

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WIRRAL SHOPMOBILITY

What is Shopmobility?

Shopmobility is a scheme that loans manual and powered wheelchairs and powered scooters to members of the public who have limited mobility. This service has been running for over 30 years.

These can be used to visit facilities in the local area. Staff and volunteers will help you to decide what equipment to hire and ensure that you receive training to use it safely. On average people who hire mobility scooters from WIRED collectively spend over £140,000 a year in Birkenhead Town Centre



What training do we offer to all new scooter users?

At Wirral Shopmobility, we do a health and safety check with all new users.

This includes:

- Checking eye site
- Manual dexterity
- Spatial awareness

New users will also be required to complete a test drive which they are required to pass before being allowed to use a scooter.

How easy is it to learn to drive a mobility scooter?

Our mobility scooters are really simple and easy to drive.

The scooters only have two levers, one forward and one to reverse. They also have a speedometer so you can choose whichever speed you wish.

What happens if one of our scooters breaks down?

If a breakdown occurs we have our office number on all the scooters and it just takes a phone call. We take a replacement scooter to the user so they can continue their day

What are the different sizes of scooters that we have and what does each size work well for?

- **SMALL** - boot scooter these are small and compact and are able to collapse down to fit in a car boot, these can weight bare up to 114kg/17stone depending on the make (as the newer boot scooters can go up to 136kg/21st.
- **MEDIUM** - these scooters are the most popular, they don't collapse down but they can fit into a black cab, they can weight bare up to 160kg/ 25stone.
- **LARGE/ROAD** - these are the largest class of scooters (class 3) these need to be registered with the DVLA (free of charge) and can safely go on the road, these weight bare up to 204kg/28st

What repairs can we do?

We can do all aspects of repair from the basic electrical repairs to body cosmetic work, we do full servicing of the scooter including lights, seat, brakes, batteries and give a good clean down

Why is it important to get your mobility scooter services and what we offer?

Scooters are like cars if you look after them then they will look after you, regular servicing keep everything working as it should and can prolong the scooter life as well as users independence. We offer a health check for batteries, full service and service & repair

SCOOTER SPECIFICATIONS

Are there different types of mobility scooters?

Yes, mobility scooters come in various types to suit different needs. Some common types include:

- **Travel & "Car Boot" scooters:** Lightweight and easily portable, ideal for short trips and easy storage.
- **3-Wheel Scooters:** Provide better maneuverability in tight spaces and indoor settings.
- **4-Wheel Scooters:** Offer more stability and are better suited for outdoor use and uneven terrain.
- **Heavy-Duty Scooters:** Designed for individuals with higher weight capacities and extended battery life.
- **All-Terrain Scooters:** Equipped with larger wheels and rugged construction for rough or uneven surfaces.

What is a 'car boot' scooter?

A car boot scooter refers to a compact and portable mobility scooter designed to conveniently fit into the boot of a car. Unlike larger, more cumbersome "Road Class" mobility devices that require dedicated storage, these ingeniously designed lightweight scooters prove to be a practical and space-saving solution.

What is the free wheel lever on my scooter?

The free wheel lever disengages the brake and therefore allows you to push the scooter, it's important to remember that if the scooter is switched on whilst in freewheel, it will not operate. This will be solved by turning the scooter off, engaging the brake, and turning the scooter back on again. Freewheel levers are normally located at the rear of your scooter or by the motors of your powered wheelchair.

How fast can a mobility scooter go?

The speed of mobility scooters varies depending on the model and type. On average, most mobility scooters have a maximum speed of around 4 to 8mph. Some scooters may have adjustable speed settings for added control.

- **Class 2** mobility scooters are designed for use exclusively on footpaths and pavements, as well as for crossing roads. They cannot be used on the road (except where there is no pavement.) Their maximum speed is limited to 4 mph.
- **Class 3** mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs are the only permitted types for road usage. They can travel at a maximum speed of 4 mph when used off the road, and their speed increases to 8 mph when driven on the road. To qualify for road use, they must meet specific criteria, including a maximum unladen weight of 150 kg (or 200 kg when carrying essential user equipment, such as medical supplies) and a maximum width of 0.85 meters.

