

FAMILY, PARTNERS AND LIFE ADMIN · 10.7

Blue Badge and Neurodivergence: When Hidden Disability Qualifies

The Blue Badge scheme has covered hidden disability explicitly since 2019. Autistic and ADHD applicants can qualify where the impact on using public spaces is severe enough, but the evidence has to do the work.

FOR

Adults and parents of autistic or ADHD children

AUDIENCE AGE

All ages

REVIEWED

18 May 2026

PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

Blue Badge and Neurodivergence: When Hidden Disability Qualifies

What changed in 2019

- **The DfT extended the criteria to hidden disability.** Before August 2019 the scheme was framed almost entirely around physical mobility. The 2019 extension named cognitive, sensory and social disability as explicitly covered.
- **Two specific gates.** "Very considerable psychological distress" caused by a journey, and "risk of serious harm" to self or others. Both are deliberately high bars.
- **Two eligibility routes.** Automatic eligibility (Enhanced Mobility PIP and a few other categories) requires no further assessment. Most autistic and ADHD applicants come through the discretionary route, assessed by the local authority.

What goes in the application

- **Specifics, not adjectives.** Write what cannot be done safely, reliably and repeatedly, with concrete examples. "Three out of every five car park trips end with him bolting back to the car" beats "struggles in car parks".
- **A clinical letter that describes the impact, not just the diagnosis.** A two-line "X has been diagnosed with autism" is much weaker than a paragraph describing what happens in car parks, shopping centres, or busy unfamiliar streets.
- **Frequency matters.** The DfT guidance asks how often the difficulty arises. "Every journey" or "most journeys" is a different application from "sometimes". Be honest and specific.
- **Where there is a danger element, name it.** Bolting into traffic, self-injury or significant aggression triggered by sensory overload all fit the "risk of serious harm" gate and should be evidenced if they apply.
- **Existing benefits letters are supporting evidence.** A PIP award decision letter, particularly one showing Mobility component points, is useful even where it does not trigger automatic eligibility.

How we can help

- **Your local council and patient orgs first.** Council Blue Badge teams handle procedural questions. The National Autistic Society and Disability Rights UK both publish detailed guides written for hidden-disability applicants.
- **Clinical letters from your team.** Your GP, paediatrician or diagnosing clinician can write supporting letters. NeuroFX clinicians can write supporting letters for patients they have assessed; speak to your clinician about scope and turnaround.
- **When refused, reapply with new evidence.** There is no formal tribunal route. The council's review process is the first step; a reapplication with stronger evidence is often more useful than a review.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Your local council's Blue Badge team is the right first call for procedural questions. Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK both publish detailed Blue Badge guides written for hidden-disability applicants. For clinical evidence, your GP, paediatrician or diagnosing clinician can write supporting letters; NeuroFX clinicians can write supporting letters for patients they have assessed where helpful.

SOURCES

DfT Blue Badge guidance; gov.uk Apply for Blue Badge; DfT 2019 press release; NAS; Disability Rights UK

NEXT STEPS**Speak to NeuroFX**

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

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