Guidance for the private purchase of mobility scooters

South Essex Homes – Keeping you informed

www.southessexhomes.co.uk  0800 833 160

Revised January 2014
**Introduction**

It has been estimated that the market for mobility scooters in the UK is approximately 300,000 to date and for many users these vehicles greatly enhance their independence in daily life. However Government figures indicate that more than 7 deaths and 400 injury accidents have occurred as a result of the use of these vehicles, which highlights the need for this leaflet.

Residents should not purchase a scooter without seeking permission of South Essex Homes first. Also before any agreement can be given you will need to ensure that there is suitable storage and charging facilities for the scooter and no health and safety risks exist. Failure to obtain this permission may affect your ability to keep the scooter and you may be required to dispose of it.
Assessment

Mobility scooters are not provided to individuals by the Council’s Social Services team and therefore there is no formal assessment of an individual’s ability to use one safely. It is therefore strongly recommended that individuals or their family/carer that are considering purchasing a mobility scooter first check with South Essex Homes that the scooter will be permitted (see above) and then assess their ability to use one safely and competently, by adhering to the following recommendations:

Medical conditions that could affect you (fitness to drive)

The following medical conditions are thought to have a possible impact on an individual’s ability to operate a mobility scooter safely and competently.

If an individual has one of the following medical conditions, they are strongly advised to discuss with their Doctor whether they feel that it would prevent them from operating a mobility scooter without risk of harm to themselves or others before purchasing one.

- A history of epileptic fits.
- Other causes of loss of consciousness.
- Impairment of memory, attention, concentration and spatial awareness.
- Visual impairment.
- Hearing impairment.
- Recent history of alcohol/drug or substance misuse.
- Severe tremor/ataxia.
**Doctor’s medical advice**

If in doubt regarding whether they have any of these medical conditions, an individual should seek advice from their Doctor.

In addition, the side-effects of certain medication may impact on an individual’s ability to operate a mobility scooter safely and if in doubt an individual should seek advice from their Doctor.

**The purchase**

If an individual or their carer/family is considering purchasing a mobility scooter it is strongly recommended that it is from a bona fide British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA) dealer. If a 2nd hand mobility scooter is to be purchased, an individual should ensure that the vendor can guarantee it is in a road worthy condition.

Prior to the purchase of a mobility scooter, it is strongly recommended that an individual reads the Get Wise: Highway Code for Electric Scooters and Wheelchair Users which can be obtained by telephoning BHTA.

**Telephone 020 7702 2141**
Insurance

The BHTA can also provide information on insurance as all residents are strongly recommended to have third party insurance.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) OR Personal Independence Payment

If you receive the highest rate mobility component of DLA you may be able to purchase a scooter through the 'Mobility Scheme'.

If you require any further information regarding this please telephone ‘Motability’.

Telephone 0845 60 762 60

Taxing your Scooter

The DVLA requires all Class 3 Mobility Scooter Users (4mph +) new and old to be taxed at no cost to the owner. The law states that a Class 3 vehicle can only be used by a disabled person aged 14 or over and must have a tax disc displayed on the vehicle at all times.

Telephone 03007906802
Storage

South Essex Homes has a legal responsibility to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Order applies to shared areas of South Essex Homes managed properties e.g. hallways, corridors, stairs, lifts and landings. **In order for South Essex Homes to meet these requirements mobility/electric scooters will not be allowed in these shared areas.**

Storage and charging facilities are limited and cannot be guaranteed therefore you may have to wait for storage space to become available. If storage is provided users must be able to transport themselves from their flat to the vehicle storage area by independent means, with or without walking aid or wheelchair.

If the mobility scooter is going to be stored in your home you need to take into account that most front door widths are 750 mm, if you live in a flat the communal door width will be approximately 800 mm. A mobility scooter should be less than 700 mm wide. So you need to ensure that you can ride the scooter into and out of your property.

For information on the availability of storage and charging facilities please contact -

**Telephone 0800 833 160**
Checklist - For potential Scooter Users

- Points to consider **before using or buying** a scooter:

- Where can I obtain **independent impartial advice** about using, buying or hiring a scooter that is best suited to my needs?

- Are there any **medical restrictions** to using a scooter e.g. eyesight, upper body strength, getting on and off scooter, types of controls available?

- Will my **abilities** impose restrictions e.g. dealing with recharging or a breakdown - how will I get help and/or get home?

- Where can I “try out” a scooter e.g. at a Shopmobility scheme? Are there any local **training** schemes?

- Should I **buy** a scooter or **hire** one?

- Physical Restrictions - **local geography** are there steep inclines, drop kerbs or pavements? The lack or provision of the above may increase the distance I need to travel in order to find a suitable route - so would the local conditions deter me from using a scooter?
Access and storage in my home - will adaptations be needed?

- If so what will they cost and have I applied for permission from South Essex and obtained the relevant planning permissions?
- Who can give me expert advice on the adaptations I will need to suit my own particular needs?
- Where can I store my scooter safely and securely (can I get round my scooter)?
- Where will I recharge the scooter (no trailing leads)?
- Will storing a scooter in my home pose any risks to me or affect my insurance?

**REMEMBER SCOOTERS CANNOT BE STORED IN COMMUNAL AREAS.**

Suppliers and after-sales advice - should I buy second-hand, from a supplier offering a home sales visit, on-line, from a catalogue or from a local shop?

- How will I know that what I am buying is the best model for me?
- What help will I get with repairs and maintenance?
- Are the manufacturer’s instructions and service history provided?

