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**Brexit and Disability**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

On 6 June 2019, Cardiff University’s and WCVA’s Brexit Forum Project and Disability Wales teamed up to bring together academics, disabled people’s organisations, and Welsh Government Ministers to explore the implications of leaving the European Union for disabled people.

This briefing provides answers to questions collected during the event to help disabled people and organisations understand what Brexit may mean for them and to raise the profile of concerns emerging directly from communities in Wales.

**Contents**

[**1 - Medication and Assistive Technologies:**](#Medication)

[**2 - EU Citizens**](#Citizens)

[**3 - Accessibility**](#Accessibility)

[**4 - Benefits**](#Benefits)

[**5 - Legal Frameworks**](#Frameworks)

[**6 - Freedom of Movement after Brexit**](#Movement)

[**7 - Funding and the Economy**](#Funding)

[**8 - Brexit support for organisations and communities**](#Support)

**1 - Medication and Assistive Technologies:**

**Will I still be able to get my medicine after Brexit?**

There has been no official list of at risk medications made public.

The flow of medicine from the EU to the UK is unlikely to stop completely, but depending on the type of Brexit, there may be some disruption to supply.

The UK imports a lot of medicine from the EU, [around 45 million packs per month](http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11926/cr-ld11926-e.pdf), according to the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI).

* If the UK leaves the EU with an agreement, there are no anticipated risks in the medium term as the agreement provides for a transition period until at least December 2020.
* If the UK leaves the EU without an agreement these supply routes may be disrupted which could result in delays and aggravate shortages.

However the [UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medicines-and-medical-products-continuity-of-supply-update) and [Welsh Governments](https://gov.wales/preparing-wales-brexit/health-and-social-services#medical-supplies) have put in place contingency plans to reduce this risk by securing national level stockpiles and putting in place additional transport systems. Their official recommendations are **that people do not need to stockpile** or secure additional prescriptions.

Not all experts are reassured however, as the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5226) has expressed concern about shortages, despite Government preparations. The reality is that some medicines are prone to supply issues even in ordinary times and Brexit may compound existing problems.

In April 2019, the [BBC published a news piece](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p075g4j7) claiming medicines for bipolar disorder, epilepsy and neuropathic pain could not be stockpiled and were therefore at risk. If you have any concerns, its important that you do not panic and speak to your pharmacist as the Welsh and UK Governments are taking steps and updating information regularly.

**Will I have to pay for medicines?**

Brexit should not have a direct effect on whether people in Wales have to start paying for their medications.

There are concerns that a future trading relationship with the United States after Brexit could lead to radical change in how the country’s health system is delivered. However, this is impossible to predict and would face considerable resistance.

Contrary to some reports EU citizens currently residing in the UK will still be able to use NHS services for free as they do now. As was previously the case, you need only be ‘ordinarily resident’. There may be a change for EU citizens visiting the UK after Brexit, as they are currently able to get unplanned treatment for free with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This will no longer be possible under a no deal Brexit.

**Will the cost of medicine increase for the NHS?**

There is evidence to suggest that the cost of medicines for the NHS itself is increasing because of Brexit, and that this is likely to be worse in a no deal Brexit scenario. This is because the value of the UK’s currency has dropped sharply since the Brexit referendum. If you would like to learn more about this, see this blog from the [Nuffield Trust](https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/news-item/how-much-would-nhs-costs-rise-if-there-s-no-brexit-deal#the-bigger-picture) and this analysis of trade data in the [British Medical Journal](https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5300/rr-5).

**Will the NHS have to use cheaper medicines after Brexit? Could this worsen health conditions?**

This is very difficult to answer at this stage. This article in the [British Medical Journal](https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5300/rr-5) reports that the cost of importing medicines for the NHS has risen by almost 10% since the referendum - so costs are increasing. However, whether this means the NHS will have to secure cheaper variants of medicines is a question for longer term planning, which is very difficult on the current context of uncertainty.

**Will there be braille on packs of medicines? Is this a Brexit or NHS problem?**

EU Law which has been implemented in the UK provides that medicine packaging [should have the name of the medicine in braille on the label](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medicines-packaging-labelling-and-patient-information-leaflets#braille-on-labelling-and-in-pils) and this will be retained in UK law after Brexit. However the EU is in the process of further improving accessibility of products and services including computers, ATM’s and ticket machines. The UK will likely miss out on these improvements as they will enter into force after Brexit. Organisations may want to engage with decision makers to get them to match these improvements.

