

Mobility Vehicle Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy sets out the approach of Platform Housing Group (the Group) to mobility vehicles which include battery powered mobility scooters, battery powered wheelchairs or any other battery assisted equipment such as e-bikes and scooters.

The Group acknowledges that its customers (occupants) should, under the Equality Act 2010, have a quality of life which allows for the provision of full mobility; including the right to own a mobility scooter or electric powered wheelchair.

Mobility scooters were introduced to provide local outdoor mobility for people with disabilities who might otherwise be confined to their home. Electric powered wheelchairs are typically provided to people with increased disabilities and provide mobile access both indoors and outdoors.

Whilst e-bikes are not legally regarded as “mobility vehicles”, they are becoming increasingly popular. All lithium-ion battery powered vehicles pose increased levels of fire risk, especially when being stored and when batteries are being recharged within Group premises.

For the purposes of this policy, these pieces of equipment will be referred to as “mobility vehicles”.

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the Group.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy has been produced to help occupants achieve or maintain their independence without compromising the health and safety of others.

The Group has a duty of care to ensure that mobility vehicles are being used appropriately in its buildings with full responsibility being taken by the owner (customer (tenant/leaseholder) or visitor).

This policy applies to all internal and external communal areas at properties owned and/or managed by the Group.

2. Context

- 2.1 The policy has taken the following into account:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Building Safety Act 2022
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) - Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings

The Group must comply with the law regarding fire safety. This law applies to England and Wales and covers general precautions and fire safety duties which are required to protect people in case of fire in common areas in, and around, buildings. Fire Risk Assessments must be completed and recorded, documenting reasonable and practical solutions to reduce fire risks. Fire risk actions will be raised when battery assisted equipment such as scooters and e-bikes are deemed to be causing a risk.

Responsibility for complying with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 rests with the 'Responsible Person' in line with Fire Safety Management Policy.

2.2 **Health and Safety at Work**

It is an employer's duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and other people who might be affected by their business. Employers must do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this.

This means making sure that employees and others are protected from anything that may cause harm, effectively controlling any risk of injury to health that could arise in the workplace.

Inappropriate storage and charging of mobility vehicles will increase the chances of trips and falls, increase fire risks which are accompanied by toxic smoke and would seriously hamper escape routes, especially in communal areas.

Where demand/space allows, the Group will investigate options to alter buildings to maximise storage capabilities for mobility vehicles when upgrading/refurbishing communal spaces (where the Group considers it reasonable to do so).

In the event of any fire incident involving a mobility vehicle (however small), a SHE Accident/Incident Report should be completed. A further report should be made to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which is responsible for regulating medical devices (including mobility scooters). The make and model of the vehicle along with details of the incident will be required.

3. **Aims and Objectives**

3.1 The policy will, as far as possible:

- Ensure the safety of all our occupants.
- Enable the Group to meet its statutory, legislative and regulatory obligations.

- Ensure occupants receive information and comply with the Group's management of mobility vehicles on its premises.
- Raise awareness of health and safety risks associated with the inappropriate storage and charging of mobility vehicles and ensure measures are in place to reduce risk wherever possible.
- Ensure that data held in adhering to this policy is kept securely on the Group's Housing database in accordance with data protection.
- Provide appropriate guidance to Group colleagues in the management of mobility vehicles on Group premises.

4. Policy Outline

4.1 Definition of a Mobility Vehicle

Typically, wheelchairs and mobility scooters come in a range of sizes with different features and benefits to the user. They come in 3 or 4 wheel variations, from small, folding vehicles to large roadworthy vehicles.

They are defined as "invalid carriages" under The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divide these vehicles into three classes:

- **Class 1** – are manual wheelchairs that are not electrically powered.
- **Class 2** – are powered wheelchairs and scooters intended for indoor use and pedestrian footpaths, limited to a maximum speed of 4 mph and do not exceed an unladen weight of 113.4kg. They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to another or where no pavement is available.
- **Class 3** – are vehicles which can be used on pavements up to 4 mph and on highways up to 8mph and must not exceed an unladen weight of 150kg. They are required by law to be registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for road use and cannot be operated by anyone under the age of 14 years. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class.

