



Participation Request Strategy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL			
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The only current version of this policy is on the intranet

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1. Introduction

The primary purpose of this strategy is community benefit with a secondary aspect that the Health Board wants communities to be involved in the design and delivery of services tailored to people's needs.

Participation Requests are, therefore, not just about a formal mechanism for communities to have their voice heard. Participation Requests is part of a wider picture in helping communities to co-produce and deliver services that meet local needs.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway aims to promote a proactive approach to community engagement through a range of Strategies which develop opportunities for communities to engage with the Health Board and influence outcomes.

The Health Board values local empowerment, respects our communities, works in partnership with communities to sustain services. We do not want to do things "to" communities but rather want to do things "with" communities.

The Community Participation and Engagement Strategy and the Community Asset Transfer Strategy in particular allow individuals and communities routes to express their views and participate in delivering outcomes for their communities. The Health Board has adopted the National Standards for Community Engagement.



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Participation Requests will form one aspect of the Health Board's approach to community empowerment – combined with greater engagement, participatory involvement and supported volunteering there is great potential for a more equal relationship between the Health Board and communities when working together.

Participation Requests are a formal mechanism for dialogue with the Health Board. Our hope is that as we work to ensure good opportunities for informal dialogue then the need for formal approaches will be the exception rather than the rule.

We want to leave a legacy of skills within the local community; our support should leave community groups more empowered and with a greater range of abilities and experience to take on other challenges.

Participation Requests are about empowering communities, (both geographic and communities of interest). We want to ensure that our approach to Participation Requests is fully inclusive and is open and available to the widest range of groups, taking into account barriers to participation that may exist, or be perceived to exist. Our approach to promoting information about Participation Requests will be mindful of and actively promote, through narrative and imagery and the inclusion of groups whose voices are not always or often heard.

We will work working groups involved in Equality and Diversity to ensure that our approaches and materials are as inclusive as we can make them.

We will look to hear and become aware of any barriers, which may exist, and work with partners to remove these. We will also work with colleagues to monitor and analysis of the Participation Requests we receive from an equality and diversity aspect (personal information will be redacted), to ensure that we are fully aware of any underrepresentation from protected characteristic groups and can work with partners to ensure that we increase focus on opening up channels to maximise opportunities for participation.

2. Definitions

Throughout the Participation Request Strategy and the associated Procedure, there are certain terms which are used – some are drawn from the legislation and some have been developed for use within NHS Dumfries and Galloway. Here is an explanation of what they mean:

Term	Definition
Community Asset Transfer Strategy	Community Asset Transfer is about the transfer of buildings or land owned by the Council into community ownership or lease to benefit community plans and ambitions.
Compliant Application	An application will only be accepted when it is fully completed with all sections fully considered and detailed and the group is able to evidence that it is community led and fits the governance requirements for a Community Participation Body.
Outcome Improvement Plan	An outcome is the result of actions and plans. For example the outcome of creating activities for and with older people might improve mental and physical health and a reduction in doctors' visits.
Participation and Engagement Strategy	The Community participation and Engagement Strategy outlines the Health Board's approach to involving communities of place and communities of interest in the way we plan and deliver services.
Participation Request	A participation request is a formal mechanism for Community Participation Bodies to participate in the design, delivery or adjustment of services.
Community Participation Body	A Community Participation Body is the Government's term for a community group, which has the appropriate governance to carry out a Participation Request.
Volunteer Strategy	The Volunteer Strategy defines the Health Board's approach to working with volunteers, including the rights and responsibility of volunteers.
Sustainable	This means that a service improvement outcome needs to be maintained for a period of time within reasonable budgets to the benefit of the community.

3. **Context**

3.1 **National**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and Guidance

This legislation has a specific focus on Participation Requests to provide a formal mechanism for communities to put forward their ideas for how public bodies might be changed to improve outcomes and to request to participate in achieving these outcomes.

Key aspects of the regulations are:-

- A Community Participation Body puts forward a Participation Request to the public body asking them to take part in a process that will improve the outcome set out by the community body.
- The public body must agree to the request and set up a process unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.
- At the end of the process the public body must publish a report on whether the outcomes were improved and how the Community Participation Body contributed to that improvement.
- The maximum turnaround time for dealing with a Participation Request is usually 30 days.

The presumption in the Act shifts the balance of power clearly towards the community bodies by requiring Councils and other public bodies to agree the request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal.

Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services

This Commission, chaired by Campbell Christie, highlighted that if they are to be effective, public services must empower individuals and communities by involving them in both the design and delivery of services. It advocated a fundamental overhaul of the relationships between institutions responsible for delivering public services and the needs of individuals and communities.

