

# Rhoda Grant MSP submission of 3 October 2023

## PE1902/F: To allow an appeal process for Community Participation Requests

As you are aware, I spoke at the last hearing of this petition. I still believe that Caithness Health Action Group (CHAT) should be recognised as a community organisation under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

I appreciate the findings by Glasgow Caledonian University in respect to the low numbers of participation requests submitted and whether in light of that an appeals process was needed. However, CHAT is one prime example of how this one aspect of law has failed the very people it is intended to help. CHAT is widely seen in Caithness as an advocate – as well as a campaign group - for Caithness health provision.

In my view CHAT do not only deserve a role representing their community to NHS Highland under this Act but they have earned a place at the table due to their work advocating for the County.

This petition was submitted in 2021 and since then, NHS Highland have admitted that improvements are indeed necessary to the provision of healthcare in Caithness. An example being the review into women's services earlier this year and there are other examples in relation to mental health, maternity and orthopaedics. I would request the Committee to ask NHS Highland whether they would consider accepting CHAT now as a community organisation.

Additionally considering the views previously stated by the Committee, I would ask that they keep the petition open until the Scottish Community Development Centre have published their proposals on an appeals process which would allow the Committee the opportunity to scrutinise these proposals.

Thank you for considering this evidence.