

May 2011



The Blue Badge Scheme

Local Authority
Circular (England)

Eligibility Changes



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Foreword

This circular provides information on changes to the Blue Badge scheme eligibility criteria for some applicants and sets out action to be taken by all local authorities in England who administer the scheme and issue badges.

We aim to bring this change into force on 17th June 2011, subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

1. Eligibility for certain children between the ages of two and three

- 1.1** Children under the age of three will be eligible for a Blue Badge if they fall under either or both of the following categories:
- a. a child who, on account of a condition, must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty;
 - b. a child who, on account of a condition, must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that, if necessary, treatment for that condition can be given in the vehicle or the child can be taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where such treatment can be given.
- 1.2** It may be necessary to make transitional arrangements for children under the age of two who have been issued with a Blue Badge before the new Regulations enter into force whose current badge will expire on the day following their second birthday. Provided that they continue to meet the eligibility criteria on account of their condition they will become eligible for a Blue Badge until their third birthday under the new Regulations. This also applies to children between ages two and three whose badge has already expired.
- 1.3** It will therefore be necessary for the local authority to re-issue a Blue Badge on application to an eligible child to cover the period up to their third birthday. This may in some cases lead to badges being issued for very short periods of time. Badges issued to children under three years of age will need to have an expiry date of the day after their third birthday.
- 1.4** Local Authorities should make it clear when issuing the badge that it should be returned to the issuing authority on expiry or if the recipient no longer needs it because the condition under which it was issued no longer applies. Any parent who continues to display the Blue Badge when their child no longer needs it will be committing an offence and be liable for a fine of up to £1,000. This is particularly relevant in the case of children with hip dysplasia, as this condition normally lasts between three and six months.

2. Continuous automatic entitlement for severely disabled service personnel and veterans

- 2.1** Disabled veterans are automatically eligible for a Blue Badge if they are in receipt of a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS). However that award is only paid to veterans injured before 6 April 2005. The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) covers injuries sustained in service on or after 6 April 2005. The AFCS operates on a tariff system and does not include a specific mobility allowance to which entitlement to a Blue Badge could be linked.
- 2.2** The Government has agreed to provide continuous automatic entitlement to a badge to service personnel and veterans who have been both:
- a. awarded a benefit (giving rise to entitlement to a lump sum at tariffs 1-8 inclusive) under the AFCS; and
 - b. assessed and certified by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) (an executive agency of the Ministry of Defence) as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
- 2.3** The Service Personnel and Veteran's Agency will issue an applicant who meets both of these conditions with a letter confirming the level of their award under the AFCS and also confirming that they have been assessed as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. This letter would need to be presented by the applicant to the local authority when applying for a Blue Badge. A sample AFCS award letter is at Appendix A.
- 2.4** Local authorities should note that successful applicants under this criterion must be able to provide a letter from the SPVA confirming that they are in receipt of tariffs 1-8 under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation Scheme) Order 2011 and that they have been assessed by the SPVA as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

- 2.5** Local authorities are strongly advised to verify the eligibility of an applicant under this criterion by contacting the SPVA on 0800 169 2277.
- 2.6** Local authorities should make it clear when issuing the badge that it should be returned to the issuing authority on expiry or if the recipient no longer needs it.

3. Appendix A

A sample Service Personnel and Veteran's Agency (SPVA) award letter can be viewed on the following page.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys
Lancashire, England, FY5 3WP

Freephone: 0800 169 22 77

Overseas: + 44 1253 866 043

Textphone: 0800 169 34 58

veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk

www.veterans-uk.info

Surname

Other names

Member number

You have received a lump sum benefit under the Armed forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1 – 8 (inclusive) and the Secretary of State certifies that you have:-

- a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking

You may be entitled to a blue badge and / or concessionary travel.

Further information on blue badges and concessionary travel can be found at www.direct.gov.uk.

You can also contact your local authority for information.

Helpline Hours: Monday – Thursday: 8.15am – 5.15pm, Friday: 8.15am – 4.30pm

Telephone: 0800 169 22 77

e-mail: veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk

Internet: www.veterans-uk.info