
Mobility Scooters in Council Properties

November 2021

Tenant Services

Last updated: *November 2021*

Next document review by: *November 2022*

Reviewed by: *Lynne Mansell. Service Delivery Manager (Independent Living)*

Approved by: Housing Committee

Contents Page

- 2. Policy Statement**
- 2. Scope and Definitions**
- 2. Aims**
- 3. Requesting Permission**
- 4. Terms and conditions of the permission**
- 5. Storing and Charging**
- 6. Breach of Mobility Scooter Policy**

Policy Statement

This policy sets out how Stroud District Council will consider requests from tenants and leaseholders to keep electric mobility scooters and the factors it will take into account when granting or refusing permission.

- 1.1 Stroud District council is committed to maximising choice and independence and recognises the value of mobility aids such as mobility scooters to tenants in maintaining their independence.
- 1.2 At the same time, the Council has duties to ensure high standards of Health and Safety within blocks of flats, maisonettes and Independent Living sites for tenants, leaseholders, staff and visitors. The Council has limited storage facilities for mobility scooters which are becoming more common, especially in Independent Living accommodation.
- 1.3 This Policy aims to balance the needs and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders to keep mobility scooters with its duties to maintain a safe living environment for tenants and leaseholders; particularly in relation to potential fire risks.

Scope and Definitions

- 2.1 A mobility scooter is defined for the purpose of this policy as an electric scooter or electric wheelchair designed specifically for outdoor use. This does not apply to lightweight wheelchairs suitable for indoor use.
- 2.2 Powered scooters are defined as 'Invalid Carriages' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1998. The regulations divide these machines into three classes:

Class 1 – Manual wheelchairs (not covered by the Policy)

Class 2 – applies to motorised wheelchairs, designed for use on the pavement travelling at speed of up to 4mph. They may also be used to cross the road or where there is no pavement.

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 vehicles are required by law to be registered with the DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class and must display a nil tax disc. Insurance is not a legal requirement but is essential if the vehicle is to be stored in an Independent Living site.

Aims

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to:

- Ensure the council takes a consistent approach to granting permission to tenants and leaseholders to keep a scooter.
- Ensure tenants ask for written permission before obtaining a new scooter.
- Accommodate all requests for permission to keep a scooter where practicable, and not to refuse permission unreasonably.
- Carry out a full assessment prior to a decision on whether or not to grant permission.
- Ensure that, where permission is granted the tenant has been advised in relation to adequate insurance and understands and commits to the terms and conditions they are required to adhere to.
- Provide clear information on the terms permission is granted.
- Provide a clear explanation, in writing of the reason(s) for refusing permission.
- Manage the number of scooters in any one site so as not to compromise the safety of tenants, leaseholders and other users of the site.
- Ensure that tenants are aware of their responsibilities to others.

Requesting Permission

- 4.1 Stroud District Council's Tenancy Agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities of the tenants and the Council.

Section 4. The Property > 4.4 Vehicles and driveways > 4.4.5 If you wish to keep a mobility aid such as a scooter, motorised wheelchair (or any other type of similar type of mobility aid) you must get our written permission first. This permission will not be unreasonably withheld and will be based on any relevant health and safety requirements being kept to. Any requests for permission will need to be made in writing to Tenant Services.

- 4.2 This policy sets out the circumstances in which the Council will grant permission to keep a mobility scooter or motorised wheelchair. The Council will generally grant permission, provided the aid can be stored and charged safely.
- 4.3 This policy will apply to all new requests to keep a scooter, to customers considering moving into a council property and retrospectively to existing tenants who already have a scooter without permission.
- 4.4 Tenants and residents who wish to obtain a mobility scooter must apply in writing to Stroud District Council for permission as stated at 4.4.6 in the tenancy agreement.
- 4.5 The Council will respond to requests within 28 days of receipt. The terms and procedures in force at the time of applying for permission will determine whether permission is granted.
- 4.6 Requests to keep a mobility scooter will be considered by Stroud District Council in conjunction with the Health and Safety team who will carry out a risk

assessment prior to permission being granted or refused. This may involve a visit to the property in some cases. This can be carried out prior to the tenant obtaining a scooter provided the tenant can provide details of the model they are planning to get.

