

Blue Badge, Taxicard & Freedom Pass

This document accompanies the single application form for the Blue Badge, Disabled Person's Freedom Pass and Taxicard travel concessions. The form is designed to simplify the application process and these notes will provide you with information about which concession you may be eligible for and should assist you in completing the process as well as explaining what happens once your application has been submitted and how long it should take.

The form can be completed online via www.harrow.gov.uk this will allow you to scan and upload your photograph and supporting documents or you can complete the paper version and send this to Access Harrow with your supporting documents and photograph.

What are the Travel Concession Schemes in Harrow?

Blue Badge

The Blue Badge scheme gives free and dedicated parking close to amenities for drivers and passengers with mobility-related disabilities, or who are blind. Blue Badge holders are able to park on yellow lines for up to three hours and are also exempt from the central London congestion charge. A pass is valid for a maximum 3-year period whereupon pass-holders are required to reapply.

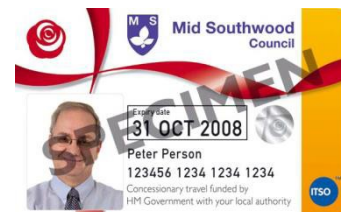


If you are applying to renew an existing Blue Badge, then please note that it is your responsibility to ensure you reapply 12 weeks before the expiry date of your existing badge allowing sufficient time for your application to be processed. As described on page 8, this can take several weeks to complete, depending upon the details of your application.

If your application is successful, a £10 fee is payable to the Council when you come to collect your Blue Badge you can pay by cheque, postal order, debit or credit card.

Freedom Pass (older persons, disabled and discretionary disabled)

The Freedom Pass scheme allows free travel in the Greater London area on buses, the tube, national rail services (London network); DLR and Tramlink, for older and disabled people who meet the national eligibility criteria and who reside in the Borough. It also allows free bus travel after 9:30am Monday to Fridays and at all times at the weekends on local bus services anywhere in England.



From 1 May 2022 Discretionary Freedom Passes (for people with mental health conditions) will no longer be issued. Passes already in circulation can continue to be used until such time the pass holder is no longer eligible or has moved out of the borough.

London Taxicard

Taxicard is a London-wide door-to-door licensed taxi and private hire vehicle service for those with serious long-term mobility problems, are dependent on a wheelchair or have a severe sight impairment and who have difficulty in using mainstream public transport such as tubes, buses and trains. Harrow members can take a maximum of 40 trips per year. It should be noted that under no circumstances is Harrow Council able to grant further trips above these maximum annual allocations. Please note if you are a wheelchair user please provide as much detail about your wheelchair in your application as you can in order that London Councils, who run the scheme, can establish the best way to provide the Taxicard service for you. Their ability to provide a suitable vehicle for you will be limited if you do not have access to a wheelchair of a type which can be safely secured in a London taxi and you are not able to transfer to a seat when travelling.

Who is eligible?

Harrow Council has published on its website full details of the eligibility criteria and evidence it will accept in order for someone to be eligible for a travel concession. This information can be found at www.harrow.gov.uk. Please note that your sole or principal residence (occupied as your main residence, not a second home) must be in Harrow and you must be able to provide proof of identity.

Blue Badge eligibility

To be eligible for a Blue Badge a person must meet one of the following two criteria:

- 1) Drives a vehicle regularly, has a severe disability in both arms and is unable to operate, or has considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of parking meter
- 2) Has an enduring and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking

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

- 1) A child who has a condition that requires that they be always accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around with the child without great difficulty
- 2) A child who has a condition that requires that they must always be kept near a motor vehicle so that they can, if necessary, be treated for that condition in the vehicle or taken quickly in the vehicle to a place where they can be so treated

If you have one of the following benefits and if you can submit current proof of entitlement, provided the benefit has been in place for at least 12 months, or is expected to be for at least 12 months, then you are automatically entitled to the Blue Badge and no further assessment is required.

