



HONEYCOMB
GROUP

Mobility Scooter Policy

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Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
1.0	March 2025	Cyclical review	Giles Parkyn

1. Introduction and Purpose

The number of mobility scooters have increased dramatically in recent years and for many older people, particularly those with medical conditions or disabilities which limits mobility, they have increased personal independence and reduced dependency on others.

The rise in mobility users has resulted in a number of challenges especially for those living in designated blocks for older people or in buildings with communal areas which were built some years ago and were not designed for mobility scooters.

This policy aims to balance the needs and aspirations of our customers to keep mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs alongside Staffs Housing's duties to maintain a safe living/working environment for residents, staff, contractors and visitors, particularly in relation to potential fire risks.

This policy applies to communal areas within our buildings, including areas used by third party agencies, retirement villages, housing for older people, and general needs accommodation with communal areas, such as blocks of flats with hallway, staircase and landing area access.

2. Policy Objectives

The use of mobility scooters can create potential significant fire and safety risks. The risks can include:

- collisions with vehicles, buildings and people
- trip hazards from inappropriate storage
- obstructing and blocking fire escape routes
- defective batteries or chargers, giving off toxic smoke and fumes and lead to a mobility scooter catching fire.

This policy sets out how Staffs Housing will consider requests from residents to keep mobility scooters, and the factors to take into account when granting or refusing permission. It will also outline how we will look to address the need for adequate mobility storage and charging facilities that benefit the most residents in the safest way.

The policy recognises the value of mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs to residents in maintaining their independence. At the same time, Staffs Housing has a duty to ensure high standards of health and safety within properties having shared communal areas and in ensuring that owners of powered vehicles understand their responsibilities to others.

This Policy sets out the approach of Staffs Housing to Mobility Vehicles. We acknowledge that tenants and leaseholders (occupants) should, under the Equality Act 2010, have a quality of life which allows for the provision of full mobility, including the right to own a mobility scooter or electric powered wheelchair.

The policy covers all tenures, including our leasehold and shared-ownership customers, and the term residents refers to tenants and leaseholders.

The policy has taken the following into account:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988.
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Health & Safety Rating System regulations 2005
- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1999
- The Building Safety Act 2022

The policy will as far as possible:

- ensure the safety of all our occupants;
- enable the Staffs Housing to meet its statutory, legislative and regulatory obligations;
- ensure occupants receive information and comply with our management of mobility vehicles on our premises;
- raise awareness of health and safety risks associated with the inappropriate storage and charging of mobility vehicles and ensure measures are in place to reduce risk wherever possible; and

3. Definition of a Mobility Vehicle

Typically, mobility vehicles come in a range of sizes with different features and benefits to the user. They come in 3 or 4 wheel variations, from small, folding vehicles to large roadworthy vehicles.

They are defined as “invalid carriages” under the Use of Invalid Carriages on the Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divide these vehicles into three classes:

Class 1 – are manual wheelchairs that are not electrically propelled;

Class 2 – are powered wheelchairs and scooters intended for use on footpaths up to 4 mph. They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to another or where no pavement is available; and

Class 3 – can be used on pavements up to 4 mph and on roads up to 8mph. They are required by law to be registered with DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class.

Mobility scooters were introduced to provide local outdoor mobility for people with disabilities who might otherwise be confined to their home. Electric powered wheelchairs are typically provided to people with increased disabilities and provide mobile access both indoors and outdoors. For the purposes of this policy, these pieces of equipment will be referred to as “mobility vehicles”.

4. Storage and Charging

Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs must never be stored or charged in communal corridors, hallways or stairwells or any communal space (both internal

and external) unless it has been designed specifically for use to store/charge mobility scooters because they could increase the risk of fire or obstruct a fire escape route. Charging of a mobility scooter in an external charging location might be possible if undertaken at a reasonable distance from the building, away from an escape route and avoids any tripping hazards. Agreement from Staffs Housing must be given BEFORE using any area which is not specifically designed for charging or storage of mobility scooters.

Where it is not possible to identify a suitable storage and charging area, Staffs Housing will seek to negotiate a satisfactory outcome with the resident who might need to consider alternative options, including seeking a move to a more suitable property.

Where no designated storage facility exists, storage and charging arrangements might be possible inside the home of individual residents. A resident will need first to obtain prior agreement of Staffs Housing. This option removes the risk from the communal hallways and corridors and places the storage and charging of scooters within a fire resisting enclosure beyond a fire resisting, self-closing door. However, this places residents potentially at risk from a fire involving a mobility scooter in their own home.

It is the responsibility of individual residents to be safe. If a resident considers this option, the scooter should not be stored or charged in their hallway, if this is the only means of escape available. The scooter should be stored and charged in a separate room which is fitted with a fire-resisting door and fire detection. Residents are advised that the charging of a scooter within their own home should not take place between 8.00pm and 8.00am to reduce the risk to sleeping occupants.

Residents storing a mobility scooter within their own flat should ensure any manufactures guidelines or instructions on the safe use of the charging equipment are followed and have in a place a valid Portable Appliance Test (PAT) – (electrically tested every 12 months).

