



MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY

Reference	HPS-H-09
Information Classification	Public
Review Frequency	3 years
Date Reviewed/Approved	February 2021
Next Review Due Date	February 2024
Applicable Committee(s)	Housing & Property Services Sub-Committee
Owner - role	Director of Housing & Property Services

Record of Updates/Changes			
Current Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Changes

INTRODUCTION

Castlehill Housing Association (CHA) is committed to promoting equalities and recognises that tenants should have a quality of life which allows them to maintain and maximise independent living. We understand the use of mobility scooters in the community is becoming a more common occurrence and we recognise the value that a mobility scooter can bring to the lives of some tenants.

We also recognise our duties to protect the health and safety of tenants, staff and visitors, and to conform to fire safety regulations.

CHA's developments have not been built to take into account the use, charging and storage of powered mobility scooters. The communal areas in these developments do not easily allow alterations to meet the increased requirement for these facilities however it is recognised that in order to promote independent living there is a need to work with tenants to identify suitable storage and charging facilities.

This Mobility Scooter Policy has been developed to contribute to this by providing a clear framework to support accessibility for older and disabled people and to set out the objectives and principles for the safe use and storage of Mobility Scooters in common areas within our developments.

The primary aim of CHA in its approach to the use of mobility scooters within developments is to provide a safe environment for all tenants, staff and visitors with all hazards identified and removed or suitable controls in place.

Tenants who currently have a mobility scooter, or who are considering purchasing or leasing one, must get permission from CHA. If you require any information, please contact your Housing Officer.

AIMS

The Policy aims to:

- Meet the needs and aspirations of CHA tenants to have, use, store and charge mobility scooters in our developments and to comply with the legislative requirements of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 (including all relevant subordinate legislation/regulations) and general health and safety legislation.
- Manage scooters so as not to compromise the safety of tenants, staff and/or visitors.
- Ensure all requests for permission to keep a scooter are accommodated where possible and permission is not refused unreasonably.
- Ensure a full assessment is completed prior to granting/refusing permission.
- Ensure tenants' needs, views and priorities are taken into account when carrying out such assessments.
- Ensure that where permission is granted, that the tenant has adequate insurance and understands and commits to the terms and conditions of approval.
- Ensure tenants are aware of their responsibilities relating to the storage, charging and use of mobility scooters.
- Ensure tenants are aware that they are responsible for any injury or damage caused to another person, communal area or other CHA property as the result of their mobility scooter usage.

- Ensure prospective new tenants are aware of this Mobility Scooter Policy prior to accepting an offer of accommodation.
- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities relating to the safe use and storage of mobility scooters.

DEFINITIONS

Mobility scooters are defined as 'Invalid Carriages' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The Regulations divide these machines into three classes:

1. Class 1 – Manual Wheelchairs
2. Class 2 – Machines designed for use on the pavement, travelling at a speed of 4 miles per hour. They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to the other or where no pavement is available.
3. Class 3 – Machines that can be used both on the pavement where they are limited to 4 miles per hour, and on the road where they can travel at speeds of 8 miles per hour. These types of vehicles are required by law to be registered with the DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class where no duty will apply.

For the purposes of this Policy, 'mobility scooters' will mean class 1, class 2 and class 3 vehicles.

CONTEXT

CHA has a duty to comply with the law relating to Health & Safety, including fire safety.

Storage of mobility scooters in communal areas heightens the risk to people in the event of a fire. This might be a fire caused by the scooter itself or the obstruction caused to tenants/staff/visitors as they try to escape the building.

PERMISSIONS

Tenants must obtain permission from CHA prior to considering the purchase or hire of a mobility scooter as it cannot be guaranteed that permission will be granted.

The only exception is where the tenant is able to store a class 1 wheelchair within their property. In this case, there is no requirement for CHA's permission to be sought.

Class 1 Vehicles

If the tenant is unable to store the class 1 wheelchair within their property, permission must be sought from CHA to store the wheelchair in a suitable location within the development.

