

# Restricted Zone Access Permits – Issue and Management Draft Equality Impact Assessment

The consultation period will end on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010.



Department for  
**Regional  
Development**

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AN ROINN  
**Forbartha Réigiúnaí**

MÄNNYSTRIE FÜR  
**Kintra Pairts Fordèrin**

**ROADS** Service

## SEEKING YOUR VIEWS

We are carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the existing Roads Service policy and procedure guide for the issue and management of access permits for restricted (pedestrian) zones, specifically concerning the concessions available to those with a disability who hold a Blue Badge.

The purpose of this consultation is to obtain:

- your views on this draft assessment of the equality impact of the existing policy and the proposed changes on Blue Badge holders; and
- any further information which could be useful in assessing those equality impacts.

When considering your response, the following questions may offer a useful guideline:

1. Do you have any general comments on the equality issues covered in this draft assessment?
2. What are your views on the draft conclusions?
3. Are there any other issues that have not been addressed? If so, what are these?
4. Is there any other relevant information you consider should have been taken into account in performing this analysis?

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read Appendix 4 at the back of this document on the confidentiality of consultations. This will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

Should you require this document in an accessible format such as Braille, audio format/CD, minority ethnic language etc, please contact us by any of the means provided below.

Comments can be sent to us at;

Department for Regional Development  
Roads Service, Transportation and Engineering Policy Unit  
Room 3-29  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB

or e-mailed to: [roads.transportation@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:roads.transportation@drdni.gov.uk)

**The consultation period will end on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010.**

Following consideration of all responses a final Equality Impact Assessment will be published on the Department's website at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk> under the consultations link.

This document is also available from the Department at the address given above or by calling 028 9054 0683.

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# 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Roads Service policy and procedure guide '***Restricted Zone Access Permits – Issue and Management***' was implemented in July 2006 for the purpose of controlling access to 'pedestrianised areas' in some of our cities and towns.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the policy is to regulate the movement of vehicular traffic within pedestrianised areas whilst maintaining the safety of all users.
- 1.3 Following a complaint from a Blue Badge holder, the policy was the subject of an Equality Commission investigation. This resulted in a recommendation that Roads Service should conduct an EQIA on that part of the policy dealing with access permits for Blue Badge holders.
- 1.4 This draft EQIA examines the various factors influencing the management of pedestrianised areas and how these impact on the section 75 groupings.
- 1.5 The draft EQIA concludes that the Department is unaware of any data to suggest that the policy has a differential impact on the majority of section 75 groupings. However, there are differential impacts, both positive and negative on the age, disability and dependant groupings. For the disability groupings, there is a positive impact for those who are blue badge holders and can therefore apply for a permit to enter the pedestrian zone, whereas for those with other types of disability including wheelchair users and those with visual impairments, the presence of vehicles, either moving or stationary can present a hazard. Similarly, for the elderly

and those with dependants, especially young children, the presence of vehicles, either moving or stationary can present a hazard

- 1.6 In recognition of the concerns expressed about the policy but at the same time being mindful of the need to manage the space for the benefit of all users the Department proposes to:
- Increase the allowable access period to four hours per week (with the applicant being able to decide on what four hours they need);
  - Review the accessible parking bay provision around the zones with a view to improving the provision where feasible;
  - Provide guidance to staff who issue access permits on the use of the discretionary element of the policy in relation to extending access.
- 1.7 The Department would also invite comment on whether it would be appropriate to consider the inclusion the Higher Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance as an additional qualifying criterion for an access permit as is the practice in several towns/cities in Great Britain.
- 1.8 These measures are aimed at reducing the negative impact of the policy on drivers with disabilities while at the same time minimising the impacts for other affected groups.

## **2 Introduction**

2.1 This section outlines the background to the creation and purpose of this document.

### **Equality of Opportunity**

2.2 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department for Regional Development, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without;
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

2.3 In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

2.4 The Department is fully committed to complying with the statutory requirements of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

2.5 Under section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Department is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and

- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').
- 2.6 This consultation document presents the findings of a draft EQIA on the existing Blue Badge concessions within the policy, and will be subject to public consultation as part of the overall process.
- 2.7 It has been carried out in accordance with the guidance set down by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in its Practical Guide on Equality Impact Assessment.
- 2.8 The draft EQIA considers the impact that the policy may have for the section 75 groupings within the general public especially persons with disabilities.

