



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1380
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT/01073/25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

09 July 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 27 June regarding Petition P-06-1380 Make Blue badge Applications Lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis.

There was a commitment for officials to collaborate with local authorities to make improvements that were raised from the petition, in addition to considering the recommendations from ongoing research which was undertaken from 2023-2025. Can I firstly assure you that officials continue to work on the matters outlined from the petition, together with the published review of the Blue Badge Scheme on the 21 May 2025. Please be assured that this remains an ongoing priority for the blue badge team alongside other key policy work.

The Written Statement I made on the 21 May 2025 was specifically intended to respond to the published report by the Welsh Government's Internal Research Programme's Knowledge and Analytical Services directorate, which they published the same day.

We continue to move things forward, but this work will take time. I am fully committed to advancing this important work and appreciate its significance. However, due to the complexity involved, it will require careful attention and time to achieve the best outcomes. I kindly ask for your patience and understanding as we allow the team the necessary space to focus on delivering meaningful progress. A Blue Badge Workgroup meeting which is a forum whereby local authorities can share best practice with Welsh Government (WG) took place on the 12 June 2025 with stakeholders that have been part of this group since 2019.

I fully appreciate that there is a wish for STAND North Wales to contribute and be involved with the improvements and this will be the case with certain aspects of actions we need to progress. Officials have already shared some of the lived experiences to get an understanding of the key points and once some initial work has been completed, they will be invited to participate.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The meeting in June covered several updates and further emphasis was placed on raising the profile of things like consistency, streamlining applications and why complex cases should be referred to the Independent Advisory Service. Also, how some applicants may struggle to apply online and how we need to establish good practice across local authorities in terms of what information and help should be offered. To move this last point forward, officials have asked some of the local authorities to join a focus group, which the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) will be taking forward with WG. The aim will be for this to be arranged and convened and the concerns your petition has already raised will be considered. I understand the WLGA intend to engage with STAND North organisation after some initial work has been undertaken.

Streamlining applications and relevant guidance for local authorities and using the Blue Badge Digital System to record Not for Reassessment (NfR) has progressed. Following the workgroup meeting in June, two shorter sessions are currently being arranged for later this month. An expectation is for all local authority staff involved with the Blue Badge Scheme to attend one of these sessions. These sessions will cover additional guidance, working with health care professionals from the workgroup and the Independent Advisory Service. We want to ensure there is clear understanding of how some applications that are further assessed or who apply under the automatic criteria may also be assessed as not for re-assessment when the applicant reapplies, meaning they will have a streamlined route. I trust you will appreciate this will be looked at individually by the local authorities and WG or Ministers, cannot get involved with individual applications that are not determined by a local authority, as not for reassessment.

It would be extremely beneficial, if the petitioner and one other person with lived experience of the issues about having to re-apply could join a very short part of this meeting. I have asked officials to make contact with the petitioner to provide them with the relevant meeting information and hope that they are able to provide their valuable feedback. The aim is to complete some guidance on NfR for local authorities and for this to be implemented from the 17th of July 2025.

Following this my officials will be prioritising work and trying to move things forward and we will update the Committee and relevant stakeholders periodically when possible.

I very much value the commitment the petitioners and the Committee have already made to outline concerns and experiences. I would like to thank everyone for their future involvement with seeking improvements as we take forward agreed actions and recommendations from both the research and the petition. However, we need to be realistic and say some of this work will take time and will extend into next year. I hope both the Committee and the petitioner can bear this in mind and understand although, I appreciate the eagerness to see changes considered and put into practice. The immediate priorities include streamlining applications, applying not-for-reassessment measures, enhancing support for applicants and a procurement of a new contract for the Independent Advisory Service. We have also been approached by other groups keen to contribute, and we remain committed to fostering collaborative, continuous improvement.

I hope this helps answer the queries and I look forward to the petitioners being able to contribute to the sessions outlined above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales