

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 18/01/2024
Report for: Information
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Report Title

Blue Car Badge Service

Summary

This report provides an overview into the Blue Car Badge Process, providing statistical data on breakdown of awards by and disability criteria, associated cost and other relevant particulars.

Recommendation(s)

Scrutiny is asked to –
1. note the contents of this report

1. Background

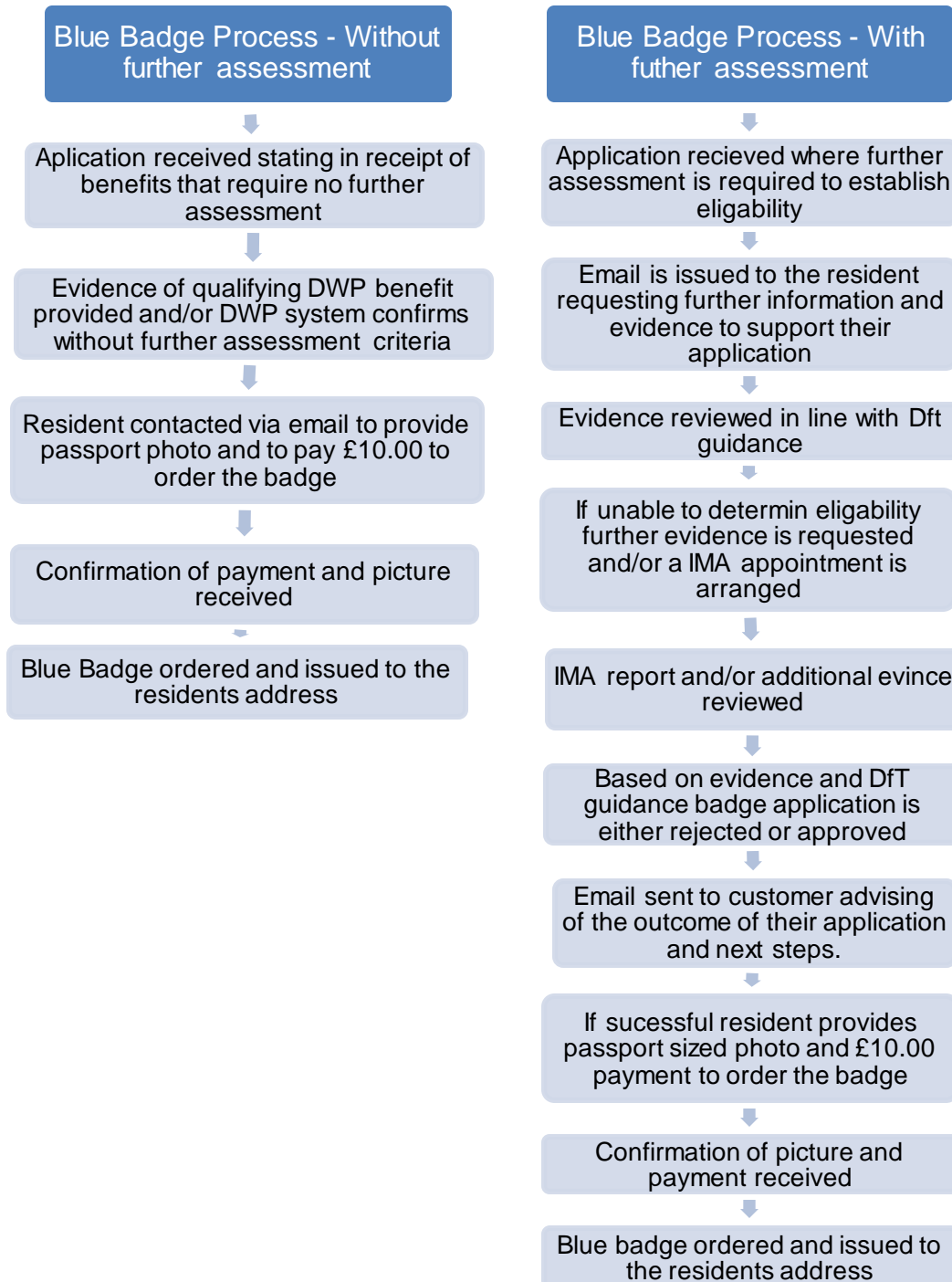
- 1.1 The Blue Badge scheme enables those who qualify to park close to good and services.
- 1.2 The Blue Badge scheme is administered by Local Authorities utilising guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT). The full guidance to Local Authorities can be found online ([Blue Badge scheme local authority guidance \(England\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/blue-badge-scheme-local-authority-guidance-england))
- 1.3 The administration of Blue Car Badges sits under the remit of the Customer Service Lead.
- 1.4 The team is currently managed by 0.69 FTE Customer Service Manager, 2 FTE Blue Car Badge Officers and 1 Blue Car Badge apprentice- post currently vacant.
- 1.5 The team currently award over 3000 applications each year.
- 1.6 BCB process is currently managed within the CRM system C360. This system is in the process of being replaced and the BCB process will be managed through the new CRM system Microsoft Dynamics (D365) by the end of June 2024.

2 Blue Car Badge Process

- 2.1 The process of determining eligibility of a Blue Car Badge is dependent on whether the resident meets the without further assessment criteria or the with further assessment criteria.
- 2.2 The process for without further assessment criteria is very straightforward in terms of determining eligibility.
- 2.3 Where a resident falls under the with further assessment, this process depending on reasons for applying can take longer, as there may be in a need for additional

evidence from a specialist to understand the impact of the condition and how this impacts the resident and if this meets the DfT guidance to determine eligibility.

