

# A guide to completing Blue Badge forms



Age UK Wiltshire **0808 196 2424**

[www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk)

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**Help and advice on applying for yourself or someone else**



## **If you have a substantial and long-term difficulty walking/moving around due to a physical or mental health condition or disability, then you may be eligible for a blue badge.**

A blue badge is a document issued by your local authority that you display in a vehicle to make use of certain parking concessions. A Blue Badge is linked to a person rather than a vehicle - it can be used in a car that the person is travelling in, even if they are not driving.

### **How does it help?**

You *usually* have these extra benefits:

- Park in car park spaces reserved for Blue Badge holders (you may still need to pay)
- Park on streets with parking meters or pay-and-display machines for as long as you need to, unless a sign says there is a time limit
- Park in disabled parking bays on streets for as long as you need to, unless a sign says there is a time limit
- Park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours unless there is a 'no loading' sign
- You can ask your council for a disabled parking space near your home
- Some exceptions/ additions apply depending on your local authority, so always check with your local authority for full details!

### **There could be more money you're entitled to**

If you're applying for a Blue Badge you may like to consider applying for Attendance Allowance too. This is extra money from the government for older people to help with the extra costs of having a longer-term health problem or disability and it is not means-tested. Why not ask us for a full benefits check?

**If you're finding it difficult to complete the form yourself, please call us on 0808 196 2424 and we'll try to help further.**



## Applying for a Blue Badge

You'll need to complete an application form and you'll also need to submit supporting documents:

- Proof of identity e.g. birth certificate, driving licence, passport
- Proof of address e.g. letter from your bank or a utility bill
- Any relevant supporting medical evidence
- Head-and-shoulders photograph
- Processing fee (max. £10)

### Applying online

Most local authorities require you to apply online, following the introduction of a national government online application in 2019. You can complete an online application form at [gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](https://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge)

It is a 2-step process:

1. Pre-application eligibility check
  - Who are you applying for?
  - Which is your Local authority?
  - Do you already have a blue badge? (e.g. is it a new claim or a renewal)
  - Date of birth
  - Are you severely sight impaired?
  - Do you receive any benefits?
  - Do you have a disability or condition that means you need a Blue Badge? *(Remember you will only be eligible to apply for a Blue Badge if you have a permanent disability or condition that is not likely to improve within the next 3years.)*
  - What are the main reasons you need a Blue Badge?
2. Application form (you can save and return within 14 days, it logs you out after 30mins)



Check eligibility	COMPLETED
<b>2. Prepare application</b>	
<a href="#">Enter personal details</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">Describe walking ability</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">Add supporting documents</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">List medication</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">List treatments</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">List healthcare professionals</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">Prove identity</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">Prove address</a>	NOT STARTED
<a href="#">Add a photo for the badge</a>	NOT STARTED
<b>3. Apply</b>	
Check your answers	NOT STARTED
Agree to declaration	NOT STARTED

## If you can't apply online

If you don't have internet access yourself, and don't know anyone with internet that could help you, then the local authority should help you apply over the telephone. This will be by exception only as most people are expected to access help if they can't do themselves.

You will need to know what supporting documents you will be submitting and you will have to send in copies of these documents and a photo, and pay in the same way as above.

Age UK Wiltshire may be able to help you complete an online application through a free office appointment with one of our Information & Advice team.

If you're unable to apply using the above methods please contact us and we'll see if we can help further.

**Wiltshire Council** 01225 713002 (blue badge team) / [bluebadge@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:bluebadge@wiltshire.gov.uk)

**Swindon Borough Council** 01793 445500 (Customer enquiries)





## Filling in the application questions

### Automatic eligibility for some older people

If you meet one of the below criteria (and can provide proof) then you may qualify automatically and do not need to complete the whole form. The form will state the full criteria and which sections you should complete:

- Registered blind or severely sight impaired
- Receiving DLA mobility component at higher rate
- Receiving PIP mobility component *and* scored 8+ points in the ‘moving around’ descriptor *or* 10 points in the ‘planning and following journeys’ descriptor
- Receiving War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement *or* lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

### If you don’t automatically qualify

You’ll need to explain why you have difficulties in walking or moving around and which illnesses or disabilities affect you. Perhaps you can walk some distance, but your level of mobility may prevent you from walking quickly, repeatedly or easily.

