

## **BLUE BADGE GUIDANCE NOTES**

Notes for the applicant

- Some people will automatically qualify for a Blue Badge: please ask us for further guidance before applying.
- Badges are awarded for people who are unable to walk or virtually unable to walk, or who are able to walk ONLY with excessive labour and pain, where the latter is related to their medical condition(s) for which they can provide evidence. Their walking will be at an extremely slow pace and will cause excessive pain.

**Under the government guidance issued in 2022, to be eligible for a Blue Badge your degree of walking disability should be permanent and substantial, not intermittent or temporary. People with a temporary disability, e.g. following an operation, do not qualify.**

- The aim of the scheme is to help people with severe mobility problems caused by visible and invisible (hidden) disabilities to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination.
- So, being unable to walk means that you have difficulty in putting one foot in front of the other and that this effort causes considerable pain. If your only means of mobility is swinging through elbow crutches, you may be considered unable to walk.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

- An assessment is NOT routinely offered at initial application: the onus is on you, as the applicant, to provide evidence to support your application and NCC (Norfolk County Council) will cross-check records held by them. **Only if all other avenues have been exhausted will NCC consider a telephone-based assessment, in exceptional circumstances**, with an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.

## **EVIDENCE**

- You can submit evidence obtained from your GP but **NOT simply a letter from a GP**: as a GP is not considered as an expert assessor for a Blue Badge. So a summary report of your conditions, prescription list, scan results and/or Xray results would support your application. These can be obtained from your GP surgery. Similarly, letters and discharge notes from a hospital doctor would provide evidence of your medical conditions. In addition a letter from a specialist nurse (diabetes, COPD etc.) or a physiotherapist/ occupational therapist would be helpful.
- Lack of sufficient or suitable medical evidence is the most common reason for a Blue Badge being refused.

## **Section 3: walking difficulties**

- When answering these questions remember to describe your problems on your worst day: give FULL descriptions of the problems with balance, co-ordination and or posture.

*EG. Due to my COPD I am unsteady on my feet and short of breath all the time. This is worse on any exertion. I can only walk with a stick, even on even ground and need to have an inhaler to hand always. I need to hang on to a wall if I feel I am getting exhausted.*

*I can get dizzy spells and need to have frequent stops. Even with my Rollator I need to stop quite often.*

## **Pain levels**

- Your pain must be cross-referenced to your medical condition, and your attempt to walk causes this pain and/ or breathlessness.
- If you are applying due to your pain levels but do not take strong pain medication, only Paracetamol, you need to explain the reasons why not. Perhaps you cannot tolerate the side effects so you should explain this.

*EG. As I have an arthritic left knee, I experience chronic and long-lasting pain and need to stop frequently, to manage the pain. I have been prescribed strong painkillers, but the pain is still very bad. The side-effects give me headaches and interfere with other medication.*

- If you have a heart or breathing problem you need to be able to demonstrate that walking could present you with deterioration to your health, and consequently this may cause you danger. Frequent stops to get your balance/ get your breath should be emphasised.
- If you have had contact with your GP surgery, (face-face, telephone) or nurse or consultant or the Falls Clinic in the past 12 months, you should detail these in the appropriate box, and say how many times you fell and the reasons why you fell.
- If the conditions you experience are dangerous for your health and safety, you should say why.

*EG. When I lose my balance, I have fallen, and needed help and support to get up.*

*As my condition means I bend forwards, I can't always see the trip hazards and with my sight issues, I tend to trip up frequently.*

### **SIGHT ISSUES**

If you are partially sighted or registered as completely vision impaired, i.e. blind, then you should try to get a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI)  
This can be obtained from an ophthalmologist.

## **Mobility Aids**

- If you use a stick and this enables you to walk quickly, this may negate your application, since this may help you to walk 'normally', so you would not need a Blue Badge, according to the national guidelines.
- List any aids you use in this section and make sure that your answers tally with anything you have said in the section describing breathlessness and the length of time you take to walk at all.
- Make sure you describe your manner of walking fully: do you shuffle your feet/ walk with a limp due to a foot problem?
- State clearly how far you can walk to and from; be specific and state if this includes your use of your aid(s).
- If you have seen an Occupational Therapist/ Physiotherapist then say when and where and list the aids you were given or advised to get.
- If you struggle to get on/off a chair, or to use stairs, then say so, and if you need help from friends/ family state clearly how they help you to walk or to get up/ into a car.

*EG. I am no longer able to manage stairs. My feet are numb so I cannot feel the ground and this causes me to stumble and my feet won't go where I want them to, so I trip and fall.*

### **Other points**

- It is your right to request a paper form: we can supply a copy, if required. **You do not have to complete the application over the telephone or on-line.** It is better to have the paper form in front of you and to take time to frame the answers to the questions using these guidance notes.
- It is quite acceptable to send in longer answers to the questions asked; if the space provided is insufficient. Simply send in a separate sheet of paper, stapled to the form, with supplementary points listed. Make sure this paper is headed with your name, address and National Insurance number.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember that if you get a refusal from NCC, followed by a review of your evidence by telephone, a face-face assessment can be an option at a further appeal, <b>but is not guaranteed.</b></li> <li>• Following a refusal, it may be helpful to <b>telephone us for further assistance.</b></li> </ul> |
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