Mobility Scooter Policy

Early Intervention and Community Empowerment

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BON ACCORD

ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aberdeen City Council is committed to promoting equalities and recognises that our tenants should have a quality of life which allows them to maintain and maximise independent living.Therefore we understand the value that a mobility scooter can bring to the lives of some tenants.

1.2 A new policy has been introduced to provide help and guidance to those who currently own a scooter or those who are considering purchasing one. The aim of the policy is straightforward: to ensure the health and safety of all residents and visitors in our sheltered and very sheltered housing complexes.

The main points of the policy are:

- Permission is now required to keep a mobility scooter at your home or complex.
- Storage is only allowed in certain areas.
- Scooters must not be stored next to heaters or fire exits.
- Scooters should not be charged overnight.
- Owners should have adequate insurance cover.
- Scooters should have an annual safety check.

1.3 The Council takes the health and safety of tenants, staff and visitors very seriously, especially in terms of the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Specifically:

- The fire safety of individual dwellings within sheltered housing schemes and other housing blocks.
- Access to and from common areas and the need to keep such areas clear of obstructions and combustible materials.
- Keeping escape routes from the building clear.

1.4 The policy aims to:

- Ensure the safety of all our tenants and visitors to sheltered and very sheltered housing as far as possible.
- Ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations in relation to the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and any other legislation which supports health and safety within blocks of flats.
- To provide information on scooters so that they can be of a size which can be stored and charged in the tenant's own home.
- Ensure that residents are aware of their responsibilities relating to the storage, charging and use of mobility scooters in and around the building and especially in designated communal areas.
- Ensure that tenants are aware that they are responsible for any injury or damage caused to another person, communal areas or other Council property as the result of their mobility scooter usage.
- To ensure as far as possible that tenants who own or lease mobility scooters have adequate insurance cover which should include public and third party liability to cover damage to buildings, property and grounds, or injury involving residents, visitors or staff.

1.5 Residents who currently have a scooter, or are considering purchasing or leasing one, should get permission from the Housing Teams. If you require any initial information or have a question, please contact your Housing Officer or Senior Personal Carer in your complex

2. Context

2.1 Mobility Scooters are defined as "Invalid Carriages" under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988. The Regulations divide these machines into three classes:-

1. Class 1 - Manual Wheelchairs.
2. Class 2 - Machines designed for use on the pavement, travelling at a speed of 4 Miles per Hour. They may also be use on the road to cross from one pavement to the other or where no pavement is available.
3. Class 3 – Machines that can be used both on the pavement where like class 2 vehicles they are limited to 4 Miles per Hour, and on the road where they can travel at speeds of 8 Miles per Hour. These types of vehicles are required by law to be registered with the DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class where no duty will apply.

Please follow the link to see the main features and differences in Class 2 and Class 3 Scooters

https://www.ridc.org.uk/features-reviews/out-and-about/choosing-wheelchair/mobility-scooters/class-2-and-class-3-mobility

2.1 Aberdeen City Council has a duty to comply with the law relating to Health and Safety and including fire safety. The law applies to and covers general fire precautions and fire safety duties which are required to protect people in case of a fire in and around the premises. Where necessary, fire precautions should be put in place to the extent that is reasonable and practicable.

2.2 Storage of Mobility Scooters in communal areas such as corridors and community lounges heightens the risk to people in the event of fire. This might either be a fire caused by the scooter itself or the obstruction caused to other tenants as they try to escape the building. There is also a risk to the emergency services, which may be required to attend the property and find scooters stored in inappropriate places.

2.3 Due to damage to buildings including lifts, walls and doors, caused by scooters it is anticipated that this policy developed in consultation with tenants will help to advise and educate scooter users in the safe operation of their vehicles.

2.4 It would be expected that those using class 1 and class 2 wheelchairs would require these inside their flats. However, the class 3 scooters are not designed for inside use and it is these machines this report has been written mainly to cover. Almost all people who use these machines can walk a little, all be it with some kind of walking aid. They are not permanent wheelchair users so it may be possible for them to be able to park their scooter in a designated area which is not directly outside their flat.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 Ensure as far as possible the safety of all our tenants.

3.2 Ensure the Council meets their statutory obligations in relation to the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and any other legislation which supports Health and Safety within block of flats.

3.3 Scooters must be of a size which can be stored and charged in the tenant's own home.

3.4 Ensure that tenants engage with the council so that reliable and correct advice on their storage/charging options, health and safety, and responsibilities when using the mobility scooter both inside and outside the building can be discussed.

3.5 Ensure that where permission has been given that residents are aware of their responsibilities relating to the storage, charging and use of mobility scooters in and around the building and especially in communal areas designated for this purpose.

