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# Allotments Fact Sheet

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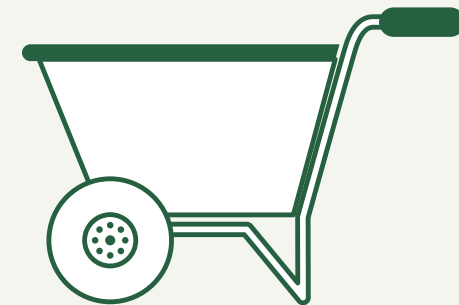
Allotments are brilliant places to grow your own food, make friends and build community, to learn, share ideas and relax. With the climate crisis and both physical and mental health crises affecting many people in Scotland, it is more important than ever that we get growing together to build resilience and community.

Growing spaces are in demand. But the waiting lists for allotments are long, the legislation confusing, and allotment rules can be intimidating.

Here, we are trying to answer some of the questions that often come up in regard to allotments - for example, what our rights are, how we get a plot and what to do about the long waiting time.

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## 1. Main points/ TL;DR

- Under the **Community Empowerment Act 2015 (Scotland)**, local authorities in Scotland have the duty to provide an allotment to anyone who would like one. A standard plot is 250 square metres for the purpose of growing vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. (You can ask for a smaller plot if 250 square metres is too big for you.)
- You should **not be on a waiting list for longer than 5 years** (Section 112 of the Community Empowerment Act).
- Rents for allotments should be **fair and include services provided by the local authority** (for example water, toilets) and consider the circumstances of the person paying the rent (Section 115 of the Empowerment Act).
- Allotment tenants can be both **individuals or groups**.
- We need to **put pressure on local authorities to fulfil their duty** to provide more allotment spaces, through campaigning efforts and grassroots action to make our voices heard.



## 2. What is the legislation around allotments?

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is a piece of legislation by the Scottish Parliament which aims to empower communities to own and control more land and buildings in Scotland. The act has 11 parts which cover different aspects of community empowerment and public participation in planning and policy.

Part 9 of the Act is about allotments. It aims to simplify and update the legislation around allotments and importantly, it asks local authorities to take reasonable steps to provide allotments if waiting lists exceed certain trigger points. Section 112 of the Act states that a person entering a waiting list should not remain on it for a continuous period of more than 5 years. Reasonable steps the council should be taking are:

- 1. Analyse the demand for allotments*
- 2. Disseminate information*
- 3. Develop partnership working*
- 4. Identify all land in the area that is suitable for growing*
- 5. Ensure there is sufficient suitable land to satisfy future demand*

The Act also requires that local authorities develop a food growing strategy through which they identify land that could be used both as allotments and for community growing purposes.

### **DUTIES LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE UNDER THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT:**

- To take reasonable steps to provide allotments.
- To establish and maintain a list of persons requesting an allotment.
- To take reasonable steps to provide an allotment within five years.

### **YOUR RIGHTS:**

- You can request to be put on the local authority waiting list for an allotment.
- You can specify the size of the plot if you want less than a standard plot of 250 square metres.
- You can cultivate the allotment as you wish but you must follow the rules and regulations for the site that the allotment association has agreed with the Council.
- You are allowed to sell surplus vegetables and fruit grown on your allotment, as long as you don't intend to make a profit (Section 131 of the Empowerment Act).
- You should not have to wait more than 5 years for a plot. However, many waiting lists are longer than this. The Council should have made Regulations by April 2020 and then has 8 years to provide enough allotments to reduce waiting times to five years. However, the Council has not yet produced any Regulations

### 3. How do I get a plot?

To take on a plot on a council-owned site, you need to contact Glasgow City Council and ask to be put on their waiting list. They may point you to the waiting lists held by the different allotment sites. For all the Glasgow City Council sites, you can contact Sandy Paterson who is Glasgow City Council's Liaison Officer for allotments.

•Phone: 0141 287 4198  
•Email: [Alexander.Paterson@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:Alexander.Paterson@glasgow.gov.uk)  
•Post: Sandy Paterson, Natural Environment Officer, 4th Floor, Exchange House, 231 George St. Glasgow G1 2RX.  
•Further information about council-run allotments is available on the Glasgow City Council website



Independent allotment sites may have eligibility criteria, for example living within a certain postcode. You should be able to find out if a site is owned by the council or privately and if there are any eligibility criteria by visiting the website of the allotment in question or emailing its secretary.

Once you reach the top of the waiting list, the allotment committee will contact you and invite you for a site visit to look at available plots.

You can find more info on how to apply for an allotment and what to do when you are offered one on Glasgow Allotment Forum's website.

### 4. What about the rules and regulations that come with allotments?

You can cultivate your plot as you wish but you must follow the rules and regulations for the site that the allotment association has agreed with the Council. Every allotment site has specific rules in regards to the level of maintenance of individual plots and general behaviour on the site. Generally, this is to ensure that plots stay in active use and that everyone gets on well with each other. Unfortunately, some rules can be quite outdated and go back to war times when plots had to be used more efficiently.

### 5. I have been on a waiting list for several years – what should I do?

The Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 requires local authorities to provide more allotment sites if there are people on waiting lists for longer than 5 years. This means that Glasgow City Council should be identifying sufficient suitable land and helping communities to set up new allotment sites.

You can find a map with contact details for each of the 32 allotments in Glasgow on Glasgow Allotment Forum's website.

Most allotment sites in Glasgow are owned by the council and are open to applications by anyone living in the city. You can apply as an individual or as a group. You don't need to apply to the site nearest to where you live. However, you should make sure you apply through the Council so you are on their waiting list.



It is important to keep up pressure on the council to make sure this happens, through joint campaigning efforts with others or through talking to your local councillor. You could also get in touch with your MSP to ask them to update the legislation.

You can write letters, email or phone councillors or MSPs or provide input into proposals including planning applications and new policies. You can also use social media or speak up at public events, as well as school, housing and community council meetings. This feedback can make a real difference by raising awareness of barriers to accessing land and food growing.

Please consider joining campaigning efforts that are happening around the demand for more allotment and community growing spaces. Glasgow Allotment Forum held an Action for New Allotments Webinar in October 2020. As a result of this a campaigning group **'The Peoples Plot'** has been formed and are mobilising efforts around this issue.

You can also contact Sandy Paterson who is Glasgow City Council's Liaison Officer for allotments and growing (see address in section 3)

Please also consider taking part in the Scottish Allotment and Gardens Society's survey to ascertain how urgent the need for allotments in Scotland is and how to best keep pressure up on local authorities to provide more growing spaces (info in section 6).

You might also want to look into some community growing initiatives in the meantime, some organisations allow individuals to try out growing in their own raised beds. For example, South Seeds and Urban Roots run "Adopt-a-bed" schemes for people living in the Southside.

## 7. Resources and further reading

**Allotments – Further Guidance for Local Authorities** – Part 9 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 can be found at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

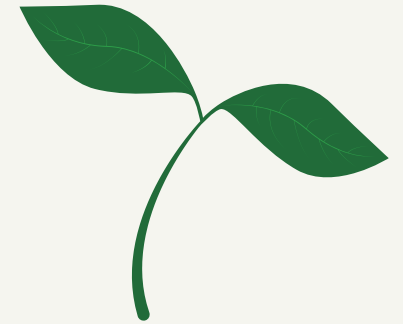
**Allotments: duty to prepare a food growing strategy - guidance for local authorities**, can be found at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**On the waiting list? | Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society** - survey to scope out the extent of people on the waiting list for allotments can be found at [scottishallotments.org/waiting-list](http://scottishallotments.org/waiting-list)

**Glasgow Allotments Forum** - useful info for any allotmenters in Glasgow, including new plot-holders, can be found at [glasgowallotments.org](http://glasgowallotments.org)

**The People's Plot** - campaigning group for more food growing spaces in Glasgow, can be found at [thepeoplesplot.wordpress.com](http://thepeoplesplot.wordpress.com)

**Glasgow Community Food Network** - organisation supporting and connecting anyone in Glasgow that grows, produces and eats food, can be found at [glasgowfood.net](http://glasgowfood.net)



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This fact sheet was made by:

