

Brexit Snapshot Survey: Results March 2017



Background

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) is the national membership organisation for the third sector in Wales. We have 3,000 plus members across the length and breadth of Wales, with the majority working in the third sector.¹

To mark our inaugural **gofod3** event, taking place on Tuesday 7 March at Cardiff City Stadium, we have conducted a survey on the impact of Brexit, specifically focusing on the personal views of professionals working in our member organisations.

gofod3, a brand new third sector event for Wales, was conceived partly in response to the extraordinary and unprecedented social and political events of 2016, including the historic EU referendum result. Consequently, a members' only session entitled 'Brexit: what it means for the third sector in Wales' will be held at **gofod3**, chaired by Tom Jones OBE, Vice-President of WCVA and member of the European Economic and Social Committee. Contributions will also be heard from Jonathan Edwards MP, Wales Representative on the new Exiting the European Union House of Commons Select Committee; Emyr Lewis of Blake Morgan, an expert in public and constitutional law and EU procurement; and Dr Rachel Minto, of the Wales Governance Centre, who is researching the impact of Brexit on the devolved nations.

The **Brexit Snapshot Survey** complements this session, offering a rare insight into the personal views of third sector professionals on what is a challenging issue. The results of the survey will also be included in our written evidence submission to the new Exiting the European Union House of Commons Select Committee and its Inquiry into 'the UK's negotiating objectives for its withdrawal from the EU'.

Methodology

Held in the weeks prior to **gofod3**, this straightforward survey was developed using the Cardiff-based tech start up, DooPoll.² Twelve questions were asked in total, taking just over three and a half minutes to complete in full. The survey was disseminated to WCVA member organisations, in order to pass on to staff to garner their personal views on Brexit.

We received 375 responses in total, securing one of the highest response rates ever for a WCVA survey. All respondents were guaranteed confidentiality, with only one self-identifying question, which related to the sector in which they work. The majority of respondents (87%) work for the third sector (including charities and volunteering); 10% work in the public sector, while 3% work in the private sector.

¹ The third sector in Wales, which does vital work across the country and comprises over 33,000 organisations and almost one million volunteers, is estimated to be worth £3.7bn to the Welsh economy.

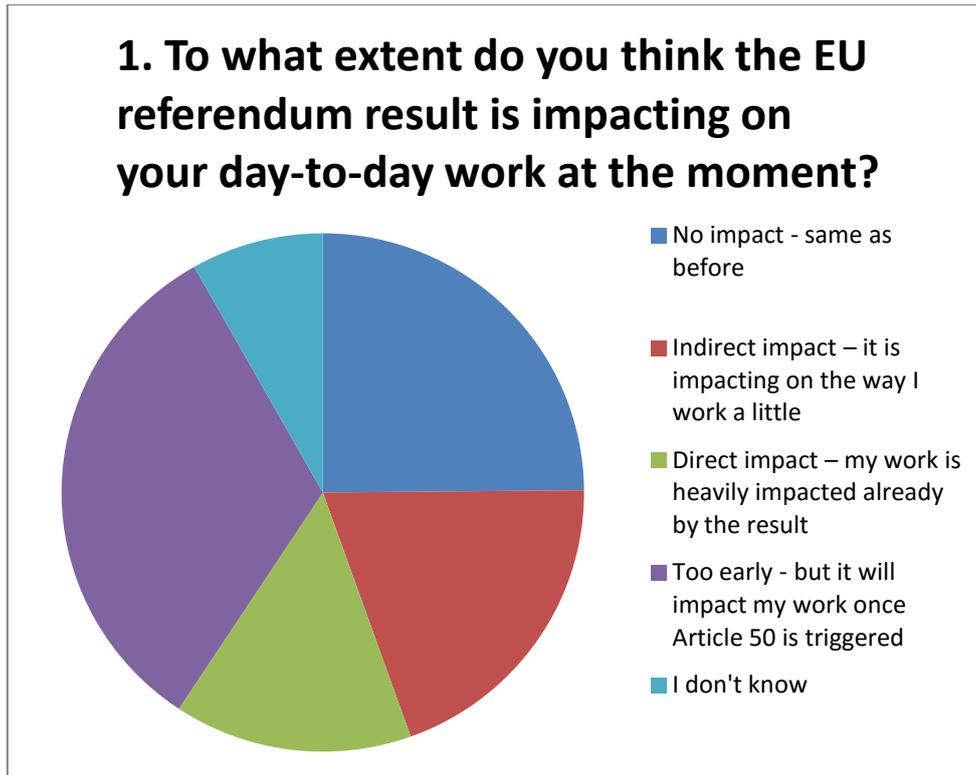
² More information about DooPoll can be found here: <http://doopoll.co/>