3.6 Ensure that tenants are aware that they are liable for any injury caused to another person or damage to the communal areas or other Council property as the result of their use of a Mobility Scooter.

3.7 To ensure that tenants who own or lease mobility scooters should have adequate insurance cover which should include public and third-party liability to cover damage to buildings, property and grounds, or injury involving residents, visitors or staff.

3.8 To ensure that tenants, housing staff and other strategic partners such as SFRS Social Care and Wellbeing and the City Council's Health and Safety Service are involved in the monitoring and review of the policy.

4. Consultation and Communication

4.1 Aberdeen City Council is committed to full consultation in the development of its policies. However there are certain areas where, as a responsible landlord and property owner, policy decisions have to be taken in line with Health and Safety considerations, legislation and guidance from bodies such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the City Council's Health and Safety executive. The safe storage and charging of Mobility Scooters is one such area.

4.2 Tenants and groups have been consulted on this policy and their comments have been incorporated within the policy where appropriate.

4.3 Area Housing Teams, Bon Accord Care, Scottish Fire and Rescue officers and Elected Members have also be briefed on the councils position and have endorsed this policy document.

4.4 Communication will now focus on discussing with residents who already own Mobility Scooters their storage and charging options. This will place the emphasis on finding a solution, while taking into account the Council's policies and resources.

5. Storage and Charging

5.1 In the interest of safety all Mobility Scooters must be stored and charged in the residents own home if possible.

5.2 5Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in any internal communal areas unless an area has been specifically designated and set aside for this purpose by the housing team. Allocation of any spaces if available will be on a controlled basis. Area housing teams will do all they can to assist residents in finding a workable solution to their storage and charging issues.

5.3 It is important that all tenants should obtain written permission to have a scooter stored and charged within their property or in any storage area designated for such a purpose within the block in order that the housing service can communicate effectively with mobility scooter owners and provide help and guidance.

5.4 Since blocks vary in size and layout any request to store and charge scooters will be taken on a block by block case by case basis as determined by the Locality Inclusion Manager.

5.5 Prior to a resident considering the purchase or lease of any size of Mobility scooter, it is important that they seek advice and assistance from the Locality Inclusion Manager. Then tenants need to apply to the local Locality Inclusion Manager in writing to keep a scooter in their home or designated communal area if one exists. Please see appendix 3 which will provide details on where to send your written application.

5.6 Permission to store and charge a scooter will not be unreasonably withheld however this will depend on the availability of a suitable space being designated if the scooter will not fit into the tenant's home.

5.7 A risk assessment must be carried out at the tenants' property to ensure that there is sufficient space for the scooter to be stored safely, that access or exit from the property is not restricted and that charging can be carried out safely. If this cannot be guaranteed, permission cannot be granted.

5.8 Residents should ensure that the charging of scooters in their home is conducted in line with the manufacturer's instructions. We strongly advise that residents use suitable circuit breakers when charging scooters in their home.

5.9 It is important for the safety of all residents that Scooters are not charged overnight.

5.10 The Council's Housing Teams and the Housing Allocation section will work together to ensure that prospective new tenants are aware of the Mobility Scooter Policy prior to accepting an offer of accommodation in the block.

5.11 An assessment will be undertaken at each relevant development to identify any areas within them in which scooters may safely be stored and charged in consultation with the Fire Risk Assessor. The council will advise tenants if there are any areas where scooters can be stored and charged. Allocation of spaces will be on a controlled basis.

5.12 Responsibility for undertaking the assessment and updating of the plan rests with the Locality Inclusion Manager, in consultation with relevant council services and other

relevant professionals.

5.13 Every effort will be made to accommodate all requests, and permission will not be unreasonably withheld. In considering whether permission is given, account will be taken of the assessment and potential impact on other people and it will only be granted where the needs and wellbeing of other tenants and users of the development are not adversely affected or put at risk.

5.14 Should any tenant store and or charge their scooter outwith their home in any undesignated communal area within the block their scooter may be removed by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service if it is deemed a fire risk or a risk in terms of evacuation of the building in the event of a fire by virtue of section 93 of the Civic Government Act 1982.

5.15 Should Early Intervention and Community Empowerment function grant permission for the storage and or charging of a scooter, the resident will be responsible for any cost associated with this permission.

5.16 Advice on which type of mobility scooter might be best for you can be found on the Gov.UK website at https://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules or by clicking this link Gov Mobility scooters and powered wheelchair rules.

Permission is likely to be refused where:

- There is no safe storage space available in the tenants 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, feasibility and/or disruption to other service users
- A tenant fails to take out the necessary insurance cover

6. Communal Areas

6.1 In the interest of tenants Health and Safety, Mobility Scooters should not be stored and charged in communal areas, unless the tenant is permitted to use designated scooter storage/charging area in the block.