- Describe the nature of your condition and how it affects your mobility in as much detail as possible – remember that your difficulty in walking must be due to a ‘severe and permanent disability’ in order to be eligible
- Use extra paper if there is not enough space and ensure you write your name and National Insurance number on any loose pages. Clearly spell out your difficulties and do not assume the decision maker will be able to read between the lines.
- Consider different aspects of walking - distance, speed, discomfort, breathlessness, use of walking aids and the manner in which you walk.
- You will sign the declaration to say it is a true reflection of your circumstances so all your answers should be in the first person i.e. “I have difficulty...”. If someone else needs to sign the form for you, for instance if you do not have mental capacity due to dementia, then the answers can be

in the third person i.e. “My mum struggles to...” or “Mr Smith has difficulty with...”.

- Do not worry about repeating the difficulties you face on different questions on the form. This helps to show how often these things affect you.
- You may find it helpful to keep a diary; you could write in it how far you’ve walked on different occasions, how long it took and how it made you feel.

## **Sections of the Form**

### **Describe your walking ability (including your illnesses and disabilities)**

- Name any health conditions or disabilities that affect your walking - make sure you include them all! Say how long you have had these conditions; approximate length of time is ok.
- Select from the multiple choices the most relevant options for you relating to your health conditions and walking ability.

Depending on what you select, this may prompt further questions about the below areas:



#### Walking Aids

- If you use aids or equipment to help you walk/move around then make sure you include these in the form, even if they are small. Examples could include: walking stick, wheelchair, another person, shopping trolley, inhaler, wall/chair to sit on – anything that you need to use to assist you.

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- Make clear any difficulties you have in using the aid e.g. ‘I struggle to grip the walking stick due to arthritis in my hand’ or ‘I can’t lift my walking frame to get up/down kerbs without help from another person’
  - Consider how walking without the aid makes you feel e.g. if it causes you pain, makes you feel anxious, out of breath or dizzy.

### Distances and how far you can walk

- Give an estimate of the maximum distance you can walk *without assistance or severe discomfort* (without help, pain or breathlessness)
- If walking causes pain or difficulty, say so. Also consider whether you need prompting, supervising or motivating when doing so.
- Think about the length of time that you can walk for in one go e.g if you need to stop frequently to rest, catch your breath or steady your balance.
- You might be asked to specify a local landmark that you could comfortably walk to. Examples could include: ‘to a car parked on my drive’, ‘end of my driveway’, ‘corner shop at x’, ‘bus stop at end of my road’.
- If you’re not sure, think about how many parked buses you could walk past before you'd start to feel pain or need a rest. A double decker bus is about 11m (12yards) long and a football pitch is about 100m (109.3 yards) long.
- If you can’t estimate a distance, you could write down how many steps you can take instead, and how long it would take you to walk this. An average adult step is around 70cm (less than 1 metre).
- If you can comfortably walk more than 80m (87.5 yards) you may not have a strong case for a Blue Badge, unless you have considerable difficulty in walking through other factors.



### Speed and how quickly you can walk

- If you walk at a 'very slow' pace this is likely to demonstrate very considerable difficulty walking and meet the eligibility criteria – this is generally considered as covering a distance of less than 40m per minute.
- If you need to pause regularly to manage pain, breathlessness or fatigue then mention this and include the duration of pauses and their frequency.

### Discomfort and the style of walking

- Consider how walking makes you feel e.g. if it causes you severe pain or makes you breathless, so that you have to sit down and rest.
- Think about what adjectives or phrases might describe your walking e.g. taking small steps, shuffling, hunched over posture, bent or leaning over, poor coordination, unsteady balance, very careful, stilted rhythm of walking.