- 1) Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA)
 - 2) Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – providing you have been awarded:
 - 8 points or more against the ‘Moving around’ activity
 - exactly 10 points for the “planning and following a journey” activity with Descriptor E “overwhelming psychological distress”
 - 3) Registered blind (severely sight impaired)
 - 4) War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS)
 - 5) Have been both awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking
- In the case of children under three, the badge is issued for a maximum period ending on the day immediately following their third birthday
 - Where entitlement is linked to an award of HRMCDLA or WPMS the period of issue is linked to the period of receipt of that allowance, where that period is less than three years. For example, a badge can be issued for 9 or 12 months if this corresponds with the period of issue of HRMCDLA or WPMS.

All other applications are for Harrow Council to determine and will be referred to our mobility specialists for further assessment.

Older Person's Freedom Pass eligibility

Applicants are advised to use the Gov.uk tool (site address below) to calculate the date at which they become automatically eligible for an Older Person's Freedom Pass.

<https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age>

If you are eligible for an Older Person's Freedom Pass you do not need to complete this application form and can apply online at London Councils: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk

Disabled Person's Freedom Pass eligibility

Residents of the borough whose disability has a substantial effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities and who have a disability which is permanent or which may last for at least 12 months may be entitled to a Disabled Person's Freedom Pass. To be eligible you must meet one of the seven criteria in the Transport Act 2000, as set out below.

Eligible people are those:

- 1) who are blind or partially sighted
- 2) who are profoundly or severely deaf
- 3) who are without speech
- 4) who have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to walk
- 5) who do not have arms or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms
- 6) who have a learning disability, that is, a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind, which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
- 7) who, if they applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, would have their applications refused pursuant to Section 92 of that Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol

Under criteria 7 above, those who are currently barred from holding a licence are people with:

- 7.1) epilepsy (unless it is of a type which does not pose a danger)
- 7.2) severe mental disorder
- 7.3) liability to sudden attacks of giddiness or fainting (whether as a result of cardiac disorder or otherwise)
- 7.4) inability to read a registration plate in good light at 20.5 metres (with lenses, if worn)
- 7.5) other disabilities which are likely to cause the driving of vehicles by them to be a source of danger to the public

Please note that it is not necessary to have applied for a driving licence to be eligible under these criteria. You can provide evidence from your consultant psychiatrist to state that you would be refused a licence should you apply, although for epilepsy, eligibility is not automatic and will depend on the circumstances of each applicant. There are a number of categories of severe mental disorder under which a person may qualify and eligibility will depend on the circumstances of each applicant and the severity of the condition. Such conditions include (but are not limited to) dementia (or any organic brain syndrome), behaviour disorders (including post head injury syndrome and Non-Epileptic Seizure Disorder), and personality disorders.

If you have one of the following benefits and if you can submit current proof of entitlement, provided the benefit has been in place for at least 12 months, or is expected to be for at least 12 months, then you are automatically entitled to the Freedom Pass and no further assessment is required.

- Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA)
- War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – providing you have been awarded 8 points or more against either the 'Moving around' and/or 'Communicating Verbally' activities

All other applications are for Harrow Council to determine and will be referred to our mobility specialists for further assessment.

Discretionary Disabled Person's Freedom Pass eligibility

From 1 May 2022 Discretionary Freedom Passes (for people with mental health conditions) will no longer be issued. Passes already in circulation can continue to be used until such time the pass holder is no longer eligible or has moved out of the borough.

Exceptional Circumstances where a Freedom Pass will be issued:

Sufferers of chronic medical conditions exacerbated by physical activity, which will also then affect their mobility, or to provide an essential escort for learning disability teens/adults where the disabled person has a Freedom Pass and can use the bus but cannot travel alone due to cognition/orientation/safety reasons.

Please note that exceptional circumstances do not apply to residents of residential homes. Assessment will be based solely on mobility and will not take into account compassionate or financial grounds. It should be noted that only one escort pass will be issued, and this will be to the main carer.