If required, Staffs Housing staff can give further advice on the suitability of the property; including smoke detection, charging points, fire compartmentation and access to the flat.

5. Designated Mobility Vehicle Storage Areas

In some schemes, there will be designated storage facilities for mobility scooters. The storage areas for scooters will normally be allocated on a first come first served basis. Permission for the scooter is still required and Staffs Housing can not guarantee that a space will be available.

Service charges may apply for the use of the scooter store provided. These charges would cover the use of the provision of an electricity supply for charging the scooter. Some schemes may have a 'pay as you go' token system.

Scooters must not be left on permanent charge and only charged in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

Chargers used within designated facilities must be subject to an annual Portable

Appliance Test (PAT). Although Staffs Housing can arrange these tests (the cost of which will be met by resident service charges), if any equipment fails the PAT, it is the resident's responsibility to repair or replace it before using it.

6. Use of Mobility Vehicles within the Communal Areas

Class 2 and 3 mobility scooters are essentially outdoor vehicles; class 3 scooters can not be used inside our schemes by residents or visitors. Should it be essential to use a class 2 scooter within a building (i.e. because of the resident's mobility), use is restricted between the main entrance of the building and a resident's flat.

Wherever possible, motorised/ non-motorised wheelchairs or walking aids should be considered for use to assist with mobility inside the building rather than the use of large mobility scooters.

Particular care should be taken when driving within a scheme and when using a lift. Mobility scooters must give priority to pedestrians; they should always give way and, if necessary, move over and stop to let a pedestrian pass.

The use of mobility scooters within passenger lifts is discouraged. Where they are necessary for mobility reasons, the following guidance will apply:

- only one scooter should use the lift at any one time to ensure that weight limits are not exceeded and to avoid the risk of collisions,
- Scooters should be driven forward into the lift and reversed out (using the lift mirror to assist with reversing).

Any damage or injuries should be reported to Staffs Housing at the first opportunity.

7. Permission to Keep a Mobility Vehicle

This policy sets out the circumstances in which Staffs Housing will grant permission to keep a mobility scooter.

This policy will apply to all new requests to keep a scooter and retrospectively to existing residents who already have a scooter. (Note: It is important that retrospective applications are made so that Staffs Housing can review the risks posed rather than to remove any previously granted permissions).

Residents who wish to obtain a mobility scooter must apply in writing for permission BEFORE purchasing. We will normally respond to requests within 14 days of receipt. If no response is received, the application will remain unapproved.

Permission is conditional on the resident having relevant tax registration (where required) and that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the Mobility Scooter Policy (a copy of which should be sent with each permission letter).

Current and prospective Staffs Housing residents who are thinking about purchasing a scooter are recommended to discuss this with scheme/village staff before making a purchase.

Any resident considering renting or purchasing a mobility scooter should get advice

from a reputable dealer experienced in assessing customer needs and who can offer appropriate training on the different types and suitability and the safety aspects of using a mobility scooter. If buying a second-hand scooter, residents are strongly recommended to have the mechanical and electrical condition of the scooter checked prior to purchase.

8. Insurance

Although there is no legal requirement for users of Class 3 mobility vehicles to be insured (even when driving on the public highway), Staffs Housing highly recommends that owners of all mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs should obtain adequate insurance. In certain circumstances, residents might be personally liable for damage to property (including walls, doors and lifts) or personal injuries caused to other residents whilst using or charging their scooter or powered wheelchair.

9. Maintenance & Testing

Residents should ensure that mobility scooters are maintained in line with manufacturer recommendations; this should include usage and charging. Evidence of maintenance and testing should be provided to Staffs Housing on request.

10. Withdrawing Permission

Permission may be withdrawn if:

- a resident fails to comply with the conditions of the policy,
- purchases an additional scooter without permission,
- uses their scooter in a way that presents a danger to other residents or causes regular damage to the building,
- evidence of maintenance and testing of equipment cannot be provided.

11. Breaching Conditions

If residents are found to be breaching the conditions stated in this policy, and depending on the risks and severity of the breach, or breaches, once reviewed by a Manager of Staffs Housing, notice will be issued to enable occupants to rectify the issue(s) within a specified period of time. Failure to do so will result in occupants being asked to remove the mobility vehicle from the building within a period of 7 days.

Where a scooter is stored or charged within communal areas without permission, or outside the terms of permission granted, Staffs Housing reserves the right to remove the scooter in order to safeguard the health and safety of other residents and may recharge the resident for any removal/storage costs.

12. Monitoring and Complaints

All applications for permission for a Mobility Vehicle will be recorded.

Decisions to refuse an application for a Mobility will be made by the Head of Customer & Neighbourhoods.

Should an applicant feel that the policy has been misapplied to their application they may request a review of the decision by using Staffs Housing's complaints procedure.

Where the internal complaint process has been completed, and the applicant wishes to appeal they can refer the matter for review by the Housing Ombudsman Service in accordance with the complaint's procedure.

13. Data Protection

All personal data processed, stored, shared and when responding to the rights of data subjects will be carried out in accordance with current data protection legislation (UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018).

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed after three years, or more frequently as required by changes in legislation and regulations.

March 2025