

metroSTOR Webinar Summary and Transcript

Beyond Policy:

Practical Solutions for E-Mobility Risk

30.09.26

Webinar Summary pages **2-3**

Transcript pages **4**

Key Themes pages **14**

Catch up on all our previous Webinars [here](#)

metroSTOR Webinar **Summary**

The session moved the e-mobility conversation from awareness to practical risk management. The central message was that housing providers are unlikely to eliminate all lithium-ion battery risk, but they can take proportionate steps to understand where the risks sit and reduce them. The framework running through the session was Educate → Locate → Assess → Mitigate.

1. The sector increasingly recognises the risk, but visibility is still poor

Previous webinar polling showed that e-mobility devices are increasing rapidly across housing stock, while relatively few organisations have comprehensive policies or confidence that they know where devices are being stored and charged. The challenge is therefore not simply awareness, but knowing where the higher-risk devices are and what condition they are in.

2. Repeated storage in communal areas often signals a wider problem

If e-bikes, e-scooters or mobility devices repeatedly reappear in communal areas, repeated enforcement may not solve the underlying issue. It may indicate that residents lack suitable space or charging provision within their homes. The implication is that landlords may need to look at safer, workable alternatives, rather than relying on notices and prohibition alone.

3. The harder issue is the devices inside residents' homes

The webinar acknowledged the sensitivity around landlord responsibility and access to residents' flats, but reframed the question as: would housing providers rather know where potentially higher-risk batteries are, or not know? The emphasis was on voluntary engagement and resident benefit, rather than surveillance or overreach.

4. Battery assurance could help identify the highest-risk devices

BatteryIQ described an approach similar to a battery MOT or PAT test, using checks on condition, provenance, make/model and visible damage, with a tag linking the battery to its assessment record. The purpose is not to guarantee that a battery will remain safe forever, but to identify obviously higher-risk or untraceable devices and create better evidence about the batteries already in buildings.

5. Provenance matters

A recurring point was that a battery supported by a responsible UK organisation is easier to trace, recall and manage than a battery of unknown origin bought directly from an online marketplace. The webinar suggested that some batteries may simply be difficult or impossible to assure satisfactorily where provenance cannot be established.

6. E-scooters and modified devices present particular concern

E-scooters can contain relatively large batteries and are vulnerable to impact and water ingress. Modified e-bikes and DIY battery assemblies also create additional uncertainty. The focus, however, was kept on fire risk rather than wider road-legality issues.

7. Temperature monitoring is useful, but not a complete solution

Temperature monitoring may help identify batteries that are repeatedly getting unusually hot during charging, but the webinar stressed that it should not be relied on as a primary safety control. By the time a battery is visibly very hot externally, the internal temperature may already be significantly higher.

8. Resident engagement will determine how much visibility landlords achieve

The discussion recognised that some of the highest-risk users may also be the least likely to engage. The suggested approach is to make participation easy and beneficial: offer peace of mind, safer-use advice and potentially greater security, rather than presenting battery assessment purely as an enforcement measure.

9. Identifying a higher-risk device is only useful if there is an escalation route

One of the strongest practical themes was: what happens next if a device is deemed too risky to remain in a flat or communal area? The webinar highlighted the need for immediate safe storage pending further assessment, repair, battery replacement, device replacement or disposal.

10. External storage has two distinct roles

The discussion pointed to two potential uses for external provision: everyday managed storage/charging where residents lack suitable space, and temporary quarantine/storage for devices that have been identified as higher risk and need to be removed quickly from the building.

11. Mobility scooters need a different approach

Mobility scooters may be essential to residents' independence, so blanket restrictions are unlikely to be appropriate. The session emphasised the need to balance fire safety with accessibility and equality considerations, making safer charging and storage provision particularly important.

12. There is no single solution

The overall conclusion was that e-mobility risk will need a layered approach combining resident education, better visibility, battery assessment, monitoring where appropriate, safer charging practices, external storage and clear escalation procedures. The aim is not perfection; it is to demonstrate that reasonable, proportionate steps are being taken to reduce a known risk.