3.2 **Regional**

Participation Request arrangements across public sector partners

All public service authorities are subject to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, but the different legislative and decision-making routes mean that a common approach is not practical. However, procedures and documentation are being shared to ensure consistency wherever possible to make it as straightforward as possible for community groups.

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3.3 **NHS Dumfries and Galloway**

Priorities and Commitments

NHS Dumfries and Galloway aim:

- to deliver excellent care that is person-centred, safe, effective, efficient and reliable.
- to reduce health inequalities across Dumfries and Galloway.

We have set the following outcomes that we aim to achieve through the services we deliver to ensure a safe, effective a person-centred approach to healthcare in the region:

- Improved outcomes for patients that reflect learning from patient experience in order to ensure a person-centred focus is maintained.
- Improved staff experience; and health and wellbeing of staff.
- The delivery of continuous quality improvement and sustainability through services that are effective and efficient.
- All children have the best possible start in life through a variety of interventions, sometimes targeted at vulnerable groups.
- A population in Dumfries and Galloway who are enabled and assisted to have more control over all aspects of their life, health and wellbeing.

4. Development of the Strategy

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 stresses that the spirit of Participation Requests is to create a more equal relationship between public authorities and communities.

The Health Board aims to utilise the existing range of strategies to improve community engagement and participation, in addition to the formal process for Participation Requests. If the policies are following this should lessen the frequency of formal requests. The strategies referred to above include Community Participation and Engagement, Volunteering and Asset Transfer.

The Health Board wishes to have a good and open relationship with communities and the formal approach for Participation Requests should not be seen as the first or only channel for dialogue with the Health Board. The Health Board will continue to develop ways to better engage, involve and empower communities.

4.1 Consultation with local partners

Consultation and engagement will be undertaken with the Local Authority, Third and Independent Sector and community user groups, as appropriate on all requests.

4.2 Consultation with the Equality and Diversity

Facilitated discussions with representative organisations for Protected Characteristics particularly age, disability, gender, race, sexuality and religion.

4.3 Stakeholder Impact Assessment

The Strategy and Procedure presented in this report were considered using the Health Board's Impact Assessment Toolkit. A copy of the Impact Assessment Summary will be made available on the Board's website at [http://www.nhsdg.scot.nhs.uk/About Us/Equality Diversity/Equality Impact Assessments](http://www.nhsdg.scot.nhs.uk/About_Us/Equality_Diversity/Equality_Impact_Assessments)

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5. Our Objectives

In order to achieve the intent of this Strategy we have identified four specific Objectives which will shape the detailed activity we undertake:

- **Objective 1** - To promote Participation Requests as a key aspect of community empowerment.
- **Objective 2** - To support community groups throughout the Participation Request process.
- **Objective 3** - To ensure transparency and fairness in our decision-making.
- **Objective 4** - To respond positively to the improvements suggested through Participation Requests.

6. Delivering and monitoring the Strategy

6.1 Delivering the Strategy

Objective 1 - To promote Participation Requests as a key aspect of community empowerment.

- We will develop Participation Request webpage to promote the process, guidance and sources of support to those wishing to pursue Participation Requests.
- We will publish examples of good practice and other Participation Requests to show community groups what can be done.
- We will encourage dialogue with community groups across NHS Dumfries and Galloway as part of an ongoing programme of work around community empowerment
- In the narrative and imagery we will use to promote Participation requests we will be mindful of the diversity to ensure that all communities feel this includes them.

Objective 2 - To support community groups throughout the Participation Request process

- We will set out a clear process for a Participation Request to sit alongside this Strategy, which sets out step by step how a Participation Request is developed and put into place.
- Training and development
 - Appropriate staff across the Health Board will be trained in the Participation Request Process
 - The Locality Managers have, and will continue to develop, expertise in capacity building and working with community groups, to develop their skills and abilities in all requirements.
- Support for community groups.
 - This is a significant aspect of the Strategy and the Procedure gives details of the different types of support and options available to community groups to maximise their potential for undertaking a Participation Request. There are three specific aspects to this support:

- Providing a single point of contact – the Corporate Business Manager initially. This may include having initial discussions with the community group and confirming which Locality Manager will be supporting them throughout the process. The Locality Manager will assist community groups in capacity building, clarifying how the community group might contribute to the Outcome Improvement Plan, developing thinking around making a request, helping navigate the Health Board's processes and which Services need to be involved. A particular focus will be on areas where social capital is low so that the empowerment of individuals and communities has the greatest positive impact.
 - Signposting community groups to assistance independent from the Health Board. There are a number of national and local organisations who can provide assistance and it is a matter for the community group to identify who it chooses to engage with. Third Sector are funded by the Council to provide support to third sector organisations and would one of several sources of advice to community groups.
- Ensuring our Procedure and documentation is clear, easy to understand and access.