London Taxicard eligibility

Taxicard is only for people who have a serious long-term mobility impairment, or severe sight impairment, and difficulty in using mainstream public transport. To be eligible, you must have a disability that is permanent, having lasted, or expected to last, at least twelve months:

If you have one of the following benefits and if you can submit current proof of entitlement, provided the benefit has been in place for at least 12 months, or is expected to be for at least 12 months, then you are automatically entitled to a Taxicard and no further assessment is required.

- Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – providing you have been awarded 8 points or more against the 'Moving around' activity
- Registered as Severely Sight Impaired/Blind
- War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS)

All other applications are for Harrow Council to determine and will be referred to our mobility specialists for further assessment.

Please note you will not qualify for any travel concession if:

- 1) You do not meet any of the above criteria
- 2) You have a temporary disability such as a broken leg
- 3) You experience a psychological disorder that does not cause severe discomfort
- 4) You only experience walking problems when carrying shopping
- 5) Your condition does not continuously severely limit your ability to walk and function on a daily basis
- 6) You are prevented by your immigration status from claiming benefits in the UK or generally prevented from having recourse to Public Funds and you must not apply. It is Harrow Council policy to prosecute all fraudulent claims

How to complete the application form

It is important that you fully complete the relevant parts of the form and that you provide all the supporting documentation. It is your responsibility to obtain any supporting information from your healthcare specialist or GP. If you do not provide the supporting documentation, then this will delay your application. The onus is on each applicant to prove their entitlement and Harrow Council may refuse to issue a travel concession if you do not provide adequate evidence that you meet the eligibility criteria.

Section A: Personal Details

Please provide your personal details and information in section A including your proofs of identity and residency. Failure to provide this information or the relevant proofs will result in a delay in processing your application.

You will need to supply 2 passport size photographs. Please enclose these with your application form otherwise it will be returned to you.

Please Note if you are receipt of a benefit that grants automatic entitlement (as listed above) and can provide proof dated within the last 12 months then you only need to complete Section A and Section E (Declaration) of the form.

If you receive the Higher Rate of the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) you will have had an award notice letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). You will also have been sent an annual up-rating letter stating your entitlement. This up-rating letter can be used as proof of receipt of HRMCDLA.

If you are submitting evidence of a qualifying Personal Independence Payment award, please be sure to include the full breakdown of your score for each activity. The cover sheet alone, showing award of standard or enhanced rate, is not sufficient to prove your entitlement.

If you need proof that you're getting a benefit, such as a printed record if you have lost the original please contact the benefit office that pays you.

Section B: Eligibility Criteria (Questions for 'without further assessment' Applicants)

You will be eligible for a badge if you are more than two years old, can satisfy residency and identity checks, and meet at least one of the eligibility criteria in Section 2. You will need to provide the appropriate documentation to prove eligibility under one of the criteria. An example of proof of entitlement is proof of payment of the allowance. Any documents sent in as proof of entitlement will be returned to the applicant as quickly as possible, once they are no longer needed by the local authority.

Section 1a and 1b

Please complete this section if you are registered as severely sight impaired (blind). You are asked to state the name of the local authority or borough with which you are registered. In many cases, you will be registered with the same authority to which the application for a badge is being made. If this is not the case, local authorities will check with the named authority that you are registered as severely sight impaired (blind).

The current formal notification required to register as severely sight impaired (blind) is a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI), signed by a Consultant Ophthalmologist, which states that you are severely sight impaired (blind). However, registration is voluntary.

Section 2

Please complete this section if you receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (WPMS). You should have an official letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency demonstrating receipt of the grant. You must enclose a copy of the original letter as proof of entitlement. If you have lost this letter, the agency can be contacted via the free-phone no: 0800 169 22 77.

Section 3

Please complete this section if you receive a lump sum benefit under the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme within tariff levels 1-8 (inclusive) and have been assessed and certified by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You will have been issued with a letter from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency confirming the level of your award and also confirming that you have been assessed as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking. You must enclose the original of this letter as proof of entitlement. If you have lost this letter, the agency can be contacted via the free-phone no: 0800 169 22 77.