Catch up on all our previous Webinars [here](#)

metroSTOR Webinar **Edited Transcript**

Nigel Deacon

Morning, and thanks for joining us. This is the third in our series looking at e-mobility fire risk in residential buildings. We've been looking at the nature of the risk, some of the questions housing providers are asking, and what reasonable action looks like. Today we want to move that conversation on and look at what we can practically do to reduce risk around e-mobility and lithium-ion batteries. This isn't going to be a product presentation, and I'm not suggesting there are any silver-bullet solutions. We're going to work through some of the situations housing providers are actually encountering and look at some of the different interventions that are becoming available. I'm joined today by Nick Bailey from BatteryIQ. Nick, do you want to give us a brief introduction?

Nick Bailey

Hello everyone. I'm Nick Bailey, CEO of BatteryIQ. I created BatteryIQ as an initiative coming out of the e-bike industry. We work both on battery-safety technology and on the assurance programme we're going to talk about today. So we bring fairly deep expertise on the more technical side of batteries, and I'm very happy to be here alongside Nigel, who brings the estate-management perspective.

What do we know about the risk in our buildings?

Nigel Deacon

Just a brief reminder of some findings from one of our previous sessions. We found that 91% of attendees were seeing significant growth in e-mobility devices, 48% were aware of incidents in their buildings, only 16% had a comprehensive e-mobility policy, and just 4% were confident they knew where devices were being stored. So we've got a slightly uncomfortable position. We increasingly recognise the risks, but in many cases we don't actually know where that risk sits or what we should do to reduce it. The framework we're using is Educate, Locate, Assess, Mitigate. We need to continue making residents and staff more aware of the risks posed by lithium-ion batteries if they're poor quality, damaged, misused or approaching the end of their useful life. But in our view, we also need to get better at establishing where those batteries are in our buildings, what condition they're in, where they're being stored, and what risk they may pose to users, their families and their neighbours.

Scenario 1: Devices in communal areas

Let's start with something I suspect many of you will recognise. Let's assume you've got a policy saying that e-bikes and e-scooters shouldn't be stored in communal areas. You've communicated it, you've put notices up, and the devices keep appearing. So what is that actually telling us? Is it because there isn't enough room in the flats? Is it because residents haven't got anywhere else to store or charge them? And does repeated enforcement really address this? Or is repeated non-compliance telling us that we need to do something different? If that behaviour keeps returning, we probably need to understand why it's occurring and start looking for other, safer methods of storing devices. Because we all know this is unacceptable in communal areas. Those are the things we see every day when we're surveying and inspecting estates. But what about the devices we don't see?

Scenario 2: Devices inside residents' flats

That brings us to devices inside residents' flats. I can almost hear the keyboards tapping already saying, "That's not my responsibility." But I think there's a different question worth asking: would you rather know what potentially high-risk devices and batteries might be in your buildings, or not know? We know the challenges around access to flats and questions of responsibility. We're not trying to redraw that line today. What we're

saying is that there may be ways of assessing condition and assessing risk. And what we can say to residents is: "We could actually give you greater peace of mind by helping you understand what condition your device is in." That brings us to what Nick is going to talk about.

Battery assurance: identifying the highest-risk batteries

Nick Bailey

What we're effectively trying to create is an equivalent of PAT testing for batteries. What we want to do is get rid of the worst batteries from estates. Most batteries are fine. Even mid-level batteries that aren't particularly high quality generally aren't going to cause a problem. But what we've got to try to do is help tenants identify and get rid of the worst batteries. We also need to make it clear that this isn't simply about being a nanny state or telling people what devices they can use. It's about shared responsibility. If you have dangerous equipment in your flat, it can affect you, your family and your neighbours as well.

Why e-scooters and e-bikes present a particular concern

A really sad article came out a couple of days ago involving a family killed by a lithium-ion battery fire. At the time I hadn't been able to get much information, but it appeared likely to have involved an e-scooter rather than an e-bike. The BBC has since said that it was a scooter battery fire, which makes sense. E-scooters often contain very large batteries, usually positioned in the platform at the bottom of the scooter. They're low to the ground, they can be hit by kerbs, and they can be exposed to water ingress. So e-bikes are a concern, but e-scooters are a particular concern. The batteries can also be larger than those in e-bikes because all of the propulsion energy has to come from the battery. People sometimes ask me why we aren't focusing on laptops or phones. Apart from the fact that laptops tend to be better regulated, the size of an e-bike or e-scooter battery means it can set fire to things around it. If you have a scooter parked in a hallway, a battery fire may be sufficient to ignite skirting boards, carpets, curtains or nearby furnishings. That battery isn't simply going to sit there and smoulder in isolation. If there are combustible materials nearby, the fire can quickly move beyond the battery itself. Then you are no longer dealing with a battery incident. You're dealing with a wider building fire.

