



Places to live. Space to grow.

Mobility Scooter Policy

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1. Introduction: the purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the storage and charging of

mobility scooters, powered wheelchairs, and the process of requesting permission promoting tenant responsibility. The term 'vehicle' used within this document refers to mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs only.

- 1.1 This policy covers any residential buildings that have communal facilities or communal exits/entry for example extra care schemes, blocks of flats, or supported accommodation.
- 1.2 For general needs properties not in a block, (for example, a self-contained house or bungalow), you can have a mobility vehicle without our permission. It is your responsibility to use it safely, store, charge, insure and licence it. We strongly advise you do not leave your vehicle charging unattended or overnight. We will only be involved if adaptations are required, or a risk has been identified/highlighted.

2. Policy statement

In alignment with West Kent's vision to deliver "places to live and space to grow" and to foster "a prosperous, strong and sustainable society in Kent," this policy supports the responsible use of mobility scooters to enhance independence and quality of life for residents with mobility needs.

West Kent is committed to creating inclusive, accessible communities where all residents can thrive. Mobility scooters are permitted in communal areas and on West Kent premises, provided their use does not compromise safety, accessibility, or the peaceful enjoyment of shared spaces by others.

Conditions and restrictions:

- Scooters must be stored in designated areas and must not obstruct hallways, fire exits, or communal pathways.
- Only Class 2 and Class 3 scooters (as defined by UK law) are permitted.
- Residents must ensure their scooters are insured and maintained in safe working condition.
- Charging of scooters must only occur in approved locations to prevent fire hazards.

Exemptions:

- Residents with specific medical or accessibility needs may request reasonable adjustments or exemptions, subject to individual assessment and approval.

This policy reflects West Kent's values of delivering excellent services and building successful communities, while ensuring safety, accessibility, and mutual respect among all residents.

Aims and objectives

- 2.1 To accommodate vehicles when possible, while maintaining fire and health and safety standards.
- 2.2 Ensure that vehicles do not cause an obstruction and do not increase the risk of fire spread or block an escape route in the event of a fire.
- 2.3 Provide clear guidance on the safe use and storage of vehicles in approved communal facilities and permitted properties, including general needs.
- 2.4 Ensure that residents adhere to their storage, charging and use of vehicle responsibilities once permission is granted.

2.5 Ensure that residents are aware that they need to obtain the correct insurance, are liable for any injury caused to another person and damage to mobility scooter stores, communal areas, and another people's property, because of their use of a vehicle.

2.6 Respond to the changing needs of residents by offering assistance and facilities where possible.

2.7 Allocate storage space fairly.

3. Equality and diversity

3.1 We will consider the individual needs of residents.

3.2 We will recognise the value of these vehicles in helping residents remain independent.

3.3 We will work closely with other agencies when they are supporting a resident.

3.4 We will provide key information in accessible formats (for example, large print and braille) where required. Our communication formats guide sets out the range of different services we can provide, and how to request them, visit www.westkent.org/accessibility

4. Legal definitions and requirements

4.1 This policy considers the following legislation and guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The National Fire Chief Council Fire Safety in Specialised Housing 2017
- The National Fire Chief Council Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings 2018
- The Chief Fire Officers Association Draft Mobility Scooter Guidance 2017.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

4.2 Mobility vehicles are defined as '*invalid carriages*' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divided these machines into three classes:

- Class 1: Manual wheelchairs (not covered by this policy)
- Class 2: Machines designed for use on the footway, travelling at speed of up to 4mph
- Class 3: Machines that can be used on the footway, and roads where they are limited to speeds of up to 4mph on paths and indoors and roads they can travel at up to 8mph.
- Class 3 Machines are required to be registered with the DVLA for road use, be licensed in the 'disabled' taxation class and display a nil duty tax disc.