Class 3 vehicles are not permitted to be used inside Group properties (exceptions can be made, subject to an individual risk assessment).

Whilst other battery assisted equipment (such as e-bikes and scooters) are not legally recognised as mobility aids, they are increasing in popularity and use. They have lithium-ion batteries which can pose a fire risk in the same manner as a mobility scooter or electric wheelchair. For all items with a lithium-ion battery, the risk of fire increases.

4.2 Safe Storage and Charging Facilities - Allocation of Space

Allocation of storage space for mobility vehicles will take place on a first come, first served basis. Some Group buildings have a limited number of mobility vehicle

charging and storage facilities. There will be local restrictions on the number of mobility vehicles permitted to be used and stored in Group buildings. If there is not sufficient space, there may be alternatives for occupants seeking to use a mobility vehicle to consider, such as:

- Local shop mobility arrangements.
- Locally arranged storage in a garage of the Group (only for Class 3 vehicles and at occupant's own risk).
- Request permission in accordance with the Tenancy Management Policy to erect a suitable outdoor storage and or/charging facility (at occupant's own risk, cost, including ongoing maintenance costs).
- Request a move to more suitable/appropriate housing.

4.3 **Storage – General Rules**

Mobility vehicles must not be stored in any part of a corridor or stairwell that might block an escape route, potentially cause an obstruction, trip or fire hazard. This includes vehicles that have been agreed to be stored and/or charged in occupant's own accommodation. The Group recommends storage in an occupant's own lounge, not the hallway as this would impede a safe escape route in the event of a fire.

All vehicles stored outside Group buildings should be at least 6 metres away from the building to reduce the risk of fire spreading to Group buildings. Exceptions to this would be identified in an individual site risk assessment.

4.4 **Charging – General Rules**

Mobility vehicles **must not under any circumstances** be charged in communal corridors or other communal areas unless the area has been agreed as a "designated area" on a Fire Risk Assessment and documented on an occupant's permission form.

Unless an electricity token meter is installed for recharging mobility vehicles, the Group will not charge individuals to recharge their vehicles in designated communal areas. These electricity costs will instead be recovered through service charges.

4.5 **Insurance**

Insurance is not a legal requirement for mobility vehicles, but it is **compulsory** if the vehicle is to be used and stored outside or inside a building belonging to the Group. Customers will need to liaise with their insurance provider and respective cover may be available under a customer's house contents policy, which may extend to have public liability included. Insurance must provide, as a minimum, third party cover for damage to property and claims from another person/third party.

Occupants leaving their mobility vehicles unattended in designated storage areas within Group buildings do so at their own risk.

4.6 **Permission to Keep a Mobility Vehicle**

All prospective owners of mobility vehicles will need to request written permission before purchasing or leasing a mobility vehicle if it is intended to be used, stored or charged within or on Group premises. Occupants must apply using a **Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use** and **Application Form (Appendix A)**.

Initial permission will be given if:

- The mobility vehicle can be suitably stored and charged according to the manufacturer's instructions in an agreed area that complies with the building's fire risk assessment. This may be inside an occupant's home if it does not obstruct safe evacuation from the property in an emergency, in a specially "designated area" e.g., a mobility vehicle storage room or in an agreed communal area internal or external that meets suitable fire safety construction and protection.
- Designated areas will be shown on communal area noticeboards and/or in Group premises Fire Boxes by main entrances for inspection by Fire Personnel.
- Occupants sign and agree to comply with the **Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use**.

Where demand exceeds space availability, all occupants are restricted to one mobility vehicle only. If there is additional space availability, an occupant may have two mobility vehicles of different sizes, however, they may be asked to remove one if demand exceeds space availability.

Where permission is not granted to an occupant, they have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals should be made in writing and reviewed by a manager providing a written response within 15 working days.

4.7 **Enforcement of the Policy**

The Group must ensure the health and safety of all occupants, employees and visitors to its buildings. This policy will be adhered to and regularly monitored via ongoing fire risk assessments and building inspections, combined with checking all occupants "Conditions of Use" to keep a mobility vehicle on Group premises.

Managers will review any breaches to this policy and give notice to occupants to rectify the issue(s) within a specified period. Failure to do so will result in occupants being asked to remove the mobility vehicle from the building within a period of 7 days in accordance with the Tenancy Management Policy.

The "Conditions of Use" are as follows:

- All travel inside Group buildings must not exceed 2 mph (a slow walking pace) to ensure the safety of all occupants, employees and visitors.

- Customer responsibility to provide, and upon reasonable request by an employee of the Group, the following documents:
 1. A copy of the liability insurance cover for the mobility vehicle.
 2. A copy of the vehicle's annual service documentation.
 3. A copy of a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) of the charging equipment.
The PAT test should ensure that the battery is suitable for the vehicle and that the electrical safety of the charging equipment is checked and should be certified as safe when the vehicle is serviced.
- Occupants are responsible for arranging servicing and PAT of their mobility vehicle(s) annually.
- If any equipment fails the PAT, or if any of the electrical equipment is unsuitable for the vehicle, the occupant is responsible for repair or replacement of the item before it can be stored/used inside a Group building.
- Occupants to receive initial instruction on the use and control of a mobility vehicle and, if requested to do so by a member of the Group's management, to receive additional instruction following an accident, incident or near miss or dangerous driving/speeding offence.
- Occupants must pay for any damage to Group property caused by collision or misuse of a mobility vehicle, including damage and cleaning costs to flooring and decoration.
- Occupants must ensure their visitors with mobility vehicles adhere to this policy. Visitors who are paying for and using the Group's guest room facilities will be advised if they can charge or store their mobility vehicles upon application to hire a guest room.
- Visitors with mobility vehicles are not permitted to recharge batteries, store or leave vehicles unattended in any area that causes an obstruction within the property. All mobility vehicles stored in designated areas are left at the occupant's own risk.
- An annual review of the permission to keep a mobility vehicle will take place by an employee of the Group. Continued permission to keep a mobility vehicle will include a review of adherence to the conditions above and the occupant's need to keep the vehicle which includes frequency of using it. Permission can be withdrawn for occupants who are storing vehicles in designated communal areas when the vehicles are not used regularly (e.g., more than once a week) and where there is demand from other applicants to use the designated communal storage space, where applicable.
- The Group reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time with immediate effect.
- The Group reserves the right to remove any battery assisted equipment which is considered by an employee of the Group to be causing an immediate and/or significant hazard/risk.

4.8 Implications

In adhering to this policy, the Group's management can accept, refuse and withdraw permission for occupants to store, charge and use a mobility vehicle within, or on, its premises.

The implications of withdrawal or refusal may affect the ability for some occupants to move into or continue to live in their current home. In these circumstances, the Group will provide information to occupants or applicants on all suitable alternative housing options.

5. Equality and Diversity

5.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

5.2 An equality impact assessment has been completed and reviewed for this policy. There could be an adverse impact on individuals or groups in implementing the policy. This impact would be due to the consequences arising from the failure of the mobility vehicle user to comply with the Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use on Group premises.

When applying this policy we aim to:

- Act in line with the Group's values, with respect and in consideration of the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- Take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

6. Complaints

6.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 Responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of this policy will be through a working group comprising the following teams:

- Operations - New Customers and Specialist Housing and Localities Teams
- Building Safety Team

Compliance with this policy will be monitored through:

- Health and safety building checks (in-house)
- External specialist Fire Risk Assessments

- Fire Risk Audits undertaken in conjunction with the Fire & Rescue Service

The next policy review is scheduled for April 2027 and then every three years thereafter.

