



RCH Policy:

Mobility Scooter &

Powered

Wheelchair Policy

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Approval Body	Social Landlord Operations Committee
Approval Date	5 th August 2025

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This policy is available, on request, in different languages and in other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.

1. Scope

This policy will apply to any customer living in sheltered housing complexes, multi-story flats or any other accommodation as agreed by the Customer Experience Directorate who currently owns and stores, or requests to own and store, a mobility scooter either within the common areas, external designated scooter storage or within their own flat.

This policy will be made available on RCH Group website and internally on RCH Group intranet.

As appropriate, RCH will ensure the promotion of equal opportunities by publishing information and documentation in different languages and other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.

RCH will comply with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of Mobility Scooters within Sheltered Housing complexes and multi-story flats. The policy will address how mobility scooters & powered wheelchairs can be used, stored and charged to ensure the safety of all customers within these areas.

Due to the widespread use and availability of mobility scooters, their popularity is beginning to create issues in terms of safe storage, use and charging in areas that were not designed to accommodate scooters. Subsequently, customers are attempting to use common areas to store and charge their scooters.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire risks in common areas should be assessed and actions taken to reduce these risks. In residential buildings mobility scooter fires can pose a life safety risk to tenants, employees, firefighters and others when stored in communal areas and/or escape routes. RCH therefore has a duty to ensure that mobility scooters for residents of flats are being stored safely.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide guidance for staff when customers request storage/charging facilities
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- provide guidance to staff when customers wish to keep their mobility scooters in their own home
- provide guidance to customers who wish to keep their mobility scooters within their own home
- address any safety risks for all customers
- respond to future needs of customers
- future proofing services to fit customers' needs

3. Definitions

3.1 Mobility Scooters & Powered Wheelchairs

Powered scooters and powered wheelchairs are defined as 'invalid carriages' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divided these machines into three classes:

- Class 2 applies to machines designed for use on the pavement travelling at speed of up to 4mph (ie power wheelchairs). They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to another or where no pavement is available
- Class 3 applies to machines that can be used both on the pavement where, like class 2 vehicles, they are limited to 4mph, and on the road where they can travel up to 8mph. These need to be registered with DVLA.
- Not in a Class: your vehicle is not in a Class if
 1. It can travel at more than 8mph
 2. It is wider than 0.85 metres
 3. It weighs more than 150kg (or 200kg if you need any equipment attached to it, for example medical equipment)

Any mobility scooter or powered wheelchair that is not in class can only be used on the road, it cannot be used on pavements, cycle tracks or any other pedestrian areas. The user must have a valid drivers licence and register the vehicle with DVLA.

The seller or manufacturer will be able to advise which class the vehicle is if it is not stated on the vehicle.

4. Policy Statement and Responsibilities

4.1 Acceptable Vehicles

This policy applies to both Class 2 and 3 vehicles. Class 1 vehicles do not require permissions to be stored within customers own homes or used within our properties. Any class 3 vehicle which is longer than 1200mm or wider than 700mm is not permitted to be stored inside sheltered housing complexes, multi-storey common areas or customers own homes nor are they permitted to travel in any of our lifts. The reason for this is class 3 scooters are road worthy vehicles and therefore are generally heavier and larger. This increases the risk of damage to RCH property including to lifts.

4.2 Permissions

All customers of sheltered housing, multi-storey flats or other accommodation, as agreed by the Customer Services Directorate, will be required to request permission from their Housing Officer prior to purchasing a mobility scooter and storing within their home, communal areas or external designated storage facilities. Permission will be granted on a first come first served basis subject to a number of conditions (per below) being met with a waiting list in operation when maximum capacity is reached. The associated Mobility Scooter Procedure sets out the maximum capacity for mobility scooter storage per complex or multi story flat.

Failure to request permission for the storage of a mobility scooter may result in a customer being asked to remove the scooter to an alternative location until permission has been sought and granted.

4.3 Conditions on ownership of mobility scooter

Insurance & PAT Testing: all users will be required to provide evidence that the scooter has Public Liability Insurance covering accidental damage to a third party and/or property. This is required in the event that the user causes injury to another person or damage to RCH building. Scooters are also required to be PAT tested annually and hold a PAT test certificate.

This information should be provided to RCH when requesting permission and thereafter on an annual basis whilst the scooter remains within the complex or multi story.

Fire Safety Check: any user who wishes to store their mobility scooter within their own home must first receive a first safety check from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service prior to permission being granted. This check can be arranged by RCH on behalf of the customer but must be carried out before the scooter is stored within the customer's home. This will ensure the scooter does not cause any fire risk either due to charging requirements or by blocking escape routes.

As per Scottish Government guidance:

"Mobility scooters involved in a fire can release large volumes of smoke and generate significant heat outputs in a very short period of time. If mobility scooters are stored on escape routes and are involved in a fire, there is a likelihood that escape routes will become impassable due to smoke and heat, placing residents at significant risk."

"the scooter should not be stored or charged in the private hallway, if this is the only means of escape available. The scooter should, preferably, be stored and charged in a separate room, which is fitted with a fire-resisting or substantial door and fire detection."

Annex 7: Mobility Scooter Guidance - Fire safety - existing specialised housing and similar premises: practical guidance - gov.scot

Suitable space available: prior to permission being granted, RCH staff will confirm that there is suitable storage space available. If the building cannot accommodate a further mobility scooter and the customers home is not suitable, then the customer will be placed on a waiting list and permission will be given as soon as a storage space becomes available. Permission cannot be given where a property has reached its maximum capacity as per procedure.

4.4 Damage caused to property

Any damage caused to RCH property, including lifts, as a result of mobility scooters will be recharged to customers. This may be recovered through the owner's liability insurance company or if the insurance is void the customer will be personally liable for all costs. If repeat damage is caused to RCH property permission will be retracted and the customer will be asked to remove the scooter from the building.

4.5 Use of mobility scooters within common areas

Mobility scooters can only be used within complexes or common areas where the permitted storage area is inside the building. Where the permitted storage area is outside, for example in Scooter Pods, mobility scooters cannot be used inside the building. Where the designated storage area is outside the building and the customer has an occupational therapy recommendation saying they cannot walk from the designated storage area to their flat, they must have a mobility scooter suitable for storage within their flat. It must not be stored in corridors or other communal areas.

Where mobility scooters are left within unauthorised areas, RCH staff will discuss this with the owner. Should the mobility scooter remain there after discussions have taken place, RCH will remove and dispose of the scooter. This action will not be undertaken without appropriate discussion and notice to the customer and will only be used at a last resort.

4.6 Speed Limits

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

4.7 Lifts

At application stage, the suitability of the customers scooter for use in the lift within that building will be considered. In cases where the scooter is not suitable to travel in the lift permission will not be granted. If customers are using scooters in the lifts, users should ensure they take due care and attention of the property and other lift users. Mobility scooter users should also ensure they can safely manoeuvre their scooters for entry to the lift and exit, especially on the upper floors where there may be open stairwells. It should be noted that any damage caused to the lift can potentially render it "Out of Service" for a period of time. Lifts are sensitive to damage and with customers relying heavily on them, any time a lift is "Out of Service" it can cause great inconvenience for all customers and staff.

4.8 External Designated Storage

RCH will aim to increase the availability of external mobility scooter storage through the use of scooter pods. These pods will be allocated in line with permission section above. If a sheltered housing complex or multi story flat has external storage, scooters are not permitted to be stored in any other common areas. A charge (£) will be applied to any customer using scooter pods which will include the use of electricity whilst charging mobility scooters. The charge will be reviewed on an annual basis.

4.9 Charging

Charging is permitted only within designated mobility scooter storage areas. Charging of scooters within other common areas and hallways is not permitted. Charging and maintenance should be undertaken in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Vehicles should not be left on permanent charge and only charged for the manufacturer's recommended time.

Where possible, customers should remove the battery and charge within their own flat on a timer device to prevent overcharging and overheating of the battery.

Where this is not possible, customers may store and charge their scooters in an agreed location, subject to risk assessment. A charge (£) will be applied to any customer whose scooter is being charged in a communal area.

Scooters should not be left charging overnight. Guidance will be provided to promote the safe usage of scooters and charging of. Staff on site have been instructed to unplug chargers at the end of their shift. In line with our Health and Safety Policy, all accidents incidents or near misses will be reported by staff to Health and Safety. This includes the overcharging of mobility scooters. Customers found to be overcharging after staffing hours are at the risk of permission being withdrawn to store their scooter in the complex.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for this policy and there were no negative impacts or equalities. River Clyde Homes will treat all customers with fairness and respect in line with its Diversity Strategy and in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. River Clyde Homes recognises that we have an ethical and a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination on the grounds of age, sex and sexual orientation disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed in its entirety every 3 years, unless an earlier review is required due to changes in legal, regulatory or best practice requirements, or because monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.