Headlines

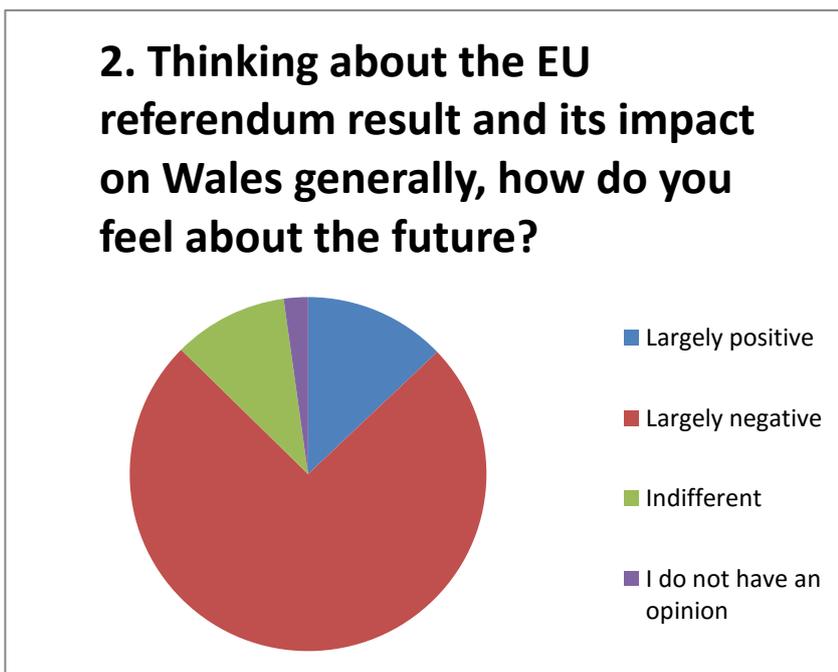
The **Brexit Snapshot Survey** provides an indication of the views held by professionals working for WCVA member organisations, the majority of whom work in the third sector.

- Over a third (the highest proportion of respondents in total) are already either indirectly or directly impacted by the EU referendum result, with as many of the opinion it is too early for it to have impacted on their work, but that this will change once Article 50 is triggered.
- Overwhelmingly, three quarters feel largely negative about the impact of the EU referendum result on Wales generally.
- Almost three quarters believe the EU referendum result has exposed deep rooted problems in our community and led to an increase in hate crime, with over a quarter seeing this for themselves.
- Professionals working in WCVA member organisations are more concerned with 'protecting existing social, economic, environmental and human rights' and 'building community cohesion and minimising hate crime' than 'safeguarding funding opportunities'.
- Almost three quarters believe EU funding to charities and volunteers have made a big difference to Wales.
- Three quarters believe the UK Government will not safeguard the interests of Wales during its Brexit negotiations with the EU.
- Soft Brexit is the favoured option, with Hard Brexit trailing far behind. Interestingly, almost a quarter are unable to take a position, which suggests they may not understand the difference between 'Hard Brexit' or 'Soft Brexit' and that more information needs to be provided for people to make an informed decision.
- Despite the timetable already laid out by the Prime Minister, the majority do not want Article 50 to be triggered.
- Over three-quarters are nervous about their own future prospects, now that the UK is set to leave the EU.
- Over half feel 'confident' or 'very confident' that their organisation is ready for the change ahead, with the majority feeling 'confident' because their organisation is usually resilient to change.
- Over half believe the third sector will survive the UK leaving the EU, though the majority of those think it will be much harder.
- Overwhelmingly, people want WCVA to provide direction and a clear standpoint on behalf of the third sector in the lead up to the UK leaving the EU.

