

## Mobility Vehicle Policy (including electric scooters and bikes)

Responsible Officer	Assistant Director Housing
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Homes Group
Approved by	Executive
Date approved	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Frequency of review	Every 3 years
Date of next review	March 2027
Implementation date	March 2024
Key related documents (policy, procedure, customer literature)	Estate Inspection Policy Estate Inspection procedures Equality and Diversity Policy Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Customer Service Standards Tenancy Agreements Community Investment Strategy Aids and Adaptations Policy Abandoned Properties Policy Fire Safety Policy Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Sources of best practice or guidance used in developing this policy	CIH Knowledge Hub Neighbourhood Standard Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Version control			
Version number	2	Author of Policy	Kath Glen
Equality Impact Analysis	Initial	Equality Analysis Date	18 May 2023

Document change history		
Version	Date	Changed sections

--	--	--

<b>Consultation</b>	
Consultation Group (if applicable)	
Staff	28 April 2023
Union(s)	Not applicable.
Customers	28 April 2023
Human Resources / Organisation Development	Not applicable.
Health and Safety Working Group	18 January 2024
Other stakeholder (please state)	Not applicable.

**Policy statement**

Mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, scooters and bikes are becoming increasingly popular in society. Customers are utilising mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs in particular to improve their independence. Karbon Homes recognises that customers want to remain independent even when their health or mobility is in decline, and mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs can be of great benefit. This policy aims to provide guidance on the use and storage of mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, electric scooters and bikes and to promote responsible mobility vehicle ownership.

**Risk policy is designed to control**

Supporting people to remain independent and enable customers to make best use of these modes of transport whilst protecting the health and safety of all customers.

**Definitions**

Mobility vehicles usually have three or four wheels and steered using a 'bicycle style' handlebar. They are primarily intended for use outside.

## 1.0 Purpose of policy

- 1.1 This Policy makes clear the conditions under which mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, electric scooters and bikes these can be used and stored and how responsible use and storage will be promoted and maintained.
- 1.2 A mobility vehicle is a battery powered aid used by individuals who are able to stand or walk for limited periods, but have systemic or whole body disabling conditions that restrict stamina e.g. coronary/lung issues, arthritis etc. People do not have to be registered disabled to purchase a mobility vehicle.
- 1.3 Mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs are designed mainly for external use and are often referred to by a variety of names including:
  - Buggies.
  - Powered scooters.
  - Mobility scooters.

1.4 Mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs have been revolutionary for many people with limited mobility, providing independence, social inclusion and reducing dependency on others for basic tasks. We recognise that being able to have the use and ownership of a mobility vehicle gives people physical and mental health benefits through:

- **Mobility** – vehicles allow users to enjoy increased outside activity.
- **Independence** – having the use of a mobility vehicle keeps users active and enables them to maintain their independence.
- **Social inclusion** – using a mobility vehicle can reduce isolation and improve quality of life.
- **Access** – allows users to access services in the wider community, which they may have otherwise been excluded from using.

1.5 The increase in mobility vehicle users in the UK generally (especially those aged 65+), and in retirement living housing in particular, has resulted in a number of challenges for providers of housing/services for older people. For example, our sheltered housing schemes were built before mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs were readily available and therefore were not designed to accommodate them in terms of physical layout and storage capacity.

1.6 Classification of wheelchairs and mobility scooters

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters are defined by the DVLA as follows:

#### Class 1

Manual wheelchairs that are self or attendant propelled. These do not need to be registered with the DVLA and customers do not need to apply for permission to have or store such wheelchairs.

#### Class 2

Powered wheelchairs, mobility scooters, e-scooters and e-bikes. These are intended for use on footpaths and have a maximum speed of 4mph. They do not need to be registered with the DVLA, however, customers do need to apply for permission to have these types of vehicles. If there is no storage available for these types of vehicles and they are to be stored in customers homes, customers should seek advice from the scheme co-ordinator or Housing Officer to make sure that they do not present a hazard in the home.

