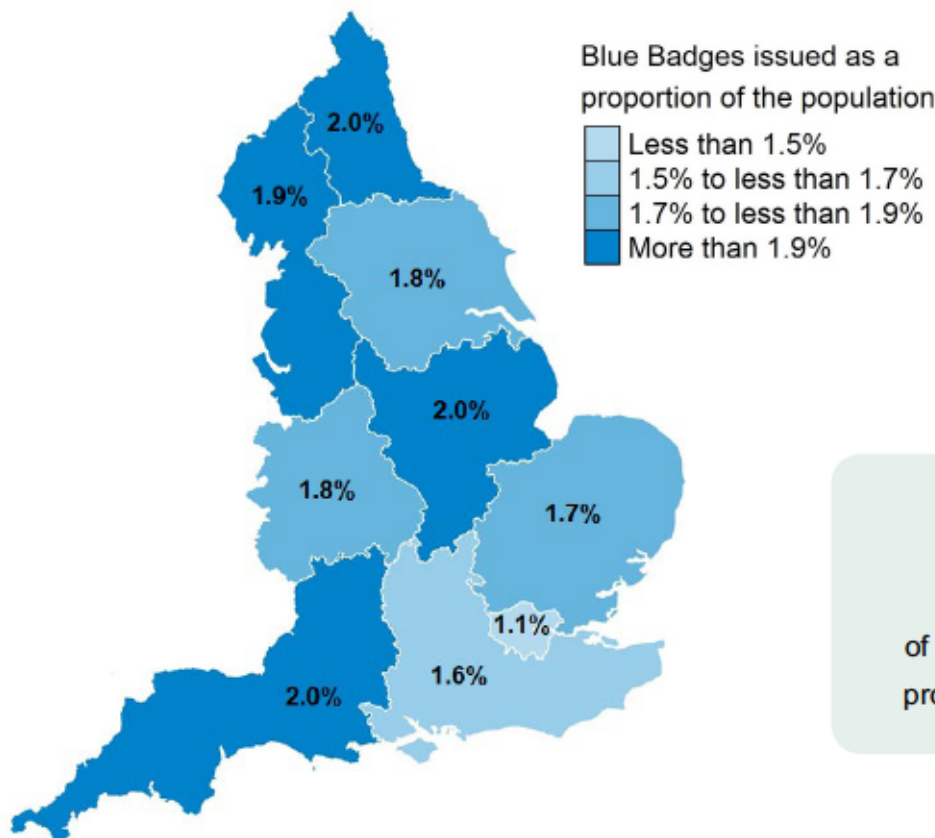
Detailed statistics

on Blue Badges issued in England in 2019/20 by region, category and local authority can be found in tables [DIS0107](#), [DIS0108](#) and [DIS0111](#) respectively.

Blue Badges issued by region in 2019/20

Map 1 shows the number of Blue Badges issued as a proportion of the population in each region in England. The regions with the most Blue Badges issued as a proportion (2.0%) of their population were North East, East Midlands and South West. The region with the lowest proportion was London (1.1%).

Map 1: Blue Badges issued as a proportion of the population: English regions, 2019/20



Data Source

Regional level figures used for this map are calculated from the number of badges issued from BBDS data and from the ONS 2019 mid-year population estimates.

England:

