1. Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

MAKING BETTER AND FAIRER DECISIONS

A. Proposal

1. Title of proposal

Community Right to Buy Scheme in Wales

2. What is your proposal aiming to achieve?

The proposed Community Right to Buy Scheme aims to strengthen the ability of communities to shape the future of assets that are important to local people. The Scheme would enable eligible community organisations to nominate assets that provide community benefit for inclusion on a register. Where a registered asset is subsequently offered for sale, an eligible community organisation could seek an opportunity to acquire that asset through a statutory right of first refusal. The Scheme would not itself provide funding for acquisition.

The Scheme is intended to support long-term community stewardship, resilience and local wellbeing, and to complement existing community asset transfer and placemaking arrangements by helping communities retain social, cultural and economic benefits within their area.

The Welsh Government has prioritised this Scheme as a Programme for Government commitment for this Senedd term and it is intended that a Bill will be introduced as part of the first phase of the legislative programme.

Wales does not currently have a statutory Community Right to Buy framework comparable to arrangements operating elsewhere in the UK. While community assets can and have been obtained in Wales, they can take decades to reach fruition. This means valuable assets that could deliver tangible benefits to a community are being lost due to communities being locked out of purchases, protracted timescales, high market rates, or a lack of knowledge by a community group. Putting a community right to buy on a statutory footing would rebalance the power between communities and asset owners and actively promote the use of underutilised buildings or land for the benefit of the community.

3. When did work start on the proposal?

Summer 2026

4. Which organisations, groups or communities are likely to be affected?

- Community Groups and Organisations including community and town councils, charities, community benefit societies etc.

- Asset owners including Local Authorities, Welsh Government sponsored bodies and other public bodies, private sector owners, third sector owners
- Support organisations including Cwmpas, Ystadau Cymru, community support organisations
- Communities and residents
- Public Sector partners

B. Impact on, and engagement with, people in protected groups

Lack of evidence is not a reason for not assessing equality impact.

AGE

1. **What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.**

Evidence from the Senedd's 2022 inquiry into community assets (Inquiry into community assets), the Community Asset Task and Finish Group report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf), stakeholder workshops and surveys indicates that community assets play an important role in supporting people of all ages. Community centres, libraries, youth facilities, recreational spaces and community hubs provide opportunities for social interaction, learning, volunteering and recreation. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of protecting spaces that support young people's development and reduce social isolation amongst older people.

Evidence suggests that volunteering participation varies across age groups. Younger adults are generally less likely to participate in formal volunteering than older adults, while retired people and those aged 65-74 have historically shown some of the highest rates of volunteering in Wales. (National Survey for Wales, 2016-17: Volunteering and caring / WCVA Youth volunteering and Welsh schools - Paper-1.pdf) Community ownership and management of assets may therefore provide opportunities for older people and retirees to contribute their skills, experience and time, and to have access to valued assets. There may also be opportunities to encourage greater participation by younger people through involvement in the governance, development and use of community assets.

Survey responses also highlighted the benefits of education and skills development, particularly for young people that can be derived from community held land and buildings. Also, the Plunkett UK's 2026 impact report was signposted (Plunkett-Impact-Report-2026.pdf) which shows that over half of community-owned businesses employ young people aged 16 – 25.

Evidence from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales indicates that digital exclusion remains a significant issue for older people, particularly those aged 75 and over, with around one-third estimated to be digitally excluded. Older people report

difficulties accessing healthcare, banking and other everyday services as organisations increasingly move towards digital-first delivery models. Barriers include affordability, lack of digital skills and confidence, and concerns about online security, creating risks of social exclusion, reduced independence and poorer access to essential services. (olderpeople.wales - Older People's Commissioner for Wales (2024), *Access Denied: Older People's Experiences of Digital Exclusion in Wales)*.

2. **Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?**

   No evidence suggests the policy will have a negative impact based on age. However, limited evidence is available on the extent to which younger people currently participate in community ownership initiatives and governance structures in Wales.

