

Have your say

Disabled Persons Freedom Pass

Consultation document

Introduction

Barnet Council is improving the way new applicants and existing Disabled Persons Freedom Pass holders are assessed to see if they qualify for a pass. This will mean a better quality, and more effective service for users.

In this document we set out our proposals for a better way of assessing applications and renewals. We are proposing to accept more types of supporting evidence for each application, making the assessment process fairer for everyone.

Over the next six weeks we will be consulting with Barnet residents, service users, volunteers, community groups and voluntary organisations on these proposals.

The consultation is also available on engage.barnet.gov.uk where feedback can be given through an online questionnaire.

We are making improvements to the:

- way we assess if someone qualifies for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass, and
- the way that people can apply.

Our proposals include:

- more ways to provide evidence to support your application
- looking at the ways you can apply for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass
- making documents more accessible for all users.

There are no proposed changes to the **categories** of the recognised disabilities because these categories are stipulated by government legislation.

What do we want to achieve through these proposals?

To achieve these proposals we will:

- provide a service that is easy and simple to understand
- provide clear information for all applications
- ensure that the service is easily accessible via telephone, email and face-to-face, ensuring that each applicant is supported through the renewal/application process
- ensure applicants are fairly assessed using the evidence they provide with their application and, where applicable, an independent mobility assessment be carried out
- ensure every person who chooses to apply for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass has access to guidance information, face-to-face assistance (if required), and document formats which are suitable for them
- introduce 'Easy Read' documents.

The review of the Disabled Persons Freedom Pass process is also to ensure:

- the process is easier to understand
- to ensure the process is efficient.

This document provides further information on Freedom Passes and our proposals, in particular:

- background information on Freedom Passes and how they are currently administered
- detailed information on what we are proposing
- an outline of the key questions we are seeking your views on.

How to give your views

The consultation is open to all Barnet residents, anybody currently holding a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass in Barnet, their carers and families, community groups and voluntary organisations.

There are three ways you can take part in the questionnaire:

- you can complete a questionnaire online engage.barnet.gov.uk, or
- complete a paper questionnaire. If you would like a paper questionnaire please contact us by:
 - email: fpfeedback@barnet.gov.uk
tel: 020 8359 5640
- attend a drop-in session (see below), where we can help you complete the questionnaire.

If you need any additional help or support, or wish to have a copy of this document in a different format, you can contact us by:
email: fpfeedback@barnet.gov.uk
tel: 020 8359 5640

The findings from the consultation will contribute to the final recommendations that are put forward to the Policy and Resources Committee in December. The committee will then make a decision on the way forward.

Details of drop-in sessions		
Location	Date	Time
Hendon Library, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4BQ	30 September 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm
North Finchley Library, Ravensdale Avenue, North Finchley N12 9HP	3 October 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm
Chipping Barnet Library, 3 Stapylton Road, Chipping Barnet EN5 4QT	11 October 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm
Burnt Oak Library, Watling Avenue, Edgware HA8 0UB	19 October 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm
Golders Green Library, 156 Golders Green Road, Golders Green NW11 8HE	27 October 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm
Edgware Library, Hale Lane, Edgware HA8 8NN	3 November 2016	10am – 12noon and 2 – 4pm

Background

What are Freedom Passes?

Freedom Pass is a brand name in London for the concessionary travel scheme which allows free travel on buses, Tube, and some rail services. It grants free transport for disabled residents at any time on almost all Tube and bus services, and after 9.30am weekdays on rail services. It is a statutory scheme which is operated by London Councils on behalf of London Boroughs including Barnet.

The Freedom Pass is a plastic card which works in the same way as an Oyster card or contactless payment card where a user taps in and taps out of transport services.



London Councils manages the Freedom Pass scheme. Once an applicant has proved their eligibility London Councils will be advised. London Councils will then arrange for the Freedom Pass to be posted out to the address supplied on the application form.

What are the different types of Freedom Passes available?

There are two types of Freedom Passes:

Older Persons Freedom Pass

The Older Persons Freedom Pass Scheme allows older people to travel free across London and free national bus journeys.

To obtain an Older Persons Freedom pass, you must meet the following eligibility criteria:

‘Your London home needs to be your ‘sole’ or ‘principal’ residence, which means you live there most of the time. The eligibility age is rising in line with the women’s state pension age. People born on or after 6 October 1954 will have to wait until they are 66 years old to be eligible for a Freedom Pass.’

The changes we are proposing will not affect the Older Person’s Freedom Pass criteria.

Disabled Persons Freedom Pass

The Disabled Persons Freedom Pass Scheme is administered by London Councils, however all checking and processing is carried out by the local authority.

How does an applicant prove they qualify for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass?

An applicant must provide supporting evidence with their application form. The evidence which should be provided by the applicant and accepted by the council is detailed in the Department for Transport guidance ‘Guidance to local authorities on assessing eligibility of disabled people in England for concessionary bus travel’.

