



**Report Launch: “The Charity Workforce in Post-Brexit Britain -  
Immigration and Skills Policy for the Third Sector”**

**Tuesday 5 June 2018, 16.00-17.15  
Committee Room 20, Houses of Parliament**

|    |                           |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b>Attendance</b>         | <p><b>Panellists:</b><br/>Andrew O’Brien - Director of Policy and Engagement, Charity Finance Group (CFG)<br/>Marley Morris - Senior Research Fellow, IPPR</p> <p><b>Chair:</b><br/>Kate Green MP - Labour</p> <p><b>Parliamentarians in attendance:</b><br/>Paul Blomfield MP - Labour<br/>Steve Double MP - Conservative<br/>Baroness Hamwee - Liberal Democrat<br/>Stuart McDonald MP - SNP</p> <p><b>Other attendees:</b><br/>20 representatives from a range of civil society organisations and academia</p>   |
| 2. | <b>Purpose of meeting</b> | To discuss the findings of IPPR’s recently released report, “The Charity Workforce in Post-Brexit Britain - Immigration and Skills Policy for the Third Sector”   |
| 3. | <b>Presentations</b>      | <p><b>Andrew O’Brien (AO)</b> presented first, highlighting some of the charity sector’s concerns regarding Brexit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charity sector needed much more clarity and detail from government on its post-Brexit vision, particularly regarding EU workers and funding.</li> <li>● Charities have not been loud enough yet in making their Brexit-related views and needs known to government. They should speak up - it was not too late to contribute effectively.</li> </ul> <p><b>Marley Morris (MM)</b> then gave an overview of the findings from the report “The Charity Workforce in Post-Brexit Britain - Immigration and Skills Policy for the Third Sector”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● While there had been a lot of analysis of how Brexit would affect public and private sector workforces, not much had been done on</li> </ul> |

|    |       |  |
|----|-------|--|
|    |       | <p>the charitable / third sector. The report was an effort to address that gap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of EU migrants working in the UK charitable sector had doubled since 2000, with the current figure at 31,000.</li> <li>● They were particularly concentrated in social work, residential care, education and membership organisations.</li> <li>● They also tended to be young, highly educated and from Western European countries. Geographically, they were mostly located in London and the South East of England.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-Brexit, introducing immigration controls based on skill level was likely to make charities less able to recruit from the EU: e.g. under current Tier 2 rules, around 82% of EU charity employees would be ineligible for a visa.</li> <li>● Charities were also poorly prepared for such a change e.g. many had little experience of using the immigration/visa sponsorship system.</li> <li>● The lack of funding available to train replacement UK staff was also cited as a problem.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The report called on government and charities to work together to address the potential issues. In the short term, government should guarantee current EU citizens' free movement rights in full, while charities should offer assistance with settled status applications.</li> <li>● Over longer term, government should seek a form of "quasi-alignment" with free movement. Failing that, it could introduce a Trusted Sponsor Scheme, which would allow employers who met a set of criteria on responsible work practices to access certain visa benefits – including the ability to recruit a wider array of skilled workers.</li> </ul><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alongside this, improvements were needed in skills policy too.</li> <li>● The apprenticeship levy should be expanded into a wider skills levy, which could support training and skills investment for smaller charities.</li> <li>● It should also be made more flexible e.g. by making it easier to transfer levy funds to other employers (such as charities) if the levy-paying employers cannot spend the funds themselves.</li> <li>● Special attention should be given to the skills and training needs of social work and residential care organisations, given the concentration of EU workers in these two sectors.</li> </ul> <p>NB. A full copy of the report is available here:<br/> <a href="https://www.ippr.org/files/2018-04/1523968694_brexit-and-the-charity-workforce-april18.pdf">https://www.ippr.org/files/2018-04/1523968694_brexit-and-the-charity-workforce-april18.pdf</a>)</p> |
| 4. | Q & A | <p>The Chair thanked the panellists for their presentations. She noted that while some of the challenges faced by the charity sector regarding Brexit were clearly unique, <b>many of the points raised applied to other sectors too</b>. It was interesting to see the similarities.</p>  |

The first question from the floor was **whether the report had considered the impact of Brexit in terms of charities losing volunteers**. MM explained it had not, but that this would be an angle worth exploring.

An attendee from Italy explained she had been attracted to working in the UK charity sector because it was well-developed compared to other EU countries. **What could employers do now to convince other like her to come and stay?** MM noted there had already been a chilling effect since the referendum, due to a number of factors including uncertainty, the exchange rate etc. Employers needed to support staff with their Settled Status applications and also with legal advice if needed. AOB noted that pay had not increased much in the charity sector in recent years. Because of this, employers could find it difficult to now start recruiting the best UK candidates. Looking at wraparound benefits could help.

Paul Blomfield MP noted that **the government's plans for post-Brexit immigration were still very unclear, despite the Prime Minister's mention of a "labour mobility framework"**. MM said he believed the government would not want to bring EU citizens arriving in the UK post-Brexit into the non-EU immigration system for at least ten years, regardless of what it agreed with Brussels. As such, a preferential arrangement for EU citizens coming to the UK would be needed in the interim. AOB also pointed out that charities had not yet received much attention from DExEU. Now was the time for the department to reach out and engage with the sector.

The next attendee pointed out that **charities often lack skills and training in good HR / employment practice. Now more than ever they needed to understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to employees**. AOB noted that CFG had run courses for its members in this area, but had not had much interest. It needed to think what more it could offer in this area. MM pointed out that in the private sector, companies would be able to hire in legal expertise e.g. to help with Tier 2 applications. Limited resources meant most charities wouldn't be able to do this, putting them at a disadvantage.

Stuart McDonald MP said that in his view the **most likely outcome from the negotiations would be free movement with some tweaks**, rather than a whole new immigration system.

Another attendee asked **how the proposed Trusted Sponsor Scheme would fit with the Tier 2 system**. MM explained that the scheme could replicate the sponsorship/registration scheme currently in place for Croatian nationals ie. sit alongside Tier 2. Alternatively, Tier 2 could be adapted to incorporate the scheme e.g. allow lower salary thresholds for EU nationals. Either option would still require employers to be sponsors and therefore mean increased bureaucracy and costs. AOB cautioned that since the government had already shown a preference for drift, it was likely to stick with just adapting the old system. This would lock in bad policy.

The Chair thanked the panellists and brought the meeting to a close.