#### Class 3

Mechanically propelled mobility vehicles capable of speeds in excess of 4mph. These must be registered with the DVLA. Permission will not be given to store or use this type of vehicle within Karbon Homes properties.

## 2.0 Objective

- Support customers to understand their responsibilities as mobility vehicle, powered wheelchair, electric bike or electric scooter users. Also to ensure customers understand the impact that irresponsible usage and storage may

have on other customers and as well their ability to keep their mobility vehicle or powered scooter.

- Ensure that customer's individual needs are met by accommodating these vehicles, where possible.
- Support staff in the management of all types of mobility vehicle related issues.
- Encourage partnership working with a wide variety of public, private, charitable and voluntary organisations in order to promote responsible mobility vehicle usage and storage.
- Ensure that Karbon Homes staff understand the conditions customers must meet when keeping vehicles in retirement living and general needs individual properties and communal blocks, and that they are clearly communicated to prospective, new and existing customers.
- Ensure that all decisions made to give or withdraw consent to use and store a mobility vehicle are made fairly and with a balanced assessment of the mobility needs of the customer.
- Ensure that customers are recharged in the event of damage to the scheme buildings or grounds and that such recharges are made in accordance with the wider Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
- Advise customers that they must purchase adequate mobility vehicle insurance and to maintain and have their mobility vehicle serviced annually.

### **3.0 Permission for a mobility vehicle**

- 3.1 Before a customer purchases or rents a mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair that they intend to store or bring into a Karbon Homes property they must seek guidance and permission from their Housing Officer or Scheme Coordinator.
- 3.2 Customers should be made aware that the larger models of Mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs (class 3) now available on the market are not suitable for storage in domestic properties or designated communal storage. Customers should take this into account when considering purchasing or renting a mobility vehicle.
- 3.3 Customers must apply for written permission to store a mobility vehicle. Unless written permission has been granted no mobility vehicle is to be stored within Karbon Homes owned property.
- 3.4 Requests to store a mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair in our properties can be made in person, via telephone, email or letter. Permission to store a mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair must be given in writing.
- 3.5 Before giving permission for a customer to have a mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair, the Officer must ensure that there is suitable available space for them to safely store and charge it.
- 3.6 Where written permission is granted the customer must agree and comply with any conditions placed upon the storage and usage of the vehicle.
- 3.7 If the scheme is communal, the Housing Officer or Scheme Coordinator will advise where the mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair should be stored and charged. Karbon Homes reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time should the conditions of the permission be broken or the needs of the scheme or communal block change.

- 3.8 Karbon Homes recommends a home visit from a specialist mobility vehicle provider who can support customers to ensure they purchase the correct size mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair and also ensure they are capable and safe enough when using the equipment.
- 3.9 Customers must take out third party insurance as we will recharge for any damage caused to the property. If anyone using a mobility vehicle injures another person, they may be liable to personal injury claims.
- 3.10 Karbon Homes will invoice the customer under the Rechargeable Repairs Policy for any damage caused by mobility vehicles or powered wheelchairs to our property or any alterations carried out to the property without written permission from Karbon Homes in connection with mobility vehicles.
- 3.11 All mobility vehicles must be set to the lowest speed setting whilst driven inside.
- 3.12 Failure to comply with this policy may lead to legal action being taken and or the customer may be required to permanently remove the mobility vehicle from the building.
- 3.13 Karbon Homes may refuse permission for a mobility vehicle if the Health and Safety Business Partner decides that a scheme or the area surrounding a scheme is unsuitable e.g. accessibility is a problem due to a large number of curbs. The Health and Safety Business partner should be consulted when there are any concerns around accessibility, safe storage or any other concerns.