1.7%

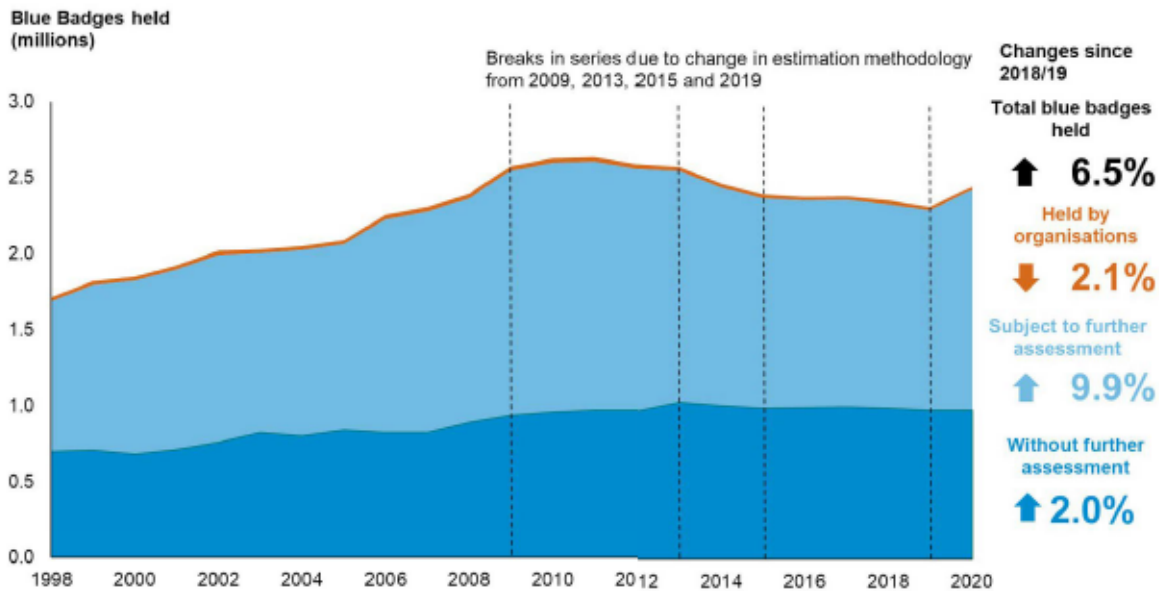
of Blue Badges issued as a proportion of the population

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Blue Badges held as at 31 March 2020

There were 2.44 million valid Blue Badges held as at 31 March 2020, an increase of 6.5% (149,000 badges) when compared with the previous year. Prior to this increase there had been a declining trend in the number of badges held since 2012, with the exception of a small increase in 2017.

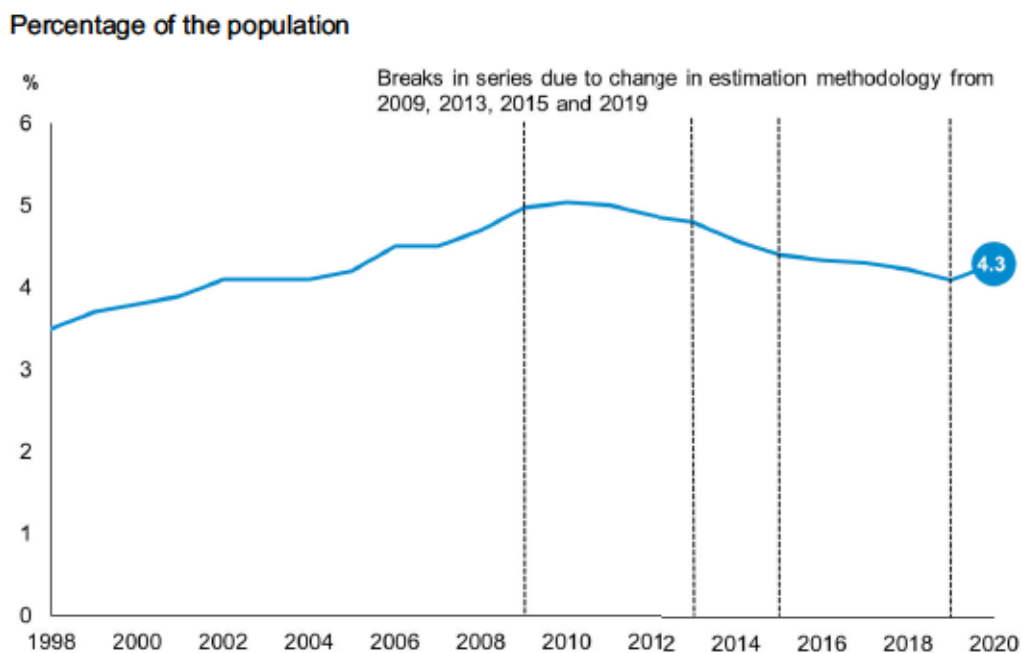
Chart 2: Blue Badges held: England, annually since March 1998 (DIS0101)



Proportion of the population holding a Blue Badge as at 31 March 2020

On 31 March 2020, 4.3% of the population in England held a valid Blue Badge, up from 4.1% the previous year. In 2010, the proportion was 5% (see chart 3).

