

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please read the EIA GUIDANCE and the EIA flow chart available on KNet.
Blue Badge Improvement Services

Directorate:

Families and Social Care

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

Blue Badge Policy and Practice Guidance
Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS)

Type

Service provided through the Blue Badge team based at the contact centre
Blue Badge is a chargeable service and the proposal is to increase the charge to provide a higher contribution to the costs associated with delivering the service and badge production to enable the service to self finance.

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

Anne Tidmarsh, Director Older People and Physical Disability

Date of Initial Screening

12.10.11

Screening conducted by Derrick Douglas, Policy Officer with challenge from Keith Wyncoll, Equalities Manager

Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group differently from others in Kent? YES/NO	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO	Assessment of potential impact HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW/ NONE/UNKNOWN		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes, why? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why? c) Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
			Positive	Negative	
Age	Yes	Yes	Medium	Low	Previously, badges were issued to all applicants over 80yrs and over without the need for a mobility assessment. Their mobility will now be assessed to bring KCC in line with Equalities Policy
Disability			Medium	Low	Some disabled people who previously were awarded badges on the basis of GP reports fail to meet the eligibility criteria following the more robust independent mobility assessments. People with automatic entitlement find that the process is much quicker when their badges have to be renewed.
Gender	Considered but no issues identified.	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community	N/a	N/a	Universal Service
Gender identity	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all	N/a	N/a	Universal Service “

		sections of the community			
Race	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community	N/a	N/a	Documentation can be produced in other formats if requested.
Religion or belief	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community	N/a	N/a	Universal service
Sexual orientation	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community	N/a	N/a	Universal service
Pregnancy and maternity	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community	N/a	N/a	Universal service
	Considered but no issues identified	Promotion of the Blue Badge Scheme to all sections of the community.	N/a	N/a	Universal service

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Context

The Department of Transport's Blue Badge Improvement Service is a response to the concerns of the public and law enforcement agencies regarding widespread fraud and misuse of the badges.

The Government has introduced legislation that will allow local authorities to charge up to a maximum of £10.00 when a Blue Badge is issued. This will more closely align the costs of administering the service to those who directly benefit from the use of the blue badge.

The policy is also consistent with Localism legislation which allows badge issuing authorities to decide on the fee the charge for issuing the badge

Aims and Objectives

- To develop a more robust and fair approach to eligibility
- To increase enforcement powers
- To develop a more transparent system.

Beneficiaries

Blue Badges Applicants

Disabled children

Carers

Enforcement Officers

District and Borough Councils

Police

GPs

Hospices

KCC staff

Blue Badge Team

The Blue Badge Service

Prior to 1st April 2011 any applicant who was automatically entitled to a Blue Badge because they met the eligibility criteria for a mandatory badge was issued with one via the Blue Badge team at the Contact Centre in Maidstone.

For the majority of applicants who did not qualify automatically but may be entitled to a discretionary badge, the Blue Badge team would request GP reports to aid the decision on whether to issue a badge. BBIS removed this need for LAs to approach GPs and the monies that previously funded their reports was transferred from Health to KCC to fund Independent Mobility Assessments. The Department for Transport has committed to providing funding for 2011/12 and 2012/13 only. The service will then become self financing.

The revised Blue Badge service was implemented on 1st April 2011. People who request or renew a Blue Badge now contact KCC and if they meet certain

eligibility criteria they may automatically be assessed as eligible for a Blue Badge or they may receive an independent mobility assessment to determine eligibility for a discretionary badge at one of the Gateway's across Kent.

From January 1st badges will be produced externally, therefore of each £10, £4.60 will be for production of the badge. The remaining money will be used to pay for the administration of the service and the assessments required as part of the new service, the shortfall in funding will be picked up by Kent County Council.

Consultation and data

- Extensive consultation was carried out nationally involving disabled and older people and organizations
- KCC also contributed to the development of this policy by responding to the national DfT consultation
- The Department of Transport carried out a survey with Blue Badge holders that suggested that 68% of badge holders supported an increase in the current £2 fee. When asked how much would be a fair price, 25% thought it would be fair to charge over £10, however 59% thought it should be between £3 and £10.

Potential Impact

People over 80 likely to feel disgruntled that they have to be formally assessed when their badge is up for renewal, generating complaints

Adverse Impact:

Some over 80s who previous were awarded a badge without a mobility assessment may be ineligible for a badge following a robust assessment by an independent mobility assessor.

Approximately 20% increase in assessments now that people aged 80 and over have to undergo assessment when they reapply for a badge

Positive Impact:

BBIS will result in:

- more robust approach to assessment.
- fairer and more consistent assessment and awarding of badges.
- better enforcement powers

JUDGEMENT

Option 1 – Screening Sufficient

NO

Following this initial screening our judgement is that no further action is required.

Justification:

- The Department of Transport conducted a widespread and thorough consultation with the involvement of disabled and older people organizations. BBIS is substantially based on the feedback from this consultation.
- It carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment which it feels is sufficient.

Option 2 – Internal Action Required YES

The need to communicate change to all key disability and older people groups in the county is recognised and would be recommended.

Option 3 – Full Impact Assessment NO