

Disabled Parking Badge Scheme for parking concessions for disabled and blind people

October 2002



Essex County Council
Social Services

Issuing guidelines

Definition

The disabled parking badges are issued to people who have a permanent and substantial physical disability which affects their walking and mobility. The definition of this is:

“permanent” = there is no possibility of development or rehabilitation

“substantial” = where there are major consequences for the person in some form, with more than one of the essential activities needed for daily living, but mainly in regard to mobility when being applied to disabled parking badges. Therefore the mobility of an applicant must be that they are only able to walk with excessive labour and at an extremely slow pace, or with excessive pain and generally no more than 50 metres in distance.

Fragility through old age does not make someone eligible for a disabled parking badge unless they have a permanent and substantial physical disability as outlined above.

Disabled parking badges are issued, for three years.

Automatic entitlement

The applicant is automatically entitled to an disabled parking badge if they:

- are getting the **higher** rate of the mobility component of DLA; or
- are registered blind (**NOT** partially sighted); or
- use a vehicle supplied by the Department of Health, Scottish Home and Health Department or the Welsh Office; or
- are in receipt of a government grant towards their own vehicle; or
- are in receipt of a War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement
- have a severe disability in both upper limbs which may impede the operation of parking meters and pay and display machines.

Applicants must provide proof that they are in receipt of the above benefits at the time of applying the badge. Should the criteria be met the disabled parking badge will be posted to the applicant within five working days of receipt of the relevant documentation.

Disabled Parking Badge Scheme for parking concessions for disabled and blind people

Discretionary badges

Badges which do not fall into the automatic criteria come under the heading of *discretionary badges*.

The applicant may be entitled to an discretionary parking badge if they:

- have a permanent and substantial disability, which causes inability to walk, or very considerable difficulty in walking
- have multiple sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease, terminal cancer or any other obvious physical or degenerative physical disability.

Badges cannot be issued if the nature of the disability is temporary or intermittent.

Badges cannot be issued to a child under the age of 2 unless their need is such that their carer has to carry equipment.

Consumers should be generally unable to visit shops, public buildings, etc. without being able to park near their destination. It does **NOT** extend to people who may have difficulty carrying shopping or parcels.

The badge holder must be a passenger or driver of the vehicle at all times when a disabled parking badge is displayed. Carers cannot use the badge when carrying out business on behalf of the badge holder.

People with behavioural problems are not considered for a badge. Those with what could be considered a mental disability, such as Alzheimer's disease and who experience considerable difficulty in walking and require close supervision when out will be given serious consideration for a badge.

For non-automatic issue (i.e. discretionary disabled parking badge) medical information to support the application will be needed.

A GP's opinion is not binding in the making of the final decision.

If the medical information does not confirm the points above, the badge will be refused. If the GP's comments are vague or unclear then the applicant will be asked to contact their GP again. It is the responsibility of the applicant to chase the G.P. for non-return of the medical form.

Photographs

Two recent passport size photographs are required. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. major facial deformity) this rule can be relaxed, endorsement must be made by the administration officer.

Photographs should be less than 2 years old. New photographs are required for duplicate badges. All photographs should be signed on the reverse.

Fee

There is currently a fee of £2 per disabled parking badges. The fee also applies to duplicate badges.

Time limit for keeping applications where a fee or photo is awaited is six months after this period a new application would have to be made

Institutional badges

The third category of disabled parking badges is the institutional disabled parking badges.

These badges should only be issued to institutions concerned with the care of people with physical disabilities, e.g. nursing/residential homes, day centres, hospices and hostels for instance. Carers, taxi companies, clubs and ambulance car services should use the consumer's badge. The organisation should care for a number of people who meet any of the current eligibility criteria in order to qualify for a badge. Each case is judged on its own merits. Institutions should not merit more than three badges unless there are specific reasons for more.

If the institution is part of Essex County Council then there is no fee.

Vehicle registration numbers must be placed on the badges along with a sample of the organisation logo.

Misuse of disabled parking badges

The misuse of disabled parking badge by either the applicant or another person is an offence which can carry a fine of up to £1,000, and the immediate withdrawal of the badge.

Appeals

If, once refused, the applicant wishes to appeal then **they** should provide additional medical evidence to support their application.

Re-applying for a badge

The onus is on the individual/institution to re-apply for a badge. The fee payable for the disabled parking badge is the cost of the administration of issuing the badge.

Duplicate badges

In the event of a lost or stolen badge, applicants should inform their local police authority and contact us for a duplicate badge application form. Two recent photographs together with a £2.00 fee is needed for a duplicate badge. Badges will only be issued for the remaining time on the original badge.

Reciprocal arrangements in Europe

A system of reciprocal arrangements exists, under which disabled visitors from the participating countries can take advantage of the concessions provided in the host country by displaying the badge issued under their own national scheme. As of April 2000, such reciprocal arrangements exist between:-

Austria	Germany	Italy	*Norway
Belgium	Greece	Jersey	Portugal
Denmark	Guernsey	Liechtenstein	*Spain
Finland	Iceland	Luxembourg	Sweden
France	*Ireland	Netherlands	

No schemes currently exist in Gibraltar, or Yugoslavia. *Although there are no formal reciprocal arrangements with Norway, Spain or the Republic of Ireland, but it is understood that they will respect the disabled parking badge of this country when displayed, it is suggested that application is made to the visiting country and that badge holders take their current badge with them.

Quality standards

- disabled parking badge application requested - send out same day or by next available post
- application returned:
 - automatic issue – issued and sent within 5 working days
 - discretionary / institutional Badges check criteria, if applicable pass to appropriate team manager within 3 working days
- discretionary / institutional badges dealt with by team manager within 5 working days of receipt and sent back to office services
 - if to issue / refuse – send out appropriate letters within 3 working days
 - if GP letter requested – send for within 3 working days.

NB The quality standards for the following part of the process relies upon the return of the medical form from the GP – this can take several weeks and is not within our control.

- GP Medical form returned – if criteria met Office Services issue within 2 working days
- decision made by team manager after the receipt of GP medical form and returned to office services – within 5 working days
- following the decision, appropriate letters will be sent by office services within 3 working days
- complaints/appeals should be passed directly to the appropriate team manager on day of receipt and actioned by the team manager within 10 working days.