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metroSTOR Webinar Summary and Transcript

E-Mobility Fire Risk

What Does Reasonable Action Look Like for Social Housing Providers?
03.06.26

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metroSTOR Webinar Summary

This session explored the growing fire risk associated with e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters and other lithium-ion powered devices in residential buildings, and what housing providers can reasonably do to reduce that risk.

The discussion brought together Pete Apps, journalist and contributor to Inside Housing, and Nick Coombe from London Fire Brigade, alongside questions and contributions from housing professionals.

Several polls were conducted to assess the scale of the risk and the steps landlords are taking in response, the results of which are appended to this report.

The central message was clear:

Housing providers cannot eliminate every e-mobility fire risk, but they can take reasonable, proportionate and defensible steps to understand and reduce it.

Our discussion centred on this framework: **Educate → Locate → Assess → Mitigate**

1. Educate

Make residents, staff and contractors aware of the risk - housing providers should focus on clear, repeated and practical education.

Key actions:

- Provide simple, visual resident guidance on e-bike, e-scooter and mobility scooter fire risks
- Reinforce safe charging messages regularly, not as a one-off leaflet
- Use local examples where possible
- Consider co-branded communications with the fire service
- Train housing officers, caretakers, repairs teams and contractors to spot obvious risks

Important messages for residents:

- Use manufacturer-approved chargers
- Avoid charging overnight where possible
- Do not charge near escape routes or flat entrance doors
- Do not use damaged, swollen or modified batteries
- Do not overload sockets or rely on poor-quality extension leads
- Get devices checked after crashes, drops or visible damage

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2. Locate

Understand where devices are being stored and charged - many landlords do not yet have a clear picture of where e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters are being stored or charged across their stock.

Key actions:

- Identify residents with e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- Record where devices are stored and charged
- Prioritise high-rise blocks, buildings with known fire safety issues, overcrowded homes and schemes with vulnerable residents
- Ask staff and contractors to report devices seen during visits
- Consider anonymous reporting routes for residents
- Add device location prompts to tenancy visits, estate inspections and fire safety reviews

Locating devices should not be treated only as enforcement. It should be part of a wider resident safety conversation.

3. Assess

Distinguish between lower-risk and higher-risk situations - housing providers need to assess the actual risk created by the device, battery condition, charger, location, user dependency and building context.

Higher-risk indicators include:

- DIY conversion kits or multiple battery packs
- Batteries taped or strapped onto frames
- Exposed or damaged wiring
- Signs of impact damage
- Swelling, overheating or unusual smells
- Incompatible or cheap replacement chargers
- Charging in corridors, escape routes or near flat entrance doors
- Charging in overcrowded or cluttered homes

Lower-risk situations may include mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs that are properly supplied, serviced and charged in safer locations. Essential mobility aids need sensitive case-by-case assessment, especially where Equality Act considerations apply.

The chat also challenged over-reliance on PAT testing. PAT testing may only check the charger and should not be seen as a complete safety solution. A stronger approach combines charger checks, visual inspection, resident engagement and battery condition awareness.

4. Mitigate

Put proportionate controls in place once risks are understood - this does not mean every organisation must immediately install major infrastructure; many useful measures are low-cost and practical.

Possible measures include:

- Resident communications and staff training
- Visual inspection guidance and battery health checks
- Device registration in higher-risk buildings
- Removal or control of communal sockets in escape routes
- Lockable or timed sockets where appropriate
- Restrictions on charging in corridors and stairwells
- Safer internal charging locations where devices must remain in flats
- External storage or charging where risk justifies it
- Fire-safe battery lockers for removable batteries
- Exploring temperature or gas/off-gassing monitoring in higher-risk situations

Fire doors, smoke detection and compartmentation remain important, but should not be assumed to fully address lithium-ion thermal runaway risk. These fires can escalate rapidly and compromise escape routes before conventional assumptions about evacuation time apply.

Key Takeaways for Housing Managers

E-mobility fire risk is now a mainstream housing safety issue

Incidents are increasing and the consequences can extend beyond the resident who owns the device. This is no longer simply a product safety issue but a housing management and resident safety issue.