What is the Average Mobility Scooter Weight?

The typical weight of a mobility scooter varies depending on the type, size, brand and model. Smaller, portable scooters typically weigh between 42kg - 100kg (92-220lbs), while larger, heavy-duty models can weigh up to 136kg (300lbs) or more. Always verify the weight capacity of a scooter before purchasing to ensure it caters to individual needs.

Several factors can affect the weight of a mobility scooter. These include:

- **Battery size:** Larger batteries can add significant weight to a scooter.
- **Motor power:** More powerful motors may require larger batteries, which can add to the weight of the scooter.
- **Frame material:** The material used to construct the scooter's frame can affect its weight. For example, aluminium frames are typically lighter than steel frames.
- **Accessories:** Additional accessories, such as baskets or cup holders, can add to the weight of the scooter.

What weight can a mobility scooter hold?

The maximum weight of a lightweight mobility scooter can vary depending on the model and brand. The maximum weight on a standard mobility scooter typically ranges from 110kg- 147kg (17st-23st), while heavy-duty models can accommodate users up to 204kg (28st) or more. Please check the weight bearing limit on the scooter.

Can I carry a passenger on my mobility scooter?

No. Mobility scooters are generally made to carry one person only. While there may be room to easily have a small child ride along with you, it is not recommended. The additional weight can make the scooter unstable or cause it to drain the battery at a faster pace.

Where am I allowed to ride my mobility scooter?

You can ride a Class 3 scooter on the road, however, Class 2 scooters are NOT allowed on the road. Always be aware of your surroundings, especially in a busy area. You can ride your scooter inside shops providing there is enough room to easily move around.

Can I use a mobility scooter indoors?

Yes, many mobility scooters are designed for indoor use. 3-wheel scooters are especially well-suited for manoeuvring through tight spaces in homes, shopping centres, and other indoor environments.

Can I ride the mobility scooter in the street?

Mobility scooters are allowed on footpaths and sidewalks. Mobility scooters are also allowed on roadways when there is no other available option to reach your destination.

How fast am I allowed to go on pavements on my mobility scooter?

Regardless of what type of mobility scooter you have, you should always limit the speed to 4mph or slower when on the pavement.

It's illegal to travel at more than 4mph on the pavement.

Are there any rules for driving on the pavement?

When it comes to driving on the pavement, you cannot go faster than 4mph, and any mobility scooter with a 8mph speed should be put into low range. You need to be attentive on pavements, as you are below most pedestrian's eye level, and pedestrians have right of way. You cannot take mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs on cycle paths that are marked as cycle only.

Am I allowed to drive my scooter on the road?

Only a Class 3 mobility scooter that can travel at 8mph can legally travel on the road. This will need to be registered with the DVLA and have fully functioning lights, indicators and wing mirrors.

Are you allowed on motorways or dual carriageways with a mobility scooter?

You are not allowed to drive your mobility scooter on motorways. You may drive your mobility scooter when using a dual carriageway, but you must have a flashing orange beacon. Class 3 scooters are equipped with indicators, lights, mirrors, and a horn for use on the road. It is important that users stay in line with the rules of the road and only drive their scooters where they feel confident and safe.

Can I use my mobility scooter at the park?

Bike paths and paved hiking paths that are accessible and safe are recommended when going to the park. The type of terrain your particular mobility scooter is able to endure depends on the instructions located in the owner's manual. Always adhere to posted restrictions to prevent injury or a hazardous situation.

Can I use my mobility scooter in all weather conditions?

Mobility scooters are designed to be used outdoors. Various weather conditions such as heavy rain can be hazardous to the electrical components of your mobility scooter, especially when driving through large amounts of water. During snowy conditions most mobility scooters are designed to handle light snowfall. However, any snowfall that is deeper than a light dusting will most likely cause your mobility scooter to lose traction.

Do parking restrictions apply to mobility scooters?

Parking can vary carpark to carpark and regarding different local authorities. Make sure to check signs in carparks and other information available, to avoid penalties. The majority of carparks will have charges for scooters, as they cannot be left on a footpath or in the way of pedestrians.