## **4.0 Storage**

### **4.1 Flats**

- 4.1.1 In communal blocks, if there is space available, customers will be allowed to store mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters or e-bikes within their home. This option is limited to those with smaller mobility vehicles and where the layout of the accommodation is suitable. Customers who store mobility vehicles, e-scooters or e-bikes in their homes must ensure they do not block entrances/exits or doorways. In addition, the following conditions must be complied with:
- The mobility vehicle, powered wheelchair, e-scooter or e-bike must be of a size that will be able to pass clearly through the front entrance, corridors (including turning any corners on their route through the corridor) and customer's own front door.
  - Any customers advised to move a mobility vehicle, powered wheelchair, scooter or e-bike from a communal area must do so and failure to comply will be considered a breach of their tenancy or lease.
  - Wherever possible, mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters or e-bikes must be stored in communal storage facilities.
- 4.1.2 Under no circumstances may a mobility vehicle, powered wheelchair, e-scooter or e-bike be stored or charged in any area that forms part of a fire escape route.

4.1.3 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling will be provided to customers.

## **4.2 Bungalows and houses**

4.2.1 For health and safety reasons, customers living in houses or bungalows should store e-scooters or e-bikes outside wherever possible, preferably in a lockable shed with a power supply (that is purchased and maintained by them).

## **4.3 General rules**

4.3.1 Mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters, e-bikes and chargers must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. This is the responsibility of the customer.

4.3.2 As detailed in our Aids and Adaptations Policy, we do not carry out any adaptations associated with mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs (e.g. ramps, paths or shed bases). However, we will consider a reasonable request for making an alteration if a customer wishes to make a disability related improvement at their own expense e.g. widening a door to allow for a mobility vehicle or powered wheelchair. A request may be refused, however, if the alteration would affect the property's structure, fire safety or presents a hazard to other customers.

4.3.3 All requests for adaptations or alterations to the property associated with mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs will be considered on an individual basis by the relevant property surveyor.

4.3.4 Mobility vehicles must not be stored or charged in any communal areas unless it is an area specifically designed for mobility vehicle storage.

4.3.5 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling will be provided to customers.

## **5.0 Designated Storage Areas in Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes**

5.1 Mobility vehicles and powered wheelchairs are powered by lithium-ion batteries which are high power, inherently flammable and vulnerable to heat and therefore can present a risk if not used, managed and charged correctly.

5.2 In a scheme, mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters and e-bikes must be charged within the customer's home or in an agreed designated area in agreement with the Scheme Coordinator. Charging should be undertaken in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

5.3 Vehicles should never be left on permanent charge.

5.4 If a mobility vehicle is stored and charged in a storage area Karbon Homes will charge a fee. This will be collected by the Scheme Coordinator.

5.5 Power leads must never cause a trip hazard, be trailed across floors or put through the letterbox of a property. Multi-point adaptors must not be used for charging mobility vehicles.

- 5.6 Where there is mobility vehicle storage provided and there is a storage space available, customers will only be granted permission to store mobility vehicles, e-scooters or e-bikes within their home if there is no storage space available in a communal storage area.
- 5.7 Each scheme will have its own waiting list for a space in the storage area and customers can request that they be added to the waiting list.
- 5.8 Customers who are in receipt of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will have priority over those who are not and storage will then be allocated based on date order.
- 5.9 Allocation of a space in a storage area is initially on a first come first served basis and a record will be kept and managed by each Scheme Coordinator. However, if a customer, via a medical assessment, has been advised that having the use of a mobility vehicle would enhance their standard of living, they will be given priority wherever possible to store their mobility vehicle in the designated area.
- 5.10 Customers given access to mobility vehicle storage must use it for this purpose and failure to do so may result in the storage being offered to the next person on the waiting list. Anyone who no longer needs storage must advise their Scheme Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.11 Any customers advised to move a mobility vehicle from an area that is deemed unsafe must do so and failure to comply will be considered a breach of their tenancy agreement/lease.
- 5.12 The use or storage of mobility vehicles, e-scooters and e-bikes in upper floor flats will only be permitted where the available lifts are safe to use i.e. they are of a suitable size to easily manoeuvre a mobility vehicle without compromising access and can accommodate the extra weight of a mobility vehicle.
- 5.13 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling will be provided to customers.

