

Basildon Council

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This Information Leaflet explains our policy on storing and charging motorised scooters in our sheltered housing schemes and general needs flat blocks.

Our aim

To promote safe storage of motorised scooters on our sheltered housing schemes and our general needs flat blocks to comply with Fire Regulations.

Fire safety

In order to comply with Fire Regulations, mobility scooters, motorised wheelchairs, buggies and other motorised mobility vehicles must not be stored in communal areas under any circumstances. This applies to tenants, leaseholders and their visitors who use such vehicles. Some sheltered housing schemes have limited storage facilities within the communal areas and only these designated areas can be used for scooter storage and charging. Not all general needs flat blocks have suitable external areas for the installation of scooter storage areas. We will carry out a thorough investigation and discuss with you all the options available. If you do not have suitable or adequate storage on the scheme or flat block, then you must store the scooter inside your home.



Background

Due to the widespread expansion in the use and availability of motorised scooters/buggies, their popularity is now beginning to create issues in premises which were not designed to accommodate such vehicles.

Finding secure storage and charging areas for these vehicles is particularly difficult in schemes and flat blocks with communal areas where safe access and fire safety is paramount. It is also important that these vehicles are not stored where they present a safety risk/nuisance to the user, other tenants, leaseholders, staff and visitors to the scheme or flat block.

Basildon Borough Council understands the benefits that these vehicles can provide and wishes to support all of our tenants and leaseholders to retain their independence as much as is possible. However, the safety of all tenants, leaseholders, staff and visitors is a priority.

This leaflet is intended to clarify how Basildon Borough Council can help accommodate mobility scooters without compromising fire safety.

Mobility scooters in Basildon Council sheltered housing schemes

Your Questions Answered...



Am I allowed to have a mobility scooter if I live in a Basildon Council sheltered housing scheme or flat block?

Yes you are, but there are important things to consider.

If you are not wishing to store in any of our communal areas, you do not need written permission as you are storing the scooter in your own home. You must not leave your scooter in any communal area where it can cause an obstruction to an escape route and therefore be considered a Health and Safety risk in that area. This also applies to any visitors you may have who are using a scooter or other motorised mobility vehicle.

What should I do if I want to purchase a motorised scooter?

Before purchasing your scooter you must check with the Sheltered Scheme Co-ordinator or the Tenancy and Estate Management team whether there is room within the communal storage facility or whether your home is suitable for storing your scooter without compromising your safety in the event of a fire.

We recommend that you test drive any scooter before purchase to make sure it meets your needs. Any good retailer will be happy for this to happen before you buy. You can also test drive a scooter to see how you get on by using the Basildon Shopmobility scheme available in the Eastgate Shopping Centre in Basildon town centre where you can hire a scooter. See further details of the scheme below.

Basildon Shopmobility Scheme

Visitors to the Eastgate Shopping Centre in Basildon town centre, who need help getting around, can hire electric and regular wheelchairs free of charge

Due to occasional high demand it is best to pre-book by phoning Shopmobility on 01268 533644 or 0800 454864.

The Shopmobility office is located on the Lower Galleries in Eastgate Shopping Centre, next to the car park.

To borrow chairs you will need two pieces of identification, one of which needs to show your address.

Shopmobility Opening hours

Monday to Saturday: 9:30am to 5:00pm

Sunday: 10:30am to 4:00pm

Is the scooter safe to store in my home?

We have taken advice from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and they have suggested the following:

- Never store scooter where it could obstruct your exit in the event of a fire in your home, i.e. in front of your main exit door
- Never leave plugged in to an electrical supply whilst you are not at home or overnight.
- Never charge your scooter for longer than the manufacturers' recommended time, normally this is no more than 4 hours, but you will need to check your instruction booklet for recommended charging times.
- Have your scooter regularly serviced and maintained.

NECESSARY ELECTRICAL PRECAUTIONS



If I use a Basildon Council storage facility, how much will it cost me and what is the criteria for obtaining a space?

If you cannot store your scooter in your home there may be a storage facility on the sheltered housing scheme where you live. The current weekly charge is £2.50. This does not include the cost of electricity, which is paid for by the user and accessed through an All Pay card. There are several retail outlets where you can top this up and more details are available from your Sheltered Scheme Coordinator. Please speak to your Scheme Coordinator about the availability of mobility scooter storage at your scheme as there may be a waiting list.

Am I allowed to drive my mobility scooter in the communal areas?

Yes. But you must restrict your speed to the slowest speed setting on your scooter and remain aware of other tenants, visitors and staff.

SPEED LIMITS IN COMMUNAL AREAS

Basildon Borough Council may charge for damage caused to lifts, walls, doors or other communal areas caused by scooters. The council is not responsible if a mobility scooter user causes injury to a person whilst using the scooter in a communal area. Mobility scooter users need to seek advice from their insurance company about suitable cover for injury to people or damaged caused to property.



What happens if my scooter cannot be stored in my home?

We advise you to, where possible, buy a scooter for your needs that can be easily accommodated. Some scooter providers may try to sell you something much bigger than you require. If you have a large scooter, you could trade it in for a smaller model. We recommend the collapsible models, which are the most suitable for storing inside a home and can easily fit in a car.

Do I need to insure my scooter if I need to use it in the communal areas?

Yes. You will need to make sure that your scooter is insured for public and third party liability cover and present your annual insurance certificate to a Scheme Co-ordinator if you live on a sheltered scheme or the Tenancy and Estate Management Team if you live in a general needs flat block. The Scheme Co-ordinator will keep a copy of the certificate. They can also give you details on the Council's competitive insurance scheme, which is ideal for those who would like to pay weekly with their rent.

Will my equipment need checking by the Council before I store it in their facility?

Yes, all scooter charging equipment will need a Portable Appliance Test before a scooter can be stored in a communal facility. The Council may also carry out periodic testing to ensure the charging equipment is still safe to use. If your equipment fails this test or subsequent tests, it is your responsibility to repair the equipment if you wish to still use the communal facility. These costs are included in your weekly service charge.

What do I do if I need some adaptations to my home to use my scooter?

Our staff can request an assessment of your needs to ensure that you can access your home with your scooter, and where possible, make the necessary adaptations to your home.

What happens if I won't comply with all of the above requirements?

The Council has to be very firm on this issue to ensure that the health and safety of our residents, staff and visitors is not put at risk.

Failure to comply with the requirements outlined in this leaflet will result in a breach of your tenancy conditions. This would result in you being asked to permanently remove your scooter from the scheme or flat block until you are able to comply with the necessary conditions.