6.2 Aberdeen City Council & Bon Accord Care should comply with Health and Safety legislation and building standards. Tenants would have to comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement, and the landlord's policy on mobility scooters.

6.3 Please contact your Senior Housing Officer or the Senior Personal Carer to find out if your block has any designated storage area within the communal areas and if so its location within the block.

7. Lifts

7.1 If tenants are using scooters in the lifts, users should ensure they take due care and attention of the property and other lift users.

7.2 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.

7.3 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 tenants relying heavily on them, any time a lift is "Out of Service" it can cause great inconvenience for all tenants and staff.

8. Training

8.1 We would recommend that all mobility scooter users undergo some form of training/instruction on the usage and control of the scooter whether Class 2 or Class 3 machines, especially if the user is not used to driving.

9. Speed Limits

9.1 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 tenants, staff and visitors to the block. All scooters should be set at the lowest speed setting when being used indoors.

10. Insurance

10.1 As part of the permission to keep a Mobility Scooter in the block tenants should have a valid certificate of insurance for the vehicle. Insurance should include public and third party liability to cover damage to buildings, property and grounds, or injury involving tenants, visitors or staff.

10.2 There are many companies offering such insurance, other insurance companies can be found through the British Insurance Brokers Association – www.biba.org.uk. Comparison websites are also a good source of information.

10.3 Proof that insurance cover exists should be provided to the estate management team before permission will be granted.

11. Scooter Maintenance

11.1 Tenants will be responsible for ensuring the scooters are serviced annually and maintained and charged in line with the manufacturers' instructions. Proof of annual service should be provided on request. Failure to so will result in permission being withdrawn.

APPENDIX 1 - GUIDANCE NOTES

We strongly recommend you consider the following advice before purchasing or leasing a Mobility Scooter.

1. You will need written permission to keep a Scooter.
    - Please check if your property is suitable for a scooter or if there is a waiting list for the designated scooter storage area within your block.
2. Where will you store and charge your Scooter.
    - All mobility Scooters should be stored and charged within your home unless there is a designated storage and charging area and ensure it does not cause any damage to your property. You should ensure that it will not cause an obstruction in the event of evacuation due to a fire.
3. Charging your Scooter
    - You will need to ensure that the charging point/socket is appropriate for your scooter.
    - Scooters Should Not be charged over night.
4. Using the lift
    - You should check that you can take your scooter in the lift in your block.
5. Buying/Leasing a Scooter
    - Seek professional advice before buying or leasing a scooter either from an occupational therapist or reputable dealer.
6. Insurance and Upkeep
    - You will need adequate insurance cover.
    - What are the maintenance costs?

APPENDIX 2 - PERMISSION TO KEEP A MOBILITY SCOOTER

1. Tenants should apply for permission to keep a Mobility Scooter. To apply you should contact your local Housing Management Office and apply in writing to the Housing Manager. Details of the offices can be found at the end of this document.
2. New tenants who already have a Mobility Scooter will not automatically be given permission to keep a mobility scooter and will be subject to the same assessment criteria as existing tenants.
3. Unless written permission has been granted from the Housing Service NO mobility Scooter is to be stored within the communal areas of the building.
4. Any damage caused to the building by a Mobility Scooter will be recharged to the owner of the scooter.
5. Where written permission is granted the tenant should agree to comply with all conditions placed upon the storage, usage and charging of the vehicle.
6. The council reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time should the conditions of the permission be broken or the needs of the block change.

APPENDIX 3 - CONTACT INFORMATION

Locality Inclusion Manager, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, Business Hub 1, Lower Ground Floor West, Marischal College Broad Street Aberdeen AB10 1AB Tel: 01224 522000

Locality Inclusion Manager, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, Mastrick Customer Access Poin, tSpey Road, Aberdeen AB16 6SH Tel: 01224 788503

Locality Inclusion Manager, Early Intervention and Community Empowerment, Tillydrone Area Housing Office, Formartine Road, Aberdeen, AB24 2RW Tel: 01224 489500

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Safety advice on parking mobility scooters in specific sites Tel: 01224 618340 Email: N.ABERFSE@firescotland.gov.uk

Review

Date	Reviewers	Outcomes	Actions
12/09/2017	Kevin Kelly – Neil Simpson – Shona Lamb – Kenny Paterson	The initial reaction to the policy has now subsided with staff and tenants now more familiar with it and appreciating its aims and objectives.	• No changes to the policy text but tenants will be communicated with Re PAT testing of scooters. • Policy to be discussed at team meetings with SHO providing clarification with regard to common areas. • New leaflets to be provided
12/10/2020	Housing Strategy, Housing Management, OIG, Bon Accord Care	No changes required	• None required



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