Focus on risk reduction, not blanket bans

Blanket bans were widely viewed as difficult to enforce and may simply push charging into less visible and potentially higher-risk locations. A more effective approach is to identify and manage higher-risk devices, behaviours and locations.

Prioritise visibility

Many organisations still do not know where e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters are being stored and charged. Understanding where risks sit within the stock is a critical first step.

Assess risk proportionately

Not all devices present the same level of risk. Factors such as battery condition, modifications, charging practices, location and building type should all influence decision-making. Essential mobility aids require particular care, balancing fire safety with Equality Act considerations.

Consider a range of mitigation measures

Potential measures range from resident education and staff training through to battery health checks, charging restrictions in higher-risk locations, dedicated charging areas, battery lockers, monitoring technologies and external storage or charging solutions.

Be prepared to justify decisions

The key governance question raised during the session was:

If there were a serious incident tomorrow, what could you demonstrate you've done to understand and reduce the risk?

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metroSTOR Webinar Transcript

Nigel Deacon

Good morning everyone, and thank you for joining us for today's webinar: E-Mobility Fire Risk in Social Housing – What Does Reasonable Action Look Like?

E-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters and other lithium-ion powered devices are now a growing reality across residential buildings. The challenge for housing providers is that while these devices may be privately owned, the consequences of an incident can affect escape routes, neighbouring homes and the wider building.

Today's session is about one central question:

What does reasonable and proportionate action look like?

We are not here to be alarmist or to suggest blanket bans. We recognise the pressures housing providers are under - legal, financial, operational and equality-related.

We also want to explore the practical steps organisations can take to reduce risk, from resident education and staff awareness, through to identifying where devices are stored and charged, assessing higher-risk situations and introducing proportionate mitigation where needed.

We are joined today by **Pete Apps,** journalist and contributor to Inside Housing, and **Nick Coombe** from London Fire Brigade. Thank you both for agreeing to share your insights.

Pete is also gathering insight from the sector for an Inside Housing article on e-mobility fire risk, so throughout the session we'll be asking a few short poll questions. Please do take part. The aim is to build a clearer picture of where the sector is today.

Pete Apps

Thanks, Nigel, and thanks everyone for coming along. It's great to see so many people on the call, which reflects the seriousness of the issue.

I'm a journalist and have spent most of my career working at Inside Housing. I've written a lot about fire safety, particularly in the years since the Grenfell Tower fire. My expertise is in producing news articles and explaining big-picture trends, rather than the technical detail of lithium-ion battery fires or the trade-offs involved in managing fire risk in social housing.

What I can do is reflect on the overall picture.

One of my main observations is how fast the rise in e-bikes has been - and how quickly e-bike fires have become a serious fire safety issue. It is not long ago that seeing someone on an electric scooter felt like a novelty. Now they are everywhere. They are used by parents on the school run, people working in delivery and courier sectors, and many others.

They have brought benefits. They are greener than cars for short journeys, they help people access work, and they are relatively affordable. But they also bring a serious fire risk.

Not long ago, this appeared to be a future problem coming over the horizon. Now it is already here. It is

changing fire safety in the home environment right now.

That speed of change means many organisations may still be catching up. That is understandable, but the issue can no longer be treated as a future risk.

Looking at the data, the rise in e-bike fires over the last few years has been genuinely alarming. In London, incidents have risen from very small numbers in the late 2010s to 143 e-bike fires in 2024 alone. Nationally, there were 432 e-bike fires in 2025.

Since 2023, 15 people have died in e-bike fires and more than 100 have been injured.

These fires are different from many of the fire risks housing providers are used to managing. They develop rapidly, reach very high temperatures quickly, and can produce toxic vapour. The usual layers of protection may not work in the same way. A smoke alarm may activate too late if the fire has already developed rapidly. Even rapid fire brigade attendance may not be enough to prevent serious harm.

This is not simply a property protection or insurance issue. We are talking about a direct risk to life.

There is also a particular challenge for social housing. Insurers are seeing a bigger rise in incidents in social housing compared with other markets. There are obvious links with inequality. People on lower incomes may be more likely to use e-bikes for work, particularly in the gig economy. They may also be more likely to buy cheaper models, second-hand devices or conversion kits.