## **6.0 What if permission to have a mobility vehicle is refused/not possible?**

- 6.1 Karbon Homes has the right to refuse permission to store mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters or e-bikes near to customer's homes or in communal areas if a risk assessment shows there is a health and safety and/or fire risk that could put others in danger. We will be as flexible as possible and where there is a risk associated with storage, we will work with the customer to try to find a solution.
- 6.2 In some schemes it may also be possible to consider alternatives including:
- Storage in a garage. Customers will be responsible for any arrangements for storage and/or charging if they choose this option.
  - Locally agreed outdoor parking. Customers will be reminded that they are responsible for the safety and security of their mobility vehicle, e-scooter or e-bike.

- 6.3 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 re-housing options customers should speak to their Housing Officer.
- 6.4 If a customer is unhappy about the way in which we dealt with their request to have or store a mobility vehicle then they should follow our complaints policy.

## **7.0 Responsibility for mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters and e-bikes checklist**

### **7.1 Karbon Homes will:**

- Consider requests for permission from customers who wish to buy or rent mobility vehicles on an individual basis, in a fair and transparent way and after taking into account the needs of the customer.
- Identify and manage any risks associated with mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooters and e-bikes.
- Discuss and monitor needs via the needs and support planning process in sheltered and extra care schemes.
- Agree storage and charging facilities with customers.
- Take appropriate action if customers are charging and/or storing mobility vehicles in communal areas or are causing damage e.g. to lifts, walls, doors, floors & carpets.
- Advise customers if lifts in communal blocks are safe to use with mobility vehicles, powered wheelchairs, e-scooter or e-bikes.
- Take appropriate action if customers do not adhere to the requirements of this policy.

### **7.2 Customer Responsibilities**

- Discuss purchase or rental of a mobility vehicle with Karbon Homes prior to buying or renting.
- Seek permission from Karbon Homes before purchasing or renting a mobility vehicle .
- If required, registering with DVLA.
- Insuring their mobility vehicle (public liability insurance covering accidental damage to property and other people; and cover for fire, theft, or other damage).
- Service and maintenance in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.
- Selling or disposing of their mobility vehicle.
- Health & safety within their home.
- Any damage caused by their mobility vehicle.
- Physically managing use of their mobility vehicle e.g. getting on and off.
- Health & Safety in communal areas.
- Charge vehicles responsibly following manufacturer's instructions and relevant fire safety guidance.

## **8.0 Customer Vulnerabilities**

- 8.1 This policy is applied in line with Our Approach To Vulnerability Policy. Everyone matters. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services. We will offer support, reasonable



adjustments, and adaptations to remove barriers. We will discuss with our customers what is reasonable and appropriate. In delivering this service we may need to escalate a particular case – if we do then customer vulnerabilities will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

- 8.2 We will support people with vulnerabilities to deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people with vulnerabilities in the delivery of our services but also to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord. Details are provided in the appropriate areas in this policy. All our customer policies are available on the website.

## **9.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years. The Assistant Director Housing has responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.

## **10.0 Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 This policy is applied in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy and the associated legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 where we aim to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 10.2 Our approach to equality and diversity goes beyond these protected characteristics we take into consideration additional factors such as socio-economic status and language barriers which may also impact individuals. Our vision is one where everyone is treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect and access to our services.
- 10.3 All of our Karbon policies and key information are made available on the Karbon Homes website. Other reasonable adjustments that can help to make our information and services more accessible are sign language and language interpreters. We will work to improve accessibility for everybody that we deal with offering reasonable adjustments, adaptations and discussing ways that we can work to remove any barriers that you may experience. A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way that we usually do things.

## **11.0 Data Protection and Privacy**

- 11.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.