Chart 3: 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 2019/20, 2.15 million people (3.8% of the population in England) were entitled to a Blue Badge without further assessment (previously known as automatically entitled). Out of the 2.15 million people who were eligible for a Blue Badge without further assessment, 46% held a Blue Badge.



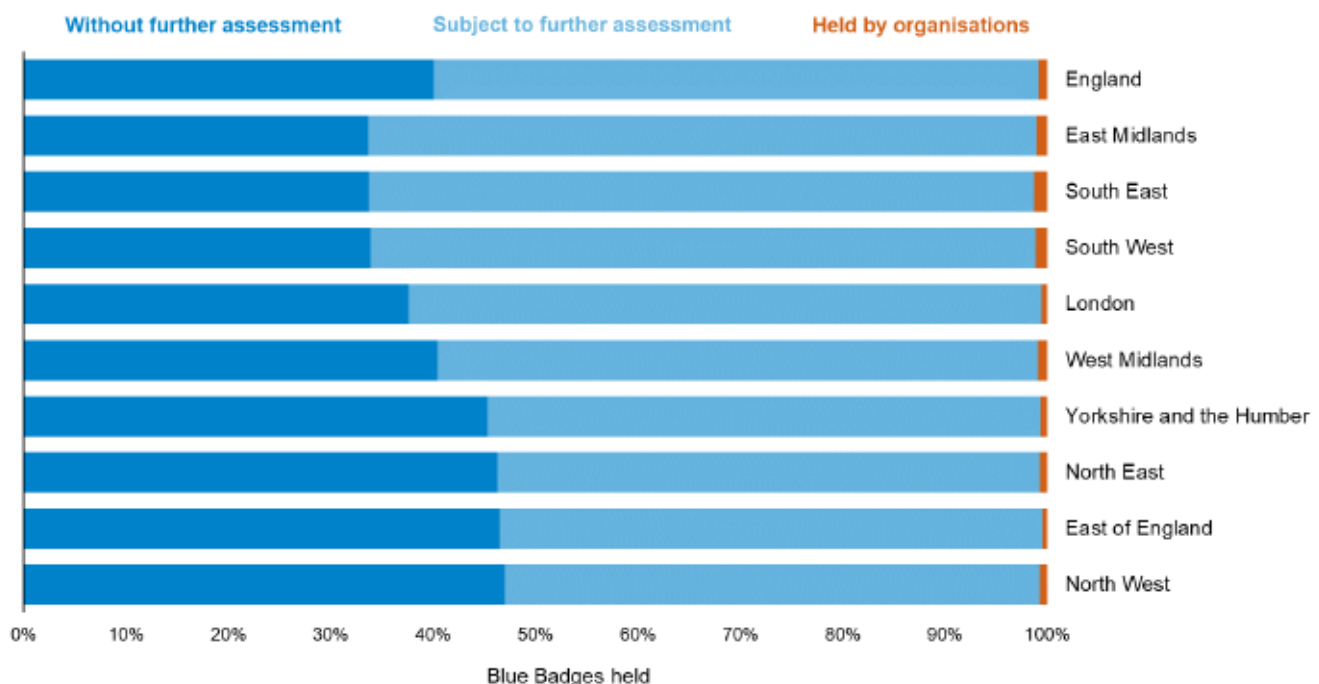
The number of people automatically eligible for a Blue Badge has been rising since 2015, however the percentage of those eligible without further assessment who hold a Blue Badge (60% in 2015) has fallen over the same period.

Blue Badges held by type and region as at 31 March 2020

Of the badges held, 59% were subject to further assessment, 40% 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 West (47%), and the regions with the lowest were the South East, South West and East of England (34%), as shown in chart 4.

