

## Responses to pre questions presented ahead of the September YAF session

- 1. People have had them (*blue badge*) before, impairments have remained the same or worsened but have been turned down.**
  - This could be in instances when they had a badge for quite a while and due to the information on their application form (for example they said they can walk 0.5 miles) they have been asked to attend an IMA to check their eligibility and have been declined after their assessment - this would be in line with the latest DfT guidance.
  - But generally these will be very specific cases of a very small few who no longer meet the criteria. Guidance changes overtime and this may affect some individuals.
  
- 2. Recommendations from multiple surgeons and doctors being dismissed.**
  - The team does check all medical evidence supplied with the application and send all medical evidence to AI if the applicant requires IMA for assessor to review.
  - No evidence is dismissed, it is considered in line with the criteria.
  - The provision of evidence and supporting statements from medical professionals involved in applicant's care is encouraged, but this can only be used to support an application and would not provide an automatic qualification for a Badge.
  - This would also not change the outcome of their IMA if the assessment report was conclusive in its findings.
  
- 3. Impact of not getting a Blue Badge has included hospitalisation due to falls.**
  - A persons risk of undertaking a journey is a major consideration in a Blue Badge application, with 82% of applications receiving a Blue Badge this impact will have been considered and assessed as a priority. (An example was requested for the team to review if possible).
  
- 4. Appeal with new evidence but generally already provided what is felt to be strong evidence.**
  - The council does not require new evidence for Stage 1 appeal, but the applicant must provide new evidence for Stage 2 appeal as their file would of been reviewed during Stage 1.

- If the decision was made not to grant a BB at stage 1, the appeal manager will not be able to overturn this decision without additional medical evidence.
- Approximately 50% of stage 1 and stage 2 appeals are overturned which highlights that both appeal stages operate with fair and appropriate consideration of all facts available.

**5. Being told to come to assessments that are too early or too far away. EG if you rely on care support, you can't get to a 9.30 appointment. Struggle to rearrange them.**

- The service provides two locations for assessments and assessments can be rearranged – Access Independent directly the appointment time with the applicant. (An example was requested for the team to review if possible).

**6. Providing evidence from a physio that is then dismissed or refuted by an physio assessor**

- Please see answer re medical evidence above (Question 4)

**7. No understanding of fluctuating conditions**

- Both the Blue Badge Team and Access Independent (AI) assessor team have training and experience around applying blue badge eligibility criteria.
- Fluctuating conditions will be desk assessed according to the medical evidence supplied and will be put through the correct pathway related to the criteria.
- AI do understand the nature of fluctuating conditions as they are highlighted in their assessment forms (when applicable).

**8. Treated badly in the assessment.**

- Anyone who feels the Assessment was not conducted in a professional way should contact the Council's complaints Team so an investigation can be appropriately undertaken.

**9. Being dismissed if not visibly in pain; people with chronic pain/fatigue are used to masking pain/fatigue.**

- Hidden condition statistics highlight that that these conditions are assessed and awarded in line with the appropriate criteria.

**10. Concern that CYC is reducing the number of Blue Badge holders to justify the reduction in Blue Badge parking and access.**

| Year | Total no of badges issued |
|------|---------------------------|
| 2015 | 2942                      |
| 2016 | 2784                      |
| 2017 | 2853                      |
| 2018 | 3073                      |
| 2019 | 3113                      |
| 2020 | 2562                      |
| 2021 | 2875                      |
| 2022 | 3188                      |

### 11. Not feeling safe or able to attend appointments due to health eg impaired immune system.

- CYC changed the policy regarding this in 2020. In these circumstances arrangements will be made for the applicant to send us their medical evidence instead so that a desk based assessment can be conducted.

### 12. We contacted Blue Badge team manager regarding wording around the applications. We felt clarification might improve the understanding of what counts as evidence etc.

- Please see our template letter below. We are happy to amend this template if needed:

Thank you for your recent application for a Blue Badge.

In support of your application we require some medical evidence to provide further insight into the **difficulties you face during the course of the journey.**

Your medical evidence should provide additional information about your medical history which would be relevant to your application.

This can include topics such as the range of movement within the joints and how this may affect your mobility, the distance you are able to walk without significant difficulty, your walking speed, your manner of walking, the level of pain or breathlessness you experience, or any use of walking aids or coping strategies, such as the presence of another person. If applicable, your evidence should also clearly outline what professional support you receive in relation to any hidden disabilities you may have, including any psychological distress or the serious risk of harm you may experience while undertaking a journey.

Please see below some examples of medical evidence you can send to us:

- diagnosis letters
- patient summaries
- Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)
- details of any disability benefits received.
- documents for any treatment or medication you receive to help you manage your condition.

All medical evidence should be provided and verified by suitably qualified health or social care professionals.

Please note that a letter from your GP will not be deemed sufficient to establish your eligibility if no other evidence is provided based on the guidance from Department for Transport.

It is applicant's responsibility to provide medical proof to support their application. We will not be able to contact medical professionals on your behalf to obtain relevant information.

Please forward your medical evidence to the above address or email it to us at [BlueBadge@york.gov.uk](mailto:BlueBadge@york.gov.uk). **Please do not send any originals.**

Once we have received your documentation, we will review your application again and notify you of the decision that has been made. There still may be a requirement for you to provide further information from a clinical professional involved in your care or to attend an Independent Mobility Assessment, if the information provided is not sufficient to establish your eligibility for a Blue Badge.

If you no longer wish to progress your application but have paid the £10 fee, please let us know and we will process a refund for you.

### 13. In particular, there is no explanation of what is meant by 'patient summary', where to get it or that it's free.

**We felt this was particularly pertinent as increasingly people who are eligible for a Blue Badge are unlikely to have a named hospital consultant and are likely to have been discharged from a service.**

- Patient summary is a standard document that any GP can provide.
- It lists all medical conditions, prescriptions and short notes from latest appointments. It is usually obtained directly from their GP practice.
- If an applicant isn't sure what evidence they should provide after receiving the letter with the guidance, they can always call the Blue Badge team– the phone number is provided on the letter.
- During the application process, it was unclear about the appeal process but also there was no mention of the possible right to ask for a review of the decision rather than going straight to appeal.

- There are no premediated thoughts that an application will be declined. If the desk assessment or IMA means a person will not get a Blue Badge, then CYC has a Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeal process and the appeals policy is sent to the applicant if they are not awarded a Blue Badge

#### **14. It wasn't clear that paper forms are available.**

- This may be because some councils do not accept paper based application forms.
- The DfT do not provide councils with a standard paper form.
- CYC has created its own in line with the latest DfT guidance to ensure all York residents can access the service in any circumstance.
- A paper application form can be offered or requested over the phone and details about postal applications are on the council's website here:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/BlueBadgeHelp>