

1st floor
NLBP
28 January 2020
Our ref: 5928764

Thank you for your request received on 27 December 2019, for the following information:

I would like to make a request to your organisation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation. If you are not the correct part of your organisation for dealing with such matters, please forward this message to the correct people.

My request concerns the 'Blue Badge' scheme as run in England, under legislation and guidance from Department for Transport (DfT). See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/blue-badge-scheme>

I would like the following information please:

1. The number of applications made to your organisation for a Blue Badge in the 2018-19 financial year and the number (or proportion if number is unavailable) of these applications that were successful and unsuccessful.

2. The total number of applications made to your organisation for a Blue Badge under the parts of recently-introduced DfT guidance around 'non-visible' or 'hidden' disabilities such as Autism and Anxiety and the number (or proportion if number is unavailable) of these applications that were successful and unsuccessful.

Where data do not exist for the financial year specified in part 1 above, please provide data for the most recent twelve months that are available. If data is provided that collectively covers both 'visible' and 'non-visible' disabilities, I request the data to be distinguished if possible. (For example, 100 total applications, of which 16 were for 'non-visible' disabilities).

For part 2 above, please only include (if possible) data on those applications that are new and which have been made on the basis of the newly-included 'non-visible' disabilities, for which DfT guidance has been issued this year.

If further break downs of data are present, for example numbers around applications that were sent to independent or external assessors before a final decision, then please include these too providing it requires no substantial additional work to do so.

Likewise, if applications went to appeal and the decision was subsequently altered, please include data on this if it is present alongside the data requested in parts 1 or 2 above.

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

1. The number of applications made to your organisation for a Blue Badge in the 2018-19 financial year and the number (or proportion if number is unavailable) of these applications that were successful and unsuccessful.

Blue Badge application data is held in a national ICT system managed by the Department for Transport. This system was introduced in Spring 2019 and data held in the previous system is archived. The current system does not have the facility to export application data.

Below are the numbers of applications made in 2018 and 2019 which are records held by the Council's Assisted Travel team.

2018 – 6482 Blue Badge applications

We are refusing your request under section 12 because we estimate that compliance with your request will exceed the "appropriate limit" under section 12. The appropriate limit is £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours at £25 per hour. The per hour figure is set by Regulations rather than actual salary paid to any officers handling requests. The appropriate limit includes the time it will take the council to discover if it holds the information requested, to locate it, extract it and collate it as well as putting it into any particular format requested by the requester.

The outcome of applications is not recorded and so it is not possible to provide a breakdown of successful/unsuccessful applications within the allowance of free officer time provided for under the FOI. This would require a manual check of the outcome of each application which would take around 30 seconds to complete a search and record the outcome per record. Below is an estimate of the time required to perform this search.

Estimated officer time to search records:

2018 – 6482 Blue Badge applications x 30 seconds per application = 3241 minutes. This equates to 54 hours of officer time.

2019 – 6221 Blue Badge applications x 30 seconds per application = 3111 minutes. This equates to 52 hours of officer time.

2. The total number of applications made to your organisation for a Blue Badge under the parts of recently-introduced DfT guidance around 'non-visible' or 'hidden' disabilities such as Autism and Anxiety and the number (or proportion if number is unavailable) of these applications that were successful and unsuccessful.

Where data do not exist for the financial year specified in part 1 above, please provide data for the most recent twelve months that are available. If data is provided that collectively covers both 'visible' and 'non-visible' disabilities, I request the data to be distinguished if possible. (For example, 100 total applications, of which 16 were for 'non-visible' disabilities).

The widened eligibility criteria for Blue Badges was implemented on 30 August 2019. As explained above, Blue Badge application data is held in a national ICT system managed by the Department for Transport. It is not possible to export application data from this system.

Data can be provided on Blue Badges awarded. Below is a summary of Blue Badges awarded since 30 August 2019, broken down by eligibility criteria. 1780 badges have been awarded since 30 August 2019.

Type 1 Eligible without further assessment

Higher Rate of mobility component Disability Living Allowance

Receives mobility component of Personal Independence Payments and obtains 8 points or more under the 'moving around' activity

Receives mobility component of Personal Independence Payments and obtains 10 points or more under descriptor E "planning and following journeys"

Registered Blind or severely sight impaired

Receives War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement

Awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Total: Type 1 Eligible without further assessment

Type 2 Eligible subject to further assessment

More than 2 years old and:

A person who drives a vehicle regularly, has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate a parking meter or has considerable difficulty in operating, all, or some types of parking meter

A person who has been certified by an expert assessor as having an enduring and substantial disability which causes them, during the course of a journey to be unable to walk, or experience very considerable difficulty when walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress or be at a risk of serious harm when of which Walking ability of which Hidden disability

walking, or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person. Any of the above three types of difficulty whilst walking could potentially be caused by a physical disability, or by a non-visible ('hidden') disability. In either case, the disability experienced by the applicant must endure for at least three years.

In addition, children under the age of three may be eligible for a badge if they fall within either or both of the following descriptions:

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;

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.

Total: Type 2 Eligible subject to further assessment

If further break downs of data are present, for example numbers around applications that were sent to independent or external assessors before a final decision, then please include these too providing it requires no substantial additional work to do so.

We are refusing your request under section 12 because we estimate that compliance with your request will exceed the "appropriate limit" under section 12. The appropriate limit is £450 which is equivalent to 18 hours at £25 per hour. The per hour figure is set by Regulations rather than actual salary paid to any officers handling requests. The appropriate limit includes the time it will take the council to discover if it holds the information requested, to locate it, extract it and collate it as well as putting it into any particular format requested by the requester.

This information is not held in a readily available format and would require manual search of systems which would take around 5 minutes for each case. To provide this information on badges awarded since the widened criteria were introduced on 30 August 2019, the estimated time taken is worked out as below:

1780 Blue Badge records x 5 minutes search of systems per badge = 8900 minutes. This equates to 148 hours of officer time.

Likewise, if applications went to appeal and the decision was subsequently altered, please include data on this if it is present alongside the data requested in parts 1 or 2 above.

This information is not held in a readily available format and would require manual search of systems which would take around 2 minutes for each case. To provide this information on badges awarded since the widened criteria were introduced on 30 August 2019, the estimated time taken is worked out as below:

1780 Blue Badge records x 2 minutes search of systems per badge = 3560 minutes. This equates to 59 hours of officer time.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.