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Purpose of training

This training is for health, social care and teaching professionals who have been asked to consider sponsoring a Blue Badge application because someone poses a risk to themselves or others in traffic. That's to say, someone completing Section 3 of the paper Risk in Traffic application form.

It's been issued by Argyll and Bute Council after having been agreed by the local Independent Mobility Assessors.

- It should take no more than **25 minutes** to complete.
- Sometimes, a **'prior knowledge prompt'** helps to pre-empt the next topic, for those able to skip ahead.

'Prior knowledge' prompt

What can someone do with a Blue Badge?

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Who is the Blue Badge scheme aimed towards?

The Blue Badge scheme is a tool to enable and support people to live as independently as possible.

Its goal is to help people with mobility problems or those who pose a risk to themselves or others in traffic who need to park close to their destination.

The scheme enables disabled people to park on the street without charge and normally without time limit.

In particular, it allows badgeholders to park in marked bays and restricted zones.

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The key outcome

It's important people are enabled to make the journeys they want to make.

A blue badge might not always be the best solution to facilitate this. It is seldom the only one.

Things to reflect upon:

- Just because someone is eligible for a Blue Badge under the risk in traffic criteria, this doesn't mean they cannot walk, cycle, or use public transport.
- But some people might need additional support to broaden up the travel options available for them.
- Some people can recover lost function through reablement and rehabilitation approaches.

We discuss how you should handle this issue, in the context of your role as sponsor, later in this training.



A Blue Badge is only useful for car travel. But It's important people are supported where necessary to use all transport modes available to them. So reflect on how you can help the applicant use public transport, walk and cycle.

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Who can get a Blue Badge?

The eligibility criteria for a Blue Badge are not based on the medical conditions that someone has.

Instead, the eligibility criteria focus on the applicant's day-to-day experiences.

Local authorities assess applicants' eligibility against criteria set out in Regulations. The next section explains these criteria and what they mean for you.



Roles and responsibilities: The legislation for the Blue Badge scheme is run by Transport Scotland, as it's part of the national transport infrastructure. But the scheme is run by local authorities.

'Prior knowledge' prompt

Who can get a Blue Badge without needing an assessment?

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The criteria I

Some people can get a Blue Badge automatically.

The person who has approached you to sponsor a Blue Badge should already have checked to see if this applies.

An application should **never** be sponsored under the risk in traffic criteria if someone can get a badge automatically.

Automatic eligibility applies if someone is:

- certified blind or issued with a letter by the local [VINCYP](#) team
- getting certain disability benefits that indicate need:
 - the higher rate of the mobility component of [Disability Living Allowance](#)
 - [Personal Independence Payment](#) having scored 8 points or more in the 'moving around' area of the assessment
 - [Personal Independence Payment](#) having scored 12 points in the 'planning and following a journey' area of the assessment
 - [War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement](#)
 - a lump sum payment as part of the Armed Forces Compensation scheme (tariffs 1 to 8), and have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability

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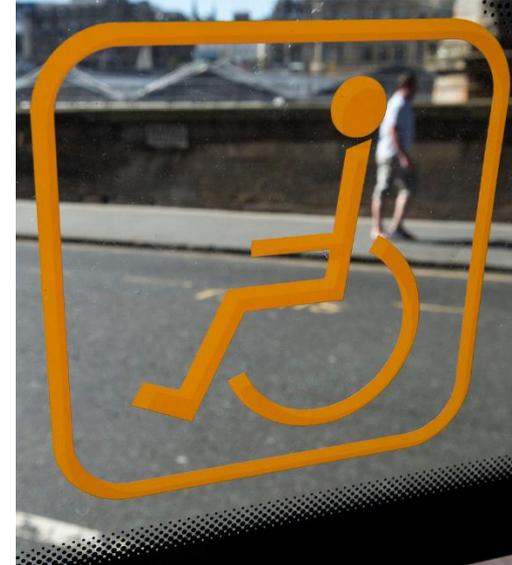
The criteria II

Where people aren't automatically eligible for a badge, they can apply for a badge if they are **unable to walk** or if they are **virtually unable to walk**:

- Virtual inability to walk means that someone can't walk very far without experiencing severe difficulty.
- Factors like pain, breathlessness, distance, speed and manner of walking are some of the most common factors considered in reaching a decision under this eligibility criteria.
- Cases where walking presents a danger to the applicant's life, or would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in their health, can also be considered under this eligibility criterion.

Special rules apply to those under the age of three, for example if the child has bulky medical equipment. You can find out more about these [online](#).

Don't sponsor an application under the risk in traffic criterion if someone can get a badge under these eligibility criteria.



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The criteria III

Where people aren't eligible for a badge automatically or under the criteria already discussed, they can apply for a badge if they lack awareness of the danger of traffic and are likely to pose a risk to the safety of themselves or others during journeys.

This risk must be because they have a condition falling within the [Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#).

You're being asked to sponsor an application under this eligibility criterion. We need to get a sponsor for this kind of application to complete Section 3 of the application form, because a snapshot assessment of need alone isn't a suitable way to judge eligibility.

This criterion was designed to cover those cases where someone's behaviour is so severely affected that it is already difficult to keep them safe in traffic because they can't be verbally or physically guided.

They may pull free from guidance and consequently put themselves or others at risk of being injured in traffic.

