



# The EU referendum result and the third sector

## Introduction

1. This briefing has been prepared for Assembly Members. It provides WCVA's initial comment on the implications for the third sector in Wales of the referendum vote to leave the European Union. WCVA has also published [a statement on the referendum result](#).
2. Wales now faces a period of unprecedented change. We will work with the third sector, as well as partners in Welsh Government and WEFO, to better understand the implications and support the sector going forward.

## Key issues for the third sector

### *The sector's role in building trust across communities*

1. The referendum vote showed different voting patterns by region, age and socio-economic background. There is a real danger that further divides will be opened in the wake of the referendum result, including divisions based on ethnicity and migration status.
2. The third sector has a key role to play in bringing people together, providing safe spaces to share differing views and to shape ideas together. A well connected sector can play a vital role in building trust and cohesion, including between citizens and public institutions.

### *EU Funds - stability and continuity*

3. The 2014-2020 EU Structural Funds programme in Wales commits over £58 million to third sector organisations. This funding is to tackle poverty in the poorest communities in Wales, including increasing skills and developing social enterprises. Third sector groups also receive funding from a range of other EU funding available in Wales.
4. This is crucial for the people who benefit from these projects. During the 2007-13 programme, third sector organisations directly supported over 100,000 people back into work, created over 150 new social enterprises and created over 1200 new jobs. Wales cannot afford for current projects to be put on hold.
5. There is now huge uncertainty facing groups currently in receipt of EU funding. Groups need urgent assurance that they will not be affected in the short term and that there will be an equivalent level of investment over the length of current programmes.

### *Involving the third sector in shaping our future*

6. At a time when many people say they feel out of control, it's more important than ever that groups right across the third sector are actively involved in debates to shape new relationships and priorities following the referendum.

We welcome [the First Minister's statement](#) yesterday. We call on all parties to support actions to seek immediate assurance that funding will continue for EU-funded projects across Wales, promote opportunities for the people of Wales to have their say in the future deals struck and to tackle any activity that divides communities, particularly race hate.

For more information, contact [Anna Nicholl](#), Director of Strategy and Sector Development, WCVA

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