

Help with getting around

If you have Parkinson's, you might be worried about how this will affect your ability to get out and about. But having Parkinson's shouldn't stop you from getting around.

This information explains more about the travel and transport schemes that you might qualify for that make travelling a bit easier.

This information covers:

- the Blue Badge scheme for parking
- driving issues
- Motability
- the National Key Scheme (accessible public toilets)
- buses and other local transport
- rail travel
- concessionary fare schemes
- the Central London Congestion Charge
- travel and holiday information

The Blue Badge scheme

The aim of the Blue Badge scheme is to help people with severe mobility problems, people who are registered blind, and those with severe disabilities in both arms to park closer to places, services or facilities they wish to visit or use.

With a Blue Badge on display, a vehicle driven by a disabled person, or with a disabled person as a passenger, can be parked:

- without charge or time limit at on-street parking meters and in Pay and Display bays (unless signs show a time limit for badge holders), where the local authority or council has adopted this policy. It's always best to check what the policy is with the relevant local authority or council

- without time limit in streets where you would usually only be able to wait for limited periods
- for a maximum of three hours in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in some local authority areas in Scotland (do check local rules), where there are yellow lines or other signage

This is only if the disabled person leaves the vehicle, and:

- in England, Wales and Scotland, a special parking clock, where provided, can be used and also should be displayed showing the time of arrival when:
 - the vehicle is parked on yellow lines **or**
 - in a reserved parking place for badge holders that has a time limit (in England, Wales and Scotland)
- the vehicle is not parked in a bus lane or cycle lane during the lane's hours of operation
- the vehicle is not parked where there is a ban on loading or unloading
- all other parking rules are met

Your car should not be wheel-clamped if you display a current Blue Badge, but the police may remove the vehicle if it's causing an obstruction.

It's an offence to display a Blue Badge if the disabled person is not, or has not been, in the vehicle. The only exception is if the driver is on the way to collect a disabled person or has just dropped them off.

The Blue Badge scheme applies throughout the UK, except for certain London boroughs (City of London, Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and part of Camden) who have their own versions. These boroughs do have some parking concessions for Blue Badge holders, so contact them to find out more.

Do I qualify for a Blue Badge?

You may qualify for a Blue Badge automatically or you may need to undergo an assessment.

Automatic qualification

To automatically qualify for a Blue Badge you must:

- be getting the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, **or**

- be assessed as having eight points or more under the 'moving around' activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment, **or**
- in Scotland and Wales, 12 points under the 'planning and following journeys' activity, **or**
- be getting War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, **or**
- in England, if you have received a lump sum payment from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (within tariff levels 1-8), and have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability, and includes Permanent Mental Disorder under tariff 6. In England, you must also have a substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking, **or**
- in Northern Ireland, you must have been certified by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) as having a permanent impairment which causes inability to walk or a lot of difficulty walking, **or**
- in England, have scored 10 points specifically for descriptor E (being unable to undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress) under the 'planning and following journeys' activity of the Personal Independence Payment assessment, **or**
- be registered blind

Qualifying through assessment

To qualify through assessment you must have a permanent and substantial disability which means that:

In England

- you can't walk at all
- you can't walk without help from someone else or using mobility aids
- you find walking very difficult due to pain, breathlessness or the time it takes
- walking is dangerous to your health and safety
- you have a terminal illness, which means you can't walk or find walking very difficult and have a DS1500 form
- you have a severe disability in both arms and drive regularly, but can't operate pay-and-display parking machines
- you are constantly a significant risk to yourself or others near vehicles, in traffic or car parks

- you struggle severely to plan or follow a journey
- you find it difficult or impossible to control your actions and lack awareness of the impact you could have on others
- you regularly have intense and overwhelming responses to situations causing temporary loss of behavioural control
- you frequently become extremely anxious or fearful of public/open spaces

In Scotland

- have a substantial disability lasting at least 12 months that means you can't walk at all or that means you're virtually unable to walk, **or**
- regularly drive and can't use parking meters because of a severe disability in both arms, **or**
- have a mental condition that means you lack awareness about the danger of traffic when making journeys

If you have a mental condition that means you lack awareness about the danger of traffic when making journeys, you can't apply online. You should call your local council's Blue Badge team to discuss your case.

