

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 4th January 2022

Research finds public believes charity and community sector responds more flexibly than statutory services

Figures highlighted today (04.01.2022) by [We Act](#) demonstrate the flexibility and responsiveness of the charity and community sector during times of crisis.

There are 34,000 organisations in the sector, employing almost 165,000 people with a further 1 million volunteers. The combined turnover of the sector is approximately €13.9 billion. Over 93,000 people serve on the boards of Irish nonprofits and charities.

We Act spokesperson Sarah Monaghan said: “The size of the charity and community sector can often surprise people. The sector employs a similar amount of people as the construction industry. But the true value of the sector really becomes apparent during times of crisis. The pandemic demonstrated that - in times of real crisis - charities and community groups are at the forefront of our national and local response.”

A survey of 1,000 people in Ireland conducted on behalf of the We Act campaign found:

- **75 per cent** say that, if charities disappeared overnight, the lives of vulnerable people would be impacted.
- **77 per cent** think that the charity and community sector need to play a role in advocating for those who are vulnerable.
- **62 per cent** think charities are more likely to be responsive in their services than statutory services.
- **69 per cent** think charities are more likely to be **personal** in their services than statutory services.
- **66 per cent** think charities are more likely to be **flexible** in their services than statutory services.
- **62 per cent** think charities are more likely to be **responsive** in their services than statutory services.

Speaking about the survey results, Ms Monaghan continued: “We know that most charity and community groups are set up in response to a need or a personal crisis - this need is often local or one that an individual, family or group has direct experience of. For example, many health charities are established to provide support for rare health conditions which do not have dedicated supports in place already. In these cases, not only did services possibly not exist already, but a charity is established by people with the real experience of living with or caring for someone with a specific condition.”

Irish charities and community groups joined forces late last year to launch We Act, a national campaign that will build on the huge upswell of community activity during the Covid-19 pandemic and help drive the post-pandemic recovery.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

About We Act: We Act is a public awareness campaign to promote the value and impact of the charity and community sector in Ireland. The campaign is being managed by a coalition of charities and community groups, led by Boardmatch, Charities Institute Ireland, the Disability Federation of Ireland, Dóchas, The Wheel and Volunteer Ireland.

The campaign is funded through a grant from RTÉ Does Comic Relief that is distributed by The Community Foundation for Ireland.

#WeAct

Find out more at www.weact.ie

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Spokespeople: Volunteers, trustees and workers from the charity and community sector have offered to share their story of why they do what they do. We Act spokespeople Sarah Monaghan and Amy Woods are available for interview / comment. Sarah Monaghan is Campaigns Manager at The Wheel and Amy Woods is Communications and Advocacy Manager at Volunteer Ireland.