**Will the economic impact of Brexit mean that fewer services will be available on the NHS (such as specific treatments no longer being free)?**

Analyses by the [UK Government](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760484/28_November_EU_Exit_-_Long-term_economic_analysis__1_.pdf) and the [Office for Budgetary Responsibility](https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Fiscalrisksreport2019.pdf) all predict that Brexit will have a negative impact on the UK’s economy. A no deal Brexit is expected to be the most detrimental. However it is impossible to say at this stage what this will translate to in practice.

**Will Brexit end up requiring us to have private health insurance?**

There is no direct reason why Brexit should result in a requirement to have private health insurance in the UK.

People have been raising concerns that a future trade agreement with the United States could lead to a privatised healthcare system, but that is only hypothetical at this stage.

One area where insurance may change, is for UK citizens travelling to the EU after Brexit. The reciprocal rights enjoyed under the current system, whereby British citizens can receive free treatment in the EU with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), will come to an end.

We may see new reciprocal arrangements emerge, but these have yet to be negotiated. If the UK leaves without an agreement, there is likely to be a time during which there will be no reciprocal rights. As indicated on this [UK Government page](https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-brexit), it will be important to secure appropriate travel insurance, especially if you have a pre-existing medical condition (unlike the EHIC which covers these, some private travel insurance policies do not).

**Will we still be able to import devices after Brexit? Will our rights change in relation to this?**

Importing devices after Brexit is likely to still be possible, however the cost may increase to accommodate new regulatory requirements.

The guidance provided by UK Government about changes to the [regulation of medicines and medical devices is here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-guidance-note-on-the-regulation-of-medicines-medical-devices-and-clinical-trials-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/further-guidance-note-on-the-regulation-of-medicines-medical-devices-and-clinical-trials-if-theres-no-brexit-deal).

It is also important to bear in mind that [consumer rights will change after Brexit](https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8102). These may be reduced, and it will likely be more difficult to seek redress regarding products imported from the EU. This is because the UK consumers will no longer be able to seek redress from EU traders, and will lose access to the EU-wide Online Dispute Resolution system.

In the future, the UK will also be able to deviate from the standards for consumer protection set by the EU which have traditionally set the bar high, though that doesn’t necessarily mean they will be reduced.

**2 - EU Citizens**

**Will EU Citizens still be able to access healthcare in the UK?**

EU Citizens currently living in the UK will continue to access the NHS as they do now. The criterion remains the same - that they be ordinarily resident in the UK. Their right to access the NHS is not contingent on having previously been granted status in the EU Settlement Scheme.

EU citizens visiting the UK after Brexit may need to buy travel insurance to cover any unplanned treatment, as the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) will no longer be valid.

**Is there help for disabled EU citizens to access to the EU Settlement Scheme?**

Yes there is! Please contact one of the organisations listed on this page if you require help in Wales.

[http://www.eusswales.com](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eusswales.com&data=01%7C01%7CWhitmoreCD%40cardiff.ac.uk%7C1139e8abfbdb47b7b32108d72bccb54d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1&sdata=ZUSmL169K93XZHaJcyWBv%2B%2BOvJ%2FqRONieYawDv80Iaw%3D&reserved=0) (English)

[http://www.eusswales.com/cy/](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eusswales.com%2Fcy%2F&data=01%7C01%7CWhitmoreCD%40cardiff.ac.uk%7C1139e8abfbdb47b7b32108d72bccb54d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1&sdata=HKBnGzlbf4L1l%2BF%2BEEYN%2FLsVy1Q1lvr0BOxuuzff7cQ%3D&reserved=0) (Welsh)

You can also find further information directly from the [UK Government’s page here](https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families).

**Will Brexit have an Impact on staffing levels within services relied on by disabled people?**

With the situation as uncertain as it is currently, it’s very difficult to know for sure, but we do have some data.

The Welsh Government commissioned research ([available here](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-03/implications-brexit-social-care-and-childcare-workforce.pdf)) which concluded that EU citizens make up around 6.4% of the social care workforce in Wales and concluded that Brexit may exacerbate existing recruitment challenges.

In the healthcare sector, it is difficult to get an accurate picture. It is thought that around 3% of NHS staff in Wales are non-UK EU citizens, but the proportion is higher in some fields like medical and dental services where they represent around 7%.

The Welsh NHS Confederation have reported that they have not experienced a significant change in the number of EU Staff on the NHS Electronic Staff Record system, but there are limits to the accuracy of this system (not everyone declares their nationality on it).

The Nursing and Midwifery Council on the other hand, has [raised concerns](https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/press-releases/new-nmc-figures-continue-to-highlight-major-concern-as-more-eu-nurses-leave-the-uk/) that Brexit has potentially had a negative impact on the number of EU nurses on and entering their register.

**Will we continue to be able to employ European personal assistants? Will those already here have to return to the EU?**

EU Citizens currently working as personal assistants in the UK will be able to [obtain settled status](https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families) and continue living and working as they do now.

After a no deal Brexit, up until 31 December 2020, EU citizens will still be able to travel to, live and work in the UK, by applying for [European Temporary Leave to Remain](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-deal-immigration-arrangements-for-eu-citizens-moving-to-the-uk-after-brexit/no-deal-immigration-arrangements-for-eu-citizens-arriving-after-brexit). This will enable EU citizens arriving after Brexit to live and work in the UK for up to 3 years.

Beyond 31 December 2020, the UK Government is bringing in a new post-Brexit immigration system. This will make emigrating to the UK harder than it currently is for EU citizens. This may make it more difficult in the future to employ personal assistants from the EU.

**3 - Accessibility**

**Are concessionary bus passes likely to be cut because of Brexit? Because of a change of potential changes in political parties?**

There is no direct connection between Brexit and the available of concessionary bus passes. However Brexit, and especially a no deal Brexit is expected to have a negative impact on the economy for years to come. It is impossible to say at this stage how this economic impact and the political uncertainty will translate into service availability in the future.

**What will happen to blue badges in the event of a no-deal Brexit?**

Brexit will have no impact on Blue badges issued and used in the UK - they will continue to be valid. If you want to use your Blue Badge on holiday in Europe after Brexit, it’s less clear - however this is what we do know.

The Blue Badge scheme is a reciprocal arrangement. EU Member States agree to recognise as valid, blue badges from other EU Member States if these are of a standard format.

For this to continue to be the case, the UK Government will have to negotiate new reciprocal arrangements.

* One school of thought is that as the UK will not change the format of blue badges, and so this should not be a problem in the short term.
* On the other hand, it is important to remember that blue badge recognition is highly localised in EU Member States - and the uncertainty and turmoil of Brexit may lead issues with recognition. Different countries may or may not accept badges produced in the UK. The UK Government has also [already started making changes to blue badges](https://davidhencke.com/2019/09/13/ministers-pre-empt-brexit-by-changing-disabled-drivers-blue-badges-putting-holidaymakers-at-risk-of-parking-fines/) by removing EU symbols, which may well exacerbate this problem in the short term.

**Will Brexit have a negative effect on accessibility legislation?**

It is too early to say.

The EU has improved accessibility in the UK and currently has pioneering accessibility legislation in the making which is scheduled to become law after the UK leaves the EU.

Whether or not the UK keeps up with EU developments will be determined by UK and Welsh Government policy.

Campaigners are concerned that the rights of disabled people will not be prioritised amongst the very many Brexit related issues that need to be addressed. Another concern is that EU law currently prevents rights being rolled back below a certain level, so without it, future UK Governments will be able to make changes to existing rights.

**4 - Benefits**

**Austerity had a terrible impact on services and benefits from a community perspective – will Brexit have a similar effect?**

Again - it is too early to say for certain.

The welfare system is a reserved matter and so the decision as to how much money is put into it rests with the UK Government. You may have seen some commentators claiming that a no deal Brexit could lead to another recession (and by extension, further austerity). Most academic analysis suggests that a no deal Brexit will have a strongly negative impact on the economy and thereby strain public finances - but it is not possible to say with any certainty whether this will lead to further austerity.

For EU citizens it is important to bear in mind that ‘pre-settled status’ (as opposed to ‘settled status’) - does not constitute evidence of a right to reside for the purpose of benefits. This means that EU claimants who are given pre-settled status, will need to demonstrate another right to reside in order to claim some benefits (such as showing that they are a jobseeker, worker, or have derivative rights from a family member). See this [guide by Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/benefits/claiming-benefits-if-youre-from-the-EU/before-you-apply/check-if-you-can-pass-the-habitual-residence-test/) for more information.

