



Applying for the Disabled Person's Freedom Pass in Lambeth

Updated March 2010

All current Disabled Person's Freedom Passes will expire on 31st March 2010 and everyone currently in receipt of a pass needs to renew their application. This includes people who are in one of the seven eligible categories given under the Transport Act 2000 and those, mostly mental health service users, who receive their pass at the discretion of Lambeth Council.

1. ELIGIBILITY FOR A DISABLED PERSON'S FREEDOM PASS

The main categories of disability in the Transport Act 2000 which make you eligible for a Freedom Pass are :

- A) People who are blind or partially sighted
- B) People who are profoundly or severely deaf
- C) People without speech
- D) People who 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
- E) People who do not have arms or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms
- F) People who 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'
- G) People who, 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.

Local councils may, at their discretion under exceptional criteria, issue Freedom Passes to disabled people who do not meet one of the statutory categories of eligibility. People who receive their Freedom Pass on a discretionary basis are not able to use it for travel outside London.

2. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (update at 24th February 2010)

Lambeth Council has stated that it still intends to issue passes on a discretionary basis to some people with mental health problems who do not fit into one of the seven categories above. The Council has drafted criteria which it will use to award a pass on discretionary grounds once these have been formally agreed. It will carry out public consultation on these proposed criteria later in 2010. When they have been agreed they will be used to assess people with mental health problems.

a) IF YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE A FREEDOM PASS ON DISCRETIONARY GROUNDS

In this case **you will be issued with a new pass for one year only. This will run until 31st March 2011.** When the new discretionary criteria have been agreed you will be assessed against these. If you do not meet the discretionary criteria (and you do not satisfy any of the statutory categories in section 1) you will be refused and your pass will cease to work from 1st April 2011. You will be informed by the Council of your right to appeal against the decision and how to do this. If you appeal and are unsuccessful your pass will cease to work from 1st April 2011.

b) IF YOU ARE A NEW APPLICANT

New mental health applicants will be assessed under the 7 statutory criteria in section 1 only until the Council's draft discretionary criteria are consulted on and agreed. There are currently no discretionary criteria in operation. Once the new discretionary criteria are agreed the Council will start dealing with new applications under these.

If you are a new applicant applying before the discretionary criteria are agreed you should check if you are eligible under any of the 7 criteria in section 1.

If you have a mental health problem and do not fit into any of categories A – F you may be able to qualify under Category G. Fill in this section if you think you would be likely to be refused a driving licence because of the nature of your mental illness and / or the effects of your medications. You do not need to have actually applied for a driving licence and been refused. Give what information you can on page 12 to make the Council aware of your condition and make sure you have given details of your GP and any other health professional who may be dealing with you on page 5.

3. HOW TO RENEW YOUR PASS

You need to return the renewal application form to **Lambeth Council's Accessible Transport Unit** by the deadline or as soon as possible afterwards. You should contact the Unit on any of the numbers if you need more information about how to do this or to tell them if you will need more time to return it :

020 7926 7777 020 7926 0747 020 7926 7591 020 7926 4585
020 7926 4655 020 7926 7176

First, make sure that you read the help notes on pages 19 – 22 of the application form which has been sent to you.

The form [Section B] explains what evidence you need to provide if you believe you fit one of the seven eligibility criteria. If you are applying under Category D but do not receive the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement you should complete D3 as fully as possible to explain the problems you have in walking.

Do not forget to complete Section C and provide proof of your identity and that you live in Lambeth. You must enclose photocopies of the documents required. You must also enclose two photographs of yourself. With the form you should have received a leaflet explaining how the photographs should be taken. You can check this also at the London Councils website

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/freedompass/applying/photo.htm>

Make sure also that you sign the form on page 5 (to give the Council authority to contact your GP) and on page 14.

Send the application form, photocopies of documents and photographs to :

Accessible Transport Unit, London Borough of Lambeth, Ground Floor, Hopton House, 243A Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EY

4) WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When the Council receives your application form, it will decide if you satisfy one of the seven statutory eligibility criteria.

If it is not satisfied that you do it will write to your GP for medical evidence. If the GP provides sufficient evidence of your mobility problems a pass may be issued. If the GP states that you do not have a mobility problem you are likely to be turned down for a pass. If the medical evidence is unclear the Council will ask you to attend an assessment by an occupational therapist.

If you are applying under category G and have not provided a statement from the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) regarding your inability to drive the Council will automatically write to your GP to ask them for a statement about whether you would be unable to obtain a driving licence. They will do this if you apply under Category G because you have a mental health problem.

5) WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM TURNED DOWN?

You have a right to appeal against the decision. You should do this as soon as possible after receiving the decision and you will need to explain why you think the decision is wrong and provide as much additional medical evidence from a health professional as you can. If you are someone with a mental health problem who is turned down because your GP's statement did not confirm that you would be refused a driving licence you would need to be able to provide evidence from a psychiatrist or

similar professional if you felt they had more expert knowledge of your mental health and the effect of your medications.

6) IF I AM AWARDED A NEW PASS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Your next Freedom Pass for use from 1st April 2010 will be different from your current one and the system for issuing it is different this time.

Firstly, the pass will be valid for five years (unless you qualified under the previous discretionary criteria and have a one year only extension - see section 2). However, this does not mean that you will keep it for five years. Councils can decide when you need to renew your application. Lambeth will make its own decision about when a renewal needs to be made and it is not yet known whether it will be after 2 years or a different period.

Secondly, for additional security and to prevent fraud, your new pass will include a photograph of you on the card itself rather than on a separate photocard

The new card brings the Freedom Pass design in line with the English National Concessionary Scheme passes, which were issued in the rest of the country from 2008 onwards. Here is a sample :



Colour strip : The older persons pass has a blue strip. The disabled persons pass has an orange strip.

ENCTS rose and hologram : This logo and hologram indicates that the card is a valid pass for obtaining concessionary travel on local eligible bus services in England. Please note that if you receive your pass on a discretionary basis you will not be able to use it outside London.

Card technology : The London Freedom Pass will incorporate two smart ticketing technologies; ITSO and Oyster. ITSO is mainly used outside of London. Though not yet available everywhere, it is increasingly being used on non-London bus networks. Oyster is used across the transport network in London. The Freedom Pass uses new generation card technology to support both ticketing systems. For the first time London Councils will be recharged for journeys made using the pass outside London : the new cards will allow this usage to be recorded.

7) HOW WILL MY NEW PASS BE ISSUED?

The other main change is in the way the pass will be issued. Instead of Lambeth Council sending it to you, you will be given a letter of authorisation by the Council which you will need to take to the Post Office, together with proof of your identity and your photographs. The Post Office will issue you with a receipt and send your details to London Councils for your pass to be processed. It should then be sent to you within two weeks.

The aim is that applications for a pass at the Post Office will start from January 2010. Current passes will cease to be valid after 31st March 2010 – there will be no period of grace to use them beyond that date.

You should receive your pass within 10 working days but there may be delays because of the large number being processed. If you are concerned because you have not received your pass within a reasonable period contact the Accessible Transport Unit (see telephone numbers in section 3) for advice.

8) WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION AND ADVICE?

Because 7,000 people in Lambeth currently receive the Disabled Person's Freedom Pass and all are being asked to renew their claims we are sorry that we are not able to offer appointments to assist people to fill in the forms.

Ring the Accessible Transport Unit first to get guidance from them if you do not understand how to complete the form. If you are not satisfied with this, we can give you advice and tips over the telephone if you ring our Enquiry Line on 020 7738 5656 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am – 1pm and Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 3pm.

You can also find out more about the Disabled Person's Freedom Pass at these websites :

London Councils :

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/freedompass>

Lambeth Council :

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/HealthSocialCare/AccessibleTransport/DisabledTravelPass.htm>

Transport for All :

<http://www.transportforall.org.uk/londonwide/freedom/>

Transport for All may also be able to assist you to appeal if you are refused a Disabled Person's Freedom Pass. You can also contact them on

Tel: 020 7737 2339

Fax: 020 7737 2231

Email: contactus@transportforall.org.uk

Information correct at 1st March 2010