



## **The storage and charging of mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs**

### **Introduction**

This fact sheet explains our policy regarding the safe storage and charging of powered vehicles (mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs) within our schemes. This policy applies to all residents who already own and use a powered vehicle, existing residents who are considering purchasing a powered vehicle, or applicants who are considering moving into one of our schemes with a powered vehicle.

Our policy has been written to enable as many residents as possible to use and store powered vehicles whilst ensuring the Association's obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; our wider health and safety obligations and satisfying the terms and conditions of our Insurance policy.

This is because powered vehicles involved in a fire can release large volumes of smoke and toxic fumes and generate significant heat outputs. If powered vehicles stored in communal escape routes or hallways of individual apartments were involved in a fire, there is potential that escape routes will become impassable and residents could be placed at significant risk from the effects of fire. Therefore, whilst we understand the benefits and independence that powered vehicles can provide residents; the health and safety of all residents, staff and visitors must be our first priority.

### **Applying for permission to use a powered vehicle within our schemes**

New residents should apply for permission to use, store or charge a powered vehicle within our schemes. Permission will not be unreasonably refused, unless there is a serious health and safety concern that we cannot reasonably resolve.

To apply residents should complete our powered vehicle application form and a member of our housing and support team will review the completed application to decide whether permission can be granted. For applications to store and charge powered vehicles within a resident's own apartment our housing and support team will visit to check that the powered vehicle is not creating a health and safety risk.

Applications to use our designated mobility scooter bays will initially be done on a first come, first served basis. Where a waiting list is in operation, we will take into account and prioritise applications for residents who we believe have the greatest needs/dependency for a powered vehicle in order to retain their independence.

Powered vehicles cannot be used within some of our schemes due to the layout of communal corridors or the lack of a lift, designed for carrying powered vehicles.

## Conditions for the use, storage and charging of powered vehicles within our schemes

There are a number of conditions that are attached to granting permission to use a powered vehicle within our schemes. These are:

- New permission requests will only be given for powered vehicles that conform to BS EN 12184:2014. (please check your vehicle's handbook or contact your supplier).
- The storage and charging of powered vehicles in communal corridors and escape routes is strictly forbidden. Within our extra care schemes, we may allow powered vehicles to be temporarily parked within a specified area adjacent to the restaurant/lounge to enable residents, with restricted mobility, to access the restaurant. This will be agreed/monitored through the scheme's fire risk assessment and health and safety inspections.
- Class 3 vehicles (vehicles which are intended for use on the road) must be registered with the DVLA for road use and speed restrictors must be enabled when used on our public access pathways. Permission will only be granted for Class 3 mobility scooters to be stored in designated mobility scooter bay and cannot be used within schemes or stored within individual apartments. If necessary, residents who need a mobility scooter to access their apartment should seek permission to transfer from an outdoor to an indoor-suitable vehicle. Class 3 Wheelchairs can be used within the scheme.
- An individual assessment of fire risk must be satisfactorily completed to enable a resident to store a powered vehicle within their own apartment. We will also ask you to check your home contents policy allows the storage and charging of powered vehicles within your own home.
- Powered vehicles should only be charged in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Once fully charged powered vehicles should be disconnected from the electricity supply at the earliest opportunity.
- Public liability insurance, covering accidental damage to a third party and property is obtained and maintained. (We reserve the right to review such insurance documents from time to time). We will not be liable for any claims arising from how individual residents operate their powered vehicles within our schemes and we will recharge for any damage that is caused to our fixtures or fittings.
- All powered vehicles must be kept in a good state of repair and maintained in accordance with manufacturer instructions. We may, from time to time, ask to see maintenance records.
- Regular inspections should include:
  - tyres have sufficient tread and have not worn unevenly.
  - batteries are charging safely and keeping charge.
  - any fitted brakes are in good working order (Class 3 vehicles).
  - lights are in good working order.
  - all wiring is clean, with the appropriate casing intact, free from dust and rust, and in good working order.

- all mechanical components are free from dirt and rust, with no signs of significant damage that could impair safety (e.g. bent struts, axles particularly where these will be load bearing)
- Powered vehicles must be used safely and competently within our schemes. This includes ensuring that other residents and users of the scheme are not injured/involved in a near miss, and that no damage is caused to communal areas or individual apartments, as a result of the way a powered vehicle is operated.
- Where powered vehicles are stored in a designated mobility scooter bay the agreed rental charge must be paid in full in accordance with the rental agreement.

We reserve the right to withdraw permission at any time if any of the above conditions are not met.

### Recharging for damage caused by powered vehicles

We sometimes have to repair our communal areas as a result of damage caused by powered vehicles. This means we have to recover these costs through a scheme's service charge contributions. Therefore, damage to communal areas results in higher service charge costs for all residents.

Damage to individual apartments increases our day to day repair expenditure and therefore may have a detrimental impact on our ability to complete planned and major repair works.

To try and reduce these costs and associated outcomes we will recharge individual residents for the cost of repairing/replacing any damage caused by powered vehicles. This includes both to the resident's apartment and/or our communal areas.

### The designated mobility scooter room

Most of our schemes have a designated mobility scooter room to prevent a fire from a mobility scooter spreading to communal corridors, or individual homes. The greatest risk is in the evening, particularly through the night. To control this risk, the National Fire Chief Council state that owners of premises should limit the charging of mobility scooters to **8am to 8pm**. We have configured the mobility scooter room's electrical supply to meet this requirement. This means before you purchase, or replace a mobility scooter, you should check that your mobility scooter will function correctly based on these charging times.