



Mobility Vehicle Policy



Introduction

This is a joint Policy between South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust (STHVT) and South Tyneside Homes (STH). The policy sets out the approach used by South Tyneside Homes to managing and monitoring all residents with mobility scooters in South Tyneside Housing Ventures accommodation.

We are aware of an increasing number of tenants in our developments who wish use an electronic mobility scooter. This can cause issues for all residents as well as Health and Safety concerns especially where scooters are stored in a communal entrance.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear procedures and guidelines for the:

- Safe storage
- Charging
- Usage

of mobility scooters and motorised wheelchairs in communal areas. (Including communal corridors, stairwells and communal rooms)

Although we do not have an obligation to provide mobility scooter storage facilities for our tenants, South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust has a duty to ensure high standards of health and safety within developments for staff, visitors and tenants.

We also have limited storage facilities for mobility scooters and need to consider this for the future as well as other limitations such as cost, location and best practice and other regulations.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to keep tenants, guests and staff of South Tyneside Homes and South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust safe and to set out procedures and guidelines for the safe storage, charging and usage of mobility vehicles within our properties.

General Guidance

Any tenant who owns or is thinking of buying a mobility scooter must comply with the following:

- Advise STHVT or STH to ensure we can provide information and advice and, where necessary, carry out a health and safety risk assessment
- Take advice and apply for permission from STHVT or STH before purchasing or storing their mobility vehicle on site
- Sign a mandate showing they are aware of the rules and regulations of owning and storing scooters and that they agree to comply with these.

Aims

This policy has been put in place to protect and preserve the health and safety of all tenants, guest and staff living working in our properties whilst allowing and enabling the use of mobility vehicles for independent living.

The principles of this policy are:

- To ensure everyone is aware of the health and safety risks associated with the inappropriate storage of mobility vehicles, and their own responsibilities in relation to this.
- To ensure all mobility vehicles are stored in a way that will not hamper escape in the event of a fire, and will not impact on the fire safety within the building or put the owner or other tenants, guests and staff at risk in any way.
- To manage the number of electric scooters in any one development in order to ensure safety of all those who access the development
- To ensure that a full risk assessment regarding storage of the vehicle and charging facilities is carried out where necessary.
- To ensure that the owner of the vehicle has adequate insurance where necessary
- To ensure that all scooter users agree to follow the guidance provided on the safe and careful use of the such vehicles within our premises (from the main entrance of the building to and from their property, or other agreed storage area only)
- To ensure that all tenants, guests and staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to:
 - Guests to their home that use mobility vehicles
 - Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) for charging equipment
 - Notifying South Tyneside Homes prior to acquiring a mobility scooter to ensure sufficient storage space is in place

STHVT reserves the right to withdraw permission where guidance is not being adhered to by a service user and where a risk is presented.

Scope and definitions

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.

Powered scooters are defined as 'Invalid Carriages' under the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988.

The regulations divide these machines into three classes:

Class 1 - manual wheelchair (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 4 mph, and on the road where they can travel at up to 8 mph. 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 duty tax disc. Insurance is not a legal requirement but is essential if the vehicle is to be used and stored in a shared storage area or communal area.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

The actual scooter / wheelchair and the batteries do not require a PAT test; however the charging equipment does require testing.

- All scooter /wheelchairs chargers must have an in date, valid Portable Appliance Test (PAT test) if the charging equipment is to be used in the mobility vehicle storage rooms, to ensure that is in a safe condition. If the equipment does not have an in date valid PAT that it must be stored within the owner's property.
- If any equipment fails the PAT, it will be wheelchair / owner's responsibility to repair / replace the damaged item before it can be used again and stored in the shared areas.

Liability Insurance

There is no legal requirement for tenants to have insurance for mobility scooters or motorised wheelchairs; however, it is advised that all tenants storing and charging their vehicle in the shared scooter storage areas have insurance to cover against damage to property and potential claims from other tenants and staff.

Please note, if damage is caused to property owned by South Tyneside Housing Ventures through the use of mobility vehicles, you may be recharged for any damages and repairs.

Permission for Storage

South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust cannot guarantee that every tenant who wants to bring a mobility vehicle into our developments will be given permission to do so.

If you would like to request permission to store or charge your mobility scooter or wheelchair within the development storage area, you must complete the permission form and pass to your Neighbourhood Officer. See attached Form.

Permission must be sought prior to obtaining a mobility vehicle so that we can ensure there is adequate storage space available before bringing further vehicles into the building.

Permission will be subject to space available within the development. The Neighbourhood officer may feel that proof of insurance is required, and if so this will be deemed a requirement of the permission.

Where written permission is granted the tenant 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.

What if I am refused permission?

South Tyneside Housing Ventures has the right to refuse permission to store scooters near to tenants' homes or in a communal area if a risk assessment shows there is a health and safety and / or fire risk that could put others in danger. We will strive to be as flexible as possible, and where there is a risk associated with storage we will work with the tenant to try to find a solution.

We can also explore the option of a transfer to another property for anyone who has difficulty getting around or managing because their home is not suitable. To discuss rehousing options please contact our Housing Options Team.

Storage and charging

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.

Storage within the home

- Motorised wheelchairs will generally be stored and charged within an individual's flat. Where the wheelchair is stored and charged within the tenant's property, there is no requirement for a PAT on the charging equipment, however we would ask for tenants to do regular visual inspections on the electrical equipment to look for any faults.
- Tenants who store scooters in their homes must ensure that the scooter does not block fire exits.

