

London Borough of Bromley

PART 1 - PUBLIC

**Briefing for ACS PDS
29 June 2021**

**TRAVEL CONCESSIONS UPDATE
(blue badge, freedom passes and taxi cards)**

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1. **Summary**

1.1 This information item has been drafted in response to questions and concerns raised by Cllr Cooke and was initially presented to the Portfolio Holder and PDS Chair Briefing on 7th June 2021.

2. **The Briefing**

- 2.1 Blue badge provision is often an area of contention for applicants who do not meet the strict eligibility criteria.. Recent liaison with the Council complaints team has found that during the financial year 2021-21, five complaints were received. This is slightly lower than the previous 2 financial years which each recorded six complaints.
- 2.2 Special measures were put in place to support the continued provision of assessment for travel concessions during the Covid 19 period, following benchmarking with other boroughs.
- 2.3 Applicants who were not deemed automatically eligible and requiring further assessment were provided with desk top assessment of their needs, based on medical evidence and telephone discussion. Successful applicants were then provided with either a 3 year blue badge (which is the standard period of provision) or for cases which were more difficult to assess, a 12 month blue badge was provided with a view to completing an updated face to face assessment as soon as covid measures allowed. Given the prevailing conditions during the pandemic interim assessment decisions were made for a 12-month provision on the basis that we would be reviewing them within 12 months.
- 2.4 Unfortunately, the need to cease face to face assessments has been required for longer than we would have hoped, but in line with current Covid 19 restriction lifting, we plan to resume face to face assessments as soon as infection control guidance allows.

- 2.5 To date, around 300 short term (12 month) blue badges have been issued. A small number of these have now come back for renewal and creative options (such as video assessments) have been used to reassess, to avoid issuing any further 12 month badges.
- 2.6 We will be seeking Covid 19 resources to enable us to address the remaining spike of temporary badges requiring a review, in a timely manner. In terms of cost, on the basis of 300 applicants requiring reviews we would need an additional OT locum for a period of 12 weeks at a cost of around £14.5k plus any associated processing costs that will be incurred by Liberata.
- 2.7 Each renewal costs the applicant £10 and a request has been made to the budget holder to waive these for these badges, to reduce the risk of complaints. Any loss of income will be offset against the Covid 19 budget.