Social housing also includes a higher proportion of high-rise homes. If a fire develops rapidly in a high-rise flat, particularly near the entrance door, escape can become extremely difficult. Overcrowding can make that risk worse.

So this is a significant issue for the sector. It is a life safety risk not only for people who own e-bikes, but also for neighbours and other residents.

Blanket bans may sound attractive, but I do not think they are workable, and I am not sure they are desirable. E-bikes are now part of people's lives and livelihoods. The more important question is: how do we manage the risk?

Some landlords are already acting. Gentoo, for example, has focused on higher-risk buildings, working with the fire service and a local trusted e-bike engineer to visit residents, identify devices and offer free checks and maintenance. That approach gives tenants a reason to engage because it offers a benefit.

There is also a need to identify residents and buildings that are particularly at risk. That could include overcrowded homes, buildings with vulnerable residents, or buildings with unresolved fire safety issues.

Education matters too. Many residents may not realise these devices carry a significant fire risk. People plug them in like phones or laptops, without understanding the consequences if something goes wrong.

Staff and contractors also need to know what to look for: damaged batteries, charging in cluttered areas, extension leads, devices blocking escape routes, or signs of modification.

Safe outside storage is another option, although there are challenges around space, cost, security and resident trust.

The sector probably needs more shared guidance and best practice. But the key point is this: if you are not doing anything - or something that works for your organisation - then a strategy needs to be put in place.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you, Pete.

I've heard you speak before about the danger of hoping for the best. In the context of e-mobility, what would you expect to be scrutinised after a serious incident?

Pete Apps

If we look back at the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, housing managers were asked why they were not aware of certain risks. Those issues were in the media and being discussed in the sector, so it became difficult to explain why action had not been taken.

One email from the Inquiry stands out. There were serious problems with the smoke ventilation system at Grenfell Tower, and the landlord had been aware of them. When the head of health and safety was told it could take another year to resolve, the response was: "Let us hope our luck holds and there isn't a fire."

That phrase summed up a dangerous attitude: we know it is not safe, but there has not been a fire yet, so perhaps we will be fine.

That is not a way to plan for risk. Eventually, luck runs out.

Nigel Deacon

Do you think the sector could still be too focused on legal boundaries and legal requirements, and not enough on foreseeable harm?

Pete Apps

Yes, there is definitely a risk of that.

Housing providers have many compliance obligations. In this area, there may not be specific legislation beyond the broader fire safety responsibilities. Much of this risk originates inside residents' flats, which has traditionally been viewed as outside the landlord's direct fire safety responsibilities.

But this is killing people. As far as I can tell, e-bike fires are now one of the major drivers of fire deaths in social housing.

So yes, this may not be the latest compliance requirement or something the regulator is directly asking about. But if the aim is safer homes and fewer lives lost, it should be a priority.

There is a difference between asking, "What am I required to do for compliance?" and asking, "What is safe and necessary?" Those two questions are not always the same.

Nick Coombe

Thanks, Nigel. I'm Nick Coombe, Head of Service Improvement in London Fire Brigade's Prevention and Protection Department.

This topic sits across both protection and prevention. It is about protecting residents and also about the enforcement responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order, where the focus is on whether buildings are fit for purpose.

The key difference with these fires is speed. They can go from warmth or a little smoke to floor-to-ceiling flames extremely quickly. That is the thermal runaway process.

Normal assumptions about how long people have to escape may not apply. These fires can develop so quickly that a means of escape may be compromised before a smoke detector has even activated.

These devices are everywhere: phones, laptops, power banks, vapes, e-scooters, e-bikes. Vapes are also causing serious fires at waste sites because they are not being disposed of properly. We are not going to stop lithium-ion batteries being part of everyday life, so total bans are not the answer. The answer lies in practical solutions and education.

From our data, e-bikes are the major category. But one issue is determining whether the battery caused the fire or simply became involved in it. If a lithium-ion battery becomes involved in another fire, it can still enter thermal runaway and worsen the incident.

There are also wider social and economic issues. Some people rely on these bikes for their livelihood. They are often more worried about the bike being stolen than catching fire. Even when you explain the fire risk, they may still keep the bike in a bedroom because it is their asset and income source.