3. **Who have you engaged with, why and how?**

   Engagement has been undertaken with community organisations, local authorities, community ownership practitioners and support organisations through workshops, stakeholder surveys and policy discussions. Stakeholders were asked to identify who benefits from community assets and whether any groups could face barriers in accessing the Scheme. The stakeholder survey was adapted to seek views specifically from young people.

4. **How has evidence affected your proposal?**

   Evidence reinforced the importance of community assets as spaces for intergenerational activity, education, recreation and social support. This has informed the focus on retaining assets that provide broad community benefit and ensuring eligibility criteria recognise social and wellbeing outcomes.

5. **What are the likely impacts of the proposal?**

   The policy is expected to have a positive impact on younger and older people by helping to retain facilities and services that support learning, recreation, community participation and social connections. No direct negative impacts have been identified.

6. **What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?**

   Guidance and engagement activity will encourage community groups to consider the needs of different age groups when developing community benefit proposals. Opportunities will also be explored to encourage participation by younger people and older people in community ownership and governance.

   As the policy develops further, we will continue to seek views to identify whether any communities could experience barriers in accessing the Scheme and will take steps to resolve these.

   Digital exclusion of older people is recognised as a potential barrier, where we may need to provide additional support if processes are reliant on digital access.

DISABILITY

7. **What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.**

   Stakeholder feedback highlighted that community assets frequently provide services, support networks and opportunities for participation for disabled people. This reflects wider evidence in Wales that disabled people continue to face barriers to participation in community life and accessing services. Welsh Government research has highlighted the importance of accessible and inclusive environments in enabling disabled people to live independently and participate fully in their communities. (Evidence sources: Locked Out (Welsh Government, 2021) - Locked out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19 | GOV.WALES; Disability Rights Taskforce recommendations 2025 - Recommendations of the Disability Rights Taskforce | GOV.WALES
   ; Framework for Action on Independent Living - Action on disability: the right to independent living framework and action plan | GOV.WALES).

   Evidence from community ownership organisations suggests that community-led ownership can create opportunities to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of local facilities. Our stakeholder survey identified disabled people, including people with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and neurodivergent people, as groups whose needs should be actively considered in the design and implementation of the Scheme. Respondents highlighted the importance of accessible assets, information and processes, and recognised that some individuals may require additional support to nominate assets or participate in the Scheme.

8. **Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?**

   Limited evidence is available on the specific accessibility characteristics of assets that may be registered under the Scheme. Further information would only become available during implementation.

9. **Who have you engaged with, why and how?**

   Engagement has included community organisations, local authorities and third-sector stakeholders through workshops and surveys. Views have been, and continue to be, sought regarding access to and participation in the Scheme.

10. **How has evidence affected your proposal?**

    The evidence highlighted the importance of ensuring the Scheme is accessible and that community assets continue to support disabled people. Consideration will be given to accessible guidance, communications and implementation arrangements.

11. **What are the likely impacts of the proposal?**

    The policy is expected to have a positive impact by helping to protect assets that provide services, activities and social support for disabled people. Retaining community facilities may help support participation, inclusion and independent living. Although no direct negative impacts have been identified, barriers could arise if information,

guidance, nomination processes or engagement activities are not designed to be accessible.

12. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Implementation will seek to ensure that information, guidance and engagement materials are accessible.

Eligible community organisations will be able to express an interest and use a protected period to undertake due diligence, prepare business plans (which would include consideration of accessibility) and secure funding.

Opportunities to support accessibility and inclusion through the management and development of community assets will continue to be considered.

As the policy develops further, we will continue to seek views to identify whether any communities could experience barriers in accessing the Scheme and will take steps to resolve these.

RACE

13. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Stakeholder engagement highlighted the role community assets can play in supporting diverse communities through cultural activities, advice services, community events and opportunities for social participation. This reflects wider Welsh Government evidence that ethnic minority communities can experience barriers to participation and access to opportunities and services, and that inclusive community spaces can play an important role in supporting community cohesion and wellbeing. Evidence from community ownership organisations also suggests that community-led ownership can help communities shape local facilities to meet local needs.

Our stakeholder survey identified ethnic minority communities as groups whose needs should be actively considered in the design and implementation of the Scheme. Respondents highlighted the importance of safe, accessible and welcoming community spaces and noted that some groups may face barriers because of differing levels of organisational capacity, awareness and access to resources.

(Sources: Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Is Wales Fairer? | EHRC; National Survey for Wales - National Survey for Wales | GOV.WALES; Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: 2024 update | GOV.WALES)

14. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence on current levels of participation in community ownership activities by different ethnic groups in Wales. The impact on specific communities will depend on local circumstances and uptake of the Scheme.

15. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken through workshops and surveys and included organisations with an interest in equality, community development and community ownership. Engagement sought views on who may benefit from, or face barriers to, the proposals.

16. How has evidence affected your proposal?

Evidence noted above highlighted the importance of ensuring that a broad range of communities can access the Scheme and that barriers to awareness and participation are minimised through guidance and outreach.

17. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

The policy is expected to have a positive impact by helping to retain community spaces that support cultural activities, advice services, social networks and community cohesion. These assets may be particularly important for some ethnic minority communities in providing opportunities for participation and connection. No direct adverse impacts have been identified, although some communities may face practical barriers to participation if awareness, accessibility or support needs are not adequately addressed.

18. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Communications and engagement activity will seek to reach a diverse range of communities. As the policy develops further, we will continue to seek views to identify whether any communities could experience barriers in accessing the Scheme and will take steps to resolve these.

RELIGION, BELIEF OR NON-BELIEF

19. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Stakeholder engagement indicates that community assets support a wide range of activities linked to faith, belief, culture and community participation. Community facilities are frequently used by faith groups and organisations serving people from different religious and non-religious backgrounds. Wider evidence on community cohesion and participation suggests that accessible local facilities can play an important role in supporting social connections, cultural expression and community activity across diverse communities

(Sources: Census - Office for National Statistics; Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Is Wales Fairer?; National Survey for Wales)

20. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

Limited evidence is available on the specific number or type of assets currently used by faith or belief groups that may be affected by the proposals. No evidence of adverse impacts has been identified.

21. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has been undertaken with community organisations, local authorities and third-sector stakeholders through workshops and surveys. This provided opportunities for stakeholders to highlight potential impacts on different groups and communities.

22. How has evidence affected your proposal?

Evidence captured through stakeholder engagement has reinforced the importance of ensuring that the Scheme remains inclusive and focuses on community benefit regardless of religion, belief or non-belief.

23. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

The policy is expected to have a positive impact by helping communities retain assets that support faith-based activities, cultural events and wider community use. These facilities can provide important opportunities for participation, social connection and community cohesion. No negative impacts have been identified, and the proposals apply equally regardless of religion, belief or non-belief.

24. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts? The Scheme will be implemented on a non-discriminatory basis. Guidance and engagement will encourage participation from communities with different faiths, beliefs and non-belief backgrounds to ensure equitable access to opportunities under the Scheme. As the policy develops further, we will continue to seek views to identify whether any communities could experience barriers in accessing the Scheme and will take steps to resolve these.

SEX

25. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Evidence from stakeholder workshops and surveys, the Community Asset Commission Task and Finish Group Final Report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf) and the Senedd community assets inquiry (Inquiry into community assets) shows that community assets support activities including volunteering, recreation, local services and community participation. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of representative governance and ensuring that decisions are not concentrated among a small number of people. Public Health Wales's submission to the Senedd Inquiry into Community Assets identifies community empowerment, participation, social relationships and greater control over decisions

affecting people's lives as relevant to wellbeing. However, the evidence reviewed does not identify a specific differential impact on the basis of sex. Evidence relating to community ownership suggests that volunteer availability, governance capacity and available time may influence participation, although impacts by sex are uncertain.

26. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence on participation in community ownership and asset governance by sex in Wales. It is also unclear whether caring responsibilities, working patterns or differences in available time may affect participation. Further evidence may emerge through consultation, stakeholder engagement and ongoing policy development.

27. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has taken place through stakeholder workshops, surveys and discussions with community organisations, local authorities and support bodies. Participants were asked who might benefit from the Scheme, who might face barriers and what support communities may require. The engagement was not designed to provide a representative breakdown of views by sex.

28. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence gained through stakeholder engagement has reinforced the importance of proportionate participation requirements, representative community governance and accessible engagement. Detailed eligibility, governance and support arrangements remain subject to consultation.

29. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

No direct impact based on sex has been identified. The proposals may help retain or repurpose assets that support volunteering, recreation, community activity and local services.

However, participation could be affected by differences in available time, caring responsibilities or access to established community networks. There is not currently enough evidence to determine whether either sex would be disproportionately affected.

30. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Consultation responses will be reviewed for evidence of differential impacts. Further consideration will be given to proportionate application requirements, inclusive engagement and the monitoring of participation, subject to the final Scheme design.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

31. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Evidence from stakeholder workshops and surveys, the Community Asset Commission Task and Finish Group Final Report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf) and the Senedd community assets inquiry (Inquiry into community assets) shows that community assets can provide places for community activity, support, culture and social participation. The evidence reviewed has not identified an impact specifically linked to gender reassignment.

32. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence about participation in community ownership by people with this protected characteristic or whether they face particular barriers to taking part. Further evidence may emerge through consultation.

33. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has taken place through stakeholder workshops, surveys and discussions with community organisations, local authorities and support bodies. This engagement considered potential beneficiaries, barriers and support needs. No targeted engagement has been undertaken specifically with people with this protected characteristic or representative organisations.

34. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence gathered through stakeholder engagement has reinforced the importance of inclusive community engagement, transparent decision-making and accessible participation. These matters will continue to be considered as eligibility, governance and implementation arrangements are developed.

35. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

No direct differential impact relating to gender reassignment has been identified. The proposals may help retain or repurpose inclusive community spaces used for community activity and support.

However, the effect would depend on the assets involved, their future use and the inclusiveness of community decision-making.

36. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Consultation responses will be reviewed for relevant evidence. Consideration will be given to inclusive guidance and engagement and to whether further targeted evidence is needed before the EqIA is revised.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

37. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Evidence from stakeholder workshops and surveys, the Community Asset Commission Task and Finish Group Final Report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf) and the Senedd community assets inquiry (Inquiry into community assets) shows that community assets can support social participation, cultural activity, community groups and access to local services. The evidence reviewed has not identified an impact specifically linked to sexual orientation.

38. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence about participation in community ownership by sexual orientation or whether particular groups face barriers to accessing community assets or governance structures. Further evidence may emerge through consultation.

39. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has taken place through stakeholder workshops, surveys and discussions with community organisations, local authorities, businesses and support bodies. No targeted engagement has been undertaken specifically with representative organisations for this protected characteristic.

40. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence gathered through stakeholder engagement has reinforced the importance of inclusive community benefit, representative governance and accessible participation. These matters will continue to be considered as the detailed Scheme is developed.

41. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

No direct differential impact relating to sexual orientation has been identified. The proposals may help retain or repurpose community spaces used for social participation, community activity and local support.

The effect would depend on the assets involved, their future use and whether community decision-making is inclusive.

42. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Consultation responses will be reviewed for evidence of differential impacts. Consideration will be given to inclusive engagement and guidance and to any need for further targeted evidence.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

43. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Evidence from stakeholder workshops and surveys, the Community Asset Commission Task and Finish Group Final Report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf) and the Senedd community assets inquiry (Inquiry into community assets) shows that community assets can support family activities, recreation, social participation and access to local facilities and services. Stakeholders identified community centres, family facilities and community hubs as assets that may provide community benefit. The evidence does not establish specific impacts on pregnancy or maternity.

44. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence about the specific experiences of pregnant people and people on maternity leave in relation to community ownership. It is also unclear whether caring responsibilities, childcare, accessibility, transport or the timing of engagement could affect participation.

45. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has taken place through stakeholder workshops, surveys and discussions with community organisations, local authorities and support bodies. Participants were asked about community benefit, barriers to participation and the types of assets that communities value. No targeted engagement has been undertaken specifically with pregnant people, people on maternity leave or representative organisations.

46. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence gathered through stakeholder engagement has reinforced the importance of accessible engagement and recognising the potential community benefit of assets used by families. The detailed community benefit and implementation arrangements remain subject to consultation.

47. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

The proposals may have positive effects where they help retain or repurpose assets used for family activities, local services and social participation.

No direct adverse impact has been identified. However, participation could be affected if engagement and application processes do not take account of accessibility, caring responsibilities or available time.

48. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Consultation responses will be reviewed for relevant evidence. Accessible engagement methods and proportionate processes will be considered as the final Scheme is developed.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

49. What evidence is available and what is its source? Include the findings from any engagement.

Evidence from stakeholder workshops and surveys, the Community Asset Commission Task and Finish Group Final Report (community-asset-commission-task-finish-group-final-report-december-2025.pdf) and the Senedd community assets inquiry (Inquiry into community assets) has not identified an impact specifically linked to marriage or civil partnership status. The proposals concern the eligibility and activities of community organisations rather than an individual's marital or civil partnership status.

50. Is any evidence unavailable or uncertain?

There is limited evidence on marriage or civil partnership status and participation in community ownership. No evidence currently suggests that this status would affect eligibility or access to the proposed Scheme.

51. Who have you engaged with, why and how?

Engagement has taken place through stakeholder workshops, surveys and discussions with community organisations, local authorities and support bodies. No targeted engagement has been undertaken specifically in relation to marriage or civil partnership.

52. How has evidence affected your proposal?

The evidence noted above has not identified a need for a policy change specifically in relation to marriage or civil partnership. The emerging proposals are intended to operate irrespective of this status.

53. What are the likely impacts of the proposal?

No direct positive or negative impact has been identified in relation to marriage or civil partnership. No eligibility requirement based on this status is currently proposed.

54. What steps will you take to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

Consultation responses will be reviewed for any relevant evidence. No specific mitigation is identified as necessary at this stage.

C. Publication and Monitoring

1. **Is this EqIA ready for publication on the Welsh Government website?** Yes
2. **If you cannot publish the EqIA please explain why.**

   N/A
3. **Is this EqIA an update on a version previously published?**

   No
4. **How will you monitor and evaluate progress on the equality issues identified in this EqIA?**

   The EqIA will be reviewed following consultation and updated if legislation is taken forward. Consultation responses will be analysed for evidence of differential impacts, barriers to participation and suggested mitigation.

   Subject to the final design of the Scheme and data-protection requirements, future monitoring could consider:

   - the geographical distribution of nominations, registrations and acquisitions;
   - the types of organisations participating;
   - use of non-digital and accessible routes;
   - uptake of advice and support;
   - reasons organisations do not progress;
   - initial nominations versus completed registrations;
   - sale notifications;
   - expressions of interest;
   - progression to preferred purchaser status;
   - completed acquisitions;
   - withdrawal and non-progression reasons at each stage;
   - whether repeated requirements create disproportionate burdens;
   - use of digital and non-digital channels;
   - accessibility-related feedback, complaints, reviews and appeals; and
   - evidence of differential barriers affecting protected groups.

   The Scheme will not collect protected-characteristic data unless collection is necessary, proportionate and supported by an appropriate lawful basis. Alternative approaches, including periodic research and voluntary feedback, will be considered.

   Monitoring arrangements will be proportionate to the final Scheme and the information that can lawfully and practically be collected. The EqIA will be reviewed before any Bill is introduced and again as implementation arrangements are developed.

D. Authorisation

Declaration by the Deputy Director / Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):

I am satisfied that the impact of the proposal has been properly assessed and recorded in accordance with guidance, and that the requirement for publication has been duly considered.

Signature: Richard Baker

Department: Housing & Regeneration Directorate, Place Division

Date: 09 November 2026