

Appendix 'A'

DARMS - Blue Badge Administration Team Performance Indicator Recovery Plan

Performance Indicator Description:
Why is this indicator under-performing?
<p>Background Blue Badges are applied for via an online system which was introduced nationally in 2012 to prevent fraud and misuse. The criteria for receiving a badge is set by the Department for Transport (DfT) and was also updated in 2012 with an added focus on mobility and replacing Doctors letters being used as evidence. The increased focus on mobility issues rather than broader disabilities has meant that people who may have previously been eligible for a badge may now, under the new guidelines no longer be eligible.</p> <p>Main duties relating to the Blue Badge Scheme at present:</p> <p>Enquiries (Customer Access Team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answering queries regarding Blue Badges <p>Applications (Customer Access Team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online applications by applicants using national online system• Applications supported by the Customer Access Team either by phone or by Telly Talk <p>Administration (Documents and Record Management Service)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making decisions based on the evidence supplied with the application• Dealing with the appeals process <p>Fulfilment – Northgate (nationally appointed company)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printing of badges and maintenance of online system <p>Complaints All complaints are responded to by the Blue Badge Administration team, even if they are not the origin of the complaint. Complaints are generally on a range of issues including the DfT guidance and how it's been applied to an application, technical issues with the online system, Telly Talk facilities being out of action or experiencing long waiting times for the facilities, delays in processing applications, disagreement with the outcome of an application decision or the absence of face to face support.</p> <p>The move towards a predominately online service has potentially been the biggest shift experienced by the Blue Badge Scheme. Early in 2014 Customer Access began sign-posting applicants to the online system wherever possible. Previously operators would complete the applications with the individual over the phone. However, due to the nature of the application, these calls were often lengthy and time consuming. Customer Access now ask the service user to apply online but do offer a call back in 8 days to see if they still require help. If a caller has difficulty reading and writing, the operator will complete their application over the phone with them at the time of their call. Paper forms are also available in instances where applicants are perhaps elderly and unable to access the internet or support to help with the application process, or where the applicant is visually impaired or deaf.</p>

Complaints increased from 0.11% in Q1 to 0.39% in Q2. To give this some context this equates to 8 complaints received out of 7,053 applications processed in Q1 and 29 complaints received out of 7,304 processed in Q2. Below is a summary of the reasons for these complaints. **Please note, one complaint may contain multiple reasons therefore they will not add up to 8 and 29.**

Reason	Q1	Q2	TOTAL
Telly Talk	8	6	14
Online Technical	4	2	6
Online Processing	6	7	13
No Reminder	1	7	8
No Internet	2	1	3
Misinformed CSC	3	3	6
Misinformed BB	1	1	2
Operator Attitude CSC	1	0	1
Operator Attitude BB	0	1	1
Eligibility	0	4	4
Other	4	8	12

What actions are required to put it back on track?

Action Taken to Date

The above section outlines the reasons for underperformance. However, the Head of Service and Business Manager for DARMS accept that not all of the reasons for underperformance are out of their control. It was identified soon after the Blue Badge team's transfer from OCL back into LCC that the service required an over-haul. There was a lack of management information available to assess and monitor performance. Anecdotally there seemed to be an increasing dissatisfaction with the service, but it was difficult to tell where the problem lay. Extensive work was carried out in June 2014 to pull together retrospective and day-forward key management information on application numbers, complaints, appeals and their reasons. Quality spot checks were also introduced. The availability of this data from June 2014 onward has allowed us to accurately monitor the service and has also identified that whilst there are indeed complaints, a large proportion of the reasons can be attributed to factors outside of Blue Badge Administration control.

In September 2014 a full review of the DfT Guidance was undertaken. DARMS management led this review to ensure that guidelines were being interpreted and applied consistently by the Blue Badge team. Inconsistencies and grey-areas were addressed and clear operating frameworks were agreed with the Blue Badge Manager and Team Leader.

Some of the outputs of this review include:

- A clearly documented and advertised process for complaints and appeals
- A defined escalation process for the handling of complaints, VIP complaints and appeals within DARMS identifying clear hand-off points
- A flyer for service users highlighting key information about the Blue Badge application process which will be distributed at locations such as GP surgeries etc.
- Clearly documented team processes

- Checklists and prompts to elicit the right information first time
- Knowledge sharing and training to empower staff to use their judgement
- A review of Blue Badge letters to ensure they are fit for purpose and customer focussed
- An approach that acknowledges the individual applicants unique requirements rather than 'one size fits all'
- A move away from solely process driven service delivery in favour of a more personalised, empathetic approach to assessing applications

A report was also commissioned by the Assistant Chief Executive to understand the issues contributing to the feeling of discontent with the Blue Badge Scheme which had been reported at a higher level. The Business Improvement team undertook a review and looked at all aspects of the service, including Telly Talk, Blue Badge Administration and Customer Access. This report recommended the move of Blue Badge Administration into Customer Access to allow for a more joined-up approach to service provision. This report is currently being considered by Management Team.