If you need help with the EU Settlement Scheme in Wales, please visit one of the links below:

[http://www.eusswales.com](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eusswales.com&data=01%7C01%7CWhitmoreCD%40cardiff.ac.uk%7C1139e8abfbdb47b7b32108d72bccb54d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1&sdata=ZUSmL169K93XZHaJcyWBv%2B%2BOvJ%2FqRONieYawDv80Iaw%3D&reserved=0) (English)

[http://www.eusswales.com/cy/](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.eusswales.com%2Fcy%2F&data=01%7C01%7CWhitmoreCD%40cardiff.ac.uk%7C1139e8abfbdb47b7b32108d72bccb54d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1&sdata=HKBnGzlbf4L1l%2BF%2BEEYN%2FLsVy1Q1lvr0BOxuuzff7cQ%3D&reserved=0) (Welsh)

**Having to challenge decisions in a context of increasingly harsh benefits systems has a massive emotional and wellbeing impact on claimants – how can we ensure Brexit doesn’t make this worse?**

Brexit has undoubtedly compounded the emotional and wellbeing outcomes of disabled people, along with other groups due to the uncertainty and fear of increased hardship it has created.

While there is no direct connection between Brexit and the benefits system, it is impossible to predict what the medium and long-term implications may be. At this stage - get in touch with your local representatives and organisations and continue to ask questions and raise concerns so that these can be fed into dialogues with decision makers.

**5 - Legal Frameworks**

**Without the Court of Justice of the European Union – is there somewhere else we can go after British Courts?**

The UK will no longer be covered by the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) except for potential points covered in a withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU - if there is one.

The UK will still be subject to the European Court of Human Rights. This court is separate from the CJEU and is responsible for enforcing the European Convention on Human Rights. After Brexit, UK citizens who feel that the rights enshrined in the convention have been breached by UK law, will still be able to bring a case to this court.

It is noteworthy however that the rights covered in EU law are wider than those of the convention and have stronger enforcement mechanisms.

**How can we increase protections of disabled people’s rights after Brexit? What can we do in Wales specifically? Won’t any new protections we put in place take years to come into effect anyway?**

The Welsh Government is currently investigating ways to improve rights in Wales after Brexit - but this will take time.

One suggestion has been to ‘incorporate’ international rights treaties directly into Welsh legislation. This was done with the United Nations Convention on the Rights the Child in 2011 and means that decision makers must have ‘due regard’ to the convention when making policy.

It has been suggested that similar steps could be taken for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP).

Ultimately, however, the EU’s legal system is unique in its enforceability, and cannot be replicated. Organisations need to remain vigilant about potential changes to people’s rights after Brexit as it will be possible to roll these back without the constitutional guarantees of EU law. One suggestion has been to introduce a new status for laws which would alter disabled people’s rights after Brexit, so that it would be harder to pass these.

**Will we still have the European Convention on Human Rights?**

Yes – though there has been some discussion about the UK also leaving the ECHR (part of a different organisation to the EU), there have been no formal proposals to do so.

In fact, the UK will still be subject to a variety of international rights treaties that are independent from the EU, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRDP).

So in the case of the ECHR - UK citizens will be able to bring cases before the European Court of Human Rights if they think their treaty rights have been breached by UK law.

Campaigners are concerned however because:

* even with the UK remaining party to these conventions, losing EU law could result in people having less rights. This is because EU law is unique in that is covers a wider variety of rights and has stronger enforcement mechanisms. Much of EU law has ‘direct effect’ which means it provides rights that citizens can use directly in UK courts, whereas treaties like the ECHR, do not.
* the UK Government has historically shown an interest in removing the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights.

**Could we fall behind the EU in terms of disabled people’s rights? What can we do to prevent this?**

In short yes - over time the UK could eventually fall behind the EU in this area if the EU continues to innovate and the UK does not.

However it is impossible to say how policy will develop in the years after Brexit. With the EU’s legal framework gone, it will be possible for the UK Government to diverge from EU standards in the future.

This means that the UK Government could choose whether it wants to adopt future EU innovations (like the upcoming Accessibility directive), but unlike now, it could also choose not to do so.

Campaigners are concerned that without the backdrop of EU law, not only could the UK fall behind future EU improvements, it will now be possible to rollback rights if the UK Government chose to do so.

It is important to bear in mind that people do not expect an immediate attack on rights right after Brexit. However legislating is complicated and the risk comes from rights being chipped away at incrementally over a long period of time.

**What preparations are being made by the Welsh Government to ensure we continue to benefit from EU directives on accessibility after Brexit?**

The Welsh Government is currently looking into how to advance rights in Wales after Brexit as well as reviewing how to improve access to help, advice and services for disabled people in Wales with its Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living consultation.

Current EU provisions on accessibility are being carried over into domestic law by the EU Withdrawal Act, so these will be preserved until they are changed by domestic legislation.

Organisations will want to remain vigilant and engage with decision makers to ensure that future accessibility improvements in EU law are matched by UK and Welsh legislation.

**6 - Freedom of Movement after Brexit**

**Will going on holiday after Brexit be more expensive for disabled people?**

If you are travelling to the EU - yes it may well be - but this will depend on whether an agreement is secured and what reciprocal agreements have been put in place between the UK and EU Member States.

For detailed information - see this UK Government page on [visiting the EU after Brexit](https://www.gov.uk/visit-europe-brexit).

You may need to consider the following if travelling to the EU:

* Travelling will be VISA free until 2021. After which - you will need to apply on ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System - [more information here](https://www.etiasvisa.com/etias-news/etias-visa-how-will-it-affect-uk-citizens)). There is currently a fee of around 7 Euros.
* European Health Insurance Cards will no longer be valid after Brexit if the UK leaves on a no deal basis. You will **need to secure private travel insurance**, especially if you have a pre-existing medical condition. Unfortunately, this can be expensive.
* If driving, you will need an International Driving Permit - which currently has an application fee of £5.50.

**Will disabled British citizens living in the EU have to return to the UK? What help is there for them?**

This is highly uncertain currently. The UK Government has published a list of country by country guides which is [available here](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/overseas-living-in-guides#f).

British citizens living in EU Member States after Brexit will need to secure permanent residence rights as they will no longer benefit from EU free movement. The process for doing this will vary from country to country.

The UK Government has also encouraged British citizens living in the EU who are encountering problems to get in touch with their local consular support. If you have family members living in the EU who are worried about their future – you can also direct them to the [British in Europe webpage](https://britishineurope.org/) who may be able to provide information.

**Will EHIC cards still be valid? Will disabled people travelling to the EU need to buy insurance after Brexit?**

After a no deal Brexit - European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) will no longer be valid and people travelling to the EU will need to buy travel insurance. Please be mindful that if you have a pre-existing medical condition, you need to make sure that the insurance you buy has you covered.

The UK and EU Member States may eventually establish reciprocal agreements which could change this - but this is unlikely to be in place from Brexit day (31 October 2019 at time of writing).

**7 - Funding and the Economy**

**Will there be less funding opportunities for disabled people’s organisations as a result of Brexit?**

It’s difficult to say.

European Structural Funds do finance some disabled people’s projects and these funding streams will end after the current round as the UK will no longer be in the EU.

The UK Government has committed to replace EU funds with a new scheme called the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - however very little is known about this at the time of writing. The UK Government has committed to consult widely on the design of this fund, but this is more than a year late.

Campaigners are concerned that the UK Government’s language has suggested this fund may be slanted more towards industry and business whereas EU funding mainstreams equality and rights.

**Many disabled people’s organisations and projects receive EU funding – will this continue into the future?**

The Treasury has provided a guarantee that any projects currently funded by the EU will be guaranteed to continue to receive funding after Brexit, until the end of the current funding cycle (end of 2023 at the latest). [See here for information on this guarantee](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal).

After this round however, EU funding streams are expected to be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Very little is known about this at this time and a UK Government consultation is expected. There are concerns amongst organisations that the fund may not place the same emphasis on disabled people’s and equality-based projects as current EU schemes.

**How do we ensure that disabled people have a voice in shaping the UK Shared Prosperity Fund?**

Once the UK Shared Prosperity Fund consultation goes live, it will be important to feed information in through your local disabled people’s organisations to ensure that the sector’s voices are heard.

You can also raise the issue with your local Assembly Members and Members of Parliament.

**Will Brexit lead to a recession?**

It's impossible to say at this stage.