Results

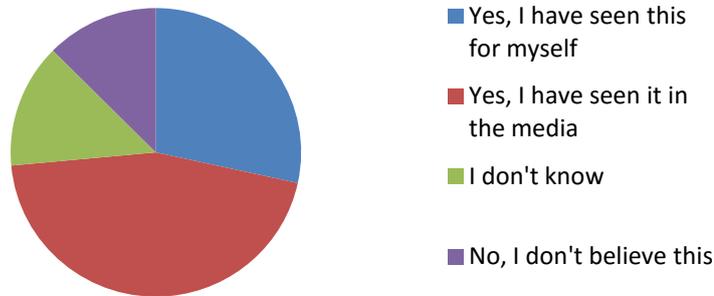


The most popular response was that, as yet, it is too early for the EU Referendum result to have impacted on day-to-day work, but that this will soon change once Article 50 is triggered. However, over a third of people (the highest proportion of respondents in total) are already either indirectly or directly impacted by the result, with just a quarter of respondents feeling the result has changed nothing in their day-to-day work.



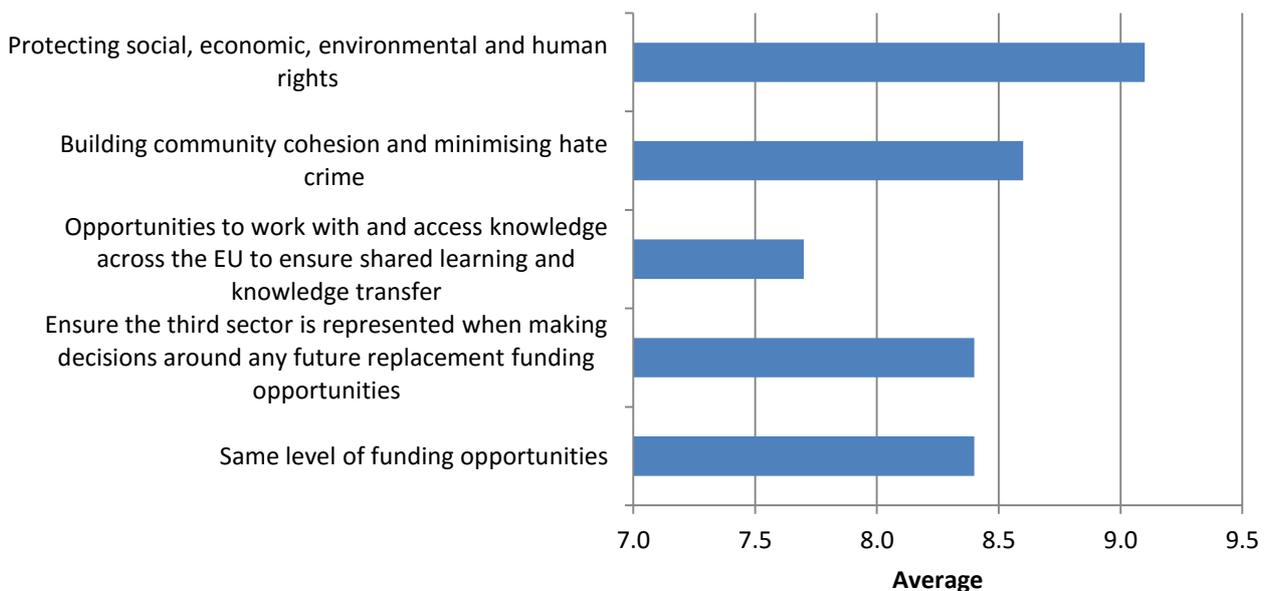
Overwhelmingly, **three quarters** of professionals working in WCVA member organisations feel largely negative about the impact of the EU Referendum result on **Wales generally**. Thirteen percent of respondents feel largely positive, with almost as many feeling indifferent.

