

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Cllr Coker

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Patel, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport

Question: it states that a renewal of a disabled badge can take up to 12 weeks, currently can you tell me how many are outside of this sla?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

Plymouth City Council administers the Blue Badge scheme for Plymouth residents on behalf of the Department for Transport who also maintain and own the application process which is only available online. If applicants are not able to apply themselves or access family or friend support, [Citizen's Advice Plymouth](#) or [Age UK Plymouth](#) have experience in helping.

Applicants can access face to face appointments on Thursdays at Central Library by contacting the Customer Hub.

The application process can take up to 12 weeks **once all information required has been supplied**, what we are experiencing is a number of applications where the documentation confirming identification or health conditions is not provided or does not meet the requirements which then causes delays. The PCC webpage messaging did not make this clear and this has now been updated.

Some applicants are automatically eligible due to receiving certain health benefits or confirmed health conditions and upon PCC receiving the correct documentation a Blue Badge can be issued; we are completing this within 12 weeks.

Applicants who are not automatically eligible will need to be further medically assessed and currently PCC refer these applicants to Access Independent, who employ occupational therapists to consider health related eligibility assessments on behalf of local authorities and NHS CCGs. Access Independent will determine from the information provided in the application whether to arrange a desktop assessment, face to face clinical assessment or request further medical information to consider eligibility.

We are currently experiencing delays and have requested to meet with Access Independent to discuss this further. Access Independent are stating delays are due to an increase in applications since the lifting of Covid restrictions and reporting referrals have nearly doubled in September and October compared to previous months and are recruiting additional staff to address this.

Assessment action	SLA	Access Independent (AI) Oldest referral awaiting outcome
Desk-based assessment	5 working day	35 working days – all have been allocated to an assessor
Face to face clinical assessments	15 working days	103 working days – this relates to one referral which is awaiting information from the client The next longest referrals are at is 44 working days of which many applicants have not shown up to planned appointments and AI are following up
Further information	Request to be sent within 5 working days once received, desk-based assessment within 5 working days	90 working days

In addition, we are aware that some applicants receiving their Blue Badge have been impacted by the Royal Mail strikes.

Blue Badge volumes:

Period/Year	Applications received	Referred for assessment	% Referred for assessment	Approved	Declined	% Declined
2022 (18/10/2022)	4876	790	16%	560	230	41%
2021	5225	1454	28%	1142	312	27%
2020	4394	1296	29%	1007	289	29%
2019	5278	643	12%	460	183	40%
2018	5173	2199	43%	1956	243	12%

Signed:**Dated:** 15 November 2022