We are also seeing the rise of dark kitchens and delivery hubs, where riders gather or rest, sometimes in premises not designed for that type of use. That creates further risk.

The main causes we see include poor charging, DIY conversion kits and damage.

Poor charging includes overloading sockets and using cheap replacement chargers. DIY kits are a particular issue because people convert pedal bikes into electric bikes using parts bought online. These can be poorly installed or poor quality.

Damage is also important. Delivery riders may drop bikes, crash them or knock them over, then carry on using them. Internal battery damage may not be visible, but it can still lead to failure.

If a battery or e-bike has been involved in an accident, it should be checked. Just as a crash helmet should be replaced after an impact, a battery that has been dropped or damaged may no longer be safe.

So what are the solutions?

Blanket bans are not the answer. But there may be specific buildings or areas where charging in common parts simply cannot be allowed. That needs to come from risk assessment.

If you know a common area is small and charging there could block the only means of escape, you need to take action. That could include signage, removing sockets, or other controls.

Education is key. Tenants need to understand why it is dangerous and how to charge more safely. Collaboration with residents is essential. You may have to say no in some situations, but the starting point should be engagement.

There are also opportunities around maintenance checks and bike servicing. Fire and rescue services and housing providers can work together on this.

Looking forward, building design needs to catch up. Existing buildings were not designed for this risk. But future buildings should consider storage and charging of e-mobility devices from the outset. We should be designing out problems, not always retrofitting after the event.

The key point is that this risk is here to stay, and it will grow. We need better education, collaboration and practical management.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you, Nick.

A lot of the highest risks - conversion kits, modified devices, damaged batteries - may be identifiable through fairly simple visual checks if staff know what to look for. Do you think it is important not to overcomplicate this?

Nick Coombe

Yes. There will be obvious things people can see: batteries taped onto bikes, exposed wiring, visible damage and so on.

You cannot educate everyone, and people will still do what they do. But as a landlord or responsible person, you need to be able to say you did enough to reduce the risk.

Even if a total ban is not realistic, you need evidence, policies and documentation showing what you did. If an incident happens, you need to show the steps you took.

This is similar to historic issues in common parts, such as plants and carpets in corridors. Some organisations had zero tolerance policies; others had managed approaches. The issue is not whether every risk is removed, but whether you have an audit trail showing how you managed it.

Once you know something, you cannot unknow it.

Nigel Deacon

That is a really important point.

I want to frame the panel discussion around a simple process:
Educate. Locate. Assess. Mitigate.

First, education. What messages are most effective for residents and staff, and how do we avoid this becoming just another leaflet or poster nobody reads?

Pete?

Pete Apps

Lots of people do not read their post. That is true whether someone is a social housing tenant or not.

The communication needs to be clear and attention-grabbing. I do not mean alarmist, but if you have seen an image of an e-bike fire, you will not forget it quickly.

A standard letter on the same headed paper as every other landlord communication may not be enough. A leaflet with an image of an e-bike fire and a clear question like “Do you know the risks?” is more likely to get attention.

There is also a question about trusted messengers. Could the communication come from the fire brigade, or be co-branded with the fire service? A letter from London Fire Brigade may be read differently from another landlord letter.

The key is to put yourself in the resident’s position. What would make you pick up and read this communication?

Nick Coombe

I agree. It needs to be visual. Think about cigarette packaging. The images are uncomfortable, but they are memorable.

Also make it local. If there has been an e-bike fire in one of your buildings or nearby, say so. People often think, “It will never happen to me.” But if it happened in the block next door, that is more powerful.

And it must be regular. It cannot be one communication and then the job is done. Messages need to be repeated.

I fully appreciate housing providers have many demands on them now, but this is one of the risks that needs regular attention.

Nigel Deacon

Pete, you mentioned Gentoo and their approach of proactively visiting residents. Should landlords be doing more of that?

Pete Apps

Yes, where it is targeted and practical.

Gentoo focused on ten higher-risk buildings, so it was a manageable programme. If you have 100,000 homes, you may not be able to visit every resident. But if you know certain buildings carry greater risk, a targeted approach makes sense.

The other important point is that Gentoo offered something positive. It was not just enforcement. They offered checks and maintenance, which creates a benefit for the resident.