3. Do you believe the EU referendum result has exposed deep rooted problems in our community and led to an increase in hate crime?



Almost three quarters of people working in WCVA member organisations believe this to be true - that the EU referendum result has exposed deep rooted problems in our community and led to an increase in hate crime. The majority claim they have come to this opinion based on what they have seen in the media, while over a quarter have seen for themselves community problems and an increase in hate crime.

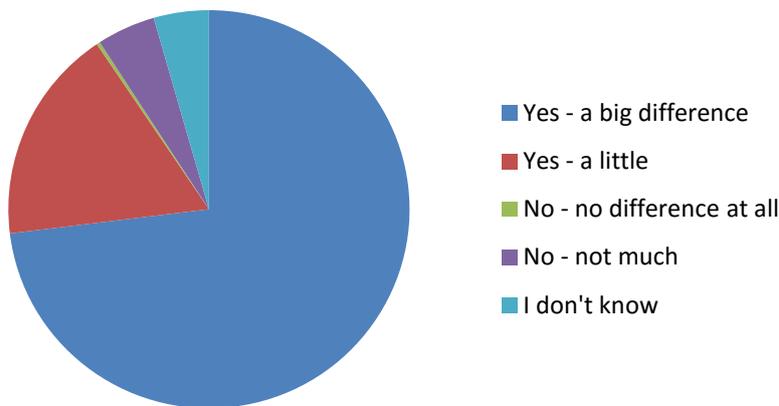
4. Post Government Brexit negotiations, how important will these elements be to you? (0 = Not important; 10 = Very important)



The preceding elements were first highlighted by WCVA member organisations as concerns in a separate survey undertaken at the end of 2016. In this survey we wanted to explore which elements were most important, in order to help focus our own future work.

Interestingly, 'protecting existing social, economic, environmental and human rights' and 'building community cohesion and minimising hate crime' were listed as the most important by professionals working in WCVA member organisations and came ahead of 'safeguarding funding opportunities'. This may be linked to the high numbers who believe there has been an increase in hate crime since the EU referendum result.

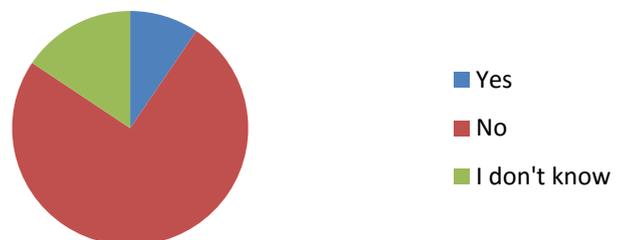
5. On balance, do you think the EU funds received by the third sector (charities and volunteers) have made a difference to Wales?



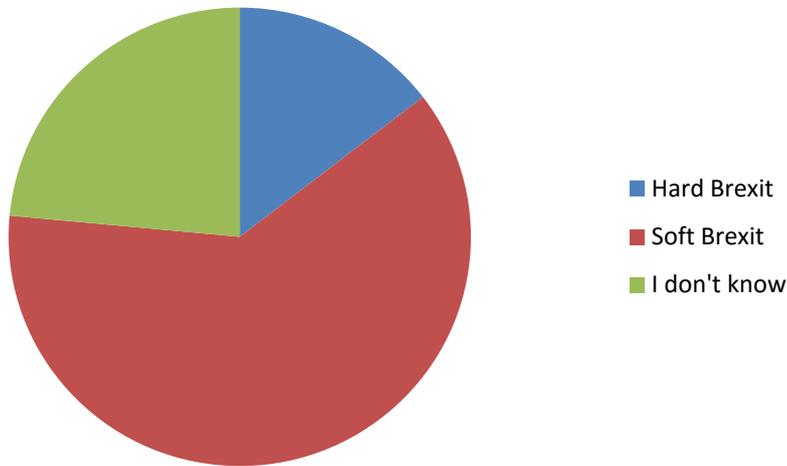
Almost three quarters of respondents believe EU funds have made a big difference to Wales - that is EU funds received by charities and volunteers. Only one person was of the opinion that EU funding of this kind had made no difference at all, and just 5% were of the opinion they have not made much of a difference. Arguably, this correlates with the largely negative response to the EU referendum result, which would bring this funding to an end.

