

1. Background and objectives

Alliance Homes recognises the value that a mobility scooter can bring to enhance the quality of life of some of our customers and for many it can provide independence and access to external facilities in the wider community, that otherwise they might not be able to access. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we also acknowledge that residents are permitted to make use of the most appropriate equipment available to enable them to live independently, and to seek reasonable adjustments to infrastructure to allow them to do so. Alliance Homes will accommodate requests for permission to keep and store scooters where practical and not refuse permission unreasonably.

Many of our older developments were not specifically designed to take in to account the use, charging and storage of powered mobility scooters. Whilst some of our over 60 age restricted schemes have storage and charging facilities, the communal areas around general need flats may not easily allow practical alterations to meet the expected increased requirement for these facilities. However, it is recognised that to promote independent living there is a need to work with our customers to identify suitable storage and charging provision. For all new buildings Alliance Homes will liaise with partners and developers to consider the provision of suitable spaces for the storage and charging of mobility scooters at the design or acquisition stage.

This Mobility Scooter Policy has been developed to contribute to this effort by providing a consistent and clear framework to support accessibility for our customers and to set out the objectives and principles for the safe use and storage of mobility scooters in common areas within our developments.

Alliance Homes will meet its duties to protect the health and safety of tenants and leaseholders, staff, and visitors to properties, promote responsible mobility scooter ownership and conform to fire regulations. Alliance Homes wishes to ensure mobility scooters are being used legally and safely, stored, and charged appropriately whether kept in individual properties, mobility scooter stores, or the communal areas of both general needs flats and age restricted properties.

2. Policy detail

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. 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:

- Class 1 - Manual Wheelchairs
- Class 2 - Powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters intended for pavement use only, not the public highway unless travelling from one pavement to another. Max speed of 4 miles per hour and unladen weight not exceeding 113.4kgs. Not required to be registered with the DVLA.
- Class 3 – Powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters that can be used both on the pavement where they are limited to 4 miles per hour, and on the road where they can travel at speeds of 8 miles per hour. Unladen weight must not exceed 150kgs. These vehicles must be registered with the DVLA for road use. They will be licensed in the disabled taxation class where no duty will apply.

For the purposes of this Policy, 'mobility scooters' will mean class 1, class 2 and class 3 vehicles. Vehicles that are not specifically designed for mobility use will not be permitted, nor will any equipment that may use an alternative power, including but not limited to a combustion engine or flammable fuels.

E-bikes and Electric Scooters

For the sake of clarity E-bikes and Electric Scooters are not classed as Mobility Scooters but do use the same battery types and present similar fire risk. They are increasingly in use, especially by younger people. Alliance

Homes will communicate appropriately with our customers regarding the safe storage and charging of these items both in and around our properties.

2.2. Legal requirements

This policy has been written taking into consideration the following legislation, guidance, and good practice. It should also be read in conjunction with our tenancy agreements:

- Use of Invalid Carriages on Highway Regulations 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment (Supplementary Guide) Means of Escape for Disabled People 2007
- Home Office guidance on Fire Safety in purpose-built blocks of flats 2011
- The Chief Fire Officers Association Mobility Scooter Guidance 2017
- The National Fire Chiefs Council Fire Safety in Specialised Housing 2017
- The National Fire Chiefs Council Mobility Scooter Guidance for Residential Buildings 2018

2.3. Residents and others affected by this policy

- Alliance Homes customers residing in age-restricted housing and flats in general needs blocks who have use of a mobility scooter and may or may not currently have written consent
- Any tenant, leaseholder or household member seeking to obtain a mobility scooter as permission must be sought beforehand
- New tenants and leaseholders
- All visitors to Alliance Homes properties who travel by mobility scooter and park vehicles in facilities on a temporary basis

2.4. Permission

All tenants and leaseholders are required to get permission from Alliance Homes to store a mobility scooter on our property before obtaining one, or a member of their household obtains a mobility scooter. An application form must be completed and submitted with required documentation. Permissions will be granted in writing and will be subject to:

- A perceived disability or medical need for a mobility scooter
- Proof of adequate insurance being provided
- Acceptance of Guidance Notes for Use with the scooter
- A Fire Risk Assessment (as shown in Appendix 1) has been completed, and all criteria have been satisfied

- 2.4.1.** Alliance Homes will generally only permit the use of one mobility scooter per person (the exception being at our extra care facilities or suitable housing where permission may be granted both for an indoor and outdoor mobility scooter).

