

# A guide to asset transfer requests and the Community Empowerment Act

## What is the Community Empowerment Act?

The Community Empowerment Act sets out a plan for empowering all the people of Scotland. This means everyone can get involved and help to make important decisions.

**Communities** can be groups of people in the same local area, or groups of people with a common interest.

People feel better when they have a say about what happens in their communities. They can make things better because they know what will work for them. People feel more confident and learn new skills when they have the right support. This can mean:

- more jobs
- more access to services and support
- less crime
- better health
- more equality

Public service providers should give communities a say in how services are given. Examples of **public service providers** are hospitals, schools, police, and local councils. Communities should also have help to do things for themselves if they need help. This could be for things like taking over a building for people to meet and socialise, or helping people learn new skills.

People who shape and run public services should ask local people what services they need. They should also ask how these should be delivered. The Scottish Government thinks this is important and this is why they introduced a new law called the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.



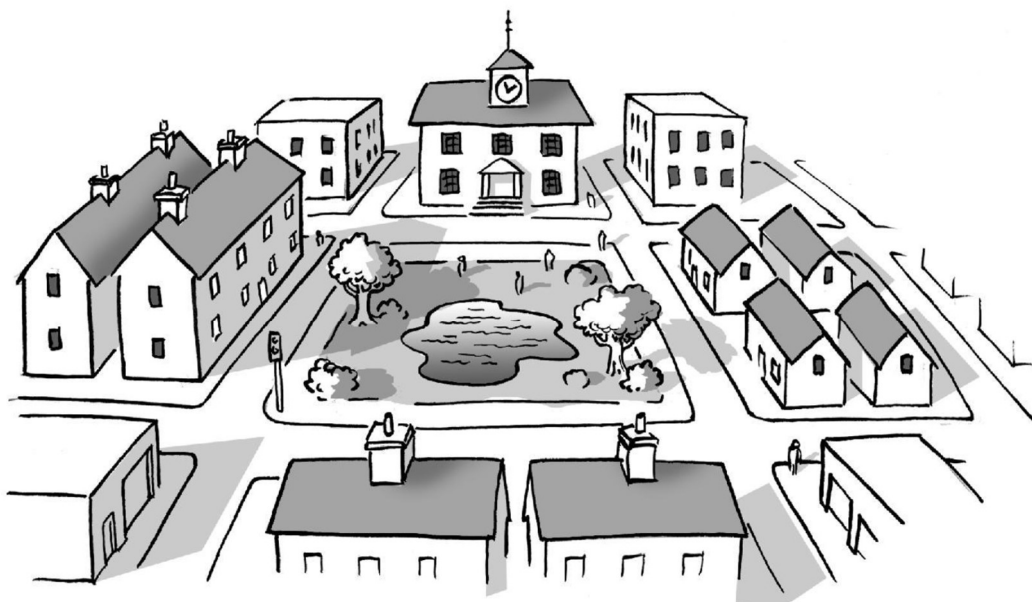
## Taking over publicly owned land or buildings

Local councils, government organisations and other public bodies own or rent lots of land and buildings, like schools, hospitals, parks and forests. Sometimes not all of the building or land is being used. The building could be put to better use by the community or used to the best benefit of the community

The Scottish Government wants to change the law so that community organisations can ask to take over control of these buildings or land.

The local council, government organisation or other public body will have to listen to what the community would like to do. If the community organisation's plan is better for local people, they will be allowed to buy or rent the land or building.

NHS Highland will ask community groups who want to take over publicly owned land or buildings to fill out an application form. This helps make sure that the community organisation is open to everyone, speak for their community and the plan will benefit local people. This is called an **Asset Transfer Request**.



## How to make an Asset Transfer Request to NHS Highland

NHS Highland encourages community organisations to first speak to their District Manager to find out more about their ideas to benefit the community.

The District Manager will ask the community group to fill out an Expression of Interest form. This is a short form to help open a discussion between the community organisation and NHS Highland. This is to help the community organisation put a plan together about how their ideas might work before they spend lots of time completing a longer formal application.

Once NHS Highland has looked over the Expression of Interest, they will:

- contact the community group to progress the plan
- ask for more information or
- let them know if there are any problems with their plan and why

If the plan is suitable the community group will be asked to fill out a formal application form. This does require more time and the community group will have to provide some documents to evidence that they are eligible and how the plan will benefit the community referring to national, regional and local outcomes (<http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome>). The community group has at least six months to complete this form and return it to NHS Highland.

NHS Highland has up to six months to assess the formal application and let the community organisation know their decision.