Class 2 Vehicles

Tenants must seek permission from CHA prior to using and storing a class 2 vehicle within their property and/or within the development.

Permission will not be granted to store class 2 vehicles within a development's internal communal areas.

Class 3 Vehicles

Tenants must seek permission from CHA prior to using and storing a class 3 vehicle. Such permission will only be granted on the basis of external storage being available.

Permission will not be granted to use, charge or store class 3 vehicles within a tenant's property or in any internal areas of a development, including internal communal areas.

Requests for Permission

Requests for permission must be made in writing. Permission will be granted in writing and will be subject to:

- Proof of adequate insurance being provided
- Acceptance of the Guidance Notes at Appendix 1
- Where appropriate, the tenant agreeing to pay the cost of the electricity supply
- Risk Assessment has been completed and all criteria has been satisfied.

Review of Permissions

Permission will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be removed at CHA's discretion if:

- The mobility scooter has been unused for a period of six months and is using a storage space that could be utilised by another tenant
- No insurance is in place for the mobility scooter
- There are arrears on any rent account charges for the use of internal or external storage facilities where required and a payment agreement has not been made
- Contributions towards the use of the communal electricity supply where required for the purposes of storage are in arrears and a repayment plan is not in place
- The mobility scooter is being stored and charged in an internal or external area that is contrary to the permission given.

ASSESSMENT

When assessing requests to store a mobility scooter, CHA will not unreasonably refuse permission but will carry out an on-site assessment of the suitability of granting permission and the impact permission will have on other tenants. Permission will only be granted where it does not adversely affect the wellbeing and safety of other tenants and where they are not put at risk. Tenants can appeal to the Housing Services Manager if they wish the refusal of permission to be reviewed.

The assessment, which will be carried out by the Property Services Officer (in consultation with Sheltered Scheme staff where necessary), will identify areas where the scooter may be safely stored and charged.

Ideally schemes will have areas set aside that can be used for this purpose however where this is not the case, we will try to identify a communal area either outside or inside the building where it can be safely stored without impeding access to corridors or stairwells.

Permission will not be granted to store mobility scooters in fire escape corridors or in stairway routes.

CHA may consider the provision of special storage facilities where there is suitable and sufficient space available within the development grounds and after obtaining planning permission, where required. Funding options to cover the costs of such provision will be explored with the tenant including Stage 3 Adaptation grant funding.

Where permission is not granted, CHA will fully explain the reasons why permission has been refused. Some examples of possible reasons for refusal include:

- No suitable or safe storage in tenant's flat and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided
- Where a major physical alteration to the premises is required and CHA believe it to be unreasonable in terms of cost and disruption to other users
- Where a tenant fails to take out the necessary insurance cover.

Where written permission is granted, the tenant must agree and comply with all conditions placed upon the storage and usage of the mobility scooter. We reserve the right to withdraw permission at any time if the conditions of the permission are broken.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Storage & Charging

Internal Storage

CHA must ensure that escape routes and stairways are clear and free from obstructions. As such, permission will not be granted to store Mobility Scooters in these areas.

Only in exceptional circumstances and where suitable internal storage areas have been identified through the Risk Assessment, will CHA consider granting permission for internal storage. Internal

areas being considered for use as a Mobility Scooter storage facility must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be lockable to minimise the risk of theft or misuse by unauthorised persons
- Provide adequate fire separation from escape routes
- Must have adequate automatic fire detection systems
- Must contain, or be able to be provided with, suitable electrical supply for the purposes of battery charging
- Must have adequate natural ventilation.

Permission for a mobility scooter will not be granted until suitable storage has been identified.

Allocation of any spaces, if available, will be on a controlled basis.

Where a tenant makes use of CHA's electrical supply for the purposes of battery charging then a fixed annual contribution towards the cost of electricity will be required.

Storage within tenants' homes

If a tenant is given permission to store and charge a mobility scooter within their home, the tenant should ensure that the charging is conducted in line with the manufacturer's instructions. We strongly advise that residents use suitable circuit breakers when charging Mobility Scooters in their home. In addition:

- Mobility Scooters must not be stored next to heaters or fire exits
- Mobility Scooters must not be left on charge overnight.

Any fines imposed on CHA for breach of Fire Regulations, directly attributable to a breach of these storage requirements, will be recharged to the appropriate perpetrator.

External Storage

Where no suitable internal location can be found to store and charge Mobility Scooters, CHA, in consultation with tenants, will give consideration to the provision of an external storage facility. The provision of an external storage facility will require that:

- Suitable space is available
- There is no loss of privacy or potential disturbance to neighbouring homes
- Planning or other statutory permission is obtained, where required.

A rent will be charged to contribute to the cost of providing and maintaining the storage facility, as well as to the cost of electricity used for battery charging.

Allocation of storage space will be on a controlled basis. Where demand for external storage exceeds supply or where no further external storage facility can be provided then CHA will operate a waiting list.

Any fines imposed on CHA for breach of Fire Regulations, directly attributable to a breach of these storage requirements, will be recharged to the appropriate perpetrator.

Consultation with Tenants

The provision of an internal or external storage facility will, if necessary, make use of the communal area of the development. It is therefore necessary to consult the tenants who will be affected and seek their views on the use of communal areas for such purposes. CHA must balance the views of the tenants with obligations under The Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Use

Mobility scooters should be ridden safely and in a responsible manner especially within the confines of the building and grounds of the scheme and by taking due care and consideration for other tenants, staff and visitors. All mobility scooters should be set at the lowest speed setting when being used indoors.

Permission is given on the basis that the mobility scooter and the tenant do not cause any damage to the building or injury to other people. Where damage is caused to the building, CHA reserves the right to recharge the tenant for any repairs that are required to rectify the damage. In all cases the tenant is expected to accept responsibility for the consequences of their action in the use of the scooter.

If tenants are using mobility scooters in lifts, tenants should ensure they take due care and attention of property and other lift users. Mobility scooter users should also ensure they can safely manoeuvre their scooters for entry to and exit from the lift.

Training

We would recommend that all mobility scooter users undergo some form of training/instruction on the usage and control of the mobility scooter.

Maintenance

Tenants will be responsible for ensuring mobility scooters are serviced annually and maintained and charged in line with the manufacturers' instructions. Proof of annual service should be provided on request. Failure to do so will result in permission being withdrawn.

Insurance

As part of the permission to keep a mobility scooter in the development, tenants should have a valid certificate of insurance for the mobility scooter. Insurance should include public and third party liability to cover damage to buildings, property and grounds, or injury involving tenants, staff or visitors.

Proof that insurance cover exists must be provided to CHA before permission will be granted and then on an annual basis.

Any damage to our property caused by a mobility scooter will be recovered through the owner's insurance company. If the owner does not have a current insurance certificate, they will be personally liable for all costs, and asked to remove the scooter from the development immediately.

APPENDIX 1 – GUIDANCE NOTES

We strongly recommend you consider the following advice before purchasing or leasing a mobility scooter.

1. You will need written permission to keep a mobility scooter.
2. Where will you store and charge your mobility scooter?
3. Charging your mobility scooter within your home.
You will need to ensure that the charging point/socket is appropriate for your Mobility Scooter.
Scooters should not be charged overnight.
4. Using the lift.
You should check that you can take your scooter in the lift in your scheme.
5. Buying/Leasing a Mobility Scooter
Seek professional advice before buying or leasing a scooter either from an occupational therapist or reputable dealer.
6. Insurance and Upkeep
You will need adequate insurance cover.
You will need to consider maintenance costs.
7. CHA will seek to recover all costs that arise from the use of a Mobility Scooter within their developments. Costs will include:
Costs of any internal adaptations to developments to accommodate the storage, unless funding through Stage 3 Adaptation Grant.
Costs of erecting an external storage facility and ongoing maintenance, unless funding through Stage 3 Adaptation Grant.
The provision of electricity for battery charging.