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

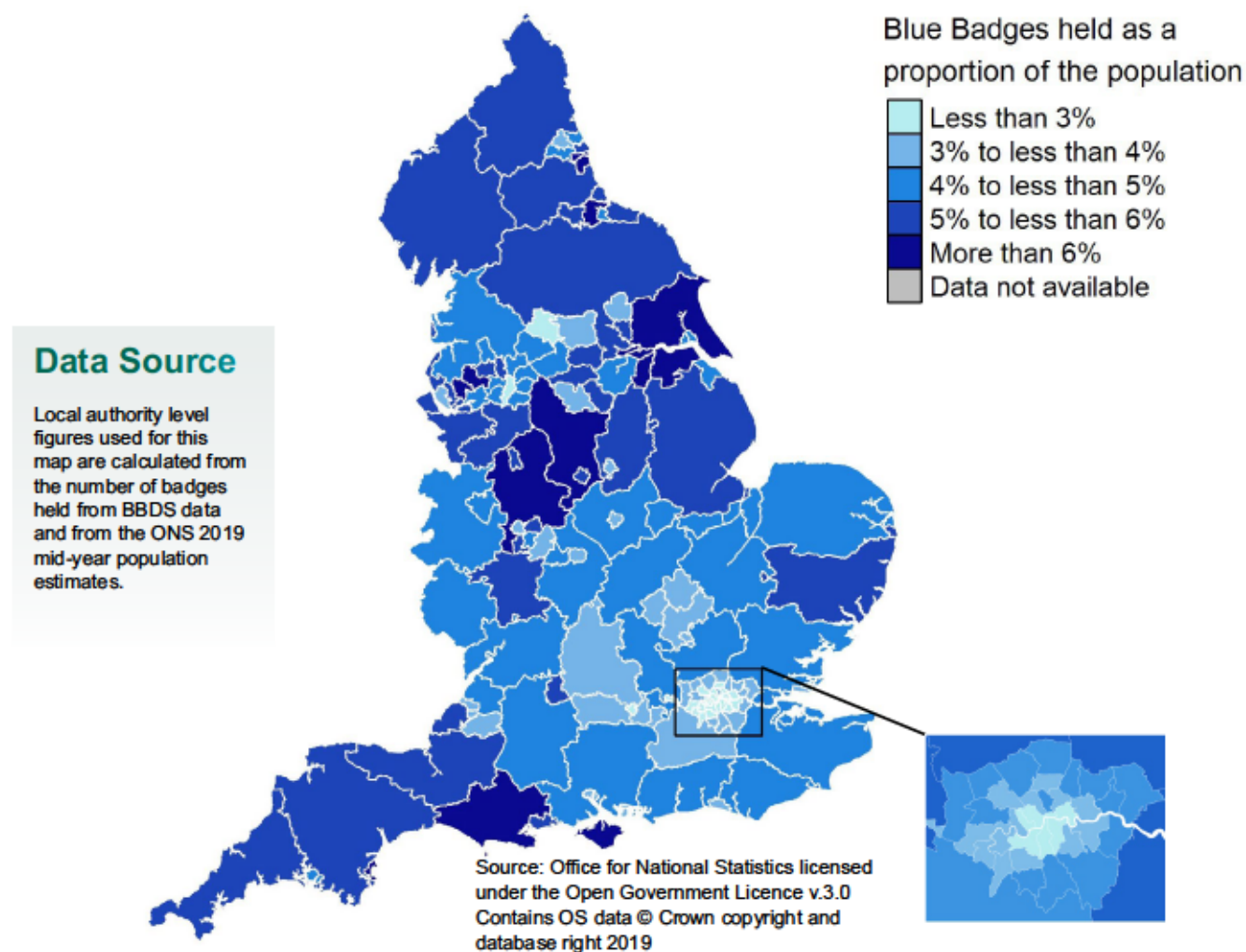
Chart 4: Blue Badges held by category: English regions, March 2020 (DIS0104)



Blue Badges held by region and local authority as at 31 March 2020

Map 2 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 (5.2%). The region with the lowest proportion was London (2.7%), which also had the lowest regional proportion of retired people. Similarly, metropolitan areas such as Birmingham (3.3%) 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 2: Blue Badges held as a proportion of the population: England, Local Authorities, March 2020 ([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 2020 ([DIS0108](#))

Local Authority	%	Local Authority	%
Dorset	7.1	Tower Hamlets	1.7
Sunderland	6.8	Westminster	1.7
Stockton-on-Tees	6.7	Lambeth	1.7
St. Helens	6.7	Kensington and Chelsea	1.5
North Lincolnshire	6.5	City of London	1.4