Low likelihood, potentially very high consequence

Generally, batteries are fine. But if they've been bashed over kerbs, if they've got wet, if they're DIY assemblies, or if they haven't been properly protected during manufacture, then you begin to create a potentially dangerous object. Often something else also has to go wrong, such as using an inappropriate charger. So you may have to do a number of things wrong before the battery catches fire. But when these batteries do fail, they can become very high-severity incidents. What we're looking at is often a low-likelihood but very high-impact risk. It's difficult to say we're going to capture everything and control everything. What we're trying to do is prevent some of the most severe incidents.

Thermal runaway

When batteries go into thermal runaway, they effectively have an oxygen source within the battery itself. So once the battery catches fire, the reaction can keep going. You can't simply put water on it and assume you've solved the problem. You can't necessarily suppress that fire in the same way you would deal with another type of fire. That is one of the reasons why lithium-ion battery incidents behave differently from the fires people are used to managing. And it's also why prevention and early identification become so important.

Why product regulation alone won't solve the existing problem

We are seeing initiatives from the mobility industry, and I'm very much in favour of stronger regulation and better checking at the point of sale. But the challenge is that we've already had several years of batteries entering the UK market, including poor-quality, imported and modified batteries. Those batteries are not suddenly going to disappear overnight. People are going to keep using them while they still have economic value. So even if product regulation improved significantly tomorrow, I don't think that alone would make an appreciable difference to incidents over the next few years. Most of the problem is already sitting within the existing installed base.

A battery "MOT"

What we're trying to do is effectively launch PAT testing for batteries and offer that as a service to landlords, tenants and manufacturers. We're building out a network of electricians and other testing professionals who can look at the battery presented to them and assess whether it appears compliant with the relevant standards. We can authenticate the battery as a known make and model against a database. We can check the physical condition of the battery to make sure it is not visibly damaged. And if there are useful measurements we can reasonably take from the battery, we would take those as well. The idea is that at the end of the process, the battery receives a radio tag linked back to the assessment. It becomes a little like an MOT for a car. Somebody could obviously damage that battery afterwards, drop it, modify it or misuse it. So we're not saying the battery is guaranteed safe forever. We're saying that at a certain date and time, that battery appeared compliant and appeared to have a responsible UK organisation behind it. That is still a meaningful improvement on knowing nothing about the battery at all.

Why provenance matters

Compliance is also about provenance. Our belief is that for a battery to be properly supported, there needs to be a responsible organisation behind it in the UK. We're increasingly seeing batteries coming in from AliExpress, Temu and other sources where the battery might conceivably be reputable, but there is nobody in the UK who is going to take responsibility for it. If there is a problem or recall, it may be very difficult for that information to reach the user or the landlord. So the view we're increasingly coming to is that some batteries imported directly from online marketplaces may simply be impossible to assure to the level we would want.

Modified devices

Someone in the chat mentioned adapted e-bikes. That's an interesting area, but we have to be careful not to make this broader than it needs to be. We're not trying to get into debates about how fast a bike should go, what is legal on the road, or exactly how somebody uses the bike. Our focus has to remain specific: reducing fires and getting dangerous batteries out of the marketplace. There is definitely a correlation between modified bikes and fire risk, but we don't want to tie ourselves in knots by trying to regulate everything at once.

Could battery assurance become compulsory?

My feeling is that if industry and landlords don't develop sensible ways of managing this themselves, something like battery assurance may eventually become compulsory. As this type of technology becomes available, insurers are also likely to ask more questions about what organisations are actually doing to mitigate battery-fire risk. You can't simply stand back and allow things to happen indefinitely. The expectation around reasonable control is likely to rise as practical controls become available.