- 2.4 A resident if they have applied under walking criteria in some cases will be asked to attend an Independent Mobility Assessment (IMA) conducted by an independent physiotherapist who will assess, walking, pain, gait, breathlessness to help determine eligibility.
- 2.5 Below is a typical BCB application journey based on without further assessment and with further assessment criteria.



- 2.6 Applications can be made under several different disability criteria and some residents may apply under more than one criterion.

- 2.7 Residents can make payments for badge via the customer portal or by phoning the Blue Car Badge number where a Customer Service Advisor will take the payment over the phone.
- 2.8 The breakdown below shows qualifying benefits for without further assessment criteria as well as with further assessment criteria.

Blue Car Badge criteria

Without further Assessment	With further Assessment
Armed Forces Scheme	Arms Disability
DLA	Hidden Disability
PIP Moving Around	Physical / Hidden Disability
PIP Planning Following	Under 3
Sight Impairment	Walking Disability
War Pensioner	

3 Customer Journey

- 3.1 As mentioned above the process is managed online and the residents are expected to complete the BCB application online via the customer portal.
- 3.2 Residents who may not be digitally enabled can have applications completed on their behalf by support workers, friends, or family.
- 3.3 Residents can also visit any library in the borough and use the public PC's, connect their own device to the free WIFI or loan a device to take home.
- 3.4 Residents also has the option to contact the Access Trafford Contact Centre to have a form completed on their behalf.
- 3.5 We acknowledge that the current CRM system C360 can cause challenges for residents making application due to the aging system.
- 3.6 From June 24 the process should be easier and quicker with the introduction of Microsoft Dynamics CRM.
- 3.7 From initial application to award we aim to process all applications within a six-week period. This time scale allows for additional information to be provided and the outcome of any IMA appointments that a resident may need to attend.
- 3.8 Below are figures to show the number of self-serve appointment v's mediated. The contact centre completes all mediated applications. Please note that currently completing an application can take 20-40 minutes depending on complexity of information provided.

Blue Badge Applications	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	TOTAL
Mediated	65	71	61	88	89	75	72	71	36	628
Self Served	392	395	432	436	546	443	474	425	308	3851
Total	457	466	493	524	635	518	546	496	344	4479

4 BCB awards

- 4.1 Currently there are 2.35 million valid blue car badges held across the UK.
- 4.2 2.26 million people automatically qualify for a blue car badge with 42% holding a blue badge.
- 4.3 Across the Northwest there are approximately 372k Blue Badges in circulation.
- 4.4 In Trafford as of 16/01/24, 9676 residents hold an active Blue Car Badge
- 4.5 Typically, a Blue Badge is awarded for 3 years or to the end date of a qualifying benefit is due to be re assessed.
- 4.6 The table below provides more detailed information regarding the criteria badges are processed under. Please note that our current system is unable to breakdown figures for residents who have applied under more than one criterion.
- 4.7 Refused badges are usually where an applicant does not meet the DfT guidelines to issue a badge or the information provided is not enough to determine eligibility, therefore the badge is refused.
- 4.8 In cases where we are unable to determine a decision based on lack of information the applicant has 3 months to provide further information before the application is automatically closed.

Breakdown award by criteria

Award Reason	2022	2023	Total
Armed Forces Reserved Forces Compensation Scheme	1		1
Blind	70	60	130
Under 3 - Bulky Equipment	4	1	5
Under 3 – needs to be close to a vehicle		1	1
DLA	448	383	831
Hidden Disability	78	109	187
PIP - Walking	1269	1340	2609
PIP - Hidden	40	49	89
Walking Disability	1659	1757	3416
War Pension Mobility Scheme	3	3	6
Organisation	23	16	39
Total	3595	3719	7314

Breakdown of Refused Applications

Refused Reason	2022	2023	Total
Armed Forces Reserved Forces Compensation Scheme	0	0	0
Blind	13	14	27
Under 3 - Bulky Equipment	0	2	2
Under 3 needs to be close to vehicle	0	0	0
DLA	54	22	76

Hidden Disability	74	60	134
PIP - Walking	129	152	281
PIP - Hidden	130	1	131
Walking Disability	114	117	231
Combined Walking and Hidden	57	51	108
Arms Disability	1	5	6
War Pension Mobility Scheme	0	0	0
Organisation	0	1	1
Total	572	425	997

- *Please note although a badge may have been refused, it may have been awarded under a different criterion. For example, if a resident applies under PIP hidden but they don't meet the specific PIP criteria they may have received a badge under hidden disability that required further assessment.*

5 Blue Car Badge costs

- 5.1 When customers are successful in their application for a blue car badge a fee of £10.00 is charged to cover the cost of producing and posting the badge.
- 5.2 The DfT set the fees that can be charged for the administration of BCB with the maximum charge being £10.00.
- 5.3 The cost of producing the badge, the pack to send it in and the postage is £4.34 net.
- 5.4 In addition to the cost of producing Blue Car badges we also provide independent mobility assessments which cost £17,000 per year to carry out 7 appointments per week carried out at alternative libraries each week.

6 Moving forward for 2024 and beyond.

- 6.1 To maintain the integrity of the scheme the Blue Car Badge Assessment Team continually ensure that applications are processed within the DfT guidance and regulations.
- 6.2 The introduction of the new CRM platform Microsoft Dynamics should ensure an enhanced customer journey making the application process much more straight forward.
- 6.3 Continuing to support our most vulnerable residents who are unable to self-serve by completing forms over the phone, where the resident can complete an application in the comfort of their own home.
- 6.4 With more automated process with the new CRM system, we hope to improve SLA's and reduce unnecessary contact with residents.
- 6.5 More reporting functionality will help with monitoring and reporting current performance.
- 6.6 Improved reporting tools such as Microsoft BI will help us to provide statistical information in real time and highlight potential areas of improvement.