Blue Badge prosecutions in 2019/20

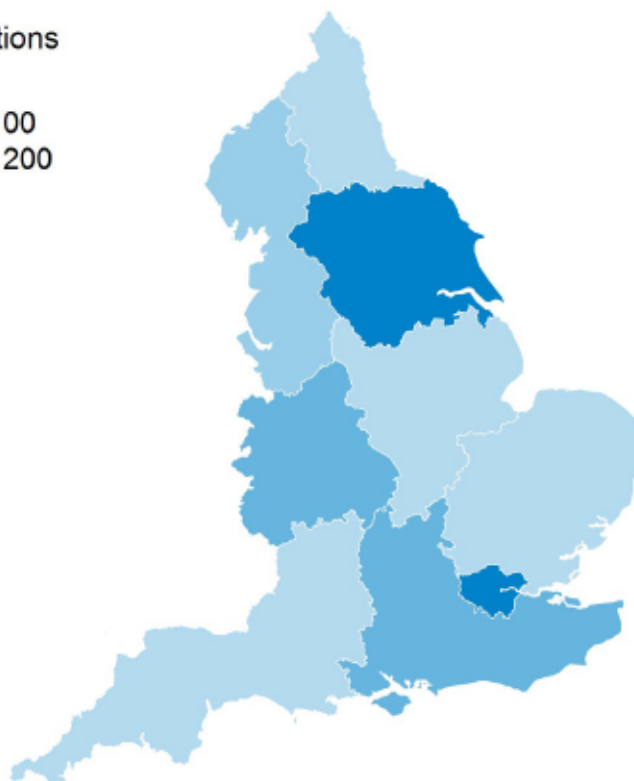
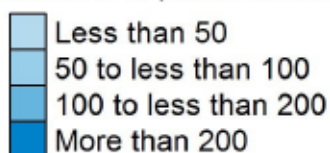
The annual Blue Badge survey, completed by local authorities in England, collates data on prosecuting misuse of the Blue Badge scheme and the number of prosecutions that occurred between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. Prosecutions for misuse of the blue badge scheme were supported by specific or general policies in 69% of local authorities (105 authorities) in England. Of those without a policy, 60% are planning on implementing one in the future.

In England, there was a total of 1,429 prosecutions in 2019/20. Of the authorities which had a policy for prosecuting, 62% prosecuted individuals for misuse of Blue Badges. The remaining 38% had no prosecutions despite having a policy. There were 755 prosecutions in London (53% of the total number of prosecutions made in England). Map 3 shows the number of prosecutions in each English region.

Similar to last year, the majority of prosecutions (98%) in England were targeted at a non-badge holder using another person's badge.

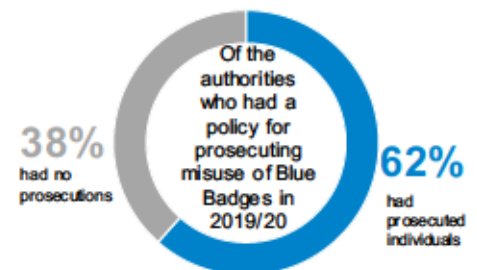
Map 3: Prosecutions for Blue Badge misuse: English regions, 2019/20 ([DIS0301](#))

Number of prosecutions



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69% of local authorities had a policy to prosecute misuse of the Blue Badge scheme in 2019/20



98% 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 2019/20 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.

Background notes

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

From 2019, data about Blue Badges held were collected directly from the Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) rather than the previous Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) which was in place from 2012 to 2019. Data covers 100% of local authorities and has done so since 2012/13. BBDS (and its predecessor BBIS) have been available to all local authorities in England since 1 January 2012 and 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](#).

From 2018/19 the Blue Badge Production & Distribution Service was procured separately to the procurement for the Citizen-facing Online Application Service and Local Authority Manage Blue Badge Service (combined they are referred to as the Blue Badge Digital Service). This change meant we were not able to collect consistent data on the number of badges issued. As a result it is not possible to compare the number of blue badges held and issued from 2018/19 onwards with figures for earlier years.

Data is unavailable on the number of lost and stolen badges in 2018/19 and 2019/20 due to a change in the way badge cancellations were recorded. However, we expect to be able to publish this information for future years starting from 2020/21.

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/BBDS 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 [quality report](#). 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 2021.



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