Can I take the mobility scooter on an airplane?

Yes. Generally you will need to use a Gel cell battery when traveling on an airplane with your mobility scooter. Individual airlines have specific regulations, it is recommended you contact the airlines directly to learn of more detailed requirements.

Make sure you double-check with your tour operator or airline before booking your flight and inform the airline that you will be bringing your scooter before travelling.

SCOOTER TRAVEL

Can I take my scooter on public transport?

Yes. Many transport networks are becoming more accessible.

Before starting your journey, check with operators to see if your scooter meets the requirements for the bus, tram, or train.

How do I transport my mobility scooter or electric powered wheelchair?

Mobility scooter and powerchair users usually have no problem travelling by public transportation, but it is important to follow these points when travelling:

- Look into the operator's policies on how to travel safely with your scooter or wheelchair before travelling.
- Check your chair fits the right requirements and isn't too large (taking up more than 700mm wide or 1200mm long when you aren't sitting in it).
- Take care when boarding and disembarking, and make sure your chair's kerb climbers are set so that they don't catch on the ramp.
- You must ensure that your scooter or wheelchair is in a safe condition to travel.
- The chair must be correctly maintained, have properly inflated tyres, and not be overloaded with bags on the back (which could cause it to tip over backwards on a ramp).
- A powered chair must also have a secure battery.

Transport operators may refuse to allow you to travel if they believe that your wheelchair is not in a safe condition.

BATTERIES

Does a mobility scooter need a battery?

Yes. Generally mobility scooters require batteries and need to be charged on a daily basis depending on usage.

How much will it cost to charge my scooter?

On average a mobility scooter should cost roughly 23p to recharge. Annually, the average cost is expected to be £40 per year.

How long does a fully charged mobility scooter battery last?

Generally, you'll be able to go between between 10 to 12 hours on a full charge. This means you can use your scooter for short and long trips without needing to worry about plugging it in.

How far can a mobility scooter go on a full charge?

The range of a mobility scooter can vary widely depending on factors like the scooter's model, battery capacity, terrain, and user weight. Generally, most mobility scooters offer a range of 15-20 miles on a full charge, making them suitable for short to medium-distance trips. It also helps to reduce your use of the throttle when you can, as this will help your battery last longer. However, under rough road conditions, it could be as low as 5 miles, whereas the maximum you might be able to get under perfect conditions could be as high as 40 miles.

What is the average battery life of a mobility scooter?

Although most manufacturers generally offer a 12-month warranty on batteries, mobility scooter batteries should deliver an average lifespan of up to 18 months depending on usage. Sporadic charging and allowing the battery to become completely depleted will shorten the life span of the battery. In a 'light' mobility application, such as using your scooter once or twice a week, the battery can deliver up to three years lifespan.

How long do I need to charge my battery?

We normally recommend an 8-10 hour charge after every use, regardless of how long the batteries were used for. The only time this would be different is if you were to have a lithium-ion battery, in which case, just like a phone, you need to run the battery down before charging rather than topping it up.

How often should I charge my mobility scooter?

Many dealers recommend you charge your scooter after each trip as well as overnight, and to never let the battery get fully discharged. If you are not a regular user, charging it after use or once a month is sufficient.

Can I overcharge my mobility scooter?

Charging your battery overnight is fine - you cannot overcharge the battery. Try to allow a complete full charging cycle of 12 hours once a week.

Does the mobility scooter battery release dangerous gases indoors?

Many dealers recommend you charge your scooter after each trip as well as overnight, and to never let the battery get fully discharged. If you are not a regular user, charging it after use or once a month is sufficient.

INSURANCE AND REGISTRATION

What qualifies me to use a mobility scooter?

You can only drive a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair if you; have trouble walking due to injury, physical disability or medical condition; are training a disabled user; are taking the vehicle to or from maintenance; are test driving the vehicle.

Do I need to test drive a mobility scooter?

