

Consultation on the Draft Participation Request (Procedure)(Scotland) Regulations 2016



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organization?

- Individual
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
 Publish response only (anonymous)
 Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
 No

Participation Requests under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015: Consultation on Draft Regulations

The Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) is the leading membership and campaigning body for local community-controlled housing associations and co-operatives (CCHAs) in the west of Scotland. The Forum represents 69 members who together own around 85,000 homes. As well as providing decent, affordable housing for nearly 85,000 households in west central Scotland CCHAs also deliver factoring services to around 20,000 owners in mixed tenure housing blocks. For almost forty years CCHAs have been at the vanguard of strategies which have helped to improve the environmental, social and economic well-being of their communities.

The Forum's key objectives are: to promote the values and achievements of the community-controlled housing movement; and to make the case for housing and regeneration policies that support our members' work in their communities.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and our response has been developed by members of the Forum and reflects their experiences of working alongside local people in their communities for the past four decades.

We have answered the consultation questions below but we would like to begin with a few essential comments.

- Overall GWSF welcomes the legislation on participation requests since it provides a process for communities to request to work alongside public sector bodies to improve outcomes, and sets out duties on how public service authorities deal with such requests.
- We believe this framework offers a real opportunity for communities to set the agenda around how to tackle the needs or issues they have identified themselves, and to become involved in helping to take forward changes to improve local services.
- The first paragraph of the consultation document captures the intention of the Participation Request element of the Act, stating:

'Evidence shows that involving people more regularly and more effectively in the decisions that affect them leads to better outcomes, making the most of the knowledge and talent that lies in communities. It also increases confidence and fosters more positive relationships between communities and the public sector.'

- We strongly agree with this emphasis and we believe the governance model pioneered by CCHAs allows local people to be part of the decision making process in their communities. This model has operated successfully for forty years and could be built upon to develop frameworks in local communities where decisions are made not only on regeneration but also on other areas like health and social care spending.
- In the current economic climate with the continued squeeze on public sector resources it is more important than ever to think innovatively and creatively about new and different models of service delivery. Participation Requests offer a real opportunity to deliver: increased partnership working with communities and the third sector; local delivery mechanisms; and changes in culture by large public service providers; sustainability; and new ways of measuring impacts or outcomes. Our members are eager to engage with all of these.

- The potential savings to public sector budgets of the early prevention and intervention activities which community Controlled Housing Associations are involved in are huge and the chances to improve services which support this activity, under this section of the Act are potentially transformative and far-reaching.

Questionnaire

Q1: Should the use of a statutory form be required in the regulations?

Yes No

Please give reasons for your response.

We believe that a statutory form would enable participation bodies to capture the required information and could also make the process easier for public authorities when processing requests.

Q2: Should it be possible for a community body to put in a participation request without using a form?

Yes No

Please give reasons for your response.

We think that in certain instances a community participation body should be able to put in a request without using a form. For instance this might be due to the capacity of the community body to do so.

Q3: What else might a statutory form usefully cover beyond the example set out in Annex B?

We think the example covers the key information which should be required.

Q4: Is 14 days a reasonable amount of time for additional public service authorities to respond?

Yes No

If not, please suggest an alternative timescale and explain reasons for the change.

Q5: What, if any, are the particular/specific ways that public service authorities should promote the use of participation request?

We think that there are numerous ways that public service authorities could promote the use of participation requests. For instance on their websites or through existing structures such as Community Planning Partnerships.

Q6: What are the ways that public service authorities should support community participation bodies to make a participation request and participate in an outcome improvement process that should be set out in the regulations?

Q7: What types of communities could the regulations specify that may need additional support? Please give reasons for your response.

This could apply to communities facing challenges such as severe socio-economic disadvantage where community development and community capacity building could help to build up collective confidence and skills.

Q8: How long should the public service authority have to assess the participation request and give notice to the community participation body? Is 30 days a reasonable amount of time?

Yes No

If not, how long should the period for making a decision be? Please give reasons for your response.

Q9: Are there any additional information requirements that should be included in connection with a decision notice? Please give reasons for your response.

Q10: What other information, if any, should the regulations specify should be published in relation to the proposed outcome improvement process? Please give reasons for your response.



Q11: What other information, if any, should the regulations specify should be published in relation to the modified outcome improvement process? Please give reasons for your response.



Q12: Section 31 sets out the aspects that the report of the outcome improvement process must contain. What other information, if any, should the regulations require the report include? Please give reasons for your response.



Q13: Do you have any other comments on the draft Participation Request (Procedure)(Scotland) Regulations 2016?