How an estate-wide assessment could work

The way we're trying to design the assessment process is to make it as easy as possible for tenants to participate. Rather than asking people to send batteries away, the technician could come to the estate or building and

residents could attend a drop-in testing day. That makes the proposition much simpler: “We’re making it easy for you to have your battery checked so it can be safer for you and your family.” The frequency could vary depending on the size of the estate. Monthly is probably too frequent; quarterly or half-yearly might be more realistic. We’re also looking at whether bike shops could offer this kind of testing. At the moment, our view is that electricians are probably the most qualified people to deal with electrical items. Bike shops may not always have the right technical skillset for assessing batteries. But that’s something we’re continuing to look at.

Internal battery damage

There was also a good comparison in the chat with electric vehicles being written off after apparently minor impacts because assessors can’t confidently rule out battery-cell damage. Batteries are made up of lots of small cylindrical cells. They look a bit like AA batteries but are slightly bigger. They are quite tough, but if you hit them hard enough, they can dent. A dent in a metal cell can be bad for it and may affect the way that cell performs. The more advanced technology we are developing at BatteryIQ can detect some changes in battery performance. But that kind of technology is not going to be present in most of the batteries already owned by residents, so for now we still have to rely heavily on external condition and provenance.

Knowing what batteries are in the building

After assessment, the landlord potentially has a much better picture of what batteries are on the estate. We have radio scanners that can be positioned in parts of a building and detect registered batteries as they enter or leave. For example, you might have a scanner at the front entrance, and potentially more elsewhere depending on how much visibility you want. My feeling is that removable batteries from e-bikes will often still be taken into flats to charge, especially by delivery riders, so the focus really does need to be on the battery, not just the bike.

Building information and recalls

Those records could potentially integrate into wider building-information systems. You might have a list of registered users, a record of assessed batteries, information on which tagged batteries are currently believed to be in the building, and alerts when assessments expire. If a particular battery model is subsequently recalled by the manufacturer, that is information we could potentially pass on. So over time, the system becomes not just about inspection but about ongoing visibility and traceability.

Education versus intervention

There was a good comment in the chat about education. I actually avoided using that word in some of our early material because occasionally people react negatively to the idea of being “educated”. But it is the right word. Education will take people a certain distance. Residents need to understand safe charging, condition, damage and the consequences of misuse. What we’re trying to add is another layer beyond education, where there is some form of objective assessment and action on batteries that appear to present a greater risk.

Landlord overreach and privacy

We also know some tenants will see this as landlord overreach. They may say, “You’re trying to stop us doing what we want,” or “You’re trying to control what we use.” But this is not really about policing what people do. It is about working within a building and community so that one person’s equipment does not unnecessarily expose everybody else to serious risk. Everything that goes out to residents needs to be focused on that message. We are not trying to stop people using batteries; we are trying to establish a reasonable minimum level of safety. There will also be concerns about privacy and tracking. Whenever we talk about radio tagging, people immediately ask whether we are tracking where they go. That is not what this system is designed

to do. We have no intention of telling landlords where a battery goes once it leaves the estate. The relevant information is simply when that battery last pinged a scanner located within the landlord's property. That is the boundary we want to maintain.

Keeping costs down

We also want to reduce barriers by keeping the cost as low as possible. Our wider commercial interest is actually in battery technology itself. This assurance scheme is not something we are trying to turn into a high-margin commercial service. The majority of the cost is likely to go to the electrician or whoever physically carries out the assessment. There may also be safety funding available in some circumstances, although budgets are obviously very constrained.

Temperature monitoring

Nigel Deacon

Nick, tell us a bit more about the temperature-monitoring side of this. If the temperature on a battery starts to climb, can you see that as an indicator that the battery may be presenting a risk at some point in the future?

Nick Bailey

There are solutions being presented at the moment involving thermal cameras looking at batteries, particularly in bike stores. The challenge is that by the time the external temperature of a battery reaches around 60 degrees and becomes clearly visible on a thermal camera, the internal temperature may already be much higher. So temperature monitoring can definitely be part of a system, but I would not want anybody to rely on it as the main safety control. By the time you see a dramatic temperature increase, you may already be quite late in the process. What could be useful is identifying batteries that repeatedly get hotter than expected during normal charging. If a battery is regularly reaching 40 or 50 degrees during charging, that is information you may want to know. That type of information could potentially be fed back to landlords and residents. But again, it is another layer of control rather than a guarantee.