- 4.7 In considering whether permission should be granted, account will be taken of potential impact on other people and will only be granted where the needs and wellbeing of other tenants, residents and other users of the building are not adversely put at risk.
- 4.8 The Council will consider requests based on the information received from the tenant or leaseholder. The Council will assess whether there is an approved safe area to store and charge the scooter.
- 4.9 Permission may be refused where:
- There is no safe storage in the tenant or leaseholders flat and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided.
 - A major physical alteration to the premises is required which the Council believes to be unreasonable in terms of cost and/or disruption to other service users.
 - A tenant/leaseholder fails to take out the necessary insurance cover.
 - If the scooter is too large to fit through the internal or external doors.
 - If the tenant wishes to keep more than one scooter.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 4.10 Examples of safe storage and charging spaces may include:
- A designated room within the property
 - A designated area within the property that does not impede escape.
 - A designated communal scooter storage area.
 - A suitable charging unit is used for outdoor use e.g. a waterproof transformer.
- 4.11 Where permission is refused, the Council will explain the reasons and give details of the appeal process which is on line with the complaints process. Where permission is given, this will be conditional and will outline the storage and charging arrangements available.

Terms and conditions of the permission

- 5.1 Where permission is granted, this will be based on certain conditions. The letter granting permission will specify the size and type of scooter that can be kept. It is tenants'/leaseholders responsibility to ensure that their scooter will fit in the external doors, lifts and internal doors.

- 5.2 Tenants who apply for permission will be expected to have the relevant insurance and tax registration as necessary which must be produced. Absence of adequate insurance cover may result in the permission granted being refused or withdrawn.
- 5.3 Permission may be withdrawn if these conditions are not adhered to, and/or if the tenant/leaseholder purchases an additional or larger scooter or if the policy is updated to meet new regulatory requirements.
- 5.4 The Council will undertake periodic checks to ensure the policy is complied with.

Storage and Charging

- 6.1 Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in communal hallways, stairwells or communal lounges **at any time** because they could increase the risk of fire or obstruct a fire escape route.
- 6.2 If a mobility scooter is stored within a tenant/leaseholder's property they must ensure that there is sufficient space within the home to store the scooter safely and the battery must be Lithium.
- 6.3 As part of this assessment, the council may provide minor adaptations such as small fillet ramps, smoke alarms, electrical charging sockets and an internal fire door as required to flats to enable the mobility scooter to be stored safely when it was not in use.
- 6.4 Tenants/leaseholders will need to gain permission for any alterations, for example the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing. The Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations, however there may be instances where it is not feasible to provide adequate facilities due to the layout of the property. Leaseholders may be recharged for the cost of any such alterations.
- 6.5 In some Independent Living sites there are designated storage facilities for mobility scooters. The storage areas for scooters will be allocated on a first come first served basis and permission is still required for the scooter. Where designated scooter storage and charging sheds for individual use are available for rental, there will be a weekly charge attached to this. The cost will be available at the time of enquiry.
- 6.6 Service charges may apply for the use of scooter stores provided. These charges cover the cost of the electricity supply for charging scooters. Some sites have a weekly fee for electricity charge.
- 6.7 Tenants are responsible for ensuring their scooter is serviced and maintained regularly, and for having an annual PAT (Portable Appliance Test). This is

something the Council will carry out when notified to do so. If any charging equipment fails the PAT, it is the tenant's responsibility to repair or replace it before using it or the electricity supply.

- 6.8 Visitors should leave their mobility scooters outside the property ensuring they are not blocking access and fire exits. If this is not possible, the scooter must be taken into the visiting accommodation to ensure Zero Tolerance in communal areas, walkways and corridors.

Breach of mobility scooter policy

- 7.1 The Council understands the positive difference to quality of life a scooter can make. However, the Council's Tenancy Agreement requires tenants obtain written permission to keep a mobility scooter. Where there is a breach of the agreement, the Council will take appropriate action.
- 7.2 The Council will endeavour to identify a safe and secure storage and charging area as set out in section 4.10 above. Where it is not possible, the Council will consider alternative options including assisting with a move. Wherever possible, the Council will seek to negotiate a satisfactory outcome with the tenant.
- 7.3 Where a scooter is stored or charged on Council premises without permission, or outside the term of permission granted, the Council reserves the right to remove the scooter to ensure health and Safety which may result in a recharge to the tenant.