### **Medical and healthcare professionals and supporting medical evidence**

- You can give details of medical professionals (such as GP, consultants, district nurse, occupational therapist) that you have seen recently; they may be able to provide information to support your application.
- It can be helpful to include copies of any supporting medical letters you have received, but not essential. If it is likely to take extra time obtaining these, explain on the form that you will forward them when you get them.

- Your GP may provide you with copies of letters if you tell them you are applying for a Blue Badge.
- Attaching a recent prescription list to the form could save you having to write these all down. Don't forget to include any painkillers you take.

Here are some examples of answers that could be put in a Blue Badge form:

## Describe the difficulties you have with walking

- I have COPD and need to walk slowly so that I don't get too out of breath. Stairs and even a slight hill are much more difficult and I need to frequently stop to catch my breath.
- I have problems with low blood pressure which makes me light headed and dizzy when I stand up. Sometimes I get so dizzy I fall, so I need someone to keep an eye on me.
- My deteriorating eyesight means I knock into things, can't always see kerbs and blips in the pavement and this also affects my balance causing me to stumble or fall.

## How far can you walk?

- My mobility is very poor and I can walk about 15m before I feel severe pain in my hip and back that prevents me from walking any further. I have to stop and rest for a few minutes before continuing.
- My mum has dementia and cannot walk for more than a few metres by herself. She gets extremely anxious if a familiar person is not in her vision of sight and she will forget where she needs to go and no longer remembers to check for traffic at crossings. Sometimes she

stops for no reason and it can take a lot of reassurance to encourage her to start walking again.

- I suffer from COPD and asthma so get extremely breathless from walking only short distances. I can walk about 30m before my breathing gets so bad that I have to stop. It takes a few minutes to get my breath back and when I start walking again, I can't walk as far and have to go slower.
- I'm in constant pain due to my arthritis and sciatica and cannot walk any distance before feeling significant pain. I take painkillers throughout the day but these are not enough to help.

## **Do you use any aids/equipment?**

- I have to use my walking frame for support in order to get to my feet and walk at all, due to the arthritis in my knees. I could not walk any distance without using the frame. I can't lift the frame over kerbs or steps and need someone with me to help with this.
- I cannot walk any distance without holding onto my wife or another person, because of my dizzy spells and arthritis. I am very unsteady on my feet and likely to stumble or fall without support. I cannot use a stick or walking frame because I don't have the strength in my arms

## **Describe the style in which you walk**

- I have very weak legs and walk very carefully and slowly because I worry about tripping up. I take small steps and regularly need to stop to hold onto something because my legs get tired.

- I walk very slowly and I am unsteady. The poor circulation in my legs often results in numbness causing me to shuffle when I walk, and I stumble and trip over my feet frequently.

### **What local landmark could you walk to comfortably?**

- Because of my arthritis and heart condition I really struggle to walk and if I need to leave the house someone has to pick me up in their car from a few metres outside my front door as this is as far as I can walk. Even this is difficult and some days I cannot manage this.
- On a good day I can walk to the corner shop which is about 50m away but this is slowly. Once I get there I need to pause and rest, and on the way back I have to stop halfway to lean on the bench.

### **Describe your walking pace**

- I walk quite slowly and carefully and notice people frequently overtake me. It takes me about a minute to walk 50m.

### **What happens next?**

Your form gets submitted to your local authority where it will be assessed and processed which can take 6-8wks. The decision is based mainly on the application form and supporting evidence you submit. Occasionally people are asked to attend a mobility assessment where a health professional will look at their ability to carry out a range of mobility activities. Some people are asked to send in extra medical evidence.

If applying online, once the application has been processed and approved, an email will be sent to the email address that submitted the application with a payment link to pay online or a phone number to pay over the phone.

Most badges are issued for 3 years and you must inform the council if your condition improves in this time. If you're turned down for a Blue Badge the council should say why you're not eligible. There is no formal appeals process but you can ask the council to reconsider the decision if you think they haven't taken into account key information.

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