

Mobility Vehicle Policy

Scope of Policy

This Policy sets out the approach of Platform Housing Group (the Group) to Mobility Vehicles.

The Group acknowledges that tenants and leaseholders (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. 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 (tenant, leaseholder or visitor).

This policy applies to communal areas within Group buildings, including areas used by third party agencies, retirement villages, housing for older people, and general needs accommodation with communal areas, such as blocks of flats with hallway, staircase and landing area access.

2. Context

- 2.1 The policy has taken the following into account:

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

The Group must comply with the law regarding fire safety.

This law applies to England and Wales and covers ‘general fire precautions’ and other fire safety duties that are needed to protect ‘relevant persons’ in case of fire in and around ‘most premises’.

The order requires fire precautions to be put in place 'where necessary' and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the case.

Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order rests with the 'Responsible Person'.

This law applies 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. The order requires that risks should be assessed and actions taken to reduce risks to the extent that is reasonable and practical.

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 and could hamper escape routes, especially in communal areas.

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; and
- ensure that data held in adhering to this policy is kept securely on the Group's Housing database in accordance with GDPR.

4. **Policy Outline**

4.1 **Definition of a Mobility Vehicle**

Typically, mobility vehicles 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 the Highways Regulations 1988. The regulations divide these vehicles into three classes:

- Class 1 – are manual wheelchairs that are not electrically propelled;
- Class 2 – are powered wheelchairs and scooters intended for use on footpaths up to 4 mph. They may also be used on the road to cross from one pavement to another or where no pavement is available; and
- Class 3 – can be used on pavements up to 4 mph and on roads up to 8mph. They are required by law to be registered with DVLA for road use. These vehicles will be licensed in the disabled taxation class.

4.2 **Allocation of Space**

Allocation of storage space for mobility vehicles will take place on a first come, first served basis. Most 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 occupants own risk);
- request permission from a Manager of the Group to erect a suitable outdoor storage and or/charging facility (at occupant’s own risk, cost, including ongoing maintenance costs); or
- 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.

Vehicles deemed too large to be used, stored and charged in Group Buildings, must be stored and charged outside.

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. Insurance must provide, as a minimum, third party cover for damage against property and claims from other occupants and/or employees or visitors. 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 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 a 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 has suitable fire safety 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; and
- 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 2 mobility vehicles of different sizes, however they may be asked to remove one if demand exceeds space availability.

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 occupant's "Conditions Of Use" to keep a Mobility vehicle on Group premises.

If occupants are found to be breaching the conditions stated in this policy, and depending on the risks and severity of the breach, or breaches, once reviewed by a Manager of the Group, notice will be issued to enable occupants to rectify the issue(s) within a specified period of time. Failure to do so will result in occupants being asked to remove the mobility vehicle from the building within a period of 7 days.

The “Conditions of Use” are as follows:

- all travel inside Group buildings must not exceed more than 2 mph to ensure the safety of all occupants, employees and visitors;
- Provide, 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; and
 3. a copy of a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) of the charging equipment.
The PAT ensures that the electrical safety of the charging equipment is checked and should be checked and certified as safe when the vehicle is serviced.

Occupants are responsible for arranging servicing and PAT testing of their mobility vehicle(s) annually.

- if any equipment fails the PAT, the occupant is responsible to repair/replace the damaged 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 as a result of an accident/near miss or dangerous driving/speeding;
- occupants must pay for any damage to Group property caused by collision or misuse of a mobility vehicle;
- 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;
- visitor’s mobility vehicles are not permitted to be charged, stored or left unattended in any area that causes an obstruction within the property and breaches the storage conditions contained in this policy. Vehicles stored in designated areas are left at the occupant’s own risk; and
- 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 storage space.

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 in turn, 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 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; and
- take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

5.3 The Group aims to meet the needs of its 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 the Group's Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

6. Monitoring and Review

6.1 Responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of this Policy will be through the following teams:

- Allocations
- Community and Neighbourhoods
- Independent Living and Supported Housing Services

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 August 2022 and then every two years thereafter.

6.2 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.

7. Associated Documents/Policies

7.1 List of documents/associated policies/publications:

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

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Mobility Vehicle Conditions of Use and Application Form



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Introduction

If you are considering purchasing a mobility vehicle, there are essential things you should know **BEFORE** you buy one.

Permission must be granted by Platform Housing Group (the Group) **before you acquire** a mobility vehicle and bring it onto Group premises.

In addition to this document, 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.

To help you make the right decisions around purchasing a mobility vehicle, you are advised to do some research. Details of useful contacts are provided at the end of this document which may help.

These conditions of use apply to any occupant who lives in a building with communal areas, such as retirement villages, housing for older people 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 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. 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.
4. Never leave, store or charge the vehicle in communal corridors at any time (unless these are confirmed by the Group as a designated area).
5. 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.
6. Participate and provide information as requested to a Group employee as part of an annual review* of your mobility vehicle use.
7. Arrange for the repair or replacement of any faulty element of the vehicle which affects its use.
8. Pay for any damage to Group property caused by collision or misuse of a mobility vehicle.
9. Ensure your visitors with mobility vehicles adhere to the Group Mobility Vehicle Policy and these Conditions of Use.
10. 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.
11. If you move out or you receive a "Notice" to remove your mobility Vehicle from the Group's premises, you must do so within 7 days.
12. 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; and
- providing a copy of the Portable Appliance Test (PAT) of the charging equipment (this may form part of the service).

NOTE – If the equipment fails a PAT test, 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 a Manager and occupants will be advised on the decision about their application in writing. During the application process, you may be requested to meet with an 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, if refusal is due to 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 Disabled Living Foundation
Email: helpline@df.org.uk
Website: www.dlf.org.uk

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
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 make:	
Mobility vehicle model:	
Class of vehicle: 1, 2 or 3	
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 a Manager 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 an employee to fully assess the details of your application.



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

Name:	
Address:	
Mobility vehicle make, model and class:	
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 PAT certificate/sticker?	
If Yes, please enter date of PAT	
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?	
Storage – where will this vehicle be stored when not in use?	Describe location: Is this area a designated communal area, safe for this purpose? Yes/No



Charging – where will this vehicle’s battery be recharged:	Describe location Is this area a designated communal area, safe for this purpose? Yes/No
Permission to keep a mobility vehicle has been approved:	
Permission to keep a mobility vehicle has been refused:	
Reason(s) for refusal:	
Insufficient space in designated communal storage/charging area	
Applicant already has a mobility vehicle	
On review, no insurance, servicing or PAT 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.