

NHS Highland

  
Highland  
na Gàidhealtachd

Meeting:

NHS Highland Board

Meeting date:

27 May 2025

Title:

Community Empowerment (Scotland)  
Act 2015 Annual Reports 2024-25

Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:

Fiona Davies, Chief Executive

Report Author:

Nathan Ware, Governance & Corporate  
Records Manager

Report Recommendation:

The Board is asked to **approve** the Annual Reports.

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Assurance

This report relates to a:

- Legal Requirement
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This report relates to the following Strategic Outcome(s)

Start Well	Thrive Well		Stay Well		Anchor Well	
Grow Well	Listen Well	X	Nurture Well		Plan Well	X
Care Well	Live Well		Respond Well	X	Treat Well	
Journey Well	Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well	Progress well		All Strategic Outcomes			

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

Attached to this report are NHS Highland Annual Reports dealing with Asset Transfers and Public Participation Requests for the period 2024/25 for the Board’s approval.

## 2.2 Background

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 has been established to enhance community involvement in community planning by creating opportunities for influencing public service provision and decision making, including how community assets are owned and managed. The Act introduces rights to community bodies to make participation and asset transfer requests to Health Boards and other public service authorities.

## 2.3 Assessment

Sections 32 and 95 of the Act require that public bodies produce annual reports which include certain information on participation requests and asset transfer requests. The annual reports follow a standardised format and are appended to this report.

### Asset Transfer

NHS Highland did not receive any Asset Transfer requests during financial year 2024-25.

An application was received in February 2021 relating to Ian Charles Hospital in Grantown on Spey which is still being progressed. The building is still in use by the Health Centre and awaiting confirmation the building is surplus. It is noted that the community have not yet produced their plans but this work is ongoing.

### Public Participation Requests

Throughout the last financial year NHS Highland did not receive any Public Participation Requests. Board members will be aware of the ways in which NHS Highland actively engages with communities about its services and developments. While Boards have a duty under the Community Empowerment legislation to promote the offer of Public Participation Requests, our ongoing engagement activity has meant that communities may not have needed to use the formal route. However it may be appropriate to refresh the approach to ensure communities are fully aware of the process available.

### Website and Accessibility improvements

A link to a specific page remains on NHS Highland's new website to signpost members of the public to the formal option and provide information on how to go about making an application. A new online engagement platform was launched in November 2024 to provide a central location for all engagement enquiries and further work is being developed in partnership to increase its use.

The previously implemented accessibility improvements have remained in place, including an online form, the option of requesting assistance from a colleague of NHS Highland to complete the form and a large print version for those who may benefit from this.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<div>X</div>	Moderate	<div></div>
Limited	<div></div>	None	<div></div>

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

Annual Reports provide assurance that healthcare is safe for every person, every time.

3.2 Workforce

Annual Reports provide assurance that staff feel supported and engaged.

3.3 Financial

Annual Reports provide assurance that there is the best use made of available resources.

There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

These are Annual Reports on business considered during the year, for which risk analysis would have been undertaken when requests were first made.

3.5 Data Protection

This report does not involve personally identifiable information.

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

These are Annual Reports on business considered during the year, for which EDIAs would have been considered when the issues were first raised.

3.7 Other impacts

No other impacts.

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Public authorities have a responsibility to promote Asset Transfers and Participation Requests and there is a prominent link on NHS Highland website signposting members of the public.

3.9 Route to the Meeting

The Annual Reports have been prepared in collaboration with the respective Executive Leads

4 List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix No 1, Annual Report relating to Asset Transfers
- Appendix No 2, Annual Report relating to Public Participation Requests



**Asset Transfer Request  
Reporting Template 2024/25 for Relevant Authorities**

Section 95 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires relevant authorities to produce an annual report on Asset Transfer Request activity and publish this no later than 30 June each year.

Following stakeholder feedback and in response to asset transfer evaluations, this template has been created to help gather asset transfer data for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. 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 will be for each relevant authority to make their own annual report publicly available by 30 June 2025, whether using this template or not.