That is useful for external storage too. If residents feel they are taking on additional theft risk by storing a bike outside, what benefit can be offered? Cheaper charging? Maintenance checks? Better security?

People are more likely to engage if they get something in return.

Michael Roche

The risk sounds extremely high, and legislation appears to be far behind. Should e-bikes have to be registered, like mopeds, and checked annually?

There is also a separate issue around disability-related mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs. That need is not sufficiently supported or regulated either. Storage near multi-occupancy buildings is a real issue.

Pete Apps

From a national policy point of view, registration and checks may well be a good idea.

The most effective regulation would probably focus on shops converting bikes badly and poor-quality products entering the market. That could solve many more problems than individual landlords can.

But regulation moves slowly. The risk emerges, then regulators take time to design and implement a response. Housing providers will still need to deal with the risk in the meantime.

There is also an enforcement challenge. Some of this sits within the gig economy and informal work. Even if annual registration existed, some people may avoid it if it costs money or affects their income.

So yes, it may be useful, but it will not remove the need for landlords to manage the risk now.

Nigel Deacon

There is also the issue of vulnerable residents using mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs. We need to look at these case by case.

If a powered wheelchair is supplied under strict regulation and serviced regularly, the risk may be much lower than a visibly modified e-bike.

Nick, would you agree?

Nick Coombe

Yes. Mobility scooters are a useful comparison. There are many of them in society, but we are not seeing the same type of incidents as with modified e-bikes and scooters.

That may be because of who is using them, how they are charged and the fact they are not generally being converted in the same way.

There is no silver bullet. The aim should be to stop poor-quality products entering the market, improve checks and continue education. Over time, as the market matures, prices for safer products may fall, reducing the attraction of cheap conversion kits.

Nigel Deacon

On assessment, it seems important to distinguish between different levels of risk. Some risks may be lower than assumed, for example where a mobility scooter uses a lead-acid battery, is serviced regularly and is stored safely. Other risks are clearly higher, such as a modified e-bike charged in a hallway.

On mitigation, there are emerging options: posters, digital screens, device checks, monitoring battery temperature, safer charging spaces inside or outside buildings.

Pete, what are your views on what is effective?

Pete Apps

It is probably too early to say definitively what works best. Some measures have only been introduced recently, so the sector needs to share experience.

If an organisation introduces a strategy and sees a meaningful reduction in incidents, that learning should be shared.

What I would say again is that banning devices is unlikely to get the sector where it needs to be. It may not be legally straightforward, particularly inside flats, and may not engage with the reality of how residents use these devices.

Over time, the sector will work out which mitigations are effective. Inside Housing would certainly be interested in sharing that learning.

Nick Coombe

We should also look internationally, including at cities like New York, where similar issues are being addressed.

But solutions need to reflect our legal and housing context.

Technology may help. Temperature monitoring could provide earlier warning, although thermal runaway is a chemical reaction and once it reaches a certain point, it will continue. Detection may buy time, but it is not a complete solution.

Firefighting techniques are also improving. When electric vehicles first caught fire, we did not know how best to deal with them. We are learning, and technology will continue to evolve.

Patience Ohabuiro

We have had issues with Lime bikes being parked in communal areas. When I inspect, I do not know who owns them, and Lime does not always respond when contacted.

There is also a wider issue with residents who own e-bikes. It is hard to identify who has them. We are trying to collaborate between contractors, property safety teams and neighbourhood officers. If contractors see e-bikes during repairs, they should report them.

It is also becoming an anti-social behaviour issue. People congregate in corridors to charge bikes, smoke cannabis and abuse residents who challenge them.

How do we deal with bikes left in communal areas when we do not know who owns them?

Nigel Deacon

That is a really important point. Collaboration is critical. Tenants, staff, contractors and safety teams all need to understand what to report and how to escalate it.

I have also mentioned anonymous reporting lines for residents. If residents see what looks like a high-risk device in their building, they may not feel safe confronting someone directly, but they should be able to report it.

Nick?

Nick Coombe

We have not yet seen rental bikes like Lime come up as a major issue, but if people are experiencing it, please let us know.

If bikes are being left inside residential buildings, that is not where they are supposed to be. London Fire Brigade may be able to raise this with providers, particularly if it is becoming a wider issue.