Resident engagement

Nigel Deacon

Brian has made another good point in the chat about relying on residents engaging. There's certainly a perception that some residents aren't particularly concerned about safety, but I suspect some of that is simply because they don't really understand the risk. We need to make them more aware of it. But I also think we need to sell them the benefits of participating. There could be peace of mind, there could be security benefits, and potentially even alerts if a device is moved unexpectedly.

Nick Bailey

I agree. There will be pushback from people who think they are already doing everything right. Everybody tends to think their e-bike or their e-scooter is the one that will never cause a problem. Unfortunately, the people involved in serious fires probably believed the same thing. I see it a bit like seat belts in cars. There was resistance at first because people thought they were being told what to do, but over time it became an accepted minimum standard. I suspect we are going to see the same sort of shift around lithium batteries. Not necessarily BatteryIQ specifically, but some form of assurance is likely to become normal over time. If you have a significant lithium battery within a shared block, it may eventually be expected that the battery meets some minimum standard. And if somebody buys something from a marketplace where there is no meaningful provenance or quality control, there may eventually be limits on whether that is acceptable within shared residential accommodation.

Illegal and non-compliant devices

Nigel Deacon

There's a question here about illegal devices. It's likely that those users may be the least willing to engage, yet they may also represent some of the highest risks. What can landlords realistically do about that?

Nick Bailey

It isn't possible for a landlord to also be the police force, the Department for Transport and every other regulator. There will always be people who refuse to engage. But the fact that you can't eliminate every risk doesn't mean you shouldn't try to reduce the risks you can influence. Every time there is a serious fire, there is potentially going to be a coroner's inquest, and people will ask what was done to reduce foreseeable risk. I think we have to try. I think an approach like this will reduce deaths. It won't eliminate every form of harm, and it won't reach every resident. But reducing harm is still the direction of travel we need.

Distinguishing higher-risk devices

Nigel Deacon

I agree. At the moment it's very difficult for a landlord to distinguish between devices that may be relatively low risk and those that may be high risk. Some things are obvious. You see something with extra batteries taped to the frame, wires hanging out, obvious modifications. We've all seen those. And to be honest, landlords should already be taking a stance on things that are clearly unsafe. But battery assurance gives us a mechanism to understand the less obvious cases and then take a proportionate response.

Nick Bailey

Yes. I think this needs to be thought of a little like storing petrol or compressed gas in an apartment. There are some things society eventually decides are simply not acceptable without controls. Lithium batteries are relatively new and they've been operating in a fairly Wild West environment. There hasn't been much pushback on owners doing extreme things with batteries, and I think what we are now seeing is a natural maturation of the way society manages the technology. You can have these devices. You can use batteries. But you need to respect the fact that they can be dangerous, and there need to be sensible controls around them. PAT testing doesn't remove every electrical risk, but it removes some of the worst problems. That's broadly the philosophy behind battery assurance too.

Government guidance and landlord responsibility

Nigel Deacon

James has asked what the latest guidance from central government is on landlord responsibility, especially for high-rise blocks. My feeling is that legislation and guidance are still behind the pace of technology and e-mobility. Would you agree?

Nick Bailey

Yes. We are talking to the Office for Product Safety and Standards, OPSS, which is working on several strands of battery safety. Government is trying, but there is only so much government can do directly. The part we potentially play is providing a practical tool that government itself isn't going to build and individual landlords probably can't build themselves. We sit somewhere between the two and try to provide a practical layer of assurance. My expectation is that something like BatteryIQ, or something that fulfils the same objectives, may eventually become the sort of approach government recommends. Going back to the question of landlord responsibility, I think you probably have to work backwards from what a coroner might ask after an incident. Were reasonable risk-management practices followed? Was there a policy? Was anything actually being done? Battery assurance is one potential risk-control measure within that broader picture.