Three quarters of professionals working in WCVA member organisations believe the UK Government will not safeguard the interests of Wales, during its Brexit negotiations with the EU. Almost twice as many did not know how to answer the question, as those who believe the UK Government will safeguard the interests of Wales.

6. Do you believe the UK Government, during its Brexit negotiations with the EU, will safeguard the interests of Wales?



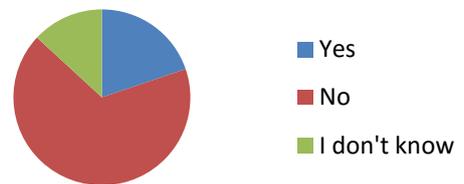
7. If Article 50 is triggered, what is your preference for the Brexit negotiations?



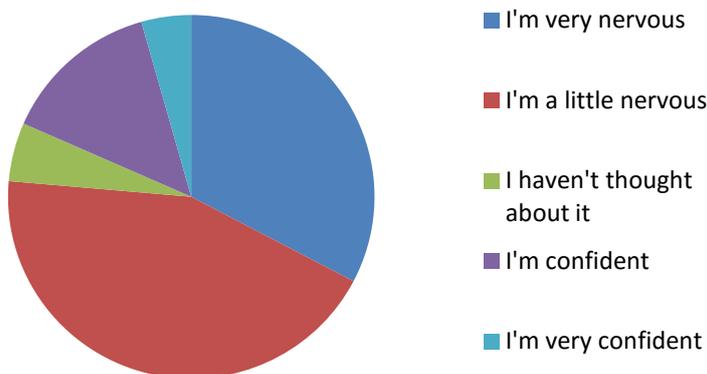
It appears **Soft Brexit** is the favoured option by professionals working in WCVA member organisations, with **Hard Brexit** trailing far behind. Interestingly, almost a quarter are unable to take a position suggesting they may not understand the difference between 'Hard Brexit' or 'Soft Brexit' and that more information needs to be provided for people to make an informed decision.

Despite the timetable already laid out by the Prime Minister, the majority of those answering our survey do not want Article 50 to be triggered.