Objective 3 - To ensure transparency and fairness in our decision-making

- The criteria used by the Health Board to assess Participation Requests is detailed in the procedure and our response to Participation Requests will include information about why a Request has been accepted or rejected.
- There will be a Participation Request Forum established; involving all stakeholders which will look at the Requests on a six monthly basis, or more frequently if necessary, and any recommendations for change to our arrangements will be reported to the public NHS Dumfries and Galloway Board meetings.

Objective 4 - To respond positively to the improvements suggested through Participation Requests

- The creation of Outcome Improvement Plans by the responsible Directorates will be promoted as a positive contribution to making our services better. This work will be supported by the Board Management Team.
- The implementation of Outcome Improvement Plans will be consistent with Health Board policies and procedures and Health Board's budget decisions.

- The Performance Committee will receive information on a six monthly basis around the Outcome Improvement Plans agreed, to allow Non-Executive Members to have oversight of the requests and the proposed outcome being suggested by community groups to the services within their remit.

6.2 Monitoring the Strategy

- Implementation of the Participation Requests Strategy and Procedure will be included in reports to the Performance Committee, which will be taken on a six monthly basis. A review of this timeframe will be made at year end to identify if more frequent reports are required.
- Annual Report - In line with the new legislation, an Annual Report will be prepared and submitted to Performance Committee, listing all Participation Request applications received and detailing the number which have been agreed and refused. The report will also provide information on how the use of Participation Requests has been promoted and the supported.

Views from the services users of this system, both public and internal about changes to the Strategy or Procedure will also be submitted as part of this report. We will be supported by the Equality and Diversity Team to look at request statistics in terms of inclusivity and will report findings and any proposed improvement plans to increase inclusion. These annual reports, covering 1 April to 31 March, will be published taken through NHS Board for discussion and published by 30 June each year. It will also report on action it has taken to promote the use of Participation Requests and to support Community Participation Bodies to make requests. In line with Scottish Government requirements, the first annual report will be produced before 30 June 2019.

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7. Evaluating the impact of the Strategy

The monitoring of the number of Participation Requests in itself does not tell us what impact the Strategy has had on the empowerment of communities. There needs to be a dialogue with people who live in communities where Participation Requests have been progressed – those that were successful, and also where they have not succeeded, if there are any in that position.

The Social Capital Index being developed by NHS Dumfries and Galloway will assist in determining the impact of the Strategy but in addition, there are evaluation tools which can be applied. This is an area of work in development at both national and local levels and it would be appropriate for the Annual Report to make reference to this.

8. Working in Partnership

Other local Public Service Authorities are also subject to these requirements and are therefore also currently developing their approach to Participation Requests. The Health Board is developing a consistent approach to handling Participation Requests to make it easier for communities. The Health Board is working with partners to identify a named person to work with the Health Board on requests to more than one Public Service Authority.

9. Strategies and Plans that link to the Participation Request Strategy

- NHS Dumfries and Galloway Community Participation and Engagement Strategy – currently being developed.
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway Participation Request Procedure – Link to be made available when finally approved.
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway Community Asset Transfer Strategy – link to be made available once finally approved.

10. Participation Requests Strategy Action Plan

Action	Link to Objective(s)	Timescale	Lead
Publish new Procedure and Participation Requests Application Forms	2, 3 and 4	By 30 June 2018	Corporate Business Manager
Develop a page on the Health Board's external website to publish form and guidance relating to a Participation Request.	1, 2 ,3 and 4	By 30 June 2018	Corporate Business Manager
Training for Locality Managers and Directorates in the Procedure for Participation Requests.	2 and 4	By 30 September 2018	Corporate Business Manager
Look at the benefits of establishing a Participation Requests Forum with input from outside partner agencies	1, 2, 3 and 4	By 30 September 2018	Corporate Business Manager / Locality Managers and Directors
Review our Strategy and Procedure	1, 2, 3 and 4	by 30 June 2020	Corporate Business Manager / Locality Managers and Directors
Annual Report on Participation Requests	1 and 3	by 30 June 2019	Corporate Business Manager

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1. Document Status

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Approver	Board Management Team
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2. Document Amendment History

Version	Section(s)	Reason for update
1.0	All	New procedure development in line with legislation

3. Distribution

Name	Responsibility	Version number
Board Wide	Corporate Business Manager	1.0

4. Associated documents

- Community Empowerment Act
- Community Engagement and Participation Strategy
- Participation Request Strategy
- Community Asset Transfer Procedure

5. Action Plan for Implementation

Action	Lead Officer	Timeframe
Disseminate Board wide	Corporate Business Manager	March 2018
Upload to external website	Corporate Business Manager	March 2018

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