### **Why is this EQIA being undertaken**

- 2.9 In December 1999, the powers contained in Articles 100, 101 and 103 (part) of the Planning Order, in relation to the making and administration of pedestrian zones transferred to the Department for Regional Development, with day-to-day responsibility for the statutory processes and administration falling to Roads Service.
- 2.10 In July 2006, following representation from the Transport Advisory Committee (now the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee or IMTAC for short), Roads Service introduced a new policy for the issue and management of pedestrian zone permits, granting access to the various pedestrian zones in Northern Ireland. The committee's desire was to see a standardised management system created to replace the local arrangements which existed for each pedestrian zone.

- 2.11 The resultant policy “**Restricted Zone Access Permits – Issue and Management**” introduced a standardised approach to the issuing of access permits for pedestrian zones throughout Northern Ireland. At the time, the Equality of Opportunity screening analysis recommended that the policy be screened out for equality impact assessment and this decision was subsequently communicated through the Department’s annual monitoring statement.
- 2.12 In April 2008, the Department received notification that a formal complaint had been made to the Equality Commission in connection with the impact that application of this policy was having on people with a disability. The notification indicated that this would be the subject of an investigation by the Commission’s Statutory Duty Investigations Committee.
- 2.13 In its final report of the investigation (issued in December 2008), the Commission accepted that the Department had complied with the consultation requirements contained in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.4 of its approved Equality Scheme.
- 2.14 However, the Commission recommended that the Department should carry out an Equality Impact Assessment to consider the impact of the policy on people with disabilities, and to consider alternative policies and/or mitigating measures in response to any adverse impacts identified.

### **3 Defining the Policy**

- 3.1 Pedestrian zones currently exist in Antrim, Ballymena, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Enniskillen, Limavady, Lisburn, Londonderry, Newtownards, Omagh and Strabane.
- 3.2 In these zones, vehicular access is prohibited by legislation to create restricted areas more commonly known as ‘pedestrian zones’.
- 3.3 However, in recognition that the houses/shops/businesses still need a certain amount of vehicle access to allow servicing etc. exemptions are provided for in the legislation. These vary slightly from zone to zone to allow for local circumstances but generally include where the motor vehicle is being used:
- (i) for police, military, ambulance or fire brigade purposes or in an emergency by a medical practitioner;
  - (ii) by or on behalf of a government department, district council or statutory undertaker carrying out their duties;
  - (iii) in accordance with a special authorisation permit issued by an authorised officer of the Department;
  - (iv) for the conveyance, loading or unloading of goods between the times specified in the individual order.
- 3.4 The main aim of the policy is to establish a framework for the issue of permits which provide the ‘special authorisation’ referred to at (iii) above for those, including people with disabilities, to gain access to a pedestrian zone for essential business that cannot be conducted by other means, either elsewhere or at other times. The policy sets out procedures to ensure that permits are only issued for legitimate reasons.

3.5 Roads Service is currently\* responsible for the management of the pedestrian zones in the towns/cities referred to in paragraph 3.1. As such, it has responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of **all** users of these zones and while vehicular traffic cannot be excluded completely, access must be managed to:

- (i) minimise the vehicle/pedestrian conflict which inevitably exists; and,
- (ii) maintain the integrity of what is intended to be a vehicle free pedestrian zone.

(\* Responsibility will transfer in May 2011 to local councils under the Review of Public Administration.)

3.6 In order to manage both, the policy stipulates that access permits are issued for one named 2 hour period or two named 1 hour periods each week. The time periods must be identified in advance to allow Roads Service to manage the allocation of time periods and carry out enforcement.

3.7 The policy is however sufficiently flexible to allow for exceptional circumstances and the permitted times can be extended when the issuing officer is satisfied that the standard permitted hours are insufficient. These changes are at the discretion of the access permit issuing staff.

3.8 The 'Guidance to Applicants' and 'Frequently Asked Questions', have been included at Appendices 1 and 2 to further explain how the permits are issued and managed. Copies of the policy are available on request or by accessing it at <http://www.drdni.gov.uk> under the consultations link.