Jan

Pete mentioned insurers being aware of the costs of e-bike fires. It strikes me that insurance may be one way of concentrating minds.

Rather than banning e-bikes, landlords could make clear to residents that if something goes wrong and their device causes damage, they may be charged for the cost.

Many social housing tenants may not have home insurance, but the financial implications should be made clear. Leaseholders who sublet should also consider this.

Trying to ban bikes through tenancy enforcement would not work. But the insurance issue is worth exploring.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you, Jan. That is a useful point.

We are close to time, so I will bring us to a close.

What I am taking from today is that e-mobility risk is no longer something housing providers can treat as marginal.

The challenge is that we cannot realistically eliminate every risk, and blanket bans are unlikely to work. But we can take reasonable and proportionate steps:

Educate residents and staff.
Locate where devices are being stored and charged.
Assess which situations carry the greatest risk.
Mitigate where needed.

For some organisations, that will mean better communication and staff awareness. For others, it may mean device checks, monitoring, safer charging locations or external storage.

The important point is that doing nothing - or not knowing where the risks sit - is becoming harder to defend.

Nick, what is the one thing you would like people to take away?

Nick Coombe

For me, it is education and collaboration.

Banning is not a realistic solution except perhaps in very specific high-risk circumstances. The key is education, collaboration with residents and understanding what is happening in your buildings.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you. Pete?

Pete Apps

A useful mental exercise is this:

Imagine one day you are standing in front of a coroner, or responding to questions from a journalist, because there has been an incident in one of your blocks.

The question will be: why did this happen, and what steps did you take to reduce the risk?

No one can prevent everything. But what answer would you give? Would it sound reasonable? Would people conclude that you did everything you reasonably could? Or would they ask why nothing was put in place?

If that thought worries you, then perhaps there is more to be done.

Nigel Deacon

That is a very good summary.

Thank you, Nick and Pete, and thank you to everyone who joined and contributed. We will review the chat and circulate considered responses where we can.

Thanks again, and have a fantastic day.

Further Questions and Themes from Chat

Insurance and recharging residents

Attendees asked whether landlords are making clear to residents that they may be recharged for damage caused by fires started by privately owned devices, and whether residents should be encouraged or required to hold insurance.

One example shared subsequently was Gloucester City Homes, where customers must ask permission to keep a mobility scooter and insurance forms part of that permission. The discussion highlighted that insurance and recharge policies may help focus attention, but applying them fairly will require case-by-case judgement, especially where residents have limited means, have lost possessions, or suffered injury.

Device testing, PAT testing and visual checks

Several questions focused on what a “device health check” should involve. Attendees noted that PAT testing generally only checks the charger and should not be seen as a complete answer.

A more holistic process may include PAT testing of chargers, visual checks of batteries and wiring, identifying damage or swelling, checking for obvious modifications, and using fire service or Electrical Safety First guidance. Some of the highest-risk factors such as damaged or modified devices may be visible through simple inspection if staff know what to look for.

Battery charging lockers

There was interest in fire-safe e-bike battery charging lockers and whether housing providers have trialled or are considering them.

The discussion suggested that lockers may form part of a mitigation strategy, particularly where removable batteries are common, but they should be treated as one element of a wider risk management approach rather than a complete solution.

Reliance on existing compartmentation

One attendee raised concern that colleagues may assume existing fire doors, smoke detection and compartmentation mean the risk is already managed.

The discussion highlighted that lithium-ion battery fires can escalate extremely quickly, with intense heat, projectiles and toxic vapour, so conventional fire safety measures remain important but should not be assumed to fully address thermal runaway risk.

Zero tolerance and blanket bans

A major theme was whether a zero-tolerance approach is workable. Several attendees noted that councils and landlords considering bans have struggled with enforcement, while others pointed out that blanket bans may drive devices into bedrooms, hidden areas or private flats, making risk harder to see and manage.

The stronger position appears to be distinguishing between essential mobility aids, compliant e-bikes, modified or damaged devices, and devices stored or charged in high-risk locations.

Product design and removable batteries

Questions were raised about what manufacturers and industry should be doing to make devices safer, including whether removable battery packs should be charged only in secure lockers.