You are not required to pass a test before using a mobility scooter, though if you have not driven before, or not driven for a while, the dealer should spend time ensuring you know how to use the scooter in a safe way

Do I need a driver's license to operate a mobility scooter?

No license is required to operate a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair in the UK, but registration may be necessary in some cases. However, it's important to note that only specific types of mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs are allowed to be driven on the road (see Class 3 above.)

Do I require an eyesight check for driving a mobility scooter?

Though there is no legal eyesight requirement for driving mobility scooters, you should be able to read a car registration from a distance of 12.3metres or 40 feet. If you are in accident that was caused by your poor eyesight, you may have to pay compensation.

Is there a Highway Code relating to mobility scooters?

As some mobility scooters can be taken on roads, there is a Highway Code based around this issue, provided by the British Healthcare Traders Association.

Do I need to register my mobility scooter with the DVLA?

Class 3 mobility scooters (between 4mph to 8mph) need to be registered with the DVLA; this is a legal requirement. It is free to do this, and you'll be given a registration number. You are not required to show this on your vehicle.

DVLA registration can be done by filling in the V55/4 or V55/5 form which is available online.

Does my mobility scooter need insurance?

Insurance is not a legal requirement, but it is always recommended to ensure your mobility scooter whether it is a lightweight travel scooter or a large 8mph scooter. Insurance is compulsory for any scooter that is road legal.

In some cases, mobility scooters might be covered by home insurance, particularly if they are deemed medically necessary. However, coverage can vary depending on your insurance provider. You must contact your insurance company to inquire about coverage options.

I've had an accident on my mobility scooter. Do I have to report it?

If you've had an accident which has damaged another person or property, you must report it to the police within 48 hours. Failure to do so can result in a fine. Its recommended that you always travel slowly in public areas. Gauge the speed of everyone around you and ensure you aren't travelling too fast. You also shouldn't operate your scooter if you've been drinking alcohol.

MAINTENANCE

How can I clean my mobility scooter?

Use a soft cloth to wipe down your scooter. You can use mild disinfectant wipes on the seat but never use bleach or any harsh chemicals as this can damage the scooter. Be careful whilst you're cleaning and don't get any electrical components wet. It's a good idea to keep your scooter covered whilst not in use.

Does my mobility scooter need maintenance?

We strongly advise getting your mobility scooter serviced annually. Regular servicing ensures that you won't have to be concerned about unforeseen breakdowns or repairs, allowing you to focus solely on enjoying your journey with peace of mind.

General maintenance includes tire inspection, overall cleaning, and battery maintenance, making sure the lights work and replacing parts when needed.

How do I maintain and care for my mobility scooter?

Proper maintenance is essential to keep your mobility scooter running smoothly. Some basic maintenance tips include:

- Regularly charging the batteries.
- Keeping the tires inflated and checking for wear.
- Cleaning the scooter and ensuring all components are free from debris.
- Periodically inspecting the brakes, lights, and other safety features.
- Storing the scooter in a dry and safe location when not in use.

Should I keep a maintenance log?

Yes. Keeping a maintenance log for your mobility scooter is highly recommended. Some owner's manuals provide a small booklet for this purpose. You can also create your own maintenance log by using a standard spiral notebook dedicated to all service and repairs done to your mobility scooter. You will want to note the date, technician and service provided for each entry. You will also want to jot down any future service recommendations offered by the professional technician.

TROUBLESHOOTING

What do I do if my scooter doesn't move with the key switched on?

Use a soft cloth to wipe down your scooter. You can use mild disinfectant wipes on the seat but never use bleach or any harsh chemicals as this can damage the scooter. Be careful whilst you're cleaning and don't get any electrical components wet. It's a good idea to keep your scooter covered whilst not in use.

- Make sure that there is sufficient power in the batteries and ensure that the charging cable is not connected to the charging socket when in use.
- Free wheel lever is engaged - Check that the free-wheel lever has not been activated. If the scooter has recently been in free-wheel mode, ensure that the lever has been fully re-engaged.
- The key switch may be broken

Why does my Scooter have reduced power, limited speed and range?

Ensure that you charge the batteries for a sufficient period of time to ensure that the batteries are at full capacity. If your scooter still doesn't operate as expected then one of the following issues might be your problem.

- One or both batteries need replacement.
- The battery charger might be faulty; therefore the batteries are not receiving a full charge.
- The cable connectors are not making proper contact.
- Connections at the battery terminals may be corroded.
- The circuit breaker may have tripped or the battery charger fuse has blown.

Why does my Scooter have reduced/no power in forward or reverse?

There may be a few reasons for experiencing no power or reduced power on your scooter whilst driving forward or reversing.

- The throttle control lever may have slipped on the potentiometer shaft and is not fully rotating.
- The throttle or speed potentiometer is broken.
- The throttle lever is not centered on the potentiometer shaft.
- The acceleration settings in the controller may need re-setting (digital controllers only).
- The motor may not be receiving full voltage, or the motor may be damaged.

Why am I experiencing erratic throttle control and my Scooter hesitates whilst in forward or reverse?

- If you are experiencing erratic throttle control, your scooter may have a faulty throttle potentiometer.
- The connection to your motor may be loose.
- The battery terminal connection may be loose or corroded.
- The carbon brushes or brush springs in the motor may be worn.

Why does the horn sound when I apply the throttle?

If your horn sounds whilst applying the throttle, you may be experiencing one of the following issues:

- Low battery voltage
- A fault in the tiller head
- Some moisture in the tiller head
- Still plugged into the charger
- Freewheel lever is engaged

What causes my Scooter to suddenly stop while in motion and engage the brakes immediately?

If your scooter suddenly stops, you may be experiencing one of the following issues:

- A broken contact at the key switch.
- The circuit breaker may have tripped.
- The connection in the loom assembly has broken.
- The fuse in the tiller head has blown.
- Lost connection to relay or the relay has broken.

What is causing my Scooter to brake slowly and slip on slopes?

If your scooter is experiencing reduced braking power, one of the following is most likely to be the issue:

- The brake has worn.
- The brake spring has worn.
- The deceleration setting needs adjusting (digital controllers only).
- The throttle control potentiometer is not centred.

Why is there excessive noise coming from my Scooter's transaxle/gearbox?

If you hear excessive noise from the transaxle/gearbox, you may be experiencing one of the following issues:

- The gear lubricant is not reaching parts of the transaxle.
- The wheel axle bearings have been contaminated or worn.
- There is a bad mounting between the motor and the gearbox.

Why does my Scooter pull to one side?

If you feel that your scooter is pulling to one side, you may be experiencing one of the following issues:

- There is uneven tyre pressure in one of the front wheels
- There has been excessive wear on one of the front tyres
- The front wheels are out of alignment
- The ball joints have been worn or excessive play in the steering linkage
- The wheel bearings have been worn

What should I do if my Scooter's batteries aren't charging/holding charge?

If you experience any problems whilst charging your scooter's batteries (whether they don't charge at all or they don't hold the charge), you may be experiencing one of the following issues:

- The battery voltage is too low.
- Your charging cable is faulty.
- The charger is not working.
- The charging circuitry within the main controller is faulty.

BUYING A SCOOTER

Remember, when buying a mobility scooter, take your time to research and choose the one that best fits your needs and lifestyle. It's also a good idea to test-drive different mobility scooters, to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

Consider hiring various types of scooters to find the one most suitable for you.

What should I consider when buying a mobility scooter?

- **Intended Use:** Determine if you'll mainly use it indoors, outdoors, or both.
- **Type and Size:** Choose between travel, 3-wheel, 4-wheel, or heavy-duty scooters based on your needs.
- **Weight Capacity:** Ensure the scooter's weight capacity exceeds your own weight.
- **Battery Life:** Consider the range offered by the scooter on a single charge.
- **Comfort and Adjustability:** Check the seat's comfort, backrest, and adjustability features.
- **Maneuverability:** Test the scooter's turning radius, especially if you'll be using it in tight spaces.
- **Safety Features:** Look for features like lights, reflectors, and safety belts.
- **Portability:** If you need to transport the scooter frequently, consider its weight and disassembly features.