## **4 Consideration of Available Data and Research**

- 4.1 Two distinct types of data were assessed, quantitative data held by Roads Service permit issuing officers and qualitative data in the form of views and opinions from those either directly affected by the policy or groups speaking on their behalf.
- 4.2 The quantitative data indicates that of the 12 towns/cities listed in paragraph 3.1 above, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Londonderry, and Strabane have had applications from, and issued access permits to drivers with a disability to enter the zones. The shape and size of zones together with adjacent parking provision generally dictate whether this type of access is needed or not. Slightly different arrangements operate in Belfast, again partly due to physical reasons but, mostly due to pedestrian volume considerations.
- 4.3 In Carrickfergus, access permits are only issued to drivers with a disability, whereas other areas issue access permits for other reasons including maintenance issues, residential access, off-street parking for businesses and for banking needs.
- 4.4 The data shows that in 2008:
- 109 access permits were issued for Carrickfergus (all for disabled access);
  - 500 access permits were issued for Coleraine with 267 of these for drivers with a disability;
  - 309 access permits were issued for Londonderry with 286 of these for drivers with a disability; and,
  - 42 access permits were issued for Strabane with 40 of these for drivers with a disability.

4.5 This gave an overall total of 960 access permits in 2008 for these 4 areas of which 702 (73%) were for drivers with a disability. The access permits were issued for various times of day and different weekdays.

(Data relating to the numbers of access permits issued can be found in Appendix 3)

4.6 The qualitative data was derived from a number of sources including the original complainant, Disability Action, the Royal National Institute of Blind People, and from an informal pre-consultation workshop attended by various disabled groupings.

4.7 Although the policy was implemented in July 2006, concerns about it did not surface until January 2007 - shortly after the transfer of responsibility for parking enforcement from the police to the Department in October 2006.

4.8 Initially, a number of calls and letters were received from individual permit holders and this was followed by correspondence from Disability Action.

4.9 The criticism of the policy had two main strands which are as follows:

(i) the 2 hour time limit is too restrictive; and

(ii) the need to name a set two hour period/two 1 hour periods is too inflexible.

4.10 Most accepted, albeit reluctantly, the reasoning behind the policy. However, one blue badge holder, who was dissatisfied with his access arrangements, did pursue the issue, firstly with his local issuing office, and then through the Equality Commission. This led

to the recommendation that Roads Service undertake an EQIA on its policy.

4.11 As part of the data collection exercise Roads Service met with the complainant. Although he has been offered extended time beyond the standard two hours, he stated that he is still very unhappy about the policy. The main points he raised were that:

- he feels disenfranchised by the policy which he considers excludes him from the town centre;
- he cannot use the town unless he gets into the town centre itself;
- he considers most of the difficulty emanates from delivery vehicles and not blue badge holders and that there was no evidence of adequate enforcement;
- he wants unlimited access, but suggested that it should be restricted to those in receipt of the higher rate of mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, although in discussion he did accept that this could attract 'all day' commuter parkers and that 5 hours each day may be sufficient;
- the scheme should be suspended in the meantime and that his suggestion for unlimited access be piloted.

4.12 Roads Service also convened a pre-consultation meeting which was facilitated by Disability Action and attended by a cross section of people with a range of disabilities.

4.13 Issues raised at the pre-consultation mostly echoed the complainant's concerns. One participant stated that the policy violated his human rights by restricting access, although the point

was made that it is the legislation that restricts access and not the policy under consideration.

4.14 The main difficulties raised by the group were that:

- The need to pick a stated/set two hour or two one hour periods in the week is impracticable;
- The time allowed is not sufficient;
- The need for multiple badges (the access permit and the blue badge) is unwieldy and unnecessary; and,
- The need to make separate applications for each zone

4.15 A note of caution was also sounded on behalf of other users particularly those with visual difficulties and people with disabilities but who do not have access to a car. The policy was originally designed to achieve a balance given the number of potential users and minimise the potential conflict between motorised and non-motorised users as far as possible, while maintaining essential access.

4.16 A number of suggestions were made during the pre-consultation exercise as possible improvements to the existing approach, including:

- remove the need for an access permit and allow unlimited access on display of the blue badge;
- issue an access permit only to those on the higher rate of mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance which provides unlimited access, at any time and for as long as needed – although the proposer did agree that this could be reduced to, say, 5 hours to prevent all day parking;

- provide marked, time limited accessible bays within pedestrian zones for blue badge holders. A three hour limit was proposed in line with current Blue Badge on-street 'yellow line' concessions;
- maintain the current approach but investigate whether increased flexibility can be built into the need to state a certain time each week;
- increase the existing time allowance from 2 hours per week to 3 hours per week;
- examine the possibility of providing more accessible bays for blue badge holders around the periphery of the pedestrian zones;
- remove the pedestrianised areas in their entirety, reverting to standard carriageway and footways delineated by kerb lines.

