

Baroness Barran MBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary for Civil Society
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ



7 August 2019

Dear Baroness Barran,

Charities and Brexit preparations

I understand that the Chancellor is currently examining how best to direct government spending in the event of a no-deal EU exit on 31 October and that all departments, including the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, have been encouraged to submit bids to the Treasury for additional funding.

Charities should not be overlooked as the government prepares its operational and financial plans. In the event of a no deal EU exit, it is very likely that many charities will be front and centre not only in providing an immediate response, but also in supporting communities up and down the country in the longer term. As the Chancellor makes decisions about government spending in order to mitigate the consequences of a no deal EU exit, this should explicitly be open to charities as well as business and the public sector.

There is also a strong case for the Office for Civil Society to call for a 'resilient communities fund', set up specifically for charities working with and supporting local communities.

Although we do not yet know the precise impact of a no-deal EU exit, the government will want to prepare for a range of potential scenarios. Charities may well be on the front line in terms of supporting communities in some of these scenarios but will need resources to do so.

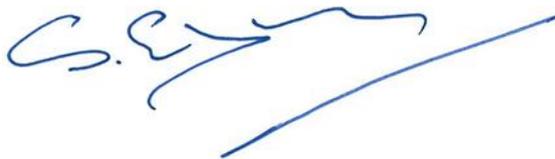
In the longer term, charities will have the expertise to provide advice and support to people and communities which may benefit from support to increase their resilience and have the greatest chance of succeeding post-Brexit, for example in employment and skills training. While business investment is crucial, to be truly effective it must go hand in hand with the social support that many families and individuals need in order to improve their lives and tackle the underlying, often longstanding problems. Often it is community groups and volunteers who can best deliver this.

However, this could be particularly difficult for charities that are already operating on low reserves. A funding package should therefore be set up specifically for charities that can help support communities with a range of needs in the event of a no-deal EU exit. This should provide grants that are easily accessible and require minimum administration, in order to ensure a swift distribution that can support the services that they will need to provide.

We all want to avoid a situation where communities are left without the support and services they might require after our country's EU exit, especially in the event of no deal. Charities have an incredible reach into communities, and the increasing role they play in our society means that – perhaps more than any other sector – they will be called upon.

So, while I appreciate that the window of opportunity to make a submission to the Treasury is very limited, I would urge you to include the request for such funding.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Stuart Etherington
Chief Executive