Section 4

If you are registered deaf or have a hearing impairment, please tick here and provide further information including an audiology report.

Section 5

If you have difficulty communicating by speech please complete this section and provide recent evidence such as proof of use of sign language, a medical report confirming severe speech impairment or proof of severe learning disability.

Section 6

If you have a learning disability, please provide information here about the support you are receiving. Please also provide recent evidence such as receipt of DLA for care at the middle or higher rate, evidence of supported living or evidence from a support worker.

Section 7

If you have Severe Mental Health problems, please provide information regarding this here including the name and address of your consultant.

Section 8

If you are unable to hold a driving license as specified in the criteria on page 3 of this document, please complete section 8 providing the appropriate proofs.

If you have been awarded a qualifying benefit, please ensure you provide the relevant proofs.

If you answered 'Yes' to any of the criteria in Section B – Eligibility Criteria relevant to the concession you are applying for (this will be in brackets next to the sub-heading), you now need only to fill in Section E: Declaration.

Section C: Eligibility subject to further assessment

Section C is to be completed if the questions in Section B do not apply to you, but you have an enduring and substantial disability which means you cannot walk, or which means that you have very considerable difficulty walking. An enduring disability is one that is likely to last for the duration of the three-year issue period.

You may be able to meet the criteria for a Blue Badge if:

- You are unable to walk
- Experience very considerable difficulty whilst walking, which may include very considerable psychological distress
- Be at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person

The notes below apply to those that apply under the “unable to walk / considerable difficulty while walking” criteria (all schemes). If you are applying under the Blue Badge “considerable difficulty whilst walking” category primarily due to “very considerable psychological distress;” or “Being at risk of serious harm when walking; or pose, when walking, a risk of serious harm to any other person” criteria please go to Section D on page 14.

Section C Part A: Unable to walk

The Guidance below is for those applying under the “unable to walk” criteria

Harrow Council may ask you to have a mobility assessment with a medical professional, such as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist, in order to determine whether you meet the eligibility criteria in Section C.

Medical conditions such as asthma, autism, psychological / behavioural problems, Crohn’s disease / incontinent conditions and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) are not in themselves a qualification for a travel concession. People with these conditions may be eligible under this criterion, but only if they are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty in walking, in addition to their condition.

1. Health and Mobility

You are asked to describe the nature of your disability and give an estimate of the maximum distance that you can walk without assistance from another person or severe discomfort. It can be difficult to accurately work out the distance you can walk. There are several things that can help you:

- Ask someone to walk with you and pace the distance you walk
- The average adult step is just under 1 metre. For example, if the person walking with you took 100 steps, you would have walked about 90 metres (or 100 yards)
- The average double-decker bus is about 11 metres (or 12 yards) long
- A full-size football pitch is about 100 metres (or 110 yards) long

If you still find it difficult to work out the distance you can walk in metres, please tell us:

- The number of steps you can take, and how long, in minutes, it would take you to walk this distance
- About your walking speed
- The way that you walk, for example, shuffling or small steps etc

2. Severely Disabled in Both Arms

To be completed by applicants who have a severe disability in both arms. You will need to show that you drive a vehicle regularly, that you have a severe disability in both arms and that you are unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of on-street parking equipment.

3. Applying on Behalf of a Child

If you are applying on behalf of a child please complete this section about their needs.

4. Activities of Daily Living

Please provide in this section information regarding your daily activities, what tasks you are capable of undertaking yourself and what other support you receive.

5. Specialist Equipment

Please provide information in this section on any specialist equipment you have been provided with or use in your day-to-day living.

6. Travel and Transport, and 7. Other Transport

Please provide information in this section on the transport services you use and are able to use.

8. Other Information

Please provide information any other information not already provided that you feel is relevant and will support your application. Please use separate sheets if necessary.

Section D: Hidden Disabilities

Please note this section only applies to those applying for a Blue Badge

If you are applying for a Blue Badge under the August 2019 “Hidden Disabilities” criteria, then you will need to obtain medical evidence supporting your application from Health Care Professionals who understand your condition. Please note that the applicant is responsible for gathering this information and will need to bear any cost. You will be provided with the DFT Document, Appendix H which you can send to those Health Care Professionals involved in your care.

