Mobility Scooters:

Customer Guidance

**Introduction**

It is becoming increasingly common for older people and those with mobility problems to use mobility scooters for getting around and maintaining their independence. This is an important consideration for Guinness and we will seek to enable people to retain their independence.

However, many Guinness properties were designed and built before the use of mobility scooters became widespread. As a result the safe use, storage and charging of mobility scooters in these buildings and on those estates can often be difficult.

In discharging our duty as a landlord we must consider and do what is reasonable to mitigate the risks to our assets and individuals that are caused by the use, storage or charging of mobility scooters and similar devices in communal areas under our control.

Our approach to mobility scooter use is primarily designed to protect all residents, visitors and staff.

**Applying to use a mobility scooter**

All customers wanting to purchase a mobility scooter with the intention of storing it within any

communal scooter facilities or within their own home must first seek permission from us.

You can do this by completing the Mobility Scooter Application form which is available on our website or from the Customer Service Centre (0303 123 1890).

Our Customer Liaison Service colleagues can also help by discussing aspects of owning, storing and charging mobility scooters.

**Our Assessment**

Once we have received your application, we will make an assessment to determine if we can grant permission for you to own and use a mobility scooter in a Guinness property.

Below is a list of the criteria that we use. This is not exhaustive but will give you a good idea of what we base our decision on:

* Size and type of mobility scooter – Class 2 are acceptable in any property. Class 3 will only be considered for self-contained properties (i.e. houses and bungalows – not flats or apartments)
* Where you intend to store their mobility scooter
* Where you intend to charge the scooter
* If the building has adequate space to move a scooter from the highway/public right of way.

Once we have received your application we will provide you with our decision within 28 days but often it will be sooner than that. Sometimes we will need to inspect the property and block you live in and we may want to use an agency or third party to help us.

Broadly speaking, where we feel that an you may ‘lack capacity’ to make a decision at a time when it needs to be taken, and/or where we feel it is in your best interests, we may request a formal assessment of capacity is carried out by a relevant and qualified health practitioner and may do so without your consent.

**Rules**

* If there is a dedicated scooter store on site then, if you have been given permission, you may use that subject to any local agreements (charges, times of use etc.)
* Mobility scooters must not be stored in communal corridors, lobbies or communal areas and can only be charged / stored in your own home.
* Charging should be undertaken in accordance with manufactures instructions.
* All vehicles charged within designated scooter stores (and or your home) will require an annual Portable Appliance Test (PAT) to ensure that the charging equipment is in a fit state to be used. It is your responsibility to organise and pay for this.
* Should the charger fail the PAT then it will be your responsibility to repair or replace the damaged item.
* Mobility scooters should not be left on permanent charge, and only charged for the manufacturers recommended time.
* Fire safety regulations state that the storage of mobility scooters is not allowed in communal corridors and any fine imposed on Guinness relating to a breach of this, will be recharged to the perpetrator. If it is your mobility scooter than you will be recharged.
* Your tenancy agreement states that mobility scooters should not be stored in communal areas without permission. We will take action to enforce this, which may put your tenancy at risk.
* All communal areas will be inspected regularly, to ensure compliance with the above.
* If the scooter is required to be driven within a communal area this must be at walking pace to safeguard other residents and to avoid damage to Guinness property.
* Any incident, accident or damage must be reported to the Customer Service Centre, or the local CLO, building manager or onsite scheme staff immediately.
* It is your responsibility to have appropriate insurance in place. This should include public liability insurance in case of either injury involving other people who may be living at or visiting the building, or damage to the building itself. We expect to be shown valid insurance paperwork if we request to see it.
* Any damage to Guinness property caused by your use of a mobility scooter will be recovered through your insurance company. If you do not have a current insurance certificate, you will be personally liable for all costs.
* Failure to comply with the above will result in Guinness attempting to make reasonable attempts to find a solution. Where customers persist in this type of behaviour and when verbal and written warnings have been wilfully ignored or not adhered to, Guinness may consider enforcement action. This could take the form of:
  + Injunctions or tenancy enforcement actions
  + Removal of the mobility scooter in which case a TORT notice will be served on you and you will have 28 days to collect the item before Guinness disposes of it permanently.

**General Information**

***Buying***

Before buying a mobility scooter it is important that you take time to consider your options as this may save you time, effort and resources later on.

There are many different types and you need to find one that is suitable for your needs i.e. size, height, weight and restricted movement.

Common guidelines recommend that you set your budget to include the cost of the vehicle, insurance and breakdown cover, maintenance, servicing and repairs and any adaptations required.

Funding from charities may be available for those in receipt of the higher mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, enhanced rate of the Personal Independence Payment, War Pensioner’s Mobility Supplement or the Armed Forces Independence Payment

The Motability Scheme may allow for the benefit to be put towards the cost of leasing or buying a scooter.

It is recommended that you choose a dealer experienced in assessing customer needs. Avoid buying from an untrained sales person. Some vehicle suppliers are members of the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA).

* Check whether the dealer can offer appropriate training
* Ask if scooters can be hired to gain experience before making purchase
* Consider your budget limit and whether you wish to buy new or second hand
* Make sure you are familiar with all the controls on the scooter before buying and taking it home
* Check whether there are instructions; second hand scooters may not have them
* Ask if there is a warranty, what this covers and the duration of the warranty.

Visit www.charitychoice.co.uk or www.guidestar.org.uk for contact details of charities that may assist with funding.

Visit www.motability.co.uk for more information on the Motability Scheme.

***Using, charging and maintaining***

You should ensure that you follow any manufacturer guidelines or instructions on the safe use and charging of their equipment.

When thinking about where to store your mobility scooter you should consider the following questions:

* Is there sufficient detection in place within the proposed storage area to provide early warning to others in the event of a fire?
* If the building is not staffed and fire detection is available for the proposed storage area, is the system monitored?
* Can a fire be restricted to the room of origin/where the scooter is stored?
* Can all persons (in the property) reach a place of relative or ultimate safety?
* Are there sufficient electrical sockets available and are these suitable for the function?
* Can charging time be restricted to minimise sleeping risk? (i.e. just charge between 08:00 and 18:00)
* Are there any other combustible materials in the vicinity?
* Can you safely get in and out of the area where you are storing/charging the scooter?
* Will your use of the mobility scooter affect other residents?

Separating the battery from the mobility scooter can reduce the risk, by removing the source of ignition. It should be noted that some mobility scooters are not designed to have the battery removed.

Where individuals use mobility scooters and they are stored and charged entirely within the confines of their own home, with no adverse impacts on the fabric of the building or Guinness owned fixtures, it will be at your own risk. Guinness will accept no responsibility for any issues resulting from your ownership and use of a mobility scooter.