5. Communal areas

5.1 We define communal areas as *"Any internal or external areas within a building which is shared or is accessed by more than one person e.g. corridors, lifts, gardens and lounges."*

6. Approved communal facilities

- 6.1 An approved communal facility is *“a purpose-built storage, or an area that has been designated for the storage and/or charging of vehicles following alteration works and a fire safety risk assessment.”*

7. Applying for permission to keep a mobility vehicle

- 7.1 Prior to the purchase of a vehicle the resident (or prospective applicant) must obtain written permission from the appropriate officer (Neighbourhood Housing Officer/Scheme Manager) or manager at West Kent.
- 7.2 The resident or applicant must apply in writing to the appropriate team, neighbourhood housing, supported housing, or extra care.
- 7.3 Consideration may be given prior to sign up if there are any medical conditions or disabilities identified that indicate the need for a vehicle in the future.
- 7.4 All new residents will be advised of this policy at sign up.
- 7.5 Where there is an approved communal facility, we will determine if space is available and ensure the resident has read this policy and understands their responsibilities.
- 7.6 Where there is no approved communal facility, residents must obtain permission to store a mobility scooter in their property. These requests may require us to carry out a risk assessment.
- 7.7 Vehicles are not permitted to be stored or used within communal areas without our written permission. Permission will be subject to the resident providing proof of:
- Adequate insurance cover for the vehicle, renewed annually (see Section 11)
 - A current PAT certificate renewed annually
 - DVLA registration
 - Tax disc (nil duty) where the vehicle is Class 3.
- 7.8 Allocation of space in an approved communal facility will be initially on a first come, first served basis. If a facility is new or is full, a waiting list will be kept. This will be based on need first, then on waiting time. This may require a resident to provide sufficient medical evidence to support their request for a space and to assist management in making a decision. The relevant staff member (scheme manager or assistant, housing or support officer) will manage waiting lists for approved communal facilities.

8. Permission outcome

- 8.1 We aim to respond to mobility scooter requests within ten days of receiving a permission request.
- 8.2 Where permission is granted, the resident must agree and comply with all conditions placed upon the storage and usage of the vehicle. We reserve the right to withdraw permission at any time if the conditions of the permission are broken.
- 8.3 The resident will be required to sign our mobility scooter contract.
- 8.4 Permission will be refused or withdrawn where:
- There is no safe storage within the property/scheme
 - It is unreasonable to make alterations to the physical features of the building or property.

- The resident fails to take out the necessary insurance cover.
- The resident fails to provide any documentation requested by us.
- A scooter is too large to fit through internal and external entrances to the building or property without causing damage.
- There are concerns regarding a resident's ability to use a mobility scooter safely.
- The resident refuses to engage with a risk assessment.

8.5 We reserve the right to withdraw approved communal facilities, particularly should a change in legislation apply.

8.6 If permission is refused, we will respond to the resident outlining the reasons for refusal.

8.7 If the resident is not satisfied with the decision and has further information that they would like considered, then they can provide the information and ask for a review by the decision maker's manager. If they are still dissatisfied at this point, they can make a complaint following our complaint procedure. Details on this are available on our website, www.westkent.org/complaints.

9. Storage of mobility vehicles

9.1 Vehicles can be stored in residents' flats, rather than in an approved communal facility, as long as the flat is safety accessible and the scooter is class 1 or class 2. A risk assessment may be conducted to access this, including an assessment of using a lift.

9.2 Permission must still be obtained for scooters being stored and charged within resident's flats, as set out in this policy

9.3 No vehicle should be stored in any communal area unless an area has been specifically designated as an approved communal facility. Where approved communal facilities are provided, residents must ensure they always comply with Fire Regulations and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. For example, they must not block fire exits, or cause obstruction with the vehicle.

9.4 Any vehicle found stored in a communal area that is not approved will be removed.

9.5 The upholstery on vehicles should be fire resistant, and other flammable materials should not be present in areas where vehicles are stored.

9.6 The vehicles stored within approved communal facilities must be inspected and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. PAT (portable appliance testing) should be completed annually, by a certified electrician. This is the responsibility of the owner and if not completed, permission to use the communal facility will not be granted/may be withdrawn.

9.7 Photocopies of all documents must be provided to us. We will keep a copy on the resident's tenancy file.

9.8 Vehicle owners are responsible for making sure the vehicle is left secure, tidy and free from trip hazards.

9.9 We will conduct regular health and safety checks of approved communal facilities.

9.10 We will not take responsibility for loss or damage to a vehicle kept in an approved communal facility.

- 9.11 No other items (for example, trolleys or cushions) should be stored in the approved communal facility. We reserve the right to remove all other items.