**Please provide information in the sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2025 to [community.empowerment@gov.scot](mailto:community.empowerment@gov.scot).**

**Section One – Relevant Authority Information**

Organisation: NHS Highland	Address: Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness, IV2 3BW
Completed by: Helen Emery / Simon Banham	Role: Property Manager
Email: Helen.Emery2@nhs.scot	Telephone: 07976 862 792
Date of completion: 14.04.2025	
Are you the Asset Transfer Lead Contact for the organisation:	
If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries:	

**Section 2: Asset Transfer Data in 2024/25**

2.1 Please complete the following table for the 2024/25 reporting period:

Total Applications Received	Number of successful applications determined	Number of unsuccessful applications determined	Number received -and yet to be determined	Number received prior to 2024/25 and yet to be determined
0	0	0	0	2 – details below
				<b>Ian Charles Hospital Granttown on Spey.</b> 19.02.2021 Expression of Interest - ongoing awaiting property to be declared surplus (building still in use by the Health Centre) and awaiting Community Company proposed plans for the development of the Hospital.
				<b>Aviemore Allotment Association (AAA) - Lease</b> of Land to the rear of Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital is to be leased to AAA for the use of community allotments.

2.2 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests received which resulted in transfer of ownership, lease, or rights from your relevant authority to a community transfer body in 2024/25:

Name of Community Transfer Body, or community group that will take ownership, lease, or management of the asset.	Date request was validated	Date decision was agreed to transfer the asset	Date transfer completed	Please provide further details, such as: description of the asset / area transferred / amount paid / discount given/ type of ownership / purpose of the transfer.

0	0	0	0	0
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2.3 Please provide details of Asset Transfer Requests that went to a relevant authority appeal or review which were concluded in 2022/23:

Name of Community Transfer Body	Was the Asset Transfer Appeal/Review accepted? (Y/N)	Why was the Appeal/Review accepted/refused? <i>Please provide details of the asset transfer request and reasons for your decision.</i>
N/A	N/A	N/A

2.4 Please use this space to provide any further comments relating to the above data:

**Section Three – Promotion and Equality**

3.1 Please provide information on any action you have taken to promote the benefits of asset transfer or any support provided for communities to engage with the Asset Transfer Request process.

**3.2 In particular what action has been taken to support disadvantaged communities to engage with the asset transfer process?**

**Section Four – Additional Information**

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

**Section 5 – 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 relevant authority concerned with part 5 (asset transfers) of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.*

5.1 Has the legislation made things easier or more difficult to access? Please provide some comments on your experiences as a relevant authority engaging with this legislation.

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

5.3 Are you aware of what support is available to you when engaging with this legislation, and how you can access this? Please provide comments where possible.

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

**Please email the completed template by 30 June 2025 to [community.empowerment@gov.scot](mailto:community.empowerment@gov.scot)**

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Asset Transfer Policy Manager at [Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot](mailto:Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot)



**Participation Requests Reporting Template 2024/25 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 2024 to 31 March 2025. 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 2025, whether using this template or not.

**Please provide information in the sections below and email the completed template by 30 June 2025 to [community.empowerment@gov.scot](mailto:community.empowerment@gov.scot).**

**Section One – Public Service Authority Information**

Organisation: NHS Highland

Completed by: Nathan Ware                      Role: Governance & Corporate Records Manager

Email: [nathan.ware@nhs.scot](mailto:nathan.ware@nhs.scot)

Date of completion: May 2025

Are you the Participation Request Lead Contact for the organisation: NO

If not please provide the name, job title and email address for the lead contact for any queries: Marie McIlwraith, [marie.mcilwraith@nhs.scot](mailto:marie.mcilwraith@nhs.scot)



**Section 2: Participation Request Data for 2024/25**

**Please complete following overview table:**

<b>Total new applications received in 2024-25</b>	<b>Total applications received prior to 1 April 2022 which were still to be determined at 1 April 2025</b>	<b>Number of accepted applications in 2024-25</b>	<b>Number of applications agreed in 2024-25</b>	<b>Number of applications refused in 2024-25</b>
None	None	None	None	None

2.1 Please provide details of Participation Requests received using the legislation and outwith the legislation in 2023/24 which resulted in changes to public services provided by or on behalf of your public service authority and tell us about those changes:

<b>Name of Community Participation Body</b>	<b>Was the Participation Request successful? (Y/N)</b>	<b>Previous way of working</b>	<b>Way of working following changes</b>	<b>What difference did those changes make for the users of the service? Did they improve service user experiences or outcomes?</b>	<b>Details of any participation requests considered outwith the formal process e.g. agreements reached that resulted in changes to services.</b>
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) and how the community participation body was involved in it, or details of any wider benefits, such as improved community engagement and ongoing participation.**

### **Section Three – Partnership Working & Promotion of Participation Requests**

**3.1 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?***

NHS Highland's services engage with third sector and other partners relevant to the topic they wish to engage on. We are not aware of any services having engaged with external organisations about participation requests.

**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).***

NHS Highland has a web page specifically dedicated to Community Empowerment. Information on this web page provides a clear definition of what constitutes a Participation Request, clarity on who can make one, how to do so, contact details of local District/Locality Managers and contact details for a single point of contact. The website confirms that the Board Secretary has been designated the first point of contact for Participation Requests. The website details the process which would be followed, together with the associated timeframes. It also provides access to Scottish Government guidance. [Participation requests | NHS Highland \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/participation-requests/) |

**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.***

NHS Highland has made the application process more accessible by making the application form fully online so that applicants can fill it in and submit on screen to cut out the need for email. We have also offered the option of contacting NHS Highland to arrange for someone to complete the form for people unable to complete it themselves. We also offer the form in large print.

We have shared access to the forms through social media channels.

**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 Board’s Engagement Framework that was approved in 2022 is due to be refreshed this year. The Framework sets out how services should engage with communities, both around service change and more general ongoing engagement to inform service improvement. It was developed in partnership with patients, carers and communities, who were members of a working group which drafted the Framework. We plan to follow a similar format for the Framework’s review. In November 2024, we launched our new engagement online platform, [The Engagement Hub](#). The Engagement Hub will become the centre point for most of our engagement activities, creating a one stop shop for people to come and participate in the things that matter most to them. Early engagement on the Hub has focused on shaping our equalities strategies and developing the Engagement Hub site, using [feedback](#) from participants. We plan to continue to develop this space in partnership with others, to ensure it is an interesting and accessible space for people to use, both internally and within communities. We also plan to continue to engage and develop our engagement practice in other ways, collaboratively with partners, to ensure engagement is available to everyone.

We are now developing training, guidance and templates to support services to engage well both via the Engagement Hub and in other ways, and are building a network of groups and individuals with whom services can engage on different topics. Work is ongoing to promote Care Opinion as a way for patients to share their stories and contribute to improvement.

**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.**

Please see above.

**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?*

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

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

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

**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.*

- 5.1 Has the legislation made things easier or more difficult to access? Please provide some comments on your experiences as a public service authority engaging with this legislation.
- 5.2 Where can things be further improved, and what needs to change?
- 5.3 Are you aware of what support is available to you when engaging with this legislation, and how you can access this? Please provide comments where possible.
- 5.4 What would you like to see now, to further empower Scotland's communities?

Completed by: Marie McIlwraith

Role: Engagement Manager

Email: [marie.mcilwraith@nhs.scot](mailto:marie.mcilwraith@nhs.scot)

Date of completion: May 2025

**Please email the completed template by 30 June 2025 to [community.empowerment@gov.scot](mailto:community.empowerment@gov.scot)**

If you have any queries please contact Malcolm Cowie, Participation Request Policy Manager at [Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot](mailto:Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot)