



A new survey of Third sector organisations has been launched today. Published by Ulster Bank & CO3, the survey reveals that Third sector organisations are confident about their prospects despite a challenging environment and significant decreases in government funding.

Findings from the Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index included;

- 30 percent of Third sector organisations saw government funding received by their organisation fall in the last quarter, with a further 54 percent experiencing no change (i.e. a real-terms decline)
- 78 percent of respondents categorised the environment in which their organisation is operating as very or quite challenging

- 50 percent expect the Northern Ireland economy to worsen during 2016
- Almost half of those surveyed expect their organisation's turnover to increase in the next 12 months, with less than one in five expecting turnover to fall
- Almost three-quarters say that their organisation saw the number of employees (full time equivalents) increase (26 percent) or stay the same (54 percent) in the last quarter



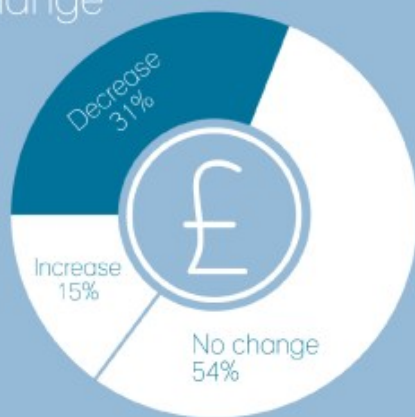
- Over 80 percent regard their organisation's strategic ability to operate in the current environment as very good or quite good
- The forthcoming EU Referendum was amongst the biggest concerns for the sector with more than 40 percent of Northern Ireland's third sector leaders identifying this as something that they are very concerned about, and a further 36 percent expressing moderate concern
- However, only 13 percent see the planned introduction of the UK national living wage as something that will have a large negative impact on their organisation. Over half expect the new policy to have no impact, and 14

percent expect the impact to be positive

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Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index

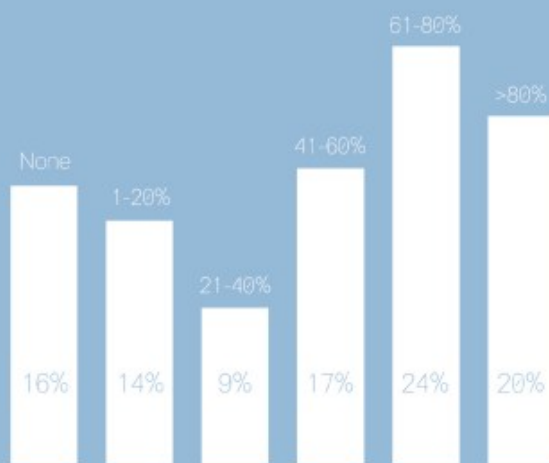
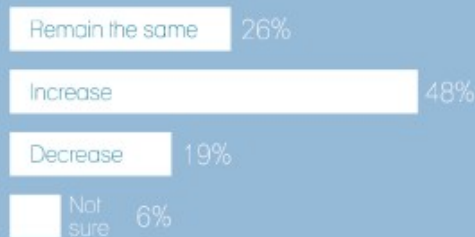
Government funding change



31% of 3rd sector chief executives said that their organisation had experienced a decrease in government funding in the last quarter, with a further 54% experiencing no change.

Turnover Expectations

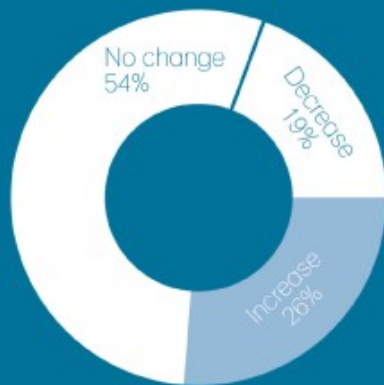
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Percentage of income from government

Reliance on government funding

The majority of third sector organisations are reliant on government funding to some extent (84%). One in five have more than 80% of their income from this source. When it comes to public donations, two in five third sector organisations have no income from this source.

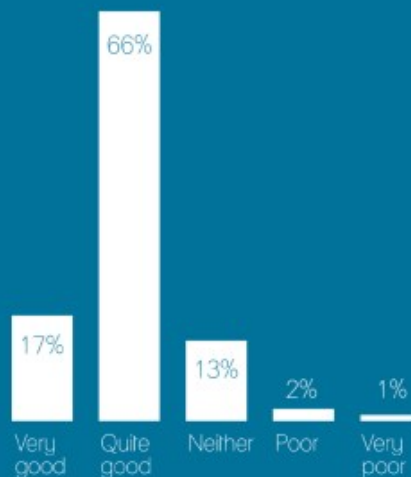


Change in employment levels

The number of employees has remained constant for most organisations over the past quarter (54%). However, 26% have increased their headcount while 19% experienced a reduction in employee numbers.

Strategic ability to operate

Over 80% regard their organisation's strategic ability to operate in the current environment as very good or quite good. Only 2% and 1% regarded their organisation's strategic ability to operate as poor and very poor, respectively.

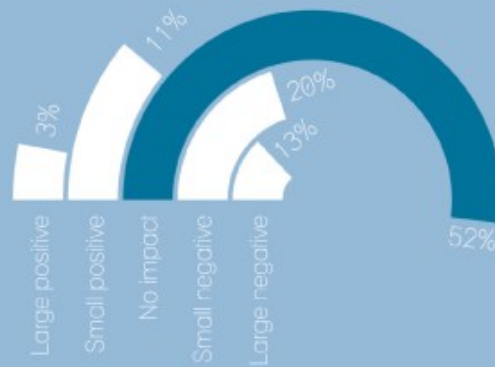


Expectations for the NI economy

50% of third sector leaders expect the Northern Ireland economy to worsen during 2016. 16% expect the Northern Ireland economy to improve this year.

Impact of National Living Wage

Just over half expect that the introduction of the national living wage will have no impact on them - introduced in April 2016. However, one third expect that it will have a negative impact on their organisation.

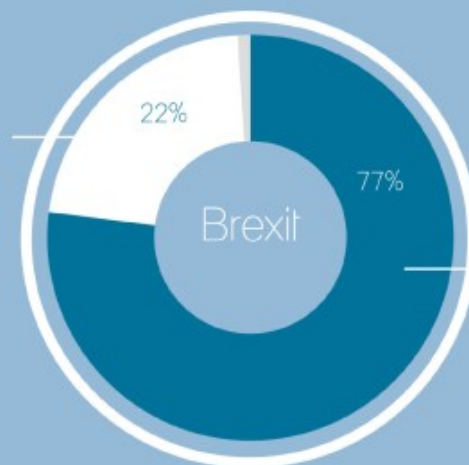


Concern regarding EU Referendum

More than 40% of third sector leaders identified the EU Referendum as something that they are very concerned about, and a further 36% expressed moderate concern.

Not concerned

22% are either not concerned or only a little concerned



Concerned

77% are either very concerned or moderately concerned

More info:

www.ulstereconomix.com

www.co3.bz

Research carried out by Perceptive Insight on behalf of Ulster Bank and CO3 - involving a survey of 125 chief executives in the 3rd sector in Northern Ireland.

Data for
Q1, 2016

Click to download the 3rd Sector Index Infographic.

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