



Lee Waters MS
Deputy Minister for Climate Change
Welsh Government
Via Email.

15th February 2024

Our Ref: VA340
Re: Blue Badge Applications

Dear Deputy Minister, Lee,

I hope this finds you well. I am getting in contact regarding required changes to the delivery of the blue badge application process and eligibility criteria in Wales. Following receipt of concerns from residents that the current system does not allow flexibility and additional support for those living with a lifelong condition, I am writing in support of the rising numbers of Welsh residents who have a permanent and substantial disability or condition.

Please kindly note that I previously requested a statement regarding the blue badge application process on 23rd January. Further to this, I'm writing today to request your response on the consideration of adjustments to the present system to introduce permanent blue badges.

Having met with constituents in the Denbighshire region to discuss their experiences at length, I am aware that many residents and families with a permanent condition or impairment are required to repeat the application process, despite the basis of their claim and their personal condition remaining constant. Further to this, I understand that many feel disappointed by having to repeatedly prove their requirement for a badge. Whilst I understand there is no charge for applicants submitting multiple blue badge applications, many subsequently feel that the application process for a permit via the Blue Badge Digital Service at present, lacks flexibility for those with permanent conditions.

It has additionally been brought to my attention that some with severely limiting mobility conditions have experienced their claims being denied. Separately, I'm given to understand that there is currently no appeals system in place for Welsh residents where they feel disappointed or dissatisfied with the outcome of a blue badge application request from their local authority, and am told that this has often made applicants feel extremely helpless, particularly those who have dedicated significant time and effort to an application and for those who may require a permit more urgently.

Given that 26% of residents in Wales have a limiting long-standing illness or disability, and are more likely to have one of these conditions than those living in other regions of Great Britain, I would be grateful for your department's consideration of the potential to introduce long-term permits, as a necessary improvement to the present system and eligibility criteria for automatic, temporary, and discretionary blue badges.

Further to this, given that eligibility for blue badges in Wales is based on mobility conditions and not specific medical conditions, I would be grateful for your response on measures being taken to enable a wider range of permanent and substantial impairments to be accepted as eligible, where these do not currently meet an automatic permit qualification. I understand that added flexibility here would be of great assurance to the many individuals and their families in my constituency and others across Wales who presently have no option than to reapply for a new permit after a 12-month period.

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Finally, in advance of the Petitions Committee's consideration of petition P-06-1380 ('Make Blue Badge applications lifelong for individuals who have a lifelong diagnosis'), I would be grateful for your response on the steps being considered by the current administration to make relevant logical adjustments to the application process, to support those with permanent conditions and impairments.

I thank you for your consideration of this important matter and I look forward to receiving the department's reply.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Davies MS
Vale of Clwyd

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