

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: TP
Dyddiad / Date: 23rd September 2024
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Chair – Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1SN

Dear Chair

Petition P-06-1380 Make Blue badge Applications Lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis

Thank-you for your letter of 17th July regarding the above petition. I apologise for the delay in responding but officers have been trying to gather information to provide responses to the questions raised.

Whilst there are published statistics on blue badges in England (e.g. [Blue Badge scheme statistics: data tables \(DIS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/blue-badge-scheme-statistics-data-tables-dis)) we are unaware of a similar publication for Wales. WLGA officers consulted Data Cymru on this and they are investigating with the Welsh Government. If they come back with any further information, we will let you know.

The Blue Badge Digital Service (BBDS) provides a web-based Management Information System for all councils. Via the BBDS it is possible to access details on Blue Badge holders from anywhere in Great Britain. However, WLGA does not have access to the BBDS and it is unclear if aggregated data are extracted from that system and published anywhere for Wales.

In light of the above comments, a brief response to each of the four points you raise is provided below.

(1) Data on how many individuals currently hold a lifelong badge in each local authority and are not required to undergo the full renewal process every 3 years.

As there is a requirement to renew badges every three years, we do not believe there to be any lifelong badges, subject to the comments made in response to Q2 below. Individual councils may be able to clarify if there are any local arrangements in place, but WLGA does not collect or collate information on the scheme. Unless Welsh Government does, we are not aware of this being held in one place so each council would need to be asked.

(2) Is there a simplified process for lifelong renewal in every local authority?

All council websites contain information on the blue badge scheme and how to apply. This can be done online or in person. At present, in line with Welsh Government's published guidance on eligibility ([Blue Badges: eligibility \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)), an application must be made every three years (and 12 weeks before the current badge expires). However, **automatic qualification** may be possible without the need for an assessment if the following can be evidenced:

1. A current, qualifying benefit letter from DWP dated within the last 12 months. This can be a full PIP entitlement letter with the points section, or a DLA high-rate mobility letter. Other evidence can include a relevant award letter from the Ministry of Defence (e.g. regarding Permanent Mental Disorder) and evidence of being 'registered blind' or having 'severe sight impairment'
2. Proof of address
3. Proof of ID.

(3) Are there any common or shared training schemes?

Welsh Government has run training and circulated information for councils on blue badges in the past when changes have been introduced. There was also guidance on blue badge use during the Covid pandemic. More recently training sessions have been run in relation to blue badge enforcement issues.

(4) Any all-Wales forum or network to share and develop good practice?

There are various networks of officers in local government that help to share good practice and that can include joint training initiatives. Blue badges are dealt with by different departments in different councils (e.g. social services; highways; customer service centres). That can make it difficult to identify the best network to share information on blue badges. Increasingly, though, the badges are dealt with by

public facing customer care centres, one stop shops or community hubs that have been established by councils. There is a Customer Contact group which may cover blue badges as part of their networking activity.

I hope that response is helpful. If we pick up additional information on the above points I have asked WLGA officials to forward it to you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Councillor Andrew Morgan OBE
WLGA Leader and Transport Spokesperson