

Participation Requests Reporting Template 2022/23 for Public Service Authorities

Section 32 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public service authorities to produce an annual report on Participation Request activity and publish this no later than 30 June each year. This template has been created to gather participation request data for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Information provided will help inform policy and practice at local and national level as the data will be collated and shared by the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Team. However, it is for each public service authority to make their own annual report publicly available by 30 June each year, whether using this template or not.

Please provide information in the sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2023 to community.empowerment@gov.scot .

Section One – Public Service Authority Information

Organisation: Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT

Completed by: Iain Jackson Role: Governance, Risk and Safety Manager

Email: iain.jackson@argyll-bute.gov.uk Telephone: 01546 604188

Date of completion: 15 June 2023

Are you the Participation Request Lead Contact for the organisation: Yes

If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries:

Section 2: Participation Request Data for 2022/23

Please complete following overview table:

Total new applications received in 2022/23	Total applications received prior to 1 April 2022 which were still to be determined at 31 March 2023	Number of accepted applications in 2022/23	Number of applications agreed in 2022/23	Number of applications refused in 2022/23
0	0	0	0	0
<p>Where you were unable to accept a participation request, was an alternative process put in place to discuss the group's issue and work with them or support offered to help them consider how to address their identified need? Please provide details:</p> <p>N/A</p>				

2.1 Please provide details of Participation Requests received using the legislation and outwith the legislation in the reporting year which resulted in changes to public services provided by or on behalf of your public service authority and tell us about those changes. Please also include details of requests received prior to 2022/23, which resulted in changes to the way of working being implemented in 2022/23.

Name of Community Participation Body	Was the Participation Request successful? (Y/N)	Previous way of working	Way of working following changes	What difference did those changes make for the users of the service? Did they improve service user experiences or outcomes?	Details of any participation requests considered outwith the formal process e.g. agreements reached that resulted in changes to services.
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.2 Please use this space to provide any further comments relating to the above data, such as:

- **describing the outcome improvement process (whether or not it resulted from a formal participation request)**
- **how the community participation body was involved in designing the outcome improvement process**
- **how the community participation body participated in the outcome improvement process including taking part in decisions and delivering actions**
- **details of any wider benefits, such as improved community engagement and ongoing participation.**

Section Three – Partnership Working & Promotion of Participation Requests

3.1a Please provide details of any engagement with support organisations such as local Third Sector Interfaces and public sector Community Learning and Development staff or national organisations such as the Scottish Community Development Centre.

For example has any new practices to support Participation Requests been developed from working with other bodies, or any learning gained?

The Council's Community Development Team continue to lead the delivery of support to Community Participation Bodies and engage with other Community Learning and Development partners as required.

Between August 2021 and November 2022, a member of Argyll and Bute Council staff was seconded to SCDC. Regular communication and updates were received throughout this time. The Council submitted a response to the Strengthening Participation Requests survey conducted by SCDC to share our experiences as a Public Service Authority.

3.1b Please tell us about any challenges you have had in accessing support.

There have been no challenges in accessing support.

3.2 Please provide details of action taken to promote the use of Participation Requests or support Community Participation Bodies in making a Participation Request.

For example this could include: Support before making a request, such as to determine whether a participation request is the most appropriate route; Support to make the request such as assist groups to complete forms, or identify appropriate outcomes; and/or Support to take part effectively in outcome improvement processes (whether or not they resulted from a formal participation request).

The Council offer support to those interested in submitting a request through Community Development and provide guidance to Community Participation Bodies during the process.

The process and the resources to support communities have been promoted through Argyll and Bute Council's Community Development Bulletin which is circulated to over 500 community contacts. This has included promotion of the resource pack created by the Scottish Community Development Centre.

In March 2023 a presentation was delivered to Elected Members to promote understanding of the Participation Request process and to encourage Members to share information and resources within their communities.

Participation Requests were included as part of community engagement training for Community Councils delivered between February and March 2023. This included both online and in person sessions with 52 Community Council representatives in attendance.

3.3 Please let us know what actions you have been taking to ensure that your processes are inclusive.

For example, this could include accessible information and other support, which enable wider use of participation requests by all population groups including those with protected characteristics. We are particularly interested in any ways you have targeted those with protected characteristics to raise awareness of the PR process or support request submissions.

The Council has promoted SCDC's resource pack which includes information in accessible formats. Updates have also been made to the Participation Request webpages to make it more accessible, this includes having a paper form available for download or to be sent by post to those who have barriers to digital participation.

Information about the Participation Request process and the resources available has been further shared through the Community Development Bulletin. The bulletin distribution list includes community organisations who support those with protected characteristics.

3.4 Please outline any plans you have to continue involving local people and local groups in outcome improvement processes as a result of your Participation Request policies (and also outwith formal participation requests).

The ongoing review of the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan will continue to offer opportunities for communities to participate in shaping local priorities. The continued development of the plan will support the delivery of existing outcome improvement processes as well as wider community empowerment.

3.5 Please provide details about any work undertaken to consider wider reviews of participation practice, and any such methods used to engage with communities.

The initial consultation and engagement for the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan by the Community Planning Partnership has been considered best practice. This provided comprehensive support to those with digital barriers and protected characteristics to participate.

Section Four – Additional Information

4.1 Please use this space to provide any further feedback not covered in the above sections.

For example, we are interested in your reflections about what has gone well and what has gone less well in relation to Participation Requests over the past year?

Raising awareness among Elected Members of the process and support available has been positive and will hopefully lead to an increased understanding among communities.

Is there any aspect of the process that you intend to adapt or change in the year ahead?

It would be useful to increase awareness among wider Council services to ensure that all have an understanding of the process and are able to signpost communities to support if needed.

Have you identified any needs for guidance or support that would support the process?

The support and guidance received meets current requirements. The Council would welcome future opportunities to attend national events to support networking and learn from best practice.

If you have developed any case study material or published new information about Participation Requests please share links to those with us here.

There are no case studies to share at this time as the recent Outcome Improvement Processes are still ongoing.

Any other information:

Section Five – Community Empowerment Act Review

The following questions relate to the Scottish Government review of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. We would value your feedback as a public service authority concerned with part 3 (participation requests) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Please note, any comments provided here would be anonymised, and would only be used in the context of the review.

5.1 Has the legislation made it easier or more difficult to work with communities to improve services? Please provide some comments on your experiences as a public service authority engaging with this legislation.

Despite no Participation Requests being received this year, it remains a useful tool to support engagement.

5.2 Where can things be further improved, and what needs to change?

Increased funding for local authorities is needed to resource awareness raising and engagement.

5.3 Are you aware of what support is available to you e.g. [Scottish Government advice and resources](#), [SCDC's Participation Request pack](#), Social Studies PR Toolbox, when engaging with this legislation, and how you can access this? Is there any support you think you would benefit from when engaging with this legislation. Please provide comments where possible.

The Council has a good understanding of the help and resources available. The support on offer meets requirements at this time.

5.4 What would you like to see now, to further empower Scotland's communities?

It would be useful to consider further monitoring of Outcome Improvement Processes once agreed, to help ensure they are delivered within a reasonable timescale.

Completed by: Iain Jackson

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Tel: 01546 604188

Date of completion: 15 June 2023

Please email the completed template by 30 June 2023 to community.empowerment@gov.scot

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Participation Request Policy Manager at Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot

Community Empowerment Team, Scottish Government