What if my needs change?

- Does the supplier offer a “Buy Back” deal if my needs change?
- Do they offer leasing/hire arrangements so that I can change to a different model?
What are the costs?
- Of the scooter?
- Insurance?
- Repairs and maintenance?
- Adaptations to my home?
- Storage and recharging facilities?
  ... and any accessories I may need?

- I need a scooter that can be driven on the road - do I need to know the **Highway Code**?

- What do I have to consider about the Health and Safety of **other road users and pedestrians**?

- Will I have to **register** my scooter with DVLA?

- What will I do with my scooter when I no longer need it?

**What happens if I get a scooter and I store it in the communal hallway?**
  - Unfortunately you will be in breach of your tenancy conditions and we could take legal action against you to remove the scooter from the communal areas. If this happens you may well be liable for any court costs.
References and Sources of Information

Age UK
Charity promoting the well-being of all older people - produces a range if factsheets including No.26 Public Transport and Concessions, No.42 Disability equipment and how to get it.
www.ageuk.org.uk/ Free Helpline: 0800 1696565

Assist UK
A national network of disability living centres offering - free and ethical information and advice about products which can increase disabled or older people’s choices about how they live. Not all centres have a Mobility Centre but they can advise further.
http://www.assist-uk.org/ Tel: 0870 770 2866
Textphone: 0870 770 5813

British Healthcare Trades Association - Has approx 350 member companies in 14 distinct sectors of healthcare business including mobility equipment. Each sector adheres to a strict Code of Practice. BHTA issue a range of information leaflets including:
Get wise to using electric scooters and wheelchairs (A highway code for users)
Get wise - get more from your battery (A guide to maximising the performance and lifespan of batteries for powered mobility equipment)
Get wise to using public transport (A wheelchair user’s guide to public transport)
Get wise - how to make sure your wheelchair remains stable (BHTA guidelines on wheelchair stability for end users)
Get wise to buying a stairlift (A guide to help you make the right decision)
Get wise to buying a mobility vehicle (A guide to helping you make the right decision)
Tel: 0116 287 6104 or email bhta@bhta.com
www.bhta.com

The British Insurance Brokers Association
Trade association of general insurance brokers - provide information for consumers and list of local brokers authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.
www.biba.org.uk/ConsumerHome.aspx
Consumer Helpline 0870 950 1790

Central Office of Information
Information from UK government departments online including:
The Highway Code - for powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/Poweredwheelchairsandmobilityscooters/index.htm
Counsel and Care
National Charity for Older People, their families and carers, offering advice about entitlement to State benefits and charities that can give financial help with unexpected expenses:
Advice Line: 0845 300 7585

Department for Transport
Code of practice for Class 3 Vehicle Users
www.dft.gov.uk

Department for Work and Pensions
Disability Discrimination Act Factsheet
www.dwp.gov.uk

Disabled Living Foundation
Provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability products and disabled equipment for older and disabled people, their carers and families. Publish (downloadable) factsheets including “Choosing a scooter or buggy” and “Choosing a powered wheelchair”
www.dlf.org.uk Helpline 0845 130 9177 Email: advice@dlf.org.uk
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
www.dvla.gov.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission - Helpline numbers
Helplines with specially trained staff who are able to give information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues.
England 0845 604 6610
Wales 0845 604 8810
Scotland 0845 604 5510
www.equalityhumanrights.com

Fire and Rescue Service
Offer home safety checks. Contact details of local Fire and Rescue Services and Fire Safety Information Booklets “Fire safety for people with sight, hearing or mobility difficulties” and “Fire prevention handbook” (downloadable) are available on the website.
www.essex-fire.gov.uk

To arrange a free home fire safety visit call 0845 601 2495 or email webmaster@essex-fire.gov.uk.
Guidestar UK - website giving information on large national charities as well as smaller local charities
www.guidestar.org.uk
Email: info@guidestar.org.uk  Tel: 020 7831 0660

Highway Code

Independent Living
www.independantliving.co.uk

Motability Scheme
The Motability powered wheelchair and scooter scheme: Your complete guide - Scheme enables disabled people to use their government-funded mobility allowances to obtain a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter.
www.motability.co.uk
Tel: 0845 456 4566 for Car Scheme
Minicom: 0845 675 0009
Wheelchair and Scooter Scheme: 0845 60 762 60
Older and Wiser - road safety advice for older people (Booklet)
Valuing Older People - Manchester
Joint Health unit
Chief Executive’s Department
Room 4042, 4th Floor
Town Hall Extension
Manchester M60 2LA

Tel: 0161 234 5000
Fax: 0161 234 3269
Email: vop@manchester.gov.uk
**Ricability (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs)**
An independent research charity that carries out research to provide consumer information for disabled and older people.
[www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk)
Tel: 020 7427 2460
Minicom: 020 7427 2469
Email: mail@ricability.org.uk

**RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)**
[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)
Tel: 0121 248 2000
Email: help@rospa.com

**The Waste Book**
A free guide to recycling and sustainable waste management in London and South East England. The medical section lists organisations that hire, buy and sell used scooters. Also has details of charities that recycle equipment.
[www.wastebook.org](http://www.wastebook.org)
Email: info@wastebook.org
Please contact us for more information
Write or visit us at South Essex Homes, Cheviot House, 70 Baxter Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6HZ
Telephone us on freephone 0800 833 160
Email us customerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk
Visit our website www.southessexhomes.co.uk