Manufacturers, delivery companies and fire services

Nigel Deacon

There are also questions about manufacturers, delivery companies and organisations like Just Eat and Deliveroo. London Fire Brigade have already done some good work engaging those companies and their riders around safe charging and use. I'd certainly recommend housing providers engage with their own local fire and rescue teams too. They are usually very willing to support resident education and awareness.

Nick Bailey

We are talking to organisations in the delivery sector as well. There are complexities around what delivery platforms can require of riders because of employment-status issues. But there is another side to this, which is that a battery brought onto commercial premises can create risk for that premises too. My feeling is that once these types of assurance tools exist, minimum battery standards are likely to become more normal across both residential and commercial settings.

Electrical Safety First

Nigel Deacon

There's also a question about Electrical Safety First. I know you've had engagement with them previously.

Nick Bailey

Yes. We received an award from Electrical Safety First in 2024 when we were starting to develop the case for this. It's an interesting situation because public bodies and charities can't necessarily formally endorse an individual commercial organisation. At the same time, they are unlikely to launch this kind of assurance programme themselves. So we have to get on with developing something useful while also bringing the right public-interest stakeholders with us.

What does an assessment really prove?

Nigel Deacon

Another question says that testing only confirms the scooter is compliant on the day, so there is no guarantee on its safety afterwards. You touched on that earlier, but anything else to add?

Nick Bailey

Yes, that's absolutely true. But the assessment still creates a meaningful threshold. For us to say a device appears acceptable, we probably need to have established that it came through a legitimate route, has a responsible organisation behind it, shows no obvious evidence of damage, and appears to be functioning correctly. That is still a significant step up from having no information at all. Ultimately, I expect embedded battery diagnostics to become much better, but until then, this is a practical interim step.

Experience from housing teams

Brian Kennedy

I go out on visits and see scooters that people have bought at flea markets, boot fairs and similar places. There's no record of where they came from, how they've been maintained, or whether they're safe. As soon as you start asking about repair records, some people just switch off. With Lambeth, we're asking residents for repair records for electric vehicles and mobility scooters, and it can be a very hard battle to get people to engage. Some residents think they're going to get into trouble. For some it's the cost, which is why they bought the equipment second-hand in the first place. The people we're most worried about aren't necessarily the responsible people who will engage. They are the people who won't engage and don't really care. It feels like a Wild West situation, and until government comes in and creates more consistency, every landlord risks doing something different.

Nick Bailey

I completely agree. Although we came into this as a commercial organisation, our main commercial interest is actually in battery-safety technology inside batteries. This assurance work is almost a public-interest project. We believe it's a much bigger problem where we can have a positive impact without trying to turn it into a major profit centre. The government point is interesting because, from what I've learned over the last couple of years, government often wants to see something already launched before it supports it. But to launch something properly, stakeholders often want to know whether government is behind it. So you get into a chicken-and-egg situation. That's why pilots are important. If we can identify landlords who want to participate in pilots, then we can go back to OPSS and say: "Here are organisations interested in doing this. Does this pilot align with what you need? Would the results be useful?" We're not going to solve everything in one afternoon. But there are relatively low-risk things landlords can do now to help build the evidence base.

Indicative cost

There was also a question about cost. At the moment we're aiming for around £25 per year per item. That will depend heavily on scale because the main cost is electrician time. The radio tags themselves are relatively inexpensive, and the more devices you assess together, the more efficient the process becomes.

Battery bags and internal containment

Nigel Deacon

Let's talk about storage. That includes storage outside the building, and obviously we can share information about what we do at metroSTOR, but also ways of reducing risk where devices still need to remain inside residents' flats. You asked earlier to be reminded about battery bags.

