

Participation Requests

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015



Participation Requests

Participation requests are a new means by which **community groups** can request to have a greater involvement in, and influence over, decisions and services that affect their communities and community lives.

Participation requests can help to -

- **start a dialogue** about something that matters to your community – highlighting needs, issues and opportunities for improvement
- have your **voices heard** in policy and service development
- **participate** in the design, delivery, monitoring or review of service provision
- **challenge decisions** and **seek support for alternatives** which improve outcomes

You can request to get involved where your group thinks it can make an improvement.



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The basics

By making a participation request, **a community body (or group of people in a community) can ask to start a discussion with organisations in charge of public services**, such as hospitals, schools and transport, about how to improve these services. The organisations that participation requests can be made to are called 'public service authorities' and include local authorities and health boards as well as a list of other organisations.



Can't the request simply be refused?

Not quite. The important bit is that the organisation which receives the request **must agree to the request or give good reason why not**.

What happens then?

If the request is granted, the public service authority invites the community group into an **'outcome improvement process'**. This is a **formal discussion process** between the public service authority, the community group and other relevant people or organisations. What it will look like, and how long it will take, will depend on the nature of the request. It is likely to involve meetings and written documents, and **those involved will have the chance to share and listen to different ideas and perspectives on the issue**.

What will it lead to?

The outcome improvement process should lead to **an improvement in the way the service is delivered**. This may or may not be based on the ideas of the community body, and **the final decision on what to do is still made by the public service authority**. However, by considering the views of everyone involved a better decision should be made. The community body will also get to see more clearly how the decision is reached.

Where do I find out more?

The best place to start is the summary guidance which you can download at www.scdc.org.uk/news/article/participation-request-summary-guidance