

Blue Badge Scheme



Wednesday 10 February 2010



- Department for Transport plans on Blue Badge Enforcement
- To Highlight problems associated with Blue Badge Enforcement
- How Birmingham and NSL have approached Enforcement

Do you have a problem with Blue Badge Misuse

- Birmingham issued over 50,000 Blue Badges
- 15,000 Stolen and lost Blue Badges Replaced.
- 1 in 20 people have blue badge. (50 per 1,000)
- National average 46 per 1,000
- 15 Misuse cases from one office block in 2 days.
- 75% vehicles in one street displaying blue badges –
Following enforcement only 20% vehicles displaying
blue badge
- Birmingham is typical of most large Conurbations.

56% of LAs think that badges are issued to a significant number of people who *do not* really need one

- Widespread abuse of badges:
 - About 70% of offences are misuse
 - Badges copied and forged
 - Multiple applications made to different LAs
 - Many badges reported ‘lost’
 - Badges not returned when people die or badge expires
 - 66% perceive levels of abuse in their areas to be serious
 - 60% think that abuse is on the increase

Birmingham Concessions

- 103 On Street Disabled Parking Places. (In City Centre)
- Unlimited Free Parking in On Street Pay and Display Bays
- 3 Hours Free parking on All Yellow Lines.
- Free parking in Some Residents Parking Schemes
- All Council Off Street Car Parks have dedicated disabled parking spaces with easy access.
- Unlimited free Parking in Council Off Street Car parks

Birmingham Partners

- Department Transport
 - Centre of Excellence
- NSL Services
 - Parking Enforcement Contractor
- Mansfield's
 - Vehicle Removal Contractor
- Disability Groups

Birmingham Does Not Have All The Answers

- Birmingham identified by DFT as a Centre of Excellence
- Still developing good practice
- Still looking to learn from others



DFT Blue Badge Reform Strategy

- Published in October 2008
- Commitment to implement
- within five years
- Objectives to:
 - ensure that those who are most in need of a Badge are able to have one
 - maximise the benefits for Badge holders by reducing abuse and preventing fraud
 - raise the reputation and value of the scheme
 - raise standards and improve consistency

DFT Blue Badge Reform Strategy

- Data sharing scheme to improve enforcement and customer services
- Explore need for new enforcement powers, e.g. on-spot confiscation
- Improve badge design & security
- Design-out potential for abuse wherever possible
- Raising awareness of misuse

Current legislation

- Section 11 Fraud Act 2006
 - Obtaining Services Dishonestly
- Section 117 Road Traffic Regulation Act 2006
 - Wrongful use of Disabled Persons Badge

Birmingham Prosecution Process

1. Intelligence Gathering
2. Observations
3. Penalty Charge Notice
4. Removal
5. Interview
6. Court

Common Defences

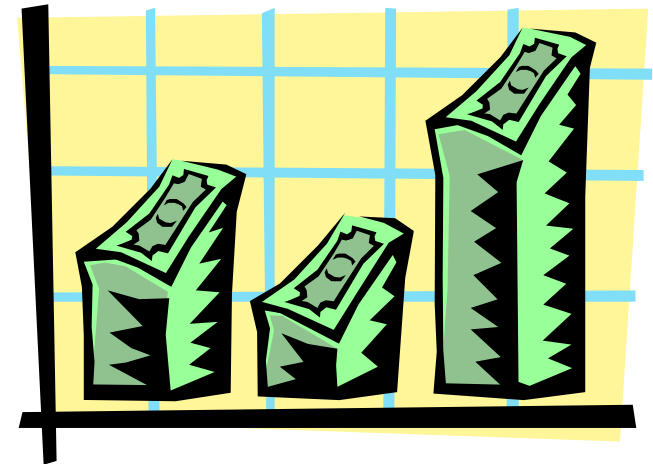
- Dropped the badge holder off around the corner and looking for somewhere to park.
 - Absolute Offence
 - Phone Badge Holder at home
 - Pattern of parking
- Going to pick badge Holder up.
 - Ring Badge Holder at Home
 - Period of time between vehicle parking and removing
 - Pattern of Parking
- I didn't put the badge In the window.
 - Observations when parking vehicle
 - Repeated observations and sightings

Cases Since March 2009

- In Excess of 400 cases of suspected blue badge misuse detected
- 240 Penalty Charge Notices Issued
- 120 vehicles removed for Misuse
- 85 cases at magistrates Court

Average Fine £500 - £600

Costs £188



Birmingham Developments

- Remote access to Care First and blue badge application forms.
- Referrals to DWP
- Improved practices with Parking Enforcement Contractor

Barriers to Enforcement

- Some key issues identified at LA workshop June 09 included:
 - Badge appearance is not standard
 - Inability to confiscate a badge
 - Inability to share information nationally

Suggested Enforcement Powers

- Some key issues identified at recent LA workshop included:
 - DfT ‘Rights & Responsibilities’ booklet should include more info on misuse and enforcement
 - 3 strikes rule needs to be removed or should be able to include PCNs as ‘relevant convictions’
 - Penalties are not tough enough
 - Not priority for involvement from police
 - Lack of clarity on availability of towing powers
 - Parking tribunals often favour badge holders
 - Lack of tools/deterrents – e.g. FPNs, points on licence

For more information please visit;

[http://www.dft.gov.uk/
transportforyou/access/bluebadge/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/bluebadge/)

- Blue Badge Strategy
- Blue Badge Reform Newsletter
- Local Authority Guidance