4.17 Each suggestion was discussed in turn looking at their individual advantages and disadvantages. It was agreed that none would completely meet the needs of everyone and that any which encouraged greater vehicular movement within the zones would adversely impact all users. Any suggestion that introduced a further hierarchical distinction beyond the blue badge was felt inappropriate. Finally the removal of the pedestrianised areas was agreed as being outside the remit of this EQIA.

4.18 In a postscript to the meetings the Royal National Institute of Blind People provided a response indicating that pedestrian areas should be such, and that access should be restricted solely to emergency vehicles. Pedestrians should know where they are safe, and where they can rely on the area being pedestrian territory.

4.19 More recently IMTAC has issued a statement on shared surfaces and while the areas in question were not designed as shared surfaces (being pedestrianised areas) the fact that vehicular access is permitted throughout most of the working day turns them into such spaces. IMTAC's statement mirrors that made by its counterpart in Great Britain - the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. The statement refers to research from Guide Dogs, which highlights the negative impact of shared surface street schemes on people with a visual impairment, other disabled people as well as older people and young children.

## **5 Assessment of Impact**

5.1 Although this Assessment is intended to concentrate solely on blue badge holders, the working of the policy does have some impact on other groups mentioned in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

5.2 The narrative which follows highlights the impact of the implementation of the policy on each of the individual Section 75 groups.

5.3 **Religious Groups** – the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact on a particular religious group.

5.4 **Political Groups** - the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact on a particular political group.

- 5.5 **Racial Groups** - the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact on a particular racial group.
- 5.6 **Age Groups** - the Department has concluded that there could be a positive impact on older members of the community given that the policy permits access to blue badge holders, a grouping that has a higher proportion of older people. However it could have a negative impact on other older and younger members of the community while using the zones by allowing vehicular use which could increase the potential for collisions.
- 5.7 **Men and Women in General** - the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact between men and women in general.
- 5.8 **Sexual orientation** - the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact on persons of a particular sexual orientation.
- 5.9 **Marital status** - the Department has concluded that there is no known reliable data to indicate that this policy will have a particular impact on persons of a particular marital status.
- 5.10 **People with disabilities** - the Department has concluded that for the disability groupings, there is a positive impact for those who are blue badge holders and can therefore apply for a permit to enter the pedestrian zone, whereas for those with other types of disability including wheelchair users and those with visual impairments, the presence of vehicles, either moving or stationary can present a hazard.

- 5.11 **Persons with dependants** - the Department has concluded that there could be a negative impact on persons with dependants due to the presence of vehicular traffic within the pedestrian zones. Parents of young children, guardians and carers will be especially disadvantaged where vehicular traffic is encountered within designated pedestrian zones.
- 5.12 **Reliable Data** - In the absence of reliable data, we would welcome comments from section 75 representative groups and others in relation to the impact of this policy as part of the public consultation exercise.
- 5.13 There is no known reliable data to suggest that the policy presents any form of impact to the following groupings, religious groups, political groups, racial groups, men and women in general, sexual orientation, and marital status.
- 5.14 There is potentially a positive impact on the age grouping and people with disabilities and in particular those in these groups who are entitled to a blue badge and can get access to pedestrianised zones.
- 5.15 There is potentially a negative impact on the people with disabilities and persons with dependants groupings due to the presence of vehicles in pedestrian zones.
- 5.16 The proposals for restricted zone access permits are unlikely to impact on good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group. By providing a clear and consistent policy for disabled people who require permits, they

should help to foster good relations between people with a disability and people without a disability.

## **6 Consideration of Alternatives and Mitigation**

- 6.1 The Equality Commission's challenge related specifically to access for blue badge holders and consequently this draft EQIA concentrates solely on this aspect of the policy.
- 6.2 It is worth recapping that vehicle access to each zone is prohibited by the relevant piece of legislation and that the policy provides a framework for managing exemptions to the legislation. The policy could therefore be viewed as a mitigating measure.
- 6.3 The weekly access allowance is limited to 2 hours in order to manage the zones for all users considering the overall number of people seeking access (267 Blue Badge holder permits in Coleraine alone, out of a total of 500 access permits). Some users have complained that two hours is not long enough to allow them to do what they require to do bearing in mind their mobility difficulties, although the Department would consider that the policy is flexible enough to allow for extensions to the two hour period for exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the local Divisional manager.
- 6.4 The Department considers that the permits are only intended to allow access to blue badge holders for undertaking essential business that cannot be done elsewhere or by any other means (e.g. bank, post office, dentist, doctor etc.). The permits are not 'parking permits' and are not provided to allow for general shopping and browsing.

- 6.5 The other main issue in relation to the policy is that applicants find it difficult to identify in advance the specified two hours for which they need access each and every week. Generally, if access is required for banking or post office requirements then this does not present difficulties, however if access is required for some specific purpose that requires an appointment e.g. dentist, optician, doctor etc. then this can prove problematic.
- 6.6 A number of people have also indicated that their medical conditions are such that they do not know from day to day when they would be well enough to be able to use the zone.
- 6.7 While blue badge holders benefit from the policy it is worth remembering that the presence of vehicular traffic in pedestrian zones can be a hazard and/or impediment to them while they are out of the car using the zone.
- 6.8 The presence of vehicular traffic in pedestrian zones also represents a hazard and/or impediment to all other pedestrian users, particularly the visually impaired, the elderly and those accompanying young children.
- 6.9 While the level of access provided for blue badge holders may seem limited, the purpose of the permit is to allow access for the blue badge holder for essential business that cannot be done elsewhere or by any other means. In terms of satisfying the seeming demand for unrestricted parking there are a number of alternatives currently available, that include:
- Parking spaces for people with a disability on roads surrounding the pedestrian zone;

- Parking spaces for people with a disability in surrounding off-street car parks;
- Concessionary parking for up to 3 hours on single or double yellow lines and up to 8 hours in limited waiting areas in adjacent streets; and,
- Shopmobility schemes where these have been established.

6.10 In terms of the level of access the policy already allows for variations to the approach taken when the applicant can demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1 The screening for the original policy recommended that the policy did not need to be the subject of an EQIA given that it provides a level of access to pedestrianised areas to blue badge holders.

7.2 The Department does however recognise that the policy is causing a certain level of inconvenience to some users who would like more flexible access arrangements up to and including unlimited access.

7.3 The Department also has to be mindful that, as the authority for managing the space, it has a duty to act responsibly and manage the space to meet the needs of all users and not just a limited section of users.

7.4 This draft EQIA concludes that the Department is unaware of any data to suggest that the existing policy impacts on the following section 75 groupings: religious belief, political opinion, racial group, men and women in general, sexual orientation, and marital status.

- 7.5 There is potentially a positive impact on the age and disability groupings, and in particular those in these groups who are entitled to a blue badge and can get access to pedestrianised zones.
- 7.6 There is potentially a negative impact on the disability and dependency groupings due to the presence of vehicles in pedestrian zones.
- 7.7 Consequently the Department proposes to:
- Increase the allowable access period to four hours per week (with the applicant being to decide on what four hours they want);
  - Review the accessible parking bay provision around the zones with a view to improving the provision where feasible;
  - Provide guidance on the use of the discretionary element of the policy in relation to giving extended times.
- 7.8 The Department would also invite comment on whether it would be appropriate to consider the inclusion the Higher Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance as an additional qualifying criterion for an access permit as is the practice in several towns/cities in Great Britain.
- 7.9 These measures are aimed at reducing the negative impact of the policy on drivers with disabilities while at the same time minimising the impacts on other affected groups.

## **8 Formal Consultation**

- 8.1 This equality impact assessment is issued in draft form for public consultation for a 12 week period commencing 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

8.2 This draft EQIA is being issued to all consultees listed in the Department's Equality Scheme. A full list of consultees is detailed at Appendix 5.

8.3 The draft EQIA has been placed on the Department's website <http://www.drdni.gov.uk> from which it can be downloaded.

## **9 Policy Decision**

9.1 This draft EQIA will be finalised following consideration of the comments made during the consultation process and will reflect the final decision taken by the Minister on any possible policy changes.

## **10 Publication of the Results of the EQIA**

10.1 All those who responded to the consultation exercise will be informed of the outcomes of the EQIA.

10.2 The EQIA will be published on the Department's website and copies in accessible format will be available on request (contact details as given on page (iii) of this consultation document).

### Access Permits Guidance for Applicants

#### Disabled persons' access

This category does not apply to restricted zones within Belfast City Centre. An exemption applies within Belfast which allows a motor vehicle lawfully displaying a disabled persons badge unrestricted access to Donegall Place, Castle Place and parts of Castle Street and High Street without an authorisation permit. On all other streets within the Belfast City Centre restricted zone, vehicular access is prohibited for disabled persons.

Disabled persons may be eligible for long-term permits to access services and / or facilities.

Disabled persons' access permits shall allow access for a 2-hour period one afternoon per week or two 1-hour periods per week.

An applicant shall specify the reason for access (e.g. shopping, dentist, doctor) along with approx. location. The applicant shall also specify their required times of access on the application form.

Applicants who put forward a strong case for access to more than one restricted zone may be considered for a second permit. However, a separate application should be made to the relevant Issuing Office.

Where the permit holder's preferred method of transport is taxi, the permit may be temporarily transferred to the taxi subject to the following limitations: -

1. the driver of the taxi must hold a valid taxi driver and PSV licence;

2. the permit shall only be valid when in use for the carriage of the disabled person; and

3. the hours of validity as stated on the permit will apply to the taxi.

Disabled persons **must** display their Blue Badge and access permit together when accessing the restricted zone, whether in a private vehicle or licensed taxi.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of disability in the form of a copy of a Blue Badge issued by the Department for Regional Development or production of the Badge in person at the local issuing office.

### **Community transport access**

Long and short-term permits may be available to local community transport providers and other such groups who provide essential door-to-door transport services to persons having severe mobility impairment or who live in areas with limited public transport services.

Use of the permit shall be restricted to conveyance of goods hours as detailed in the relevant order (e.g. 17:00-11:00 or 18:00-11:00).

A maximum of three permits may be issued to each organisation.

Supporting documents:

- Proof of ownership or usage of vehicle (see proof of ownership section);

- Proof of the organisation's address shall be required in the form of a typed letter on headed paper, signed by a representative of the organisation confirming the address; and
- Proof of vehicle registration with Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland under the small bus permit scheme.

### **How to Use Your Permit - Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How long is my permit valid for?**

If you have been issued with a short-term permit, this will be valid for a maximum of 2 weeks. If you have been issued with a long-term permit, this will be valid for a maximum of 12 months. The expiry date will be printed on the front of the permit.

#### **Can I use my permit on another vehicle?**

No. Permits are issued to specified vehicles only and, with the exception of disabled persons' access permits, shall not be transferable to vehicles not detailed on the permit.

#### **Can I use my permit in another restricted zone?**

No. Permits are issued for access to specified restricted zones and shall not be transferable from one zone to another.

#### **Does my permit entitle me to park within the zone?**

No. Possession of a valid permit is not an entitlement to park within a restricted zone.

#### **How should I display my permit?**

Permits shall be displayed on the inside surface of the windscreen or a side window facing the kerb, or place the permit on the dashboard area immediately below the windscreen so that the particulars recorded on the front of the permit are clearly visible to a person standing at the front or side of the vehicle.

### **Within a pedestrian zone, remember;**

- the pedestrian always has priority in the restricted zone;
- vehicles driven in the pedestrian zone must be driven slowly and with due care and consideration of the pedestrian;
- never leave a vehicle where it would cause an obstruction or danger to pedestrians or other vulnerable users; and
- always obey local traffic signs at the entrance / exit to a restricted zone, and traffic signs and parking / waiting restrictions within the zone.

### **Do I need to renew my permit?**

Yes. You will need to apply for a renewal permit if:

- your permit expires; or
- your details change, e.g. name, address or vehicle details.

### **Will Roads Service send me out a new permit once my current one runs out?**

No. It is the sole responsibility of the permit holder to apply for a renewal permit.

### **Will I receive a renewal notice?**

No. Renewal notices will not be sent out to existing permit holders.

### **My permit has been lost or stolen, what should I do?**

You must inform the relevant Issuing Office immediately, where the Issuing Officer will advise you on how to apply for a replacement permit. If a permit has been mislaid and is subsequently found after the issue of

a replacement, the original permit must be returned to the issuing office as soon as possible.

### **Are there circumstances where my permit may be revoked?**

Yes. Permits may be revoked where:

- the applicant's circumstances no longer confer eligibility for a permit; or
- the permit is fraudulently used; or
- a replacement permit has been issued in its place.

### **What forms of proof of residency are acceptable?**

Where the issuing office requires proof of residency, the following may be accepted:

- Northern Ireland or Great Britain full driving licence or a Northern Ireland provisional licence, each bearing the photograph of the holder; or
- passport; or
- Senior Citizen's SmartPass issued under the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme; or
- electoral identity card.

If none of the above indicates residency matching that of the application, then further additional proof shall be required in the form of a: -

- current rent book; or
- utility or rates bill issued within the last six months.

### **What do I need to produce for proof of vehicle ownership or usage?**

Where the issuing office requires proof of ownership or usage of a vehicle, the applicant shall produce a current driver's licence together with one of the following: -

- the Registration Document;
- a copy of the vehicle insurance documentation;
- a copy of a hiring/leasing agreement, together with a letter from the employer where appropriate; or
- for company owned vehicles, a typed letter on headed paper & signed by the Company Secretary confirming that the vehicle is made available to the applicant for daily use.

### **Can I appeal if I am refused a permit?**

Yes. Appeals must be made to the Issuing Office within 2 weeks of an applicant receiving a refusal letter. Only written appeals shall be accepted.

### Appendix 3

#### Numbers of Access Permits to Pedestrian Zones

Town/City	Total number of access permits	Number of Blue Badge access permits	Other Reasons
BELFAST	389	0	Maintenance, local business, banking.
LISBURN	16	0	Military & religious promotion.
CARRICK	0	109	Only for drivers with a disability.
COLERAINE	500	267	Maintenance, local business, banking.
LONDONDERRY	309	286	Maintenance, local business, banking.
LIMAVADY	3	0	Maintenance, local business, banking.
BALLYMENA	1	0	Banking.
ANTRIM	59	0	Maintenance, local business, banking.
NEWTOWNARDS	1	0	Military & religious promotion.
ARMAGH	0	0	Discontinued in 2007.
OMAGH	0	0	None applied for.
STRABANE	42	40	Maintenance, local business, banking.
ENNISKILLEN	0	0	None applied for.
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1320</b>	<b>702 (53%)</b>	

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Confidentiality of Consultations**

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that: The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided.

The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature. Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

### List of Consultees

All Government Departments (11 + 2 Junior Ministers)

All Local Government Councils (26)

All MLAs (108)

All NI Members of Parliament

All NI Members of European Parliament

Abacus Professional Recruitment

Age Concern Northern Ireland

Age Sector Platform

Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

Altnagelvin HSS Trust

Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union

AMICUS (email)

An Munia Tober

Antrim Borough Partnership

Ards Borough Council (email)

Ards Partnership

Armagh City and District Partnership

Bahai's Office for NI (email)

Ballymoney District Partnership

Barnardos NI

Barnardos Tuar Ceatha Project

Belfast Butterfly Club

Belfast City Council (email)

Belfast Education and Library Board

Belfast Harbour

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (email)  
Belfast Healthy Cities Project (email)  
Belfast Hebrew Congregation  
Belfast International Airport  
British Association for Shooting and Conservation (email)  
British Deaf Association (NI)  
Bryson House  
BT  
Cara-friend (email)  
CARE in Northern Ireland  
Carers Northern Ireland  
Carlingford Lough Commission  
Castlereagh Partnership for Peace & Reconciliation  
Cedar Foundation  
Child Poverty Action Group  
Children in Northern Ireland  
Children's Law Centre  
Chinese Welfare Association  
Chrysalis Women's Centre  
Church of Ireland  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
City of Derry Airport  
Coalition on Sexual Orientation  
Coiste-na n-iarchimi  
Coleraine Borough Strategic Partnership  
Coleraine Harbour  
Commissioner for Children and Young People (email)  
Committee on the Administration of Justice  
Community Development and Health Network (email)

The Community Foundation  
Community Places (email)  
Community Relations Council  
Community Transport Association  
Confederation of British Industry  
Concordia Partnership for Progress  
Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland (email)  
Consumer Council for NI  
Cookstown District Partnership  
Co-ownership Housing Association  
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside  
Craigavon Borough Council (email)  
Craigavon District Partnership  
Cruse Bereavement Care (NI)  
Democratic Unionist Party  
Derry City Council  
Derry Well Woman  
Disability Action  
District Partnership for Derry City  
Down District Partnership  
Down's Syndrome Association (email)  
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council (email)  
Eastern Health and Social Services Board  
Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland  
Employers' Forum on Disability  
Equality Commission for NI  
Equality Forum NI  
Falls Community Council  
Falls Women Centre