2.4.2. Where written permission is granted, applicants must agree and comply with all conditions placed upon the storage and usage of the mobility scooter. Alliance Homes reserves the right to withdraw permission at any time if the conditions of the permission are broken.

2.4.3. Permission will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be removed at Alliance Homes' discretion if:

- The scooter has been unused for a period of six months and is using a storage space that could be utilised by another customer
- There is a change in an individual's circumstances, for example a change in sight or hearing loss which makes it unsafe to be using a scooter
- No insurance is in place for the scooter
- There are arrears on any service charges for the use of storage and charging facilities
- The mobility scooter is being stored and charged in an internal or external area that is contrary to the permission given

2.5. Assessment

When considering requests to store a mobility scooter, Alliance Homes will not unreasonably refuse permission but will:

- If our customer resides in age-restricted housing with storage facilities.
Carry out administrative checks to make sure a storage and charging space is available. If not, it will be necessary for the customer to be registered on a waiting list. Until such time as our customer is granted a space to store and charge their scooter, they are not permitted to keep a scooter on site.
- If our customer resides in a block of flats with no storage or charging facilities.
Consider whether safe, practical and reasonable adjustments can be made to install facilities in external communal areas without impeding access, contravening fire regulations or causing inconvenience to other residents and visitors. An on-site assessment of the suitability of making such changes will be carried out. If feasible, recommendations will include the estimated costs of installing appropriate fire-resistant storage and charging facilities. All costs must be borne by the applicant.

2.6. Refusal

Where permission is not granted, Alliance Homes will fully explain the reasons why permission has been refused. Customers will be advised to consider moving to a property that has established mobility scooter storage or scope to provide appropriate facilities. Some examples of refusal are:

- No suitable or safe storage in customer's property and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided. (Depending on the development there may be varying physical limitations on the number of external storage facilities that can reasonably be provided due to planning or fire regulations).
- Where a major physical alteration to the premises is required and Alliance Homes believes it to be unreasonable in terms of cost and disruption to others.
- Where there are concerns regarding a tenant/leaseholder's ability to use a mobility scooter safely.

2.7. Fire Safety Considerations

Alliance Homes will comply with all relevant fire safety and health and safety at work legislation, together with any guidance. One of the requirements is that Fire Risk Assessments, focusing on the safety of occupants and visitors to a building, need to be carried out regularly, either annually or biennially. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has identified mobility scooters as a potential fire hazard when stored within communal areas. Their guidance examines a range of relevant factors to enable responsible persons to develop proportionate and risk-based policies and protocols when considering provision of storage and charging facilities. Factors include:

- Construction of storage facilities and fire spread
- Impact on external escape routes
- Electrical installation
- Location, access, and egress for users of mobility scooters
- The number of mobility scooters that can be stored safely within a proposed storage area
- Impact on other residents
- Storage, charging and maintenance in-line with manufacturers recommendations

Consequently, mobility scooters must only be kept in designated scooter storage areas when not in use and not left in communal spaces or a home where:

- fire escape routes are compromised
- there is significant risk of fire spreading to adjacent buildings

2.8. Storage of mobility scooters within customer's homes

Permission may be sought by customers intending to store and charge a mobility scooter (Class 1 and 2 only) within their home perhaps due to difficulties travelling from a communal storage facility to their home. This option potentially places the individual at risk of fire in their own home and may cause structural damage to elevators, door casings/frames and walls and to other common areas. A full assessment must take place as standard, examining fire safety considerations as below:

- A mobility scooter should not be stored or charged in a hallway if this is the only means of escape available. The vehicle should preferably be stored and charged in a separate room which is fitted with a fire-resisting or substantial door and fire detection and suppressant system.
- Mobility Scooters must not be stored adjacent to heaters.
- Mobility Scooters must not be left on charge overnight.
- Suitable circuit breakers must be used when charging batteries.
- The battery must be separated from the mobility scooter (where design allows) when it is not being charged to reduce the risk of fire.

Where the assessment identifies that the domestic dwelling is not suitable, discussions should be held with the customer to identify other areas of the building where reasonable adjustments might be made. If that is not practical, then it may be necessary to explore moving to other accommodation, either within the development or an alternative property which may allow for reasonable adjustments to be applied. This should be done in conjunction with the services and expertise of an occupational therapist.

2.9. Allocation of storage space for mobility scooters in age restricted housing schemes

- 2.9.1.** Residents who have a confirmed disability/medical need for a mobility scooter will be given priority for a space when one becomes available in designated mobility scooter stores, in date order of request. Proof will be requested of disability or medical need (supporting letter from GP, Occupational Therapist, other medical professional) during the application process, and failure to do so may affect the timely allocation of a space.

- 2.9.2.** Spaces will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis to all applicants.
- 2.9.3.** Alliance Homes will maintain a register that records the details of mobility scooter spaces in each scheme, and to whom they are allocated, to ensure that there is adequate space for all authorised mobility scooters to be stored safely. When there is no space available, a waiting list will be maintained.
- 2.9.4.** If there is insufficient storage Alliance Homes may consider securing added scooter storage facilities as part of a reasonable adjustment, provided this is a practical solution following assessment.

2.10. Safe storage and charging of mobility scooters

Alliance Homes will issue guidelines on our website so that customers owning or using mobility scooters understand their responsibilities and obligations regarding safe storage, charging and maintenance:

- Mobility scooter owners must ensure manufacturer guidelines and instructions on the safe charging of the mobility scooter are followed. Mobility scooters should not be left plugged in for longer than the recommended time as to do so would create a fire risk
- Mobility scooter owners must only charge their mobility scooter (whether it is stored in a property or a mobility scooter store) between 8.00am and 8pm to reduce the potential risk of a fire
- The battery must be separated from the mobility scooter (if designed to have the battery removed) when the mobility scooter is not being charged to reduce risk of fire
- Mobility scooters must be charged directly from the mains electric charging point installed either in an individual's home or in a scooter store. Extension leads are not to be used when charging any mobility scooter
- Mobility scooter owners are responsible for making sure that a scooter store is left secure, tidy, and free from trip hazards as well as reporting any concerns to Alliance Homes
- Any visitors arriving on a mobility scooter must leave it in a parking or other designated area outside the age restricted housing scheme, block, or communal area; they will not be permitted to leave it in a communal area or adjacent to any building

2.11. Insurance

As part of the permission to keep a mobility scooter on our properties, tenants and leaseholders should have a valid certificate of insurance for the mobility scooter. Insurance should include public and third-party liability to cover damage to buildings, property and grounds, or injury to other residents, staff, or visitors. This should be updated annually and Alliance Homes notified.

2.12. Enforcement

- 2.12.1.** Alliance Homes has a zero-tolerance approach to mobility scooters being kept or left anywhere on communal land, in age restricted housing or general needs/leaseholder blocks of flats that has not specifically been designated as an area to store and charge mobility scooters.
- 2.12.2.** Alliance Homes reserves the right to withdraw permission to store a mobility scooter at any time if the mobility scooter owner/user does not adhere to this policy. Owners/users will be asked to remove the mobility scooter immediately, and potentially permanently.
- 2.12.3.** Failure to comply with this policy and other customer guidance may also be considered a breach of tenancy conditions or lease agreement. Proportionate enforcement action will be taken which may include removal of a mobility scooter and the application of tenancy/lease sanctions to a tenant or leaseholder.

3. Monitoring, consultation, and review

- 3.1.** We monitor our performance in delivering the objectives of this policy by reporting to our leadership teams a schedule of requests for storage by scheme which will be reported annually and inform future development and upgrading of assets.
- 3.2.** The Service Delivery Manager - Neighborhoods is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.
- 3.3.** Customers, colleagues, and service users may be involved in giving feedback on this policy, leading to amendments where appropriate.
- 3.4.** This policy will be reviewed within three years of its approval date.

4. Equality and diversity

- 4.1.** This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 4.2.** The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy regarding the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.
- 4.3.** The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.
- 4.4.** This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

5. Associated documents

Fire Safety Policy, May 2023
Fire Risk Assessment Policy, February 2024
Fire Risk Assessment 2024

6. Version control and approval dates

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	11.03.2025
EIA reviewed by Equality & Diversity Manager	14/04/2025
SLT review / approval	30/04/2025
Next review date	April 2028

7. Complaints

- 7.1. If you would like to raise a complaint in relation to this policy, you can do this by calling us on **03000 120 120** or emailing us at act@alliancehomes.org.uk. All complaints will be handled in line with the latest Alliance Homes Complaint Handling Policy.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be conducted alongside the review of an existing policy or the creation of a new one.

1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function (SPPF) being assessed and name of author.

Mobility Scooter Policy

2. Aims of the SPPF being assessed.

- *Whose need is it designed to meet?*
- *Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?*

Alliance Homes is committed to promoting equalities and recognises that our customers should have a quality of life which allows them to maintain and maximise independent living. We understand the value of mobility aids and, as far as practical, aim to support the needs of customers wanting to utilise mobility scooters and provide a safe environment for users, staff and visitors.

3. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?

- *Make reference or links to consultation/evidence documents*

Alliance Homes' Customer Feedback Panel and customers using HIVE were given the opportunity to review a draft of the policy and made comments and suggestions as to possible amendments. A response to specific queries was sent and appropriate amendments agreed.

Comments and suggestions have also been sought from tenancy officers and managers within the Tenancy Services team, the Fire Safety Manager, Head of Housing, Head of Compliance and Safety Servicing, Complex Works Manager.

4. Does the SPPF promote equality of opportunity?

The policy promotes equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics as follows:

Elderly and disabled customers will benefit from access to mobility scooter facilities, promoting and improving practical options for independent living.

5. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity "groups" by considering the following questions (the list is not exhaustive but an indication of the sort of questions assessors should think about):

- *Might some groups find it harder to access the service?*
- *Do some groups have particular needs that are not well met by the current SPPF?*

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- What evidence do you have for your judgement (e.g. monitoring data, information from consultation/research/feedback)?
- Have staff/residents raised concerns/complaints?
- Is there local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?

Protected Characteristic	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Information source/s **	Comments/evidence
Race	X				
Disability			X		The policy seeks to enable customers in general needs blocks of flats who wish to use a mobility scooter to explore options to remain in their home, rather than having to move to alternative supported or age restricted schemes that may have existing facilities for the storage and use of mobility scooters
Gender	X				
Transgender	X				
Sexual orientation	X				
Religion or belief	X				
Age			X		The policy seeks to enable customers in general needs blocks of flats who wish to use a mobility scooter to explore options to remain in their home, rather than having to move to alternative supported or age restricted schemes that may have existing facilities for the storage and use of mobility scooters
Marriage & Civil Partnership	X				
Pregnancy and Maternity	X				
Rural issues	X				
Social mobility	X				

Was there a negative impact identified in question 5? If yes go to question 6. if not go to question 7.

6. If “negative impact” identified in table (4) above is it?

Legal -

What is the level of impact? -

YES	NO
HIGH	LOW

If it is not legal and/or high impact – (i.e.: if you have highlighted NO to legal and HIGH to impact, then the document should be referred to Head of HR)

7. If positive impact has been identified in table 4 above, how can it be improved upon or maximised, either in this SPPF or others?

The Development team is aware of the increased use of mobility scooters in our communities and will consider this need during the acquisition of new build properties.

8. Full EIA (or if you decide full EIA is not necessary but some changes should be considered)

- Are there changes you could introduce which would make this SPPF work better for this group of people?
- Is further research or consultation required?

9. Does this proposal have any potential Human Rights implications?

If yes, please describe (if necessary, please refer to the Alliance Homes Group Human Rights Policy)

There are no Human Rights implications.