Storage in purpose built areas

- Tenants are responsible for ensuring their scooter is serviced and maintained regularly, and for having an annual PAT (Portable Appliance Test) if it is to be stored and charged in the communal storage areas. If any charging equipment fails the PAT, it is the tenant's responsibility to repair or replace it before using it.
- Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in communal hallways or stairwells at any time because they could increase the risk of fire or obstruct a fire escape route.
- The storage areas for scooters will normally be allocated on a first come first served basis however some developments may have a waiting list where there is a high demand for the storage areas. It may be the case where the storage facilities available are not suitable for larger models of scooters and buggies available on the market and tenants are required to take this into account when purchasing a scooter / considering a move of home. Tenants who are registered disabled will have priority over those who are not and storage will then be allocated based on date order.
- If storage is no longer required, the neighbourhood officer must be informed.
- South Tyneside Housing Ventures cannot guarantee that tenants will be offered storage next to their home.
- Power leads must never cause a trip hazard, be trailed across floors or put through the letterbox of a property.
- All tenants advised to move a scooter from an area that is deemed unsafe must do so and failure to comply will be considered a breach of the agreement.
- If a tenant fails to move a scooter from an area that is deemed unsafe as outlined in this document then it will be removed and the tenant notified as to its location. (*South Tyneside Housing Ventures and South Tyneside Homes take no responsibility for the safety or security of a vehicle once it has been moved*)
- Service charges may apply for the use of the scooter store provided. Charges would cover the use of the provision of an electricity supply for charging the scooter.
- All prospective owners will need to inform South Tyneside Homes of their intentions to obtain a mobility scooter. Although permission will not be unreasonably withheld, it allows us to ensure sufficient safe storage is in place for the number of mobility vehicles being stored and charged in the

storage areas. The resident must complete a Mobility Vehicle Permission Form

Guests with motorised wheelchairs / scooters

As a tenant living in a property with shared communal areas you are responsible for ensuring any guests to your home adheres with this mobility vehicle policy.

Guests are not permitted to use the storage area, and or any other communal area for charging their motorised wheelchair / scooter.

Guests who are staying overnight or for an extended period of time can request permission from STHVT to use the storage facilities for storing and charging mobility vehicles, providing an in date PAT tests has been carried out within the last 12 months and there is adequate space in the storage area.

Breach of mobility scooter policy

South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust understands the positive difference to quality of life a scooter can make. We will endeavour to identify a safe and secure storage and charging area. Where this is not possible, we will consider alternative options including assisting with a move. Wherever possible we will seek to negotiate a satisfactory outcome with the tenant.

Where a scooter is stored or charged on our premises without permission, or outside the terms of permission granted, we reserve the right to remove the scooter to ensure health and safety and may recharge the tenant for any removal costs.

Usage of Mobility vehicles

We must ask that any tenant using a mobility vehicle in and around the scheme does so with due care and attention to other tenants, staff, guests and members of the public.

We may recharge tenants for damages caused to property by the use of your mobility vehicle.

Enforcement of the Policy

South Tyneside Homes and South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust will ensure this policy is enforced to ensure that the health and safety of our tenants, staff and guests are not put at risk.

This policy will be enforced and regularly monitored via ongoing fire risk assessments.

All tenants granted permission to store their mobility scooter In the appropriate storage areas must agree to comply with the conditions stated in this policy.

If you are found to be breaching the conditions stated in this policy, you will be given a 30 day period to rectify the issue/s, or you may be asked to remove the mobility vehicle from the scheme.

We reserve the right to withdraw permission for using the mobility vehicle storage area at any time of the conditions are not met.

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Mobility Vehicle Permission Form

If you would like to store and charge your mobility scooter or motorised wheelchair within the storage area within your development, you must read and agree to the following conditions, as well as the conditions stated within the Mobility Vehicle Policy document.

Please read the following conditions carefully and complete and sign Part A, then return this form to your Neighbourhood Officer.

- You must adhere to the arrangements for storage and charging as per the policy
- The scooter must be kept in good working condition
- The scooter must be charged in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- All charging equipment is subject to periodic ‘Portable Appliance Testing’. It is your responsibility to ensure the equipment is tested.

Periodic checks on the storage arrangements will take place to ensure all residents are complying with the policy.

Part A – To be completed by the requesting Tenant

Name	
Address	
Scooter Make	
Scooter Model	

I confirm that I have read and understood all guidance and procedures in the Mobile Vehicle Policy.

Signed:	
Print Name:	
Date:	

Part B – To be completed by Neighbourhood Officer

Has the electrical charging equipment got a valid PAT certificate / sticker?	Yes / No
If No, Has a date been set for a PAT Test? If No, Advise Tenant this must be arranged.	Yes / No
Is there adequate space in the storage area for an additional scooter / wheelchair?	Yes / No

Permissions

Permission for Storage has been APPROVED	Yes / No
Permission for Storage has been DECLINED	Yes / No

Reason/s for Refusal:

Inadequate space in the storage areas	Yes / No
Tenant already has a mobility vehicle stored in the area	Yes / No

I authorise / reject the tenant named in Part A permission to store and charge their mobility scooter or motorised wheelchair within this developments mobility vehicle storage area.

Signed:	
Print Name:	
Job Title:	
Date:	