10. Charging of batteries

- 10.1 Wherever possible, vehicles should be charged following manufacturing guidelines in a well ventilated area and only in designated approved facilities within communal areas.
- 10.2 We will consider a request for an approved external charging point connected to a tenants individual electricity supply. A formal request must be made and the work must be completed at the individual's expense. Charging the vehicle within two meters of the building, blocking fire exits, and the use of extension leads is prohibited.
- 10.3 Whether inside a resident's home or an approved communal facility, charging should be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 10.4 Charging of batteries should be carried out during the day where possible, particularly where a scheme manager or scheme assistant can be present. Charging should be completed on a rota basis where necessary. Vehicles should not be left on charge overnight and we may switch off any batteries charging at the end of the working day.
- 10.5 When charging within your own flat, you must ensure the vehicle is not left charging overnight or unattended.
- 10.6 Vehicles must be charged directly from the mains electric in the approved communal facility.
- 10.7 Residents should not leave their vehicles on charge for longer than necessary, as this creates a fire risk.
- 10.8 The running cost of an approved communal facility is included within the service charge.

11. Insurance, liability and damages

- 11.1 Vehicle owners must ensure they have appropriate insurance in place. This includes public and third party liability insurance in case of either damage to the building or injury involving other people who may be living at or visiting the building.
- 11.2 If a vehicle causes damage to a communal area (including damage to communal gardens, carpets, building or decorations), the cost of any repairs will be charged to the resident responsible for the damage.
- 11.3 Only the vehicle owner is allowed to drive the vehicle in communal areas.
- 11.4 A copy of the insurance cover note will be kept on the resident's tenancy file.
- 11.5 We take no responsibility for loss or damages to any vehicle stored within an approved communal facility.
- 11.6 We will look to recover any costs due to damage to property caused by a vehicle through the owners own insurance.

12. Applying for alterations and storage sheds

- 12.1 Alterations cannot be made to any entrance to the communal building or a resident's property, which would result in a cost to West Kent. Where residents are prepared to fund alterations themselves, they should seek formal permission by submitting a home improvement request line with their tenancy and our home improvement policy. More information can be found on our website, www.westkent.org/homeimprovements. We will not unreasonably withhold permission a small scooter shed at the rear of a property where it is practical to do so, but only after successful consultation with neighbours who may be affected.

13. Enforcement

- 13.1 Vehicles cannot be stored in communal areas or anywhere within the scheme or property without our prior consent, as per this policy and relevant clauses of your tenancy agreement.
- 13.2 We reserve the right to withdraw permission to store or use a vehicle in shared areas at any time should a resident not adhere to this policy.
- 13.3 If permission is withdrawn, the resident will be asked to remove the vehicle. Failure to comply will result in us removing the vehicle. The resident will be charged the costs. This may also result in enforcement action for breach of tenancy.

14. Monitoring

- 14.1 We will identify at assessment or sign-up whether a resident has a mobility vehicle. If the resident already owns or intends to purchase one, then we will make you aware of this policy and our procedures.

15. Review

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier should legislative requirements change.
- 15.2 We will engage current residents and service users in periodic reviews of this policy and current working practices if there are any changes to regulation or processes.

16. Responsibilities

- 16.1 The lead officer for the policy is the older peoples service manager.

17. Consultation

- 17.1 There has been no changes to regulation or our processes therefore consultation was not required.

Our Building Safety Manager has reviewed and confirmed no regulatory changes have been made and is satisfied with the process.

18. Communication

- 18.1 All residents who need to use a mobility scooter, and all staff to ensure they follow and implement the policy.

Communication will be through our intranet, the West Kent website, and during resident meetings at schemes.

19. Regulation

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The National Fire Chief Council Fire Safety in Specialised Housing 2017
- The National Fire Chief Council Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings 2018
- The Chief Fire Officers Association Draft Mobility Scooter Guidance 2017.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

20. Appendix

Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings (NFCC – National Fire Chiefs Council)