



Norwich Housing Society

MOBILITY SCOOTER, ELECTRIC BICYCLE AND POWER ASSISTED WHEELCHAIR POLICY

1. Introduction:

1.1. Mobility scooters enable outdoor mobility to those who would otherwise be confined to their home and help to maximise independence. Whilst an individual must meet the costs of ownership or leasing privately, Norwich Housing Society has a duty to ensure that the mobility scooters are being used, stored, and charged appropriately and safely within their buildings.

1.2 The Society wishes to encourage and maximise independence for individuals and recognises the value mobility scooters can bring. However, the Society also have a duty to ensure high standards of health and safety within blocks of flats and its schemes, for residents, staff, and visitors. Residents need to seek permission from the Society to store a scooter anywhere on their scheme. Residents should discuss this with their Scheme Manager to ensure that the scooter can be stored appropriately and in line with the guidance detailed in this policy.

1.3 We have a duty to comply with the law relating to fire safety. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies and covers general fire precautions and fire safety duties which are required to protect people in case of a fire in and around our buildings.

1.4 The Society has limited storage facilities for mobility scooters; this policy aims to balance the needs of residents to keep mobility scooters on site with its duties to maintain a safe environment for all residents, particularly in relation to potential fire risks. Where applicable, residents must comply with the outcome of any risk assessments carried out and failure to do so may lead to permission to keep the mobility scooter on our land being denied / withdrawn.

2. Definition of Mobility Scooters:

2.1 Powered scooters are defined as “invalid carriages” under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highway Regulations 1988.

2.2 In this policy, “mobility scooter” means Class 2 or 3 machines, other than battery powered wheelchairs. Class 2 are machines designated for use on the footpath, travelling at speeds of up to 4 miles per hour. Class 3 applies to machines that can be used on both the footpath and the highway and travel up to 8 miles per hour.

2.3 Appropriate insurance is essential for any residents owning or using a mobility scooter within any part of any our schemes. This includes liability insurance in case of either damage to buildings or injury involving other people living or visiting the building.

3. Health and Safety:

3.1 The Society's priority is to ensure the safety of all residents, visitors, staff, and contractors to our homes. We have a legal duty to maintain communal areas in a safe condition and to ensure that all fire routes and fire escapes are always kept clear.

3.2 We do not permit possessions to be stored in communal hallways and this includes mobility scooters, electric bicycles and power assisted wheelchairs as seen in your tenancy agreement set out in clause 9.2 and 10.3.

3.3 No petrol fuelled mobility scooters are permitted on our land including its external areas.

3.4 Where there are no adequate and safe storage and charging facilities available within a scheme, the resident must store their mobility scooter, electric bicycle, or powered wheelchair within their flat where the layout of the accommodation is suitable. Mobility scooters can only be stored within ground floor flats where there is sufficient space to store it safely without obstructing any escape routes.

3.5 Residents that store mobility scooters in their homes must ensure the mobility scooter does not block any fire exits. Scooters and chargers must also be maintained in line with the manufacturer's guidance.

4. Responsibilities:

4.1 The Scooter must only be used by the owner/lease holder in a safe manner at a slow walking pace to obtain access and egress to their home. The Society will withdraw permission to keep a mobility scooter if this is not adhered to. Residents must accept that they use their scooter at their own risk.

4.2 All residents with mobility scooters are expected to be responsible for the maintenance and servicing of their mobility scooters and batteries and for ensuring their proper use. Residents are strongly advised to ensure appropriate insurance is in place for accidents and damage to property. A copy of the insurance and servicing documents should be provided to the Society on an annual basis. Failure to adequately maintain and ensure a mobility scooter may lead to us withdrawing consent for a resident to keep their scooter on site.

4.3 Residents may use their scooters in communal areas such as social rooms and laundry facilities provided that the scooter is used considerately and safely. Lifts within our schemes are classed as "passenger lifts" and must not be entered by mobility scooter users.

4.4 If legislation requires a User of a mobility scooter to have a road fund, driving or similar licence to use a scooter and imposes any other regulations, the User agrees to comply with all such regulations and to obtain such a licence, a copy of which will be given to the Scheme Manager. The Society will withdraw permission to keep and use the scooter on our land, should this not be adhered to.

4.5 The Scheme Manager is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and for allocating and monitoring the use of any scooter storage facilities at their schemes.

4.6 The Scheme Manager will ensure that their regular site inspections and health and safety inspections include any designated mobility scooter storage areas. These areas are included within our fire risk assessments for individual schemes.

4.7 The Scheme Manager will ensure that a mobility scooter log is kept and is up to date. This log details all individuals living in our homes with mobility scooters, the type of vehicle, confirmation of insurance and servicing and where the mobility scooter is stored. The Scheme Manager will review the log from time to time. Should any resident have any arrears of rent or an outstanding debt due to a recharge, permission may be withdrawn to keep a mobility scooter in our storage facility.

5. Allocation of Spaces and Storage in Resident's Properties:

5.1 Residents must seek consent from their Scheme Manager to keep a mobility scooter at their home / scheme before they obtain a mobility scooter. This is to ensure that adequate, safe storage space is available at the scheme or in their home and that the resident understands the need for insurance and regular maintenance.

5.2 Mobility Scooters, electric bicycles and powered wheelchairs will not be stored in communal areas of a building, including under stairs, on landings, in corridors or access routes and social rooms.

5.3 Where there is no safe storage or charging facilities available, residents may store their mobility scooter inside their own home subject to certain restrictions. The resident must seek consent from their Scheme Manager to do so.

5.4 The Mobility Scooter, Electric Bicycle or Power Assisted Wheelchair must be in regular use (regular use is deemed as a minimum of once a month). The User will remove any Mobility Scooter, Electric Bicycle or Power Assisted wheelchair from communal storage which is not in regular use.

6. Insurance and Mobility Scooters:

6.1 Any costs for damage to Norwich Housing Society property caused by mobility scooters, electric bicycles or powered wheelchairs will be recovered through the owners' insurance company. If there is no valid insurance in place the owner will be personally liable for all costs. Any failure to pay for damage to our property would be a breach of the tenancy agreement under clause 7.8 of your Conditions of Tenancy.

7. Charging of Mobility Scooter, Electric Bicycles and Power Assisted Wheelchairs:

7.1 Mobility scooters, electric bicycles and powered wheelchairs and detached batteries should be charged inside residents' homes, unless specific provision is made by Norwich Housing Society in designated scooter stores or established safe areas with suitable charging points. Charging should be in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

7.2 A mobility scooter must be charged within a specially designated area or a resident's home between the hours of 8am and 8pm and strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

7.3 Charging should be undertaken in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

7.4 The Society reserves the right to charge mobility scooter owners a fee for the use of a designated scooter store and for the electricity used.

8. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:

8.1 The subject matter of this policy will impact on people with disabilities or older people. It is important that all requests to own a mobility scooter, electric bicycle or power assisted wheelchair will be considered on an individual basis and the tenant is supported as much as possible. These requests need to be considered alongside the overall health and safety of all residents.

8.2 The Society aims to implement policies and procedures that support and meet the diverse needs of its tenants, ensuring that no one is placed at a disadvantage over others and to minimise, and remove any disproportionate impact on the grounds of the protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.