



The Baywatch Campaign (NI)

*Providing Accessible Parking
A good practice guide*

'There is no excuse for parking abuse'

Introduction

Access to a car, the concessions offered by the Blue Badge Scheme and well-designed accessible parking enable many disabled people to do everyday things most non-disabled people take for granted. However misuse of the Blue Badge and accessible parking bays makes life very difficult for disabled people and ruins many journeys.

The Baywatch Campaign was set up to highlight the issue of misuse and abuse of parking bays and the Blue Badge. The Campaign is an alliance of organisations including Imtac, Disabled Motoring UK, Disability Action and Shopmobility NI.

Baywatch seeks to end parking abuse in a number of ways. Firstly we want to change attitudes of the public to make misuse and abuse of parking bays and the Blue Badge socially unacceptable. Secondly we want to educate Badge Holders to limit the potential misuse and abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme. Finally we want to work in partnership with service providers to improve the provision and management of accessible parking.

This Guide has been developed with the assistance of the key organisations involved in the Baywatch Campaign to help service providers deliver the best possible parking facilities for disabled people.



It's good for your business, it's good for your customers

If you provide parking as part of your business planning requirements and legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act means you must provide parking accessible to disabled people. In addition on a practical level the ease with which disabled people find accessing the parking facilities you provide will have a major influence on whether or not they use your services.

Disabled people, their relatives and friends make up a significant part of the population of Northern Ireland and make a major contribution to the local economy. There are currently over 100,000 people in Northern Ireland with a Blue Badge. Over 60% of Badge Holders are over the age of 65. With society getting older it is likely that the number of people who require accessible parking in the future will increase.

Service providers who pro-actively provide good accessible parking are likely to reap the benefits of the custom and spending power of a growing section of society.

Who can use accessible parking bays?

Accessible parking bays should be provided for the use of holders of the Blue Badge. The Blue Badge is issued to people who find walking even short distances difficult and who need to park close to their destination.

In Northern Ireland the Blue Badge is issued by DRD Roads Service. The Blue Badge is, however, a European wide scheme and you may come across Badges issued elsewhere, particularly those issued in the Republic of Ireland and by local authorities in Great Britain. Many countries outside of the EU also issue parking badges for disabled people. In general you should recognise any of these Badges regardless of where it is issued.

How many bays should I provide?

The number of bays you should provide will depend on the nature of your business and the number of spaces in your car park. Guidance¹ issued by the Department for Transport indicates the following:

Car Park used for	Car park size	
	Up to 200 bays	Over 200 bays
Employees and visitors to business premises	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total car park whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of car park capacity
Shopping, recreation and leisure	3 bays or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity

¹ "Parking for disabled people" Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/95 published the Department for Transport

BS 8300²: 2009 has detailed recommendations on the number of bays that should be provided by specific service providers. Service providers under the shopping, recreation and leisure category should provide individual bays for each disabled employee in addition to the recommendation above.

Where should bays be located?

Walking distances of over 50 metres can be difficult for some disabled people³. Therefore accessible parking bays need to be located as close as possible to the entrance and exits of your premises. Routes to and from the bays from entrances and exits should have a firm and level surface. If you provide a multi-storey car park bays should be located nearest the main access points or lifts to your premises where appropriate.

² BS 8300: 2009 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice

³ Reference Inclusive Mobility

What about “Parent and Toddler” spaces?

It is important that service providers recognise the requirements of parents with young children who also require wider designated parking. It is essential, however, that service providers consider access for disabled people when designing parent and toddler bays. Baywatch recommends that service providers adhere to the following principles when determining the location of, and designing and providing designated bays:

1. Always locate accessible parking bays provided for disabled people nearest to the entrance/exit of your building
2. Always ensure that signage and bay markings make a clear distinction between the purpose of different designated bays
3. Use other measures that differentiate between different types of designated parking – for example make “parent and toddler” bays wider but do not use hatching or alternatively use different colours for marking accessible bays and parent and toddler bays

Bay size

Accessible bays should be designed so that drivers and passengers, any of whom may be disabled and need the bay, can get in and out of the car easily and safely. Bays should be longer and wider than standard bays to ensure easy access from both sides and at the rear. This is because people may need to extend their doors fully to get out of/into their vehicle or may need extra room to transfer to or from their wheelchair.

The photos on the next two pages illustrates good examples of accessible parking provision at County Hall in Coleraine and Parliament Buildings at Stormont. The bays are clearly marked indicating they are for use by disabled people. Hatched areas on both sides and at the rear allow plenty of room to get out of and into vehicles and to safely access the boot.

Best practice recommends that the actual parking space should be at least 4.8m by 2.4m. In addition the hatched areas should allow a 1.2m access zone between bays at the side and 1.2m at the rear for easy boot access.⁴



Baywatch would expect that new developments should incorporate accessible parking designed to the above specification. Service providers should seek to improve existing provision as and when parking facilities are refreshed.

⁴ Reference BS 8300



Signage

It is important that you provide clear signage at bays indicating that accessible bays are for the use of Blue Badge holders only. On the next page are good practice examples of clear signage used by Forestside and Sprucefield Shopping Centres

Signage should also indicate if you carry out any enforcement of accessible bays.



In larger car parks, directional signage should be provided from the entrance of the car park to the location of accessible bays.

Payment arrangements

If you charge for car parking you must ensure that payment facilities (ticket machines) are accessible to disabled people. Detailed advice on how to do this can be obtained from the publications listed in the section entitled “Further information and useful guidance”.

Barriers and controls

Barriers at entrances and exits of car parks can present difficulties for disabled people. It is important that these are designed to be accessible to disabled people. More detailed advice can be obtained from the publications listed in the section entitled “Further information and useful guidance”.

Pedestrian Routes

Having provided well designed accessible parking it is equally important to ensure that pedestrian routes to and from your premises are accessible. Routes should be level, free from steps, bollards and steep slopes which present difficulties for many disabled people. Moveable street furniture such as bins, seating and A-boards should be carefully located so as to not obstruct walking routes. Well-designed dropped kerbs with appropriate tactile paving should be provided.

More advice on accessible pedestrian routes can be obtained from Inclusive Mobility details of which are included in the “Further information and useful guidance” section.

Managing your accessible parking

Providing parking spaces is only one part of good accessible parking provision. In addition you should be pro-active in the management of your parking bays. A key aspect of managing your parking spaces is making sure accessible bays are free to be used by Blue Badge holders and are not misused by others.

Surveys undertaken by the Baywatch Campaign in Northern Ireland have highlighted that one in four accessible bays here are abused at any time. We have identified the following steps which could help service providers manage spaces better and prevent abuse:

1. Make sure that accessible bays are clearly marked and signed for use by Blue Badge holders
2. Never allow bays to be used by non-Blue Badge Holders – for example for promotional events or contractors working on your premises
3. Ensure that your employees do not abuse the bays you provide
4. Make sure accessible bays are kept free of obstructions – for example shopping trolleys
5. Dedicate a member of staff to periodically monitor bays and encourage other members of staff to be aware of and report abuse

6. If you have a public address system use it to request that drivers of vehicles not displaying badges return and move their vehicle or to regularly ask that bays are not misused
7. Provide prominent and clear signage in public and staff areas of your building discouraging the misuse of accessible parking.
8. Place a leaflet on the windscreen of cars abusing bays highlighting the difficulties this behaviour causes. The picture illustrates how Sprucefield Shopping Centre operates such a policy.
9. Where possible clamp and/or fine vehicles parked in accessible bays without a Badge. The picture illustrates how Lisburn City Council enforces bays at Lagan Valley Island.



Many service providers in Northern Ireland are increasingly facing parking management issues caused by demand for parking or drivers parking in car parks to travel elsewhere. Increasingly parking restrictions are being introduced and enforced at locations including retail parks and hospital sites.

These restrictions may include charging for parking or a time restriction on parking. Where these changes are being made there is an opportunity for service providers to include management of accessible parking bays as part of the broader changes to parking management.

If you do start to clamp vehicles it is important to ensure that drivers of clamped vehicles have immediate access to the parking management to enable bays to be freed quickly. It is also worth considering in advance a response to situations where misuse occurs due to a genuine mistake by a holder – for example where a Blue Badge has accidentally slipped from view.

More detailed guidance on providing accessible parking is available from the publications listed below. These publications are available free of charge via the weblink unless stated otherwise.

Good Design

“Parking for disabled people” Traffic Advisory Leaflet 05/95 published by the Department for Transport

(http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090505152230/http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165240/244921/244924/TAL_5-951)

“Inclusive Mobility: a Guide to Best Practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure” published the Department for Transport

(www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf)

“BS 8300: 2009 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice” Available to buy from BSI

(<http://shop.bsigroup.com/en/Browse-by-Sector/Building-Construction/Disability-access/>)

“DCAN11(Draft): Access for All: designing for an accessible environment” published by the Northern Ireland Planning Service

(www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/supplementary_guidance/dcans/dcan11_draft.htm)

The Blue Badge Scheme

Details of the Blue Badge Scheme in Northern Ireland are available via the NI Direct website.

(www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/people-with-disabilities/people-with-disabilities-motoring-and-transport/blue-badge-scheme.htm)

The Baywatch Campaign wants to work in partnership with service providers to encourage the development of best practice in the provision and management of accessible parking across Northern Ireland. We would like to hear from you if you believe that you already provide the level of service outlined in this Guide. We would also like to hear from organisations and service providers who would like to do more to improve accessible parking. The Campaign is happy to provide advice and support to help you do this.

To find out more about the work of the Baywatch Campaign and how we can assist your organisation contact:

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Getting more information

If you would like information on the Baywatch Campaign (NI) or want this publication on an alternative format contact:

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