

Driving, Parking and Blue Badge

Overview

While some disabled people cannot drive and are reliant on public transport, other disabled people are unable to use public transport, and must drive. While there is a move towards disincentivising private car ownership and encouraging public transport as an alternative, cars are necessary for some disabled people. The more environmentally friendly and ULEZ compliant cars are also often more expensive. They are therefore not a viable option for many disabled people, as attested to in this quote: “...I value my car. It actually helps my quality of life. I would find it difficult to not have one, especially because of my disabilities.”

Recommendations from the report

Survey respondents raised a number of issues around driving, parking, and the use of the Blue Badge scheme in Lewisham which fed into our recommendations.

There were recommendations around driving, parking, and the Blue Badge scheme both in the short-term and the long-term recommendations in the report.

In the short-term, the report highlighted problems with blue badge parking not being enforced, and parking over dropped kerbs often blocking wheelchair access.

In the long-term, driving, parking, and the Blue Badge scheme were addressed as part of the Borough Access 2030 strategy. Recommendations were made in the following areas:

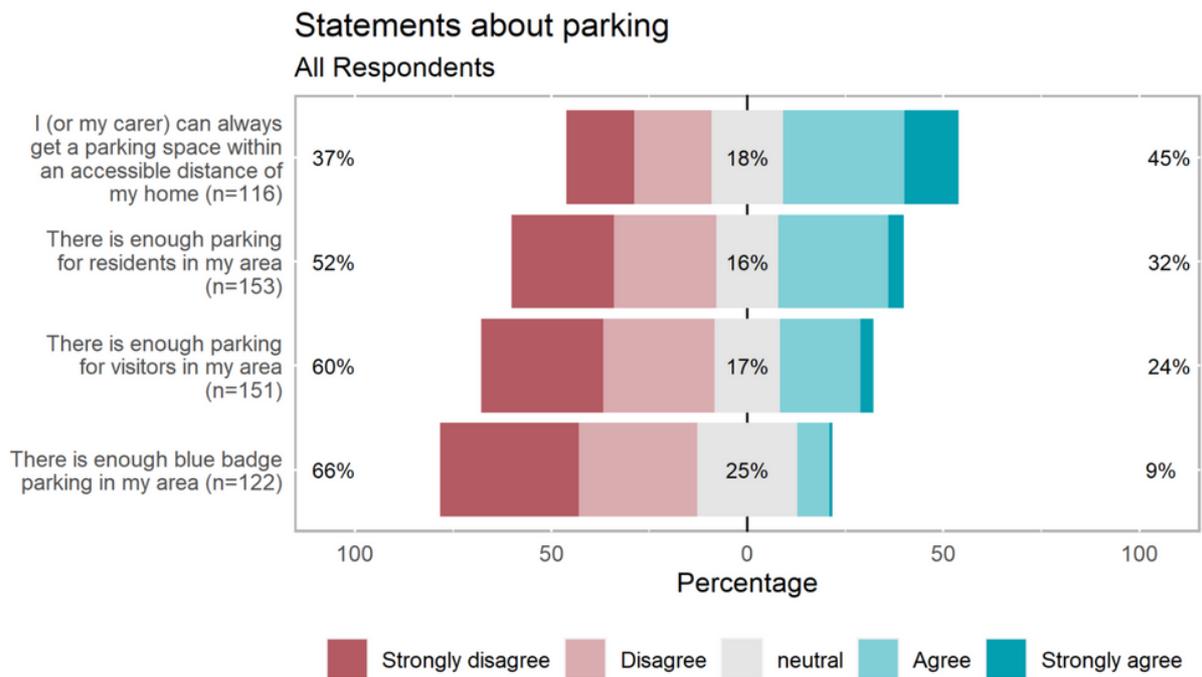
- Addressing the positive and negative impacts of Low Traffic Networks on disabled people, including committing to mitigations for disabled drivers (including multiple vehicle exemptions with a single blue badge where a Blue Badge holder legitimately uses multiple vehicles), and options for exemption for disabled drivers who were not blue badge holders.
- Enforcement of ‘disabled-only’ parking and working with disabled people to understand what would be necessary to achieve this, including: anonymous reporting of violations; a sustained campaign about Blue Badge parking space abuse, and a greater emphasis on ticketing drivers abusing disabled bays which are under a traffic management order.
- Reviewing availability of parking for disabled people and Blue Badge holders, and addressing the feasibility of permitting Blue Badge holders to use ‘residents only’ bays across the borough.
- Exploring Bromley’s *name and shame* scheme for misuse of Blue Badges as another compliance tool.