Nick Bailey

Yes. Bags are a controversial topic in the battery industry. Some people absolutely love them, particularly people who sell them. Other people who have seen lithium-ion fires up close are much less convinced. For an e-scooter, you would effectively need to put the whole scooter in a bag, which would obviously have to be very large. With removable e-bike batteries, you can physically put the battery in a bag. But the real question is what that bag actually does once the battery enters serious thermal runaway. Most battery fires appear to happen during charging because energy is being introduced into the device. So you would need the battery inside the bag while charging, and the bag would have to manage whatever happened next. I don't think bags are necessarily a bad idea. I just don't know that they provide the level of protection people sometimes assume. And when people use terms like "flameproof", nothing is really flameproof indefinitely. The question is always: resistant for how long, and under what conditions?

metroSTOR thermal-runaway testing

Nigel Deacon

We've recently carried out our own test involving a mobility scooter inside one of our external lockers. It was a big battery and a severe thermal runaway event. The locker contained the fire event, but what really struck me was the volume of toxic and potentially explosive gases being produced. You could also see from the aftermath just how severe the fire had been inside. This is not a small fire. That's why I struggle with the idea that a simple bag is somehow the whole answer. We'll be sharing more information from that test. But the broader practical point is that if you identify a device that shouldn't remain inside the flat, you need to know where it goes next.

Nick Bailey

Mobility scooters are particularly important because you also have equality and accessibility considerations. We're working with organisations such as Wheels for Wellbeing around this. An e-bike may be discretionary.

A mobility scooter may be essential to somebody's independence, so the way you manage those devices has to be different.

Direct-to-resident assessments

There was also a question about whether residents could approach us directly. I think there will be people who genuinely want a battery "MOT" simply for their own peace of mind. Some tenants and homeowners will want their battery checked because they personally want to know it is in reasonable condition. That type of service is likely to emerge, although it would probably cost more than estate-wide testing because you lose the economies of scale.

Closing thoughts

Nigel Deacon

I hope today has given everybody some insight into the technologies and approaches that are beginning to emerge. Clearly we haven't got all the answers yet. Nobody has. But there is definitely potential here for a significant step in the right direction. Nick, if there's one thing you want everybody to take away, what would it be?

Nick Bailey

We're at the beginning of a journey. We need to make lithium batteries safer. We could do nothing. I don't think that's an option. So anybody who wants to join in, let's create a community where we can start moving this forward and make batteries safer for everyone.

Extended Q&A

Resident self-assessment

Kieron O'Neill

Southampton City Council is going to trial a resident risk assessment. The resident can go online and complete an assessment of their e-bike or e-scooter using basic information. We've designed it so that the information produces a risk score at the end. It's another interim measure we've introduced to support mitigation and education.

Nick Bailey

There are a couple of organisations doing their own versions of self-assessment and smaller interventions. My view is that almost anything you can do is better than doing nothing. Obviously the gold standard would be to have only the very best devices, but that is not the real world. If self-assessment helps people understand that lithium batteries can be safe but can also become unsafe, then I think it is useful. Actually, your point raises an interesting question for us. Should BatteryIQ offer a lightweight self-assessment as part of the wider programme? If we could produce something landlords could provide to residents for free, it could be rolled out across different environments. That may become a useful first step before professional assessment.

Nigel Deacon

I think it's a great first step. Will everyone engage? No. But you're demonstrating that you're starting to manage the risk and taking active steps to reduce it. And you're getting residents to think about the condition and use of their devices.

Removal, recycling and temporary safe storage

Simon Faulkner

Are there any organisations that can remove and officially store e-bikes and scooters if we need them taken away? We can remove them ourselves, but the danger is that we just move the problem from one place to another. The alternative storage may not itself be suitable or safe in the event of thermal runaway. So sometimes you're just moving something from one bad place to another bad place.

Nick Bailey

There are specialist organisations. One I'm aware of is UK Battery Repairs, which has become an authorised repairer for a number of companies and can also deal with end-of-life batteries. But once you start moving potentially damaged lithium batteries, they become a dangerous-goods issue. That makes transport and paperwork more complicated. My view is that we are probably going to see specialist transport services emerge. Potentially vehicles designed specifically to move damaged batteries and devices in a way that minimises risk if something happens during transport. National waste companies are also going to have to get better at this because lithium batteries are increasingly appearing in ordinary waste streams. It's probably not something BatteryIQ would do itself, but we would like to connect people with the organisations that can help.

Nigel Deacon

This is exactly why I showed our locker. Sometimes you identify a device that needs to be moved today. Not next week. Not after a court process. Today. It may need to sit somewhere pending repair, battery replacement, full device replacement or disposal. If you have an appropriate external locker or managed storage point outside the building, you can move the device out of the dwelling while the next step is decided. That's a very practical part of the mitigation stage.