Analyses by the [UK Government](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760484/28_November_EU_Exit_-_Long-term_economic_analysis__1_.pdf), the [Office for Budgetary Responsibility](https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Fiscalrisksreport2019.pdf) both predict Brexit will have a negative economic impact. A no deal Brexit will have the most severe impact.

The Bank of England has previously said Brexit had a [one in three chance](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/aug/01/bank-of-england-warns-1-in-3-chance--brexit-recession-interest-rates) of triggering a recession, and the accountancy firm [KPMG](https://www.ft.com/content/f60905a0-d0c1-11e9-b018-ca4456540ea6) has since also said a no-deal Brexit would lead to a shallow recession in its view.

It is important to remember that these are only forecasts, which are made under situations of extreme uncertainty. However there seems to be a strong consensus that a no deal Brexit will, economically speaking, be very detrimental.

**Austerity led to benefits cuts – Will Brexit lead to further cuts?**

Again - it is not possible to answer this with any certainty at this stage.

In the short term, the UK Government’s response to a no deal Brexit in particular has been to **increase** spending, partly to try and secure support for its policy of delivering Brexit ‘come what may’ on 31 October.

However, austerity was the result of the recession following the 2008 financial crisis and indeed if the worst economic forecasts of a no deal Brexit come to pass, it may seem logical to assume that austerity will at least need to continue in the medium and long-term.

**Will Brexit lead to less opportunities for disabled people to find work?**

With the usual Brexit caveat that things are very uncertain - it is difficult to say.

What we do know is that the EU has acted as a catalyst to improve access to work for disabled people in the UK. Either through EU funded projects like Active Inclusion in Wales or by improving employment rights and accessibility in many aspects of life.

It is hard to say how any of these will change in the future. Campaigners will want to remain vigilant and scrutinise post-Brexit government policy for potential regressions of rights.

**More and more people are coming to charities for help due to cuts in services, and charities are shutting down due to less resources and funding being available – will Brexit make this worse?**

There are concerns that Brexit could lead to a ‘perfect storm’ for charities. Particularly in a no deal scenario, Brexit could lead to harsher economic circumstances, as well as rising need due to increases in the cost of living that would disproportionately impact vulnerable families.

It is important that charities factor Brexit into their long-term planning and explore ways of ensuring organisational resilience like becoming familiar with new funding opportunities. The UK and Welsh Governments have made funding available to organisations to help prepare for Brexit, so it is it is advisable to keep watch those communication channels.

**Is there funding available to help organisations prepare for Brexit?**

If you are a third sector organisation in need of resources to prepare for Brexit – you should contact the your relevant Welsh Government contacts to enquire.

The UK Government has also confirmed that third sector organisations can apply for the Brexit Readiness fund. [More information available here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/business-secretary-launches-10-million-brexit-readiness-fund-for-business-organisations).

**8 - Brexit support for organisations and communities**

**Where can we get reliable information on Brexit?**

There is a lot of misinformation circulating on Brexit and if we enter a general election or a second referendum, expect this to intensify. Some sources of objective analysis on Brexit include:

* The [Wales Civil Society Forum on Brexit](https://www.brexitforumwales.org/introduction) who have collaborated on this Q&A with Disability Wales can respond directly to questions sent to: [whitmorecd@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:whitmorecd@cardiff.ac.uk).
* The [UK in a Changing EU](https://ukandeu.ac.uk/) think tank of University academics.
* [The Institute for Government](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/our-work/brexit)
* [The Brexit Civil Society Alliance](https://www.brexitcivilsocietyalliance.org/)
* [Public Health Wales](https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/brexit/) and the [Welsh NHS Confederation](https://www.nhsconfed.org/supporting-members/brexit)
* The Welsh Government’s [Preparing Wales Website](https://gov.wales/preparing-wales).
* The Welsh Government’s [Support for the EU Settlement Scheme in Wales](http://www.eusswales.com/) page.

**How can we ensure that the Welsh and UK Governments remain committed to disabled people’s rights throughout the Brexit process?**

Brexit has created a great deal of uncertainty and policy instability that will likely last for years to come. The third sector and communities will play an even more important role than usual in scrutinising government policy during this time given the amount of change.

While we wait to see what form Brexit ultimately takes, the best advice is to keep having discussions, raising issues with your representatives and working with your local organisations to ensure that disabled people’s rights are not lost in the very many issues Brexit is requiring policy makers to think about.