

Mobility Vehicle Policy

1.0 Purpose of policy

- 1.1 This Mobility Vehicle Policy makes clear the conditions under which mobility vehicles 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 designed for external use are often referred to by a variety of names including:
- Buggies.
 - Electric scooters.
 - Powered scooters.
 - Mobility scooters.
- 1.4 Mobility vehicles have been revolutionary for many people with limited mobility, providing independence, social inclusion and reducing dependency on others for basic tasks such as shopping, picking up prescriptions, visiting the doctor etc. 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 retirement living schemes were built before mobility vehicles were readily available and therefore were not designed to accommodate them in terms of physical layout and storage capacity.

2.0 Objective

- Support residents to understand their responsibilities as mobility vehicle users and the impact that irresponsible usage and storage may have on their ability to keep a mobility vehicle and on their tenancy/lease.
- Ensure that resident's individual needs are met by accommodating mobility vehicles, where possible.
- Support staff in the management 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 the conditions residents must meet when keeping vehicles in retirement living are understood by Karbon staff and are clearly communicated to prospective, new and existing residents.
- 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 resident.
- Ensure that residents 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 residents 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 resident purchases or rents a mobility vehicle, they must seek guidance and permission from their Housing Officer or Scheme Coordinator.
- 3.2 Residents should be made aware that the larger models of mobility vehicles now available on the market are not suitable for storage in domestic properties or designated communal storage. Residents should take this into account when considering purchasing or renting a mobility vehicle.
- 3.3 Residents **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 owned property.
- 3.4 Requests to buy/rent and store a mobility vehicle can be made in person, via telephone, email or letter. **Permission to buy/rent and store a mobility vehicle must be given in writing.** A copy of the permission letter/email must be added to the residents house file.
- 3.5 Before giving permission for a resident to have a mobility vehicle, the Officer must ensure that there is available space for them to store and charge it.
- 3.6 Where written permission is granted the resident 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/Scheme Coordinator will advise where the mobility vehicle should be stored and charged. Karbon reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time should the conditions of the permission be broken or the needs of the communal block change.
- 3.8 Karbon recommend a home visit from a specialist mobility vehicle provider who can support residents to ensure they purchase the correct size mobility vehicle and also ensure they are capable and safe enough when using the equipment.
- 3.9 Residents must take out third party insurance as we will recharge for any damage caused to the property that we manage. If anyone using a mobility vehicle injures another person, they may be liable to personal injury claims. Households must present their insurance documents to their Housing Officer/Scheme Assistant annually.
- 3.10 Karbon will invoice the resident under the Rechargeable Repairs Policy for any damage caused by mobility vehicles to our property.
- 3.11 All mobility vehicles must be set to the lowest speed setting whilst driven inside. E.g. tortoise.
- 3.12 Failure to comply with this policy may lead to the resident being served with a Notice of Seeking Possession and possession proceedings being started for their eviction. They may also be required to remove the mobility vehicle from the building permanently.
- 3.15 Karbon 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.

4.0 Storage

4.1 Flats

- 4.1.1 In communal blocks, if there is space available, residents will be allowed to store mobility vehicles within their home. This option may be limited to those with smaller mobility vehicles and where the layout of the accommodation is suitable. Residents who store mobility vehicles in their homes must ensure they do not block entrances/exits or doorways. The following conditions must be complied with:
- The mobility vehicle 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 resident's own front door.
 - Any residents advised to move a scooter from a communal area must do so and failure to comply will be considered a breach of their tenancy/lease.
 - Wherever possible, mobility vehicles must be stored in communal storage facilities.

- 4.1.3 If there is space available we may allow a resident to meet the cost of and provide their own shed (and associated path and electrics). In this instance, we will consult other residents before we give permission.
- 4.1.4 Under no circumstances may a mobility vehicle be stored or charged in any area that forms part of a fire escape route.
- 4.1.5 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 Bungalows and houses

- 4.2.1 For health and safety reasons, it is preferred by Karbon that residents of houses or bungalows store mobility scooters outside, 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 and chargers must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. This is the responsibility of the customer.
- 4.3.2 As discussed in our Aids and Adaptations Policy, we do not usually carry out any adaptations associated with mobility vehicles (e.g. ramps, paths or shed bases). Residents will be informed of this in our Aids and Adaptations leaflet. However, we cannot refuse a request for making an alteration if a resident wishes to make a disability related improvement at their own expense e.g. widening a door to allow for a mobility vehicle; however a request may be refused where the alteration affects the property's structure or presents a hazard to other residents.
- 4.3.3 HOWEVER, WE RECOGNISE THAT DIFFERENT RESIDENTS HAVE DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND DIFFERENT NEEDS. WE WILL LOOK AT EACH REQUEST FOR ADAPTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH MOBILITY VEHICLES ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.
- 4.3.4 If a scheme has communal areas, under no circumstances may a mobility vehicle be stored or charged in any area that forms part of a fire escape route.
- 4.3.5 In communal blocks, residents will be allowed to store mobility vehicles within their home provided the following conditions are complied with:
- The mobility vehicle 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 tenant's own front door.
 - Any tenants 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 the agreement mandate.
- 4.3.6 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling is attached as Appendix 1.

