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## WCVA calls for urgent action to address underfunding of third sector in Wales, at gofod3 data hub launch

During the launch of a brand-new, publicly accessible data hub at gofod3 today (8 March), WCVA (Wales Council for Voluntary Action) has called on the third sector and its key partners across Wales to urgently work together to address chronic underfunding underpinning the sector.

The data hub, which is unique to the UK, puts the third sector under the microscope, revealing heroic efforts of charities, social enterprises and other bodies to deliver significant benefits, often to the most vulnerable. This is despite operating on a shoe-string budget at just half the income per head of the UK sector as a whole.

Recent figures, from sources including Welsh Government, NCVO, WCVA and others, have now been compiled in this brand-new data hub, leading to some startling findings. Most interestingly, it demonstrates that Wales accounts for just £1 billion of the total value of the third sector across the UK, worth over £45 billion in total (excluding Housing Associations). While income across the whole of the UK is £700 per head, it is just £350 per head in Wales. With data also revealing that Welsh Government funding to the sector has been slashed by 30 percent over a five-year period, from £350 million to £248 million, there is a real danger we will see a weaker third sector in coming years.

**Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of WCVA, says:** 'Minor miracles - in education, health, leisure and more - are performed daily by small, local charities, tiny social enterprises and thousands of volunteers in Wales. Their contribution is extraordinary and all the more impressive considering their woeful budgets.'

'There is no denying with this data that the third sector in Wales is operating with one hand tied behind its back. The data hub also helps shine a light on the real challenges we face, including Government cuts, a post-Brexit world without EU funding, and a failure by Welsh third sector organisations to capitalise on UK-wide funding.'

The data hub clearly establishes the third sector, which is responsible for 10 percent of Welsh employment, as a driving force in promoting and enhancing community participation and resilience in Wales. Figures reveal that, of the 32,000 third sector organisations operating in Wales, 97 percent of them are based in Wales only, 20% of which work in sports and recreation, including those, for example, who coach school rugby teams. Other data also demonstrates that over one in four people aged 16 or over volunteer in some capacity in Wales, contributing £750 million worth of time.

**Ruth Marks continues:** ‘This data hub provides a snapshot of the third sector as it is today. It allows us an opportunity to look under the bonnet, as it were, and determine the health of the sector - now and in the future. To my mind, it clearly demonstrates the enormous contribution the third sector is currently making to Wales. It is the backbone keeping upright many of our communities.’

**Andrew Stephens, of Data Unit Wales, commissioned by WCVA to deliver the data hub, said:** ‘Data Unit Wales is pleased to have supported WCVA in developing its new online data hub. Its launch marks an important first step in bringing together evidence about the sector in Wales in a single, dynamic resource. We look forward to continuing to work with WCVA to develop the hub further.’

Now in its second year, **gofod3** is the largest third sector event of its kind in Wales. Organisers expect over 600 professionals and volunteers to attend the event at Cardiff City Stadium, and take part in over 70 events and 60 exhibitions, on topical issues such as Brexit, new data protection laws, and public confidence in charities. WCVA’s flagship event, demonstrates the crucial work of charities and other third sector organisations in Wales.

gofod3 also falls on International Women’s Day this year, and a range of events will take place throughout the day to celebrate the occasion, with special appearances from **Betsan Powys, Editor Radio Cymru & Cymru Fyw**, and **Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales**. Events include a *Chwarae Teg* session on encouraging more young women to become trustees; an overview of the UK Parliament’s *Vote 100 Campaign*; *Welsh Women’s Aid’s #TimesUp* debate in relation to domestic violence in Wales and a debate on the challenges ahead in the company of *Women’s Equality Network (WEN) Wales, Women Connect First, NUS Wales and Welsh Women’s Aid*.

\_\_ENDS\_\_

<p>For more information, please contact Carys Mair Thomas on 07702 096704 / <a href="mailto:carys@carysmair.com">carys@carysmair.com</a> or Lynne Reynolds/Simon Dowling on 0800 2888 329.</p>
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#### Notes to editors:

- WCVA is the national membership organisation for the third sector in Wales. Our vision is for the third sector and volunteering to thrive and improve well-being for all. We achieve this by influencing, connecting, and enabling.
- Do you want a sneak peek at the data hub, ahead of Thursday’s launch? Get in touch with Carys for access.
- gofod3 takes place between 8.15am and 4.30pm, with a special session on the data hub at 2pm. Free parking and refreshments available.
- Opportunity to film sessions throughout the day, including vox pops with WCVA staff, exhibitors, events hosts, participants and visitors
- Photographer Chris Fairweather, Huw Evans Agency, will have free repro images.
- Website for full event details and programme here: [www.gofod3.cymru](http://www.gofod3.cymru)
- gofod3 comes from the word ‘gofod’, which means space in Welsh. Unlike any other event in Wales, this is a space for the third sector in Wales to learn, to motivate, and to inspire.

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WCVA welcomes receiving correspondence in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence received in Welsh, in Welsh. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.

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