Further information and the full Department for Transport guidance can be found below:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181507/eligibility-review.pdf

Currently, Disabled Persons Freedom Pass applicants will undergo a desk-based assessment by a council officer to determine whether the applicant falls under one of the automatic eligibility categories and has provided acceptable supporting evidence and can be issued a pass.

Barnet Council uses guidelines known as ‘assessment of eligibility’ to establish if someone qualifies for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass.

To be eligible for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass:

‘Your sole or principal residence must be in London; and you must have one of the recognised disabilities from Section 240 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended).’

The recognised disabilities according to s240 Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) which make someone eligible for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass are, people who:

1. are blind or partially sighted
2. are profoundly or severely deaf
3. are without speech
4. have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has left them with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to walk
5. do not have arms or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms
6. have a learning disability that is defined as ‘a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning’
7. if they applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, would have their application refused pursuant to section 92 of the Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol.

Starting on page 6 of this document we have included a table which explains the current criteria and proposed criteria. This information is also provided within the online questionnaire so you can refer to the changes as you answer each question about the changes to the evidence.

What feedback do we want from you?

We are seeking your views on:

- what extent you support or oppose the proposed changes to the evidence which will be accepted to support an application for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass
- whether there is other evidence the council should accept
- how you would prefer to send evidence
- the application process and what help you would need to complete a form
- what support could be provided to help you complete a form online.

We are also asking current Disability Freedom Pass Users:

- how you currently apply for a pass
- what is your main use of the pass, for example, socialising, education or work?

Additional information

Further information and the full legislation of s240 Greater London Authority Act can be found below:

Section 240 Greater London Authority Act: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/29/section/240

Department for Transport ‘Guidance to local authorities on assessing eligibility of disabled people in England for concessionary bus travel’: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181507/eligibility-review.pdf

DVLA guidelines on medical fitness: www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals

The current required evidence and the proposed evidence

Assessment of eligibility for Disabled Persons Freedom Pass – London Borough of Barnet		
Category	Current evidence accepted of stated disability	Proposed evidence accepted of stated disability
Is blind or partially sighted	Provide London Borough of Barnet (LBB) registration number	A Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) ; or A BD8 Certificate; or A London Borough of Barnet (LBB) Social Care Direct registration number
Is profoundly or severely deaf	Provide London Borough of Barnet (LBB) registration number	A recent Audiogram or an Audiology Report which states a severe hearing loss of 70-95 dB HL (Hearing Level) and a profound loss of 95+ dB HL; or Provide London Borough of Barnet Social Care Direct registration number
Is without speech	Provide London Borough of Barnet (LBB) registration number	Recent Personal Independence Payment (PIP) award letter stating an award of eight points or more for 'Communicating Verbally'; or Recent Medical Evidence from a Speech Therapist
Has suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to walk	Receives Personal Independence Payment (PIP)/ Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA); or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement (WPMS); or Independent Medical Assessment (if Desk Based Assessment returns a score of 8-9 points)	Recent Personal Independence Payment (PIP) award letter stating an award of eight points or more for the 'Moving Around' category; or Recent Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMCDLA) award letter; or Recent War Pensioners Mobility Supplement (WPMS) award letter; or Mobility assessment by LBB's Independent Medical Assessor (if Desk Based Assessment returns a score of 8-9 points)
Do not have arms, or have long term loss of both arms	Medical Evidence from GP	Medical Evidence demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of both arms or • Impairment resulting in loss of use of both arms or • Deformity of both arms resulting in being unable to carry out day-to-day tasks
Has a learning disability, that is, a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning	Registered with Barnet Learning Disabilities Team	Provide proof of accepted registration with the Barnet Learning Disabilities Services (BLDS); or Receiving Services from BLDS; or Recent Clinical Psychological/Psychiatrist Assessment Report; or Current Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) with relevant assessment/Education statement; or Receiving benefits relating to their disability

Assessment of eligibility for Disabled Persons Freedom Pass – London Borough of Barnet		
Category	Current evidence accepted of stated disability	Proposed evidence accepted of stated disability
<p>Would, if he/she applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, have his application refused pursuant to section 92 of the Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol.</p>	<p>Registered with Dennis Scott Unit for two years or more and must be seen regularly</p>	<p>Refusal or revocation letter from DVLA; or</p> <p>Recent Medical evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epilepsy or • Severe mental disorder or • Sudden attacks of fainting or • Inability to read a registration plate at 20.5 metres even with lenses or • Other disabilities which are likely to cause the driving of vehicles by them to be a source of danger to the public ; or <p>‘Supporting Information Request Form’ completed by a specialist; or</p> <p>Evidence of contact with mental health professional in relationship to a mental health diagnosis which has a significant impact on their wellbeing; or</p> <p>Subject to Current Mental Health Care Programme Approach; or</p> <p>Evidence of receiving benefits such as DLA OR PIP relating to their disability</p>

For more information:
tel: 020 8359 5460 email: fpfeedback@barnet.gov.uk
or visit engage.barnet.gov.uk