

Draft Possible Submission to Aberdeenshire Council: Concerns Regarding the “Education and Children’s Services Facilities Hire Agreement”

We wish to raise concerns about the newly introduced *Education and Children’s Services Facilities Hire Agreement*, which we believe is not fit for purpose in supporting sensible and inclusive community development across Aberdeenshire.

In particular, the requirement for each individual group to hold £5 million in Public Liability Insurance and to obtain their own performing rights licences creates unrealistic barriers for many local organisations. Other elements of the agreement are similarly onerous and risk deterring community use of these vital facilities.

One possible solution would be the creation of local *Neighbourhood Facility Development Management Teams*, made up of locally elected community representatives working in partnership with council officers. These teams would be accountable to their communities and could coordinate facility use, provide umbrella insurance cover, and offer a simplified, community-friendly application process.

We believe this approach would not only remove unnecessary barriers for local groups, but also lead to a more efficient use of community facilities. In turn, this is likely to increase overall usage and generate greater revenue—benefiting both the Council and the wider community.

Furthermore, if these local management teams are structured with sufficient independence from Aberdeenshire Council, they may also be eligible to attract external grant funding. This could unlock additional resources to support improvements, programming, and the long-term sustainability of community facilities.

We respectfully urge Aberdeenshire Council to review the current agreement, with a view to making public facilities more accessible, better utilised, and more financially resilient through community-led, collaborative solutions.

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