7.2 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

8. Associated Documents

8.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Fire Safety Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Service Charge Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use
- Asset Management Strategy

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Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use



Contents

Introduction	2
Conditions of Use	3
How do I apply?	4
Useful Information	4

Introduction

If you are considering purchasing a mobility vehicle or e-bike, there are essential things you should know **BEFORE** you buy one. To help you make the right decisions around purchasing a mobility vehicle or e-bike, you are advised to do some research. Details of useful contacts are provided at the end of this document which may help.

We recommend that you:

- Consider your budget, including the cost of the vehicle, insurance and breakdown cover, maintenance, servicing and repairs and any adaptations required.
- Check if you are eligible for financial assistance through the Motability Scheme.
- Choose an experienced dealer and avoid buying from an untrained salesperson. Some suppliers are members of the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA).
- Check whether the deal can offer appropriate training.
- Ask if the vehicle can be hired to gain experience before making a purchase.
- Make sure you are familiar with all the controls on the vehicle before buying and taking it home.
- Ensure your vehicle has instructions; second hand vehicles may not have them.
- Ask if there is a warranty, what this covers and the duration of the warranty.

Permission must be granted by Platform Housing Ltd (the Group) before you acquire a mobility vehicle and bring it onto Group premises. You are advised to read the Group's Mobility Vehicle Policy to understand the regulations around fire safety management of the Group's buildings.

Due to their age and design, many of the Group's buildings were not built with mobility vehicle users in mind and they do not all have space to provide adequate safe storage and charging areas that would comply with our Fire Safety Management Policy.

These conditions of use apply to any occupant who lives in a building with communal areas, such as retirement villages, retirement living schemes/community properties and general needs blocks of flats with communal areas i.e. entrance hallways, staircases and landing areas.

Conditions of Use

Before you purchase a mobility vehicle, or apply for permission to keep one, you will be required to agree to the following “Conditions of Use” to safely own, use, store and charge a mobility vehicle within or around Group buildings.

1. Receive suitable instruction on how to use and control the mobility vehicle safely.
2. Drive with the care and safety of others in mind at all times inside Group buildings. Speeds of no more than 2 mph indoors are permitted, taking care around corners to ensure the safety of other occupants, employees and visitors.
3. Do not charge your vehicle’s battery overnight.
4. Only store and charge the vehicle in the designated area(s) specified on your application if permission is granted. A vehicle left unattended in any part of the Group’s buildings is done at the owner’s own risk.
5. Never leave, store or charge the vehicle in communal corridors at any time (unless these areas have been confirmed by the Group as a designated area).
6. Do not bring vehicles with dirty wheels, or vehicles that are too large to safely manoeuvre within the building into the premises. Group employees will determine if vehicles are too large to be permitted into buildings. Class 3 vehicles and large unclassified vehicles are not permitted into Group buildings.
7. Adequately insure your vehicle in accordance with the Mobility Vehicle Policy.
8. Pay for any damage to Group property caused by collision or misuse of a mobility vehicle.
9. Participate and provide information as requested to a Group employee as part of an annual review* of your mobility vehicle use.
10. Arrange for the repair or replacement of any faulty or unsuitable elements of the vehicle which affects its use or safety/increases the risk of fire.
11. Ensure your visitors with mobility vehicles adhere to the Group Mobility Vehicle Policy and these Conditions of Use.
12. Notify an employee of the Group if you permanently remove your mobility vehicle from the premises and no longer need to store or use it in Group buildings.
13. If you move out or receive a “Notice” to remove your mobility Vehicle from the Group’s premises, you must do so within 7 days.
14. The Group reserves the right to dispose of and recharge the costs of disposal of any mobility vehicle that remains in its buildings on expiry of a 7 day notice or 7 days after an occupant moves out.

