

Equality Impact Assessment



Initial assessment or screening

Name of policy, service or decision: Blue Badge Transformation

1. Description – what is being assessed?

Background

Currently there are 16,464 valid blue badges issued by Dudley MBC.

Following the Department for Transport 2011 Blue Badge reforms, the statutory responsibility for assessment and administration of the Blue Badge Scheme was transferred to Local Authorities.

All successful blue badge applicants are required to attend a face to face appointment for the purpose of providing identification and blue badge eligibility documentation, payment and have a digital photograph taken.

Initially the duties were split between two Blue Badge teams. One team, comprised of Adult Social Care staff, provided a service to those applicants who required assessment by Occupational Therapy staff based at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre. The other team, from Corporate Directorate, dealt with applicants who had an automatic entitlement to a badge and were based at Ednam House. They later moved to 3-5 St James's Road, with completion of face to face appointments taking place at Dudley Library.

In 2016 the involvement of Corporate Directorate staff was withdrawn and less than 50% (1.27 fte) of the Corporate Directorate Blue Badge Team was transferred to the Adult Social Care team, with all Blue Badge activity now being carried out at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre.

Since these changes, due to an increased demand for the Blue Badge service and an overall reduction in staffing, it has proved unfeasible to maintain an adequate service under the current delivery model.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has also recently completed a consultation on the blue badge eligibility criteria. The result of this is that eligibility is due to change in early 2019 to include 'hidden disabilities', such as autism and dementia.

ADASS have predicted that this change in criteria will bring about approximately a 25% increase in the number of blue badges issued. This means that applications and the associated processing is expected to increase by at least 25%. This will increase the current monthly average from 657 contacts per month to 821.5.

Proposal

The proposal is to improve the service by providing a modern, efficient and customer-focused service through:

- Transforming the processing of Blue Badge applications with new systems

- Transferring the administration/processing function to the Corporate Service Centre – Dudley Council Plus. Applicants who require a face to face mobility assessment will continue to be assessed by Adult Social Care staff based at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre. This will include:

1. Online Application Facility

Through the development of online processes, it will remove the need for all service users to attend a face to face appointment for new applications, applicants who have an automatic entitlement and for people who have been identified as not requiring a mobility assessment. Service users will be required to complete an online application, which will include them uploading all required documentation, a passport style photograph and make payment electronically. An alternative will need to be considered for applicants who do not have access to, or cannot use, the internet or computers.

2. Procurement of Case Management System

The current national blue badge database (BBIS) will cease at the end of 2018 and DfT are currently designing a replacement system, for applications and badge ordering. This will no longer include a case management facility. The case management system being offered by Northgate Public Services will provide an efficient case management and tracking system that will interface directly with the new DfT system. This would replace the current functions used in AIS by Dudley social care and in addition will be accessible to approved non adult social care staff.

2. Lead officer on assessment:

3. Head of service: Marie Spittle

4. Members of assessment team:

Marie Spittle, Abbie Goodwin, Andrea Petkevicius

5. What are the main issues relating to each protected characteristic?

Consider all three parts of the public sector equality duty:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advancing equality of opportunity, and
- fostering good relations

Protected characteristic	Issues
All protected characteristics	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim nationally and locally is to channel shift applicants to self serve online. • An alternative will need to be considered for those who do not have access to, or cannot use, the internet or computers. <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>

Age	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There are is additional impact on age, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Disability	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on Disability, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Gender reassignment	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on gender reassignment, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Pregnancy or maternity	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on pregnancy or maternity, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Race	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on Race, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Religion or belief	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on Religion or belief, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Sex	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p>

	<p>There is no additional impact on Sex, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
Sexual Orientation	<p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>There is no additional impact on sexual orientation, other than that highlighted in all characteristics.</p> <p><u>Impact on Staff</u></p>
<p>6. Outline any information, such as from monitoring, consultation feedback or complaints, which indicates a differential impact on particular protected groups.</p> <p><u>Impact on Service Provision</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p><u>Impact on staff</u></p>	
<p>Conclusions</p>	
<p>7. On the basis of sections 5 and 6, is an equality impact assessment required?</p>	
<p>8. (a) If no, list any actions identified:</p> <p>Service Provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the national project the DfT are carrying out research with users throughout the agile development and are consulting with users groups / stakeholders as outlined here which DMBC will monitor. • Locally, an alternative will need to be considered for those who do not have access to or cannot use the internet or computers. • This could be achieved through a postal service or attending Dudley Council Plus (DCP). • Changes to service provision are now live and the following has been implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants who do not have access to internet can use computers in DCP local libraries or DCP. ○ Evidence can taken to DCP local libraries, DCP & Adult Social Care reception at Brierley Hill for scanning, or sent via post. ○ Applicants who cannot use the internet are being offered telephone interviews. 	

(b) If yes, what priority do you assign to the EIA (high, medium, low) and why?

Signed:.....
Assessment Lead Officer -

Date:

Signed:.....
Head of Service – Marie Spittle

Date: