

London Assembly Plenary 5 December 2024 – Motion 3.3 Blue Badge Theft - Response from Cllr Adam Hugg, Leader of Westminster City Council

Received via email on 14 May 2025

'Dear Jasmine,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 20 December 2024 regarding the 5 December Plenary meeting, which the Leader, Councillor Adam Hug has asked me to respond to.

Westminster City is committed to limiting fraud and taking appropriate action against those who misuse Disabled badges or our parking permits.

As you are most likely aware, owing to an act of Parliament, introduced due to the high demand for parking, the national Disabled Blue Badge scheme does not apply in Westminster in addition to the three other central London boroughs: City of London, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and part of the London Borough of Camden. Instead, the City of Westminster operates its own Disabled White Badge Scheme where qualifying residents also receive the Blue Badge for parking outside of the City.

We welcome the motion made by the London Assembly and hope that the information provided in this response demonstrates Westminster City Council's ongoing commitment to reducing issues that can negatively impact the lives of Disabled individuals.

Given the geographical size of Westminster's controlled parking, and considering the high value placed on access to our limited kerbside space, it is recognised that our Permit schemes are sometimes susceptible to misuse. To help combat this, we have developed a robust system for identifying vehicles with stolen Disabled badges and other types for fraud. In line with point 3 of the motion our parking Marshals, using their electronic handheld systems can verify which vehicles have active permissions in place, and, in addition to issuing Penalty Charge Notices for parking contraventions, will actively report any suspicious activity to the Council for follow up investigation.

Our bi-borough Corporate Anti-Fraud Service (CAFS) which is shared with RBKC, is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all types of internal or general fraud perpetrated against the Council. Throughout 2023/2024, investigations by the CAFS resulted in 38 positive outcomes, 28 of these involved Disabled Badges. An investigation is considered to have a positive outcome if it results in a criminal prosecution, permanent seizure of a Disabled badge, cancellation or retrieval of a parking permit, or some other form of sanction. In respect of the 28 positive outcomes, 2 related to successful prosecutions under the Road Traffic Act 1984, where individuals were proven to have misused a Disabled badge. A further 14 cases led to the permanent seizure of the Disabled badge previously declared stolen or lost, preventing further misuse, and where possible Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued and pursued separately in line with statutory legislation. Finally, in 10 instances, simple cautions (formally police cautions) were administered – these are a formal warning that may be given to persons aged 18 or over who admit to committing an offence.

I can confirm that over the last financial year (2024/2025) 56 investigations were concluded by the CAFS in relation to Disabled badge misuse. This resulted in 12 prosecutions under the Fraud Act 2006 due to the use of a lost or stolen Disabled badge; 3 prosecutions under Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 for misuse of a friend's or relatives Disabled badge. These prosecutions resulted in the defendants being ordered to pay a total of £7256 in fines and victim surcharges as well as being ordered to pay the Council costs of £8289.50. In addition, 13 Simple Cautions

were administered and 17 lost or stolen badges were permanently seized by officers, preventing them from being used again.

I can confirm that our Parking Services department is presently working with our service providers, including other Local Authorities, to further streamline the process in terms of our Marshals identifying Disabled badge misuse.

I agree that councils must ensure vulnerable applicants receive additional support to ensure continuity of coverage or prompt provision of their Badges. Westminster's Officers are continuing to develop our Permit administrative systems, to enhance the customer experience, encourage self-servicing and to ensure that any new and replacement Blue and White badge applications are processed in a timely manner. In instances where a replacement badge has been requested, holders are automatically given temporary virtual parking cover, so that they can continue to park on street and access local services, until the new, or updated, badge is received.

Kind regards,

James Crosbie

Director – Strategic Transport & Connectivity
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