* An annual review includes:

- A review of your compliance with the Conditions of Use.
- A discussion about your current medical need to use a mobility vehicle.
- Providing a copy of the liability insurance document for the vehicle.
- Providing a copy of the vehicle’s annual service documentation.
- Providing a copy of the Electrical Equipment Test (EET) of the equipment (this may form part of the service).

NOTE – If the equipment fails an EET, you will be asked to remove the vehicle from Group premises until it is repaired and passes this test.

How do I apply?

You will need to complete and submit the **Mobility Vehicle Application/Review Form** electronically online or request one from a Group employee and return it to us (details below).

Occupants should note that permission to keep a mobility vehicle on its premises can be withdrawn if any Conditions of Use are not met.

Applications will be assessed by an Officer and occupants will be advised on the decision about their application in writing. During the application process, you may be requested to meet with a Group employee to fully assess the details of your application.

You will not be permitted to store or charge a mobility vehicle within or on Group premises unless permission has been granted.

If my request is refused, is this decision final?

Usually yes, however you do have the right to appeal in writing and if refusal is due to a lack of storage space in a designated area and another occupant moves out of the building who was storing a mobility vehicle, you can reapply.

Useful Information

Other information relating to mobility vehicles can be found by visiting the following websites:

www.dlf.org.uk - Disabled Living Foundation

www.charitychoice.co.uk or www.guidestar.org.uk for contact details of charities that may assist with funding

www.motability.co.uk for more information on the Motability Scheme

www.BHTA.net for more information regarding the British Healthcare Trades Association

If you need any further information about the Group's Mobility Vehicle Policy or Conditions of Use, or want to apply for permission to keep a mobility vehicle, please contact us by visiting:

Platform Housing Group Ltd

Email: info@platformhg.com

Website: www.platformhg.com and click on 'Contact Us'

Tel: 0333 200 7304



Part A – Mobility Vehicle Application/Review Form

Name:	
Address:	
Email:	
Mobility vehicle Type/make:	
Mobility vehicle model:	
For Scooters - Class of vehicle: 1, 2, 3 or unclassified	
Do you have a disability? If yes, please describe the medical reason(s) for your need to keep a mobility vehicle on Group premises	
Do you have a Blue Badge?	
On average, how often will/is the vehicle used each week?	
I have read, understand and agree to comply with the Conditions of Use to keep a mobility vehicle on the Group premises	
I consent to the Group processing and storing this information for the duration of my occupation at this address	
Signed:	
Print name:	
Date:	

Applications will be assessed by an Officer and acknowledged within 3 working days. Applicants will be advised on the decision about their application in writing within 10 working days. During the application process, you may be requested to meet with a Platform representative to fully assess the details of your application.



Part B – Mobility Vehicle Application/Review Form [Office use only]

Name:	
Address:	
Mobility vehicle type/make, model and class (if applicable):	
How often is the vehicle used?	
Has the vehicle been serviced in the last 12 months?	
If Yes, please enter date of service:	
Has the electrical charging equipment got a valid (within last 12 months) PAT/EET certificate	
If Yes, please enter date of the test	
If No, inform customer that this must take place before permission can be granted	
Is there sufficient storage and charging space available for this vehicle?	Yes/No
Storage Where will this vehicle be stored when not in use?	Describe location:
Is this a designated communal area safe for this purpose?	Yes/No



Charging Where will this vehicle's battery be recharged: Is this area a designated communal area, safe for this purpose?	Describe location: Yes/No
Have you provided customer with Conditions of Use and confirmed the storage and charging requirements?	Yes/No
Has permission to keep a mobility vehicle been approved?	Yes/No
If No, select reason for refusal below	
Insufficient space in designated communal storage/charging area	
Applicant already has a mobility vehicle	
On review, no insurance, servicing or electrical testing evidence provided (please specify) For new vehicle applications, evidence must be provided within 7 days of acquiring the vehicle	
Other reason (please specify):	
Employee signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	

Confirm in writing to applicant the outcome of their application using the standardised letters for approval of refusal, as appropriate.