

Getting in on the Act

Communities across Scotland can now make use of The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. This quick summary should help you to get started on finding out how you can use the Act, whether you are a practitioner or a community member.



Most significant parts of the Act

Part 1: National Outcomes

The Scottish Government sets itself a set of broad outcomes such as making Scotland healthier, safer and fairer. The Act requires Scottish Ministers to consult the people of Scotland on these outcomes and report on how it is meeting these outcomes.

The [Scotland Performs webpage](http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms) contains the current National Performance Framework (NPF) with 16 National Outcomes. <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms>

Part 2: Community Planning

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) bring different public bodies and other local agencies together to plan services better. The Act makes Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) a legal requirement and requires them to involve community organisations at all stages of community planning. Tackling inequalities will be a specific focus, and CPPs will have to produce "locality plans" at a more local level for areas experiencing particular disadvantage.

The [Plain English guide](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/4607) may be a start for those who are unfamiliar with community planning. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/4607>

[This page](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP/statbasis) on Scottish Government website sums up the main provisions around community planning. <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP/statbasis>

Part 3: Participation requests

This is a new way for communities to have their voices heard in how services are planned and delivered. By making a participation request, a community body can start a formal discussion with public bodies about how to improve local outcomes. Public bodies must agree to the request or give good reason why not.

The best place to start is the [summary guidance](http://www.scdc.org.uk/news/article/participation-request-summary-guidance/). <http://www.scdc.org.uk/news/article/participation-request-summary-guidance/>

Part 4: Community rights to buy land

Rural communities have already had the right to buy privately owned land and buildings that the owner is willing to sell. Now, the Act enables urban communities to do this and owners can now be forced to sell land and buildings which are abandoned, neglected or detrimental to the environmental wellbeing of the community.

Information leaflets and other guidance on community right to buy are contained on [this Scottish Government page](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Rural/rural-land/right-to-buy/CommunityGovernmentpage). <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Rural/rural-land/right-to-buy/Community>

Part 5: Asset transfer

This part of the Act introduces a right for community bodies to make requests to all local authorities, Scottish Ministers and a wide-ranging list of public bodies, for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of. They can request ownership, lease or other rights, as they wish.

A good source of support on asset transfer and community ownership is the [Community Ownership Support Service \(COSS\)](http://www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk/). <http://www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk/>

Other bits of the Act

- **Part 6: Delegation of Forestry Commissioners' Functions** - allows for different types of community body to be involved in forestry leasing.
- **Part 7: Football Clubs** - The Act paved the way for future legislation to make it easier for football supporters to have a role in decision-making and ownership of their football clubs.
- **Part 8: Common Good Property** - Places a statutory duty on local authorities to establish and maintain a register of all property held by them for the common good. It also requires local authorities to publish their proposals and consult community bodies before disposing of or changing the use of common good assets.
- **Part 9: Allotments** - Updates and simplifies legislation on allotments, and requires local authorities to develop a food growing strategy for their area, including identifying land that may be used as allotment sites community growing.
- **Part 10: Participation in Public Decision-Making** - A new regulation-making power enabling Ministers to require Scottish public authorities to promote and facilitate the participation of members of the public in the decisions and activities of the authority, including in the allocation of its resources (otherwise known as [participatory budgeting](#)).
- **Part 11: Non-Domestic Rates** - Provides for a new power for councils to create and fund their own localised business rates relief schemes.

Further info

For more general and up to date information and contacts a good general page is the FAQ page on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/CommunityEmpowermentBillFAQs>

The Full Act is here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>