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The sponsor's role

- ✓ A sponsor must be a specialist healthcare, social care or teaching professional. The kinds of people who can sponsor the risk in traffic application are listed on the back of the form.
- ✓ **If nobody is available from the list, the applicant should contact the blue badge team within Argyll and Bute Council to discuss the case. It's still possible to make an application and it might be that another kind of professional (such as a support worker) can provide best evidence.**
- ✓ Sponsors are expected to know the applicant professionally, but **not** personally. Any personal relationship or other conflict of interest should be disclosed.
- ✓ **The sponsor should have in-depth knowledge of the applicant's case, and therefore be able to consider in a person-centred way, whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.**
- ✓ The sponsor should provide factual information, in the form of completing Section 3 of the form, that will assist Argyll and Bute to make the final decision.
- ✓ **The sponsor should also take the opportunity that thinking about the need for a Blue Badge brings, to ask why this would help. It's important to consider the answer and assess whether other help might be given to tackle the underlying reasons behind applying for a Blue Badge.**

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Things you must consider as sponsor

Here are some important points to consider when undertaking the sponsorship task.

1. The eligibility criteria is not condition-based. **The criteria is about the actual risk already identified, not theoretical or potential risk associated with the condition someone has.** As sponsor, you must therefore reflect on the individual applicant's position, not generalities or hypotheticals.
2. A Blue Badge can only provide limited assurance that risk in traffic is controlled. Therefore, a Blue Badge should never be a first resort when a risk has been identified. Other strategies and tools might work, or could be adjusted to provide greater assurance. **You must fully explore these strategies and tools.**
3. You must provide your own independent professional judgment of eligibility. **Please answer the questions on the form as fully as you can, providing examples and without resorting to generalities.**
4. Give your opinion on whether the badge will be needed for a full three-year period or for less time, depending on progression of the individual's condition. **Wherever possible you should keep under review whether a badge is needed and if the person no longer meets the eligibility criteria.**

'Prior knowledge' prompt

Where might someone not meet the risk in traffic eligibility criteria?

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Key considerations

Always reflect before completing the declaration. Times where someone doesn't meet the eligibility criteria include:

- Where someone doesn't have a qualifying condition within the meaning in the 2003 Act.
- Where someone doesn't themselves pose a risk in traffic:
 - Remember it is not the diagnosis that matters, but rather how this affects the applicant's behaviour at this point in time.
 - A risk in traffic is different from things like anxiety or distress when travelling. By themselves, these don't constitute risk in traffic.
- Where the use of other strategies and tools means someone doesn't pose a risk in traffic.
- Where the risk will not last for at least 12 months, because a badge can only be issued for 12 months or longer.

Even if someone isn't eligible under the risk in traffic criteria, they could still qualify because they are unable or virtually unable to walk. For example, someone with dementia who wanders off might really have a mobility problem – they need to be dropped off close to where they need to go because they can't walk far.

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Meeting travel help needs

Remember the goal of the Blue Badge scheme is to support people to travel. But it's wrong to look at car travel in isolation. The applicant should be getting the help they need to travel well, using all the modes of transport open to them. Very few people can only travel by private car, and even then services like community transport or subsidised taxi journeys (taxicard) could give people more options to get to the places they need or want to go to. But many people may not have the information or support needed to travel in other ways. **As a professional involved in the applicant's care, you should therefore take time to explore whether there are wider travel help needs.**

Support tools provided nationally might help. These include the bus pass scheme, adapted cycle grants, health walks, the Thistle Assistance Card, and assisted public transport services. To get a basic idea of some of the kinds of tools that are available you can look at Care Information Scotland.

It may also be appropriate to get help from other health and social care services like community occupational therapy or physiotherapy. Depending on procedures in your organisation, you may be able to discharge this responsibility by referring the applicant to a worker with expertise in this area.



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Record keeping, review and where to get help

You must keep a record about your actions when sponsoring a Blue Badge application or supporting an applicant to travel. Your organisation will have procedures for how this is done.

Argyll and Bute Council may ask to speak with you for the purpose of determining eligibility and other functions in the public interest.

Where you can, information should be recorded in your own service's systems and records so as to flag up the need to regularly review whether the applicant's travel help needs are being met and whether a Blue Badge remains appropriate.

Hopefully this training package has helped you to understand the task you have been set. If you would like more information, please contact your supervisors.

You can also contact the Blue Badge team for an informal conversation with an Independent Mobility Assessor for your area.

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Top 5 tips

Here are some top tips from what you've read:

1. Remember what the risk in traffic eligibility criterion is for. It's for cases where someone is currently putting themselves at risk in situations involving traffic.
2. **It was designed for cases where someone lacks awareness of danger, such as by walking into oncoming traffic and is difficult to be kept safe due to unmanageable behaviours like pulling away from physical guidance and running into the traffic and dropping onto the pavement.**
3. Don't complete Section 3 where someone doesn't themselves pose an actual risk in traffic – remember it is not the diagnosis that matters, but rather how this affects the applicant's behaviour at this point in time.
4. **If someone isn't eligible under the risk in traffic criteria, they could be eligible under other criteria. For example, they may be unable to walk far.**
5. Explore why a Blue Badge would help – and if other tools could help to tackle the underlying reasons why the need is considered to arise.