The discussion recognised that product regulation and safer design are important, but legislation and market change are likely to take time, so housing providers still need practical approaches for devices already in use.

Communication materials

Attendees asked what educational campaigns and resources are available.

Joint landlord and fire service communications were highlighted as effective, with resources mentioned including London Fire Brigade's Charge Safe campaign, Battery Fire Safety resources, Electrical Safety First materials, Tower Hamlets Council guidance and relevant documentary content. Co-branded communications with fire services may carry more authority than landlord-only messaging.

https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/chargesafe-campaign/

https://batteryfiresafety.org/

https://youtu.be/-ag9wkef0Zk?si=xiVrBRFPC8QpfiE3

Sharing good practice

Several attendees asked for more detail on Gentoo's approach, including procedures and resident correspondence.

Contact details were shared in the chat for follow-up, reinforcing that the sector is actively looking for practical examples, templates and proven approaches.

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External storage and charging

There was strong discussion around whether landlords should provide fire-safe storage and charging remote from buildings. Attendees recognised that external storage can help design out risk, but also noted practical barriers including limited space, security concerns, competing use of external areas, funding constraints and accessibility requirements.

The core point is that external charging and storage may be appropriate for higher-risk situations, but provision must be secure, accessible and practical if residents are expected to use it.

Device registration and inspection

Attendees discussed whether devices should be registered or subject to annual checks, similar to an MOT.

Ideas included no-questions-asked technical checks, communal events with fire services and local authorities, inspections during tenancy sustainment visits, and registration of higher-risk devices. While formal policing of devices would be difficult, active engagement and inspection can still support the "locate and assess" stages of risk management.

Enforcement

One practical enforcement suggestion was that where scooter owners cannot be identified, landlords may be able to remove items from communal areas using existing local authority powers, with residents likely to make contact once they want the item returned.

The wider point is that enforcement tools may exist, but they need to sit within a clear and consistently applied policy.

Funding

One attendee from Scotland noted that major adaptation grant funding had been used to provide stores for mobility scooters, helping move fire risk outside the building. This suggests funding routes for mobility-related storage may exist and should be explored where residents rely on devices as essential aids.

Premises Information Boxes

A question was raised about whether it would help fire services if the known location of e-bikes or e-mobility devices was included in Premises Information Boxes. This may be worth exploring as part of building-specific risk information where higher-risk devices or charging locations are known.

POLL RESULTS

Have you seen an increase in e-mobility devices across your stock in the past 2-3 years?

Significant increase	51% (66)
Moderate increase	40% (52)
No noticeable increase	3% (5)
Not sure	3% (4)

How many e-bike or e-scooter fire incidents are you aware of in your properties since 2023/24?

None	25% (30)
1	11% (14)
2-5	29% (35)
More than 5	8% (10)
Don't know	24% (29)

Does your organisation have a formal policy covering e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters?

Yes, comprehensive	16% (20)
Yes, partial	33% (41)
In development	19% (23)
No	19% (23)
Don't know	11% (14)

How confident are you that your organisation knows where e-mobility devices are being stored and charged?

Very confident	4% (5)
Fairly confident	30% (37)
Not very confident	53% (64)
No clear visibility	11% (14)

Poll Results: Summary Conclusion

The poll results show a clear gap between rising exposure and organisational readiness.

Over 90% of respondents reported either a significant or moderate increase in e-mobility devices across their stock, confirming that this is now a mainstream housing management issue rather than an emerging concern.

At the same time, only 16% said their organisation has a comprehensive policy covering e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters. A further 33% have only a partial policy, while almost 4 in 10 either have no policy, one still in development, or do not know.

The most striking result is around visibility. Only 4% of respondents were very confident their organisation knows where e-mobility devices are being stored and charged, while 64% were either not very confident or had no clear visibility.

This reinforces the central theme of the session: Housing providers cannot manage a risk they cannot see.

While many organisations recognise the growth in e-mobility use, the sector appears to still be catching up in terms of policy, risk identification and practical mitigation.

The findings strongly support the need for a structured approach:

Educate → Locate → Assess → Mitigate

The immediate priority for many landlords is not necessarily major infrastructure investment, but gaining visibility: understanding where devices are, how they are being charged, and which situations present the highest risk.