



## Guidance for the private purchase of mobility scooters



*South Essex Homes – Keeping you informed*

[www.southessexhomes.co.uk](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk) 0800 833 160

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## ***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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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?
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- 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 of factsheets including No.26 Public Transport and Concessions, No.42 Disability equipment and how to get it.

[www.ageuk.org.uk/](http://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](mailto:bhta@bhta.com)

[www.bhta.com](http://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](http://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](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

**Department for Work and Pensions**

Disability Discrimination Act Factsheet

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.dlf.org.uk) Helpline 0845 130 9177

Email: [advice@dlf.org.uk](mailto:advice@dlf.org.uk)

## **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**

[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://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](http://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](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

To arrange a free home fire safety visit call 0845 601 2495 or email [webmaster@essex-fire.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@essex-fire.gov.uk).

**Guidestar UK - website giving information on large national charities as well as smaller local charities**

[www.guidestar.org.uk](http://www.guidestar.org.uk)

Email: [info@guidestar.org.uk](mailto:info@guidestar.org.uk) Tel: 020 7831 0660

**Highway Code**

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/HighwayCode/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/HighwayCode/index.htm)

**Independent Living**

[www.independantliving.co.uk](http://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](http://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, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Town Hall Extension  
Manchester M60 2LA

Tel: 0161 234 5000

Fax: 0161 234 3269

Email: [vop@manchester.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:info@wastebook.org)

**Bengali**

যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষায় এই ডকুমেন্টটির একটি কপি পেতে চান অথবা যদি আপনি আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন। আমাদের টেলিফোন অনুবাদক আছেন যারা আপনার প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিতে পারবেন।

**Albanian**

Nëse dëshironi një kopje të këtij dokumenti në gjuhën tuaj ose nëse dëshironi të na kontaktoni, ju lutemi telefononi në numrin e mëposhtëm. Ne kemi përkthyes nëpërmjet telefonit të cilët mund t'iu përgjigjen pyetjeve tuaja.

**Gujarati**

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી પહેલી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય, અથવા જો તમારે અમારો સંપર્ક સાધવો હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર ઉપર કોલ કરો. અમારી પાસે અનુવાદકો છે, જે તમારા પ્રશ્નોના જવાબ ઘન ઉપર આપી શકે છે.

**Cantonese**

如果你想要一份中文譯本，請撥打以下號碼與我們聯絡。我們有翻譯人員透過電話來解答你的提問。

**French**

Si vous souhaitez obtenir une copie de ce document dans votre langue maternelle ou si vous souhaitez nous contacter, veuillez téléphoner au numéro indiqué ci-dessous. Nous avons des traducteurs qui peuvent répondre au téléphone à vos questions.



**0800 833 160**

This document is also available in large print, on audio tape or CD, Braille or on CD rom. Please contact the number above and this can be arranged for you.

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](mailto:customerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk)

**Visit our website** [www.southessexhomes.co.uk](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk)