

The Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index for Q4 2016 is released today.

It is a barometer of Northern Ireland's third sector, involving a quarterly survey of CO3 members who include the leaders of some of Northern Ireland's largest charities and social enterprises through to small community groups.

Some of the key findings include:

- Half agree with charity shop rating proposals, as long as revenue raised goes towards developing entrepreneurship in the sector
- 59 percent expect the Northern Ireland economy to worsen over next 12 months
- 24 percent saw a reduction in government funding in Q4 2016
- Only 4% think the Autumn Statement was positive for the sector

In proposals outlined in November, Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir suggested that he would consider reducing rating relief on charity shops from 100 percent to 90 percent, and would be in favour of the income being used to support entrepreneurship amongst social enterprises.

So about half (49 percent) of almost the 200 leaders in the sector surveyed said that they would agree with this approach. 38 percent said that they would disagree, whilst 13 percent said they were unsure.

Support for rating on charity shops drops considerably amongst respondents however if a commitment to direct the funding into the sector isn't included. In this scenario, two-thirds would favour a continuation of full rates relief.

In relation to government funding, we are seeing a continuing trend of more third sector

organisations experiencing a reduction rather than those seeing an increase; something that was evident throughout 2016.

Indeed, in 2017 budgetary pressures are likely to intensify. With the Northern Ireland Finance Minister set to announce his delayed Budget this month, this will more than likely mean further rounds of funding cuts for third sector organisations.

You can find the full report [here](#).

# Ulster Bank & CO3

## Q4 2016 3rd Sector Index

A temperature check of the third sector in Northern Ireland

Help for what matters  
Ulster Bank

CO3  
Chief Officers 3rd Sector



24%

Say they have experienced a decrease in government funding



4%

Believe the recent Autumn Statement was good for the 3rd sector



82%

Say their organisation's cash-flow position is stable



59%

Think the NI economy will worsen in the next 12 months

### Demand and headcount

67%

Say their organisation has seen an increase in demand

26%

Say they have increased headcount

### Sources of funding



The majority of third sector organisations are in receipt of funding from government sources to some extent (87%).



Over two fifths (42%) of third sector organisations have no income from public donations.



Just under half (49%) agreed charity shops should pay a contribution towards rates if revenue raised directly supported entrepreneurship in the sector.



One fifth (20%) were fully aware of the proposed changes to the regulation of fundraising in NI.

The Ulster Bank & CO3 3rd Sector Index is a barometer of NI's third sector, involving a quarterly survey of CO3 members who include leaders of some of the largest charities and social enterprises through to small community groups. The survey is carried out by Perceptive Insight, using an online survey of leaders of 3rd sector organisations.

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