Please note that the Department for Transport expects that Health Care Professionals involved in your care may need 6 weeks to respond to this request, so please allow 8-10 weeks for this process.

The Department for Transport suggest the below as possible sources of the medical evidence that will be required to support the application. Appendix H also helps guide the Professionals to provide the evidence that is needed.

- Letter of diagnosis
 - Confirmation of ongoing treatment, clinic attendance, or referral
 - Evidence of prescribed medication relevant to the condition
 - Evidence of Specialist consultations, or referral
 - Education Health and Care plans (EHCP), may provide insight into needs
 - Experience and coping strategies
 - Personal Independent Payment (PIP) decision letters
 - Social Housing reports or assessments from Local Authority
 - Care Plans from local care teams
 - The applicants’ patient summary, or summary care records
- 1) For those Blue Badge applicants with a ‘hidden disability’, Harrow will review the following as relevant considerations, based on the Guidance issued by the Department for Transport:
 - Does the problem happen more often than not?
 - Is the applicant in more danger than another person of a similar age?
 - Are ‘reasonable’ coping strategies reducing the risk?
 - It must be clear that there is a real benefit to the applicant being able to park near to the destination
 - An applicant will be asked how they access goods and services at present
 - 2) Consideration is given to the following descriptors and to the frequency of any difficulties:
 - Ability to communicate verbally with others during a journey
 - Hazard awareness when undertaking a journey
 - Mood and behaviour when travelling
 - Ability to travel independently
 - 3) If an applicant believes a decision to decline an application is incorrect, they may appeal, but in order to appeal they must provide extra evidence in addition to that already provided that they think will overturn the decision.

Section E: Declaration

The relevant mandatory declarations must be signed by all applicants, since they underpin the terms of applying for a travel concession. Please take the time to read and understand these declarations.

All applicants must sign and date the form prior to submitting it.

Harrow Council may refuse to issue a travel concession if they have reason to believe that the applicant is not who they claim to be or that the concession would be used by someone other than the person to whom it has been issued.

What happens next?

On receipt of your completed form and all supporting documentation, including your passport sized photographs, Harrow Council will process your application as quickly as possible. Please do not staple your photos to the form as we will scan an image of this which will appear on your card

If you are applying for, or renewing, a Blue Badge, and you meet one of the automatic criteria, then we will contact you as soon as the Badge is ready for collection from the Civic Centre. Please note that a £10 fee is payable to the Council when you come to collect a Blue Badge.

Method of Payment

You can pay by cheque, postal order, debit or credit card.

If you are applying for a Freedom Pass or Taxicard, and you meet one of the automatic criteria, then this will be sent to you in the post by London Councils, who manage these schemes. There is no charge for either a Freedom Pass or Taxicard.

London Councils will charge £12 to replace any lost or damaged travel concession pass and Harrow Council will charge £10 for a replacement Blue Badge.

If you do not meet one of the automatic criteria then your application will be forwarded to our approved mobility specialists, Access Independent, who will assess your application using a proven Assessment Methodology to see if you meet the eligibility criteria. Please note this may take several weeks to complete. You may be invited to attend a face-to-face assessment with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist in the Civic Centre, in which case you will receive an appointment letter or email from Access Independent.

Access Independent may also ask for confirmation of the information you have provided, or ask you to obtain further information, from a healthcare professional or GP that you have nominated.

Please note that where Access Independent considers it necessary see further information from your healthcare professional or GP to support your application then it is your responsibility to obtain any such information. Harrow Council will not meet any costs that you're a healthcare professional or GP may seek to charge in order to provide the required information.

Once the assessment has been completed you will be advised by letter or email whether your application has been successful and on what happens next. If your application is unsuccessful you will receive a letter explaining the reasons why. Anyone who is unsuccessful has a right of appeal and the letter will explain how you can do this, should you wish to.