In Wales

- be completely unable to walk **or**
- have considerable difficulty walking **or**
- have a substantial impairment to mobility **or**
- have a severe disability in both arms if you are a driver **or**
- have a severe cognitive impairment and are unable to plan or follow any journey without the help of someone else **or**
- have a terminal illness that seriously limits your mobility

In Northern Ireland

- have a permanent disability which means you can't walk or have a lot of difficulty walking - in this case your doctor may be asked to confirm your eligibility
- drive a vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and are unable to operate, or have a lot of difficulty operating, all or some types of parking meter

You can check to see if you're eligible for a Blue Badge and apply for or renew your application online at www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge (except for the City of Aberdeen Council, where you should apply via the council's website), or www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/blue-badge-eligibility-criteria for Northern Ireland. You can also contact your local authority or council. Local authorities and councils in England and Northern Ireland can charge up to £10 (or £20 in Scotland) to give you a badge. There is no charge for a Blue Badge in Wales. A badge will last up to three years.

Appealing a decision

If your local authority or council refuses to issue you with a Blue Badge, you have no formal right of appeal. However, as many authorities and councils have internal procedures for dealing with reviews, it's worth writing to ask for a review.

In Scotland there is a formal review process. If a local authority decides that you do not qualify, you can ask for a review of the decision within 28 days of receiving it.

There's no limit on how many times you can apply for a Blue Badge. If you're unsuccessful on your first attempt and your situation changes, you're free to try again.

Using your Blue Badge abroad

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the rules around using Blue Badges abroad are subject to change. For the latest guidance, you should read the *European Commission booklet Parking card for people with disabilities in the European Union*. You can find a PDF of this booklet online

Central London Congestion Charge

Blue Badge holders can be exempt from the Congestion Charge in central London if they apply to the Congestion Charge Office. This exemption can be used on any two vehicles. There is a £10 administration fee.

For an application form call **0343 222 2222** or apply online at www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/discounts-and-exemptions. Vehicles taxed in the 'Disabled' class are automatically exempt if they are registered at DVLA, Swansea.

Driving issues

If you use a car to get around and want to know more about driving when you have Parkinson's, you may find our information on driving and Parkinson's useful. It covers key issues, including:

- your legal obligations as a driver
- insurance
- exemption from vehicle tax
- mobility assessment centres

Find out more: see our information on driving and Parkinson's.

Motability

The Motability Scheme enables disabled people to exchange a 'qualifying benefit' to lease a car (including cars adapted to carry a driver or passenger seated in their wheelchair), powered wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Qualifying benefits include: the higher-rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance, the enhanced-rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment, War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement and Armed Forces Independence Payment.

To find out more about Motability, call **0300 456 4566** or visit their website **www.motability.co.uk** (not available in Northern Ireland)

National Key Scheme

If you have a disability, you may find a Radar key helpful. These allow you to unlock more than 9,000 accessible public toilets across the UK. You can purchase a Radar key from Disability Rights UK.

To order, call **0203 687 0790** or visit **www.disabilityrightsuk.org** and order via the online shop.

Alternatively, you can write to Disability Rights UK, giving your name and address and a written declaration of your disability (this means you do not have to pay VAT on the key). Enclose a cheque or postal order for £4.75 (or £5.70 if you do not qualify

for a VAT exemption) made payable to Disability Rights UK. Their address is:

Disability Rights UK
Plexal, 14 East Bay Lane
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
London E20 3BS

A list is available of National Key Scheme toilets in your area in return for a donation of £3.50 with every purchase of the key.

Buses and other local transport

By law, the government can make bus companies ensure that disabled people are able to get on and off buses safely and 'without too much difficulty' and travel 'in safety and reasonable comfort'. To find out about public transport in London, including disabled access, you can visit the Transport for London website at **www.tfl.gov.uk** or call its customer service centre on **0343 222 1234**. You can also order the Transport for London tube access guide on this number.

Outside London, local authorities are in charge of public transport. Contact your local authority to find out more about access to disabled public transport in your area. In Northern Ireland, you should contact the Department of Infrastructure.

Local community transport schemes

Many areas have volunteer-led local community transport schemes in place. Your local authority or council will be able to provide you further information about schemes in your area.

Rail travel

In England, Scotland and Wales, if you need to make special arrangements to travel by rail because of your Parkinson's (or any other condition), call National Rail Enquiries on **0800 022 3720** or textphone Enquiries on **0345 60 50 600**, and ask about their Passenger Assist service (not available in Northern Ireland). You may be able to get a Disabled Persons Railcard, which gives you and a companion one-third off the cost of most train journeys.