Extension: Driving, Parking and Blue Badge

Evidence and reflections

Parking

Out of all services addressed, residents were least happy with parking services in the Borough. 57% were unhappy or very unhappy, and only 15% were happy or very happy.



Less than half of the respondents could always get a parking space within an accessible distance of their homes. Even where people may qualify for a disabled parking bay outside their home, it is very expensive.



I dread going out because people come and park in my space, which means I have to move it when they're gone.



There was a considerable lack of parking, with only 1/3 agreeing that there were enough residents parking in their area. 1/4 of people said there was enough parking for visitors in their area, and 1/10 said that there was enough parking for Blue Badge holders in their area.



...Although I have a blue badge and a parking bay outside my home, the bay is usually taken up for days at a time with non-disabled drivers. Thus I have been forced to park streets away and get a cab home, and back to my car.



It is very expensive to apply for a disabled parking space, and the risk of losing so much money if it's not approved means I cannot afford to apply for another one



Extension: Driving, Parking and Blue Badge

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For disabled people who are not eligible for Blue Badges there is also a significant impact from the lack of parking overall.

One proposed solution for the lack of Blue Badge parking was for Blue Badge holders to be allowed to park in resident bays. One respondent said,

This was also proposed as a solution for reducing social isolation for disabled people with Blue Badges, who are otherwise unable to park when visiting people.

Residents also raised particular issues around the lack of enforcement of Blue Badges and private disabled parking bays, problems with the online parking permit system, and cars parking on dropped kerbs (e.g., near the Silver Road development) making the pavement impossible to navigate for wheelchair users.

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...I am not eligible for a Blue Badge, but often have to return home without going where I wanted as there is no parking near enough, or I am exhausted by the walk to/from the parking.

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...Blue Badge holders need to be able to park in residents bays as well. In Lambeth you can, and it's a huge help.

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...Why can't I use my Blue Badge to park in residential parking areas to visit others? I cannot maintain any connections with other people.

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Extension: Driving, Parking and Blue Badge

Low traffic networks

Respondents raised significant concerns about Low Traffic Networks.

It is worth noting that the potential health benefits of reduced pollution will also affect disabled people in particular, given the prevalence of respiratory conditions. However, this was not observed in the evidence we received.

The concerns raised by respondents included:

- A lack of communication about LTNs with residents, with comments such as *"...appalling signage."*
- A lack of information around bypasses for Blue Badge holders, including which LTNS these can be put in place for.
- A lack of access to bypasses for Blue Badge holders who would need these for multiple vehicles (e.g., because two different people drive them regularly).
- A lack of bypasses for LTNs for disabled drivers who are not eligible for Blue Badges.

Ultra-Low Emissions Zone

Whilst there is general support for the ULEZ across many respondents, the implementation of the ULEZ has had a significant impact for disabled people. This is especially true for those on a lower income, and who require cars to live their daily lives. Even with the ULEZ scrappage scheme, compliant cars are not feasible for everyone, and the restrictions this brings in impact on respondents' freedom and independence.

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...I feel disabled people's opinions about LTNs have been completely ignored, and are against the disability discrimination act.

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...Nothing is ever communicated and changes happen frequently.

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The combination of COVID-19 and the introduction of the extended ULEZ led me to give up my car, and I am happy with that decision

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Whilst I do support cleaner cars, buying a new ULEZ-compliant car has been a huge financial burden

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My daughter is my carer, and as she is unable to afford a new car and unable to afford the ULEZ charge, we have had to stop going to Lewisham for shopping.

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