5.0 Designated Storage Areas in Retirement Living Schemes

- 5.1 In a scheme, mobility vehicles should be charged within the resident'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.
- 5.2 Where there is mobility vehicle storage provided, residents will not be granted permission to store mobility vehicles within their home.
- 5.3 Each scheme will have its own waiting list that details the rules and restrictions particular to that scheme.
- 5.4 Residents can request that they be added to the waiting list.
- 5.5 Residents who are registered disabled will have priority over those who are not and storage will then be allocated based on date order.
- 5.6 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 resident, 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.
- 5.7 Residents 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.
- 5.8 All vehicles charged within a designated area will require a P.A.T (portable appliance test) annually to ensure that the charging equipment is in a fit state. This will be carried out at no extra charge by Karbon along with all other equipment on the scheme. P.A.T testing will be arranged by the Scheme Coordinator.
- 5.9 If a tenant refuses to comply to have the P.A.T test done then permission to use the storage area will be withdrawn. In addition, any mobility vehicle failing the P.A.T test will have to be repaired within an agreed timescale; otherwise permission to store will be withdrawn.
- 5.10 If a mobility vehicle is stored and charged in a communal area Karbon may introduce a small affordable fee paid to the Retirement Living Scheme Coordinator (this can be collected either quarterly or 6 monthly). Residents will always be consulted on this before any charge is introduced.
- 5.11 Vehicles should never be left on permanent charge.
- 5.12 Power leads must never cause a trip hazard, be trailed across floors or put through the letterbox of a property.
- 5.13 Any residents 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.
- 5.14 The use or storage of mobility vehicles 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. The Health and Safety Business Partner will determine whether a lift is safe to use.

5.15 Further guidance on storage within a dwelling is attached as Appendix 1.

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

6.1 Karbon has the right to refuse permission to store mobility vehicles near to resident'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 resident to try to find a solution.

6.2 On some schemes it may also be possible to consider alternatives including:

- Storage in a garage. Residents will be responsible for any arrangements for storage/charging if they choose this option.
- Locally agreed outdoor parking. Residents will be reminded that they are responsible for the safety and security of their mobility vehicle.

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 tenants should speak to their Housing Officer.

6.4 If a resident is unhappy about the way in which we dealt with their request to have/store a mobility vehicle then they should follow our complaints policy.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR MOBILITY VEHICLES CHECKLIST

7.1 Karbon responsibilities

- Giving permission for customers to buy/rent mobility vehicles.
- H & S/fire safety in communal areas.
- Risk identification & management.
- Discussing/monitoring need via needs and support planning process.
- Agreeing storage/charging facilities.
- Action if purchased without agreement.
- Action if resident charging/storing mobility vehicle in communal areas or causing damage e.g. to walls, doors, floors & carpets.
- Advising residents if lifts in communal blocks are safe to use with mobility vehicles.

7.2 Resident Responsibilities

- Discussing purchase/rental with Karbon.
- Seeking permission from Karbon.
- Buying/renting their mobility vehicle (if permitted).
- 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.
- Selling/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.
- H & S in communal areas.

4.0 Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years. Kelly Taylor, Assistant Director Specialist Housing has responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.

5.0 Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 This policy is implemented in line with the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy and associated legislation. Consideration will be given to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- 5.2 This policy and associated documents are available in different languages and alternative formats where necessary.

6.0 Data Protection and Privacy

- 6.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Homes Group which in association with the Data Protection Procedures must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.

Appendix 1

Advice on storing and charging mobility vehicles within your home

- The scooter should be stored and charged within a room within the dwelling.
- The room should be fitted with a substantial door.
- When being stored or charged the door to the room should be kept closed.
- The room used for storage or charging should be fitted with a smoke detector – if the room chosen to store or charge the vehicle does not already have a smoke detector one should be fitted.
- Recharging should only be carried out during the day time hours and not overnight and they should never be charged in the communal areas of the house / building.
- Battery charging should be undertaken in a ventilated room (i.e. ensure the window to the room is open). Note – if charging maintenance free battery (sealed battery) ventilation is not specifically required but would be best practice. This would form part of the original assessment, as to the suitability of proposed storage and charging facilities.