The card costs £20 for one year or £54 for three years. You can get details by visiting **www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk** or by ringing **0345 605 0525** (textphone **0345 601 0132**). You'll need to show that you receive one of the following benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement
- War Disablement Pension
- are buying or leasing a vehicle through the Motability Scheme

Or you must have one of the following conditions:

- a visual impairment
- epilepsy
- a hearing impairment

If you're in Northern Ireland, you can apply for the similar Half Fare SmartPass. Contact Translink on **0845 600 0049**, visit www.translink.co.uk/usingtranslink/ticketsandtravelcards/concession or pick up an application form from Translink bus and rail stations, social security offices, Health and Social Care Trusts, or Driver and Vehicle Licensing NI.

Concessionary fare schemes

Your local authority or council will have a concessionary fare scheme for older and disabled people.

Each nation in the UK sets the minimum that should be available to help pay for travel. Who qualifies as a disabled person for this help also varies between each country in the UK:

- in England, if you've reached pension age or you're disabled, you can get free off-peak local bus travel
- in Wales, if you are 60 or over or are disabled, you can travel for free on local buses across Wales, at any time of day. For more details, visit www.traveline.cymru/concessionary-travel-pass. You can also travel for free or at a discounted rate on many Transport for Wales trains. For further details, visit www.tfwrail.wales/ways-to-save/concessionary-travel

- in Scotland, if you are 60 or over or are disabled, a National Entitlement Card allows you to use national and local buses for free at any time of day and also may entitle you to discounted rail travel in some areas of Scotland. You may also qualify for the companion element on your card, which allows you to take someone with you for free to assist you on buses. To find out if you qualify, visit www.entitlementcard.org.uk
- in Northern Ireland, you can travel free if you are aged 60 or over, are registered blind or are a War Disablement pensioner, and for half price if you have a listed disabling condition or receive certain benefits. To see if you qualify, www.translink.co.uk/usingtranslink/ticketsandtravelcards/concession

Some local authorities and councils may offer more than the minimum to residents. For instance, in London, the Freedom Pass lets older and disabled people use London buses, tubes, trains and trams free of charge (time restrictions apply in some cases).

For more information see www.tfl.gov.uk. Contact your local authority or council to find out more about what they can offer.

If you're 60 or over, you may be able to get discounted coach travel. For example, National Express has a Senior Coachcard that costs £12.50 (+£2.50 p&p) and gives a third off standard and fully flexible fares for a year.

Some companies also offer reduced fares for disabled people. You can get more details from the individual coach companies.

Travel and holiday information

If you are planning to go on holiday or need to travel abroad:

- Tourism For All gives information on all aspects of travel for disabled people. Call **0845 124 9971** or visit www.tourismforall.org.uk
- You can also use the online directory of accessible accommodation and travel at www.goodaccessguide.co.uk

Find out more: see our information on holidays, travel and Parkinson's

More information and support

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see their specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at [parkinsons.org.uk/nurses](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/nurses)

Information and support from Parkinson's UK

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk.

Our helpline can put you in touch with one of our Parkinson's local advisers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

Our website [parkinsons.org.uk](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk) has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition.

Visit [parkinsons.org.uk/forum](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/forum) to chat to other people with similar experiences on our online discussion forum.

Thank you

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to or reviewed this information sheet.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at parkinsons.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at parkinsons.org.uk/information-support. If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at infocontent@parkinsons.org.uk



Help with getting around (INFOS0018/2020)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk), or email publications@parkinsons.org.uk. Thank you!

1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in I care for someone with Parkinson's
 I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's
 Other (please specify)

2. Where did you get this information from?

- GP Specialist Parkinson's nurse Parkinson's UK local group Parkinson's UK local adviser
 Ordered directly from us Call to the helpline
 Other (please specify)

3. Has it answered all your questions?

- Yes, completely Yes, mostly Not sure Partly Not at all

4. How easy was it to understand?

- Very easy Easy Not sure Quite difficult Very difficult

We're the Parkinson's charity that drives better care, treatments and quality of life.

Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's.

Parkinson's UK
215 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1EJ

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
(Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm).
Interpreting available.

NGT Relay **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices). For more information see **www.ngts.org.uk**

hello@parkinsons.org.uk
parkinsons.org.uk

Order code: INFOS0018

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Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

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5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

It helped a lot It helped a little No change It didn't help It made things worse

6. What is your ethnic background?*

Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed White British White other
 Other (please specify)

*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

Want to hear more from us?

I would like a response to my feedback I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK
 I'm interested in joining the Information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

How would you prefer us to contact you? Email Post Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party. To find out more, read our privacy policy at [parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions)