

A MESSAGE TO HAMPSHIRE'S DISABILITY GROUPS FROM THE BLUE BADGE TEAM AT HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Hello, we are members of the Blue Badge Unit based at Hampshire County Council's headquarters at The Castle, Winchester. Our team comprises 3 permanent fulltime members of staff (Debbie, Carole and Sarah) and 2 part timers (Jo and Rhona) who work alternate days. We also have a full time temp. We are very lucky to have such a stable expert team of "Badgers."

We've seen a lot of change over the past two years. We moved department in June 2007 and are now based in the Chief Executive's Department. Then in December 2007, our telephone and email business transferred to Hantsdirect (the county council's new contact centre in Fareham). And as if that wasn't enough, we then physically moved from one building to another in April 2008. So we now sit cosily alongside the Information Centre and Switchboard in Mottisfont Court.

We thought it high time we said hello to the people who are essential users of the Blue Badge scheme.

Here are a few facts and figures about our work. We hope you find them interesting:

- There are over 70,000 valid badges in Hampshire (estimated on 31 March 2008)
- Of these, 600 were issued to organisations
- Since the new regulations came into force in October 2007, we have issued 20 badges to children under the age of 2 who are dependent upon bulky medical equipment
- Last year we received 8,325 new applications as well as 16,675 renewal applications
- Sadly 2,500 badges lapsed because the badge holder died
- Only 1 badge was withdrawn last year due to misuse
- 91 badges were reported stolen.

If anyone wishes to apply for a Blue Badge, then they should telephone 0845 603 5633 in the first instance, having their National Insurance Number and details of their GP handy.

Please take a look at our website www.hants.gov.uk/bluebadge – we are keen to improve and would welcome your comments.

Let us know if there is anything we can do to make your job easier. You can email us at bluebadge@hants.gov.uk

Finally, if you would like to meet us, either in Winchester or at your work base, please let us know and we will arrange things.

Goodbye for now, Debbie and The Badgers.