8. Do you want Article 50 to be triggered?

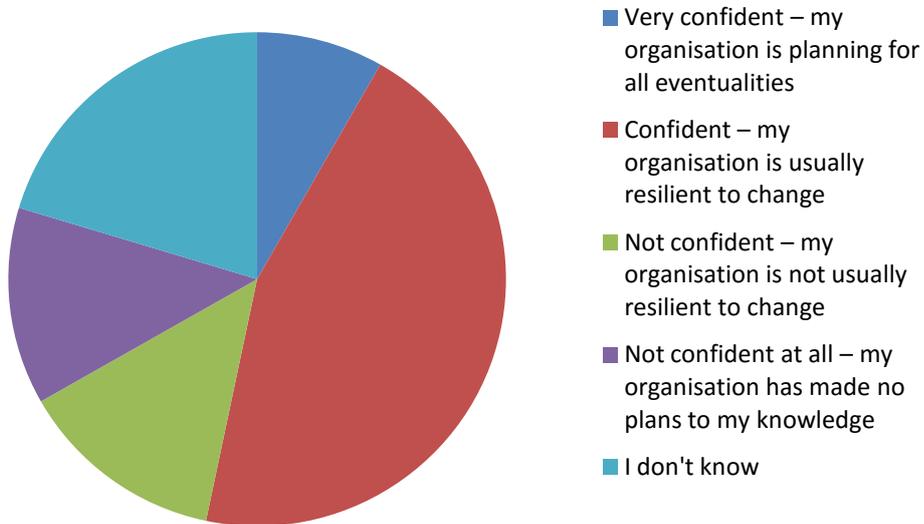


9. With the UK set to leave the EU, how do you feel about your own future prospects?



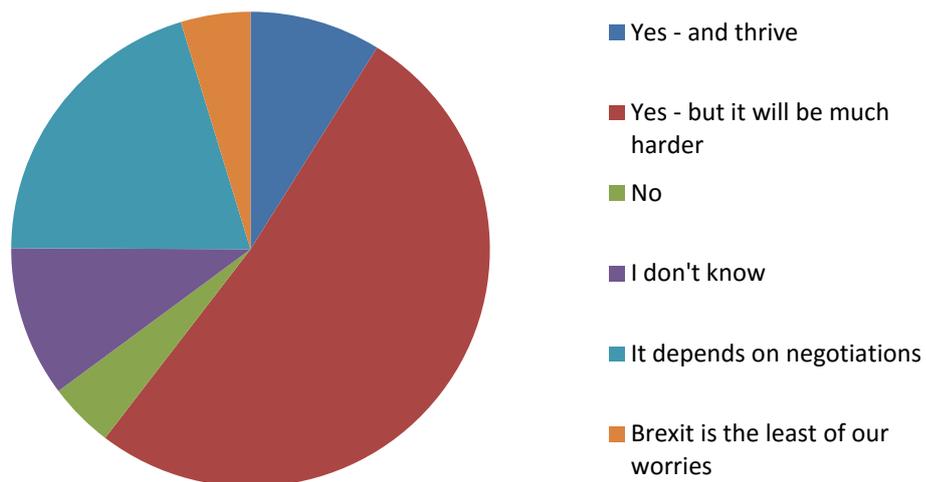
Over three-quarters of respondents are nervous about their own future prospects, now that the UK is set to leave the EU. Within that group, marginally more people are a 'little nervous' rather than 'very nervous'.

10. Are you confident that your organisation is ready for the change ahead?



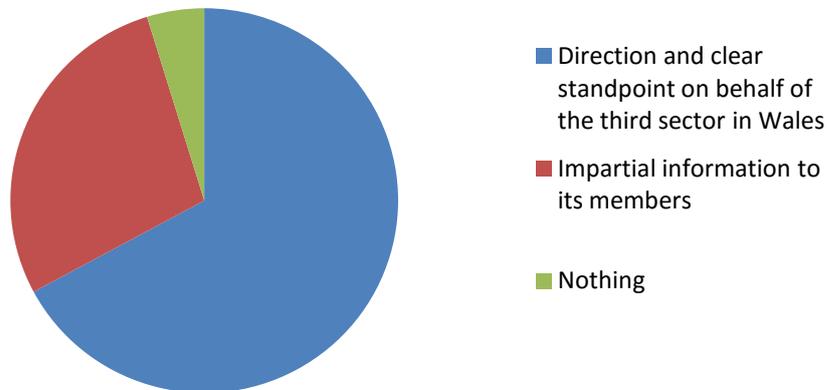
Over half of professionals working in WCVA member organisations feel 'confident' or 'very confident' that their organisation is ready for the change ahead. The majority feel 'confident' because their organisation is usually resilient to change. Those 'not confident' or 'not confident at all' make up a quarter of all respondents and are of the opinion that their organisation have made no plans and are not resilient to change.

11. Do you think the third sector will survive the UK leaving the EU?



Over half believe the third sector will survive the UK leaving the EU, though the majority of those think it will be much harder. Twenty percent of respondents feel that the survival of the third sector depends on Brexit negotiations.

12. What do you expect from WCVA in the lead up to the UK leaving the EU?



Overwhelmingly, people want WCVA to provide direction and a clear standpoint on behalf of the third sector in the lead up to the UK leaving the EU. Although more than a quarter want WCVA to focus on impartial advice only, there appears to be a real appetite for WCVA to provide more direction in relation to Brexit.

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