Enforcement and delays**Simon Faulkner**

That's exactly the issue for us. If we can find a safe external location, that is clearly more viable than keeping something potentially volatile inside an HRB. The difficulty comes when enforcement is required because the courts are already very busy. You can end up with a potentially hazardous piece of equipment still sitting on the estate while you wait for an order.

Nick Bailey

That's a really interesting point. As practice develops, I suspect there may eventually be faster ways of dealing with clearly hazardous batteries through health-and-safety powers or other mechanisms. If somebody had a petrol spill inside a flat, you would expect some ability to intervene because of the immediate safety implications. I think we may ultimately reach a similar position where a battery presents clear evidence of immediate risk.

metroSTOR Webinar **Key Themes from the Webinar Chat**

Strong concern about higher-risk and modified devices

The chat reinforced that adapted e-bikes, illegally modified devices and second-hand equipment of unknown provenance are a significant concern for housing providers. Several attendees noted that these may also be the devices least likely to be voluntarily presented for assessment. There was broad recognition that landlords will never achieve complete visibility, but that this should not prevent them taking reasonable steps to identify and manage the risks they can influence.

Resident engagement remains one of the biggest challenges

A recurring theme was whether residents would participate voluntarily, particularly where they perceive assessment or tagging as landlord overreach. Attendees highlighted that those most likely to engage may already be the more responsible users. This strengthened the case for presenting assessment as a resident benefit — offering reassurance about battery condition, safer-use advice and potentially greater device security — rather than simply as another compliance requirement.

The sector wants greater consistency and clearer guidance

Participants repeatedly questioned what current government guidance requires of landlords, particularly in high-rise residential buildings. There was concern that individual landlords are developing their own approaches in the absence of a consistent national framework. Several attendees felt the sector needs to be “singing from the same hymn sheet”, with clearer common standards around policies, assessment, storage and escalation.

Battery assessment was seen as useful, but not a guarantee

There was considerable interest in the proposed battery-assurance approach, including questions about geographical coverage, whether in-house electricians could be trained, how data would be accessed and the indicative cost. Attendees also correctly challenged that an assessment only establishes condition at a particular point in time. The discussion therefore reinforced the importance of treating assessment as one layer of risk management, alongside education, safer charging practices, monitoring and periodic review.

External storage and an escalation route emerged as a major practical need

One of the strongest themes was what happens after a higher-risk device is identified. Attendees asked about external storage, secure temporary containment, specialist removal, recycling and disposal. Housing providers recognised that simply removing a device from a communal area or dwelling can move the risk elsewhere unless there is a suitable managed location available while repair, replacement or disposal is arranged. This was particularly relevant where enforcement action may take time.

Mobility scooters require a different approach

Several comments highlighted the importance of mobility scooters in independent-living and sheltered-housing settings. Unlike many e-bikes or e-scooters, these devices may be essential to a resident's mobility and independence. Attendees therefore saw particular value in combining assurance, safer charging and appropriate external storage provision rather than relying on restrictions alone.

Interest in containment products came with caution

There were several questions about fire-resistant charging bags, boxes and other containment products for devices that need to remain inside buildings. The discussion reflected considerable uncertainty over how much protection such products can realistically provide during a severe thermal runaway event. Attendees recognised that claims such as “fireproof” or “explosion proof” need to be treated carefully and supported by appropriate evidence.

Cost appeared relatively acceptable, but scale matters

The indicative figure of around £25 per device per year generated positive responses, with one attendee describing it as good value. Questions remained about who should pay — landlord or resident — and whether testing could become a condition attached to keeping a battery within a building. There was also interest in whether larger estate-wide programmes and the training of internal electricians could reduce costs further.

There is appetite for practical pilots rather than more theory

The chat suggested a strong appetite for real-world trials. Southampton City Council's proposed resident self-assessment was welcomed as a useful first step, and attendees showed interest in battery assurance, external storage and resident engagement initiatives. The overall mood was pragmatic: nobody expects a single intervention to solve the problem, but there was clear support for testing practical measures, sharing learning and building towards a more consistent sector-wide approach.

Catch up on all our previous Webinars [here](#)