Federation of Small Businesses  
First Division Civil Servants' Association  
Foyle Women's Network  
Foyle Women's Information Network  
FPA NI  
Friends of the Earth (email)  
Gay and Lesbian Youth (NI)  
George Best Belfast City Airport (email)  
Gingerbread NI  
Green Park HSS Trust  
Guide Dogs  
Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland  
Help the Aged (NI)  
IMTAC  
Indian Community Centre  
Inland Waterways Northern Ireland  
Institute of Directors (email)  
Institute of Professional Legal Studies (QUB)  
Institution of Highways and Transportation  
Invest Northern Ireland  
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI Committee) (email)  
Irish & Local Studies Department, Central Library  
Irish Transport Trust  
Labour Party  
Larne District Partnership  
Larne Harbour  
Law Centre (NI)  
Law Society of Northern Ireland  
Limavady District Partnership

Living Streets

Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (email)

Londonderry Harbour Office (email)

Lower North Belfast Community Council

Magherafelt Area Partnership Ltd

Magherafelt Women's Group

MENCAP

Methodist Church in Ireland

Mid-Ulster Women's Network

Mobilise NI

Moyle District Partnership

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

National Energy Action

Newry and Mourne Borough Council (email)

Newry & Mourne Peace & Reconciliation Partnership

Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium

Newry & Mourne Women Ltd

Newtownabbey Borough Council (email)

Newtownabbey Local Strategic Partnership

NI 2000

NIACRO

NI Bird Watchers' Association

NI Cycling Initiative

NIE

NI Environment Link

NI Islamic Centre

NI Women's Aid Federation

NI Women's Coalition

North Down District Partnership (email)

North Eastern Education and Library Board (email)  
North West Forum of People with Disabilities  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust  
Northern Health and Social Services Board  
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service  
Northern Ireland African Culture Centre  
Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health  
Northern Ireland Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux  
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association  
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality  
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities  
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (email)  
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association  
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission  
Northern Ireland Office (Human Rights & Equality Unit)  
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance  
Northern Ireland Resident Magistrates' Association  
Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency  
Northern Ireland Tourist Board (email)  
Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company  
Northern Ireland Walking Forum  
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform  
NSPCC  
NTL Cable Tel  
NUS-USI

Office of the Archbishop of Armagh  
Omagh District Council (email)  
Omagh Women's Area Network  
The Omnibus Partnership (email)  
Parents' Advice Centre  
Parents and Professionals and Autism  
Participation and the Practice of Rights Project (email)  
The Participation Network (email)  
Peace and Reconciliation Partnership, Ballymena  
Phoenix Gas (email)  
POBAL (email)  
Police Service of Northern Ireland  
Polish Association NI  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland (email)  
Press for Change  
Progressive Unionist Party  
Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist Network  
Quarry Products Association  
Queer Space (email)  
Rainbow Project  
Relate NI  
RNIB (NI) (email)  
Road Safety Council for Northern Ireland (email)  
Royal Group of Hospitals  
Royal National Institute of Blind People  
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (NI)  
Rural Community Network (email)  
Rural Development Council  
Rural Support (email)

Save the Children  
SDLP  
Sense NI  
Sikh Cultural Centre  
Sinn Fein  
Southern Education and Library Board  
Southern Health and Social Care Trust  
South Eastern Education and Library Board  
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust  
South Tyrone Empowerment Programme  
Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium  
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards  
St. Angelo Airport  
Strabane District Council (email)  
Strabane District Partnership  
Sustainable Northern Ireland  
Sustainable Organic Living Environment  
SUSTRANS  
Training for Women Network (email)  
Translink (email)  
Transport 2000  
Travellers' Movement NI  
Ulster Archaeological Society  
Ulster Scots Heritage Council  
Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside  
Ulster Unionist Party  
Ulster Wildlife Trust  
ULTACH  
Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technology

UNISON (email)  
Warrenpoint Harbour (email)  
Western Education and Library Board  
Western Health and Social Care Trust  
Western Health and Social Services Board  
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust  
The Women's Centre  
Women's Forum  
Women's Forum Northern Ireland  
Women's Information Group  
Women's Resource and Development Agency (email)  
Women's Support Network  
Workers' Party  
World Wide Fund for Nature  
Youth Council for NI  
Youthnet (email)  
Mr J Allister  
Ms B De Brun  
Mr E McGrady  
Mr J Nicholson  
Mr A Arlow, Newcastle  
Ms O'Kane, Londonderry  
Mr T Dick, Dundonald  
Mr M Curran, Killough