**NICVA Members’ Views Survey May 2022**

**Background**

In May 2022 we issued a survey to NICVA member organisations asking their views on the current lack of NI Assembly and Executive; what they would prefer to see happen next to address this, and what issues currently facing NI they believed to be the most important. A copy of the survey is attached at annex A.

**Key Findings**

When and under what conditions should the NI Assembly be restored

* The overwhelming majority **(93%)** said that a Northern Ireland Assembly Speaker should be elected and Committees established **immediately** with no preconditions
* Only **6%** said it this should happen after the NI Protocol had been **amended** to allow unimpeded access of GB goods to Northern Ireland, and only **1%** after the NI protocol had been **abandoned**
* The overwhelming majority of respondents **(92%)** said the Northern Assembly should be restored **immediately** with no pre-conditions, with only 7% saying only after the above amendments to the NI Protocol and only 1% after the NI protocol was abandoned

What should happen next if an NI Executive is not formed within the legally required 24-week period

* Views were mixed with **31%** saying they thought the Secretary of State (SoS) should allow the **caretaker** Ministers to continue in post; **30%** that the SoS should call a second **election**; and **28%** that the SoS should implement **Direct Rule**
* A smaller proportion (**11%**) thought the SoS should allow for an extended period of **negotiation**

What do you consider to be the most important issue facing the Government in Northern Ireland

* Most (**38.4%**) chose “**The Transformation of the Heath Service** (HSCNI)” as the top issue facing Northern Ireland Government
* This was closely followed by the “**Cost of Living**” crisis which **34.3**% gave as their top priority
* **13.1**% gave “Reducing Health Service (HSCNI) **waiting lists”** and **8.1**% “Employment and the Economy” as their top option
* Only **4%** gave the “**Northern Ireland Protocol**” as their top option

Does the UK EU Withdrawal Agreement/NI Protocol contradict the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement provision that the constitutional position of NI can only be changed by the people voting in a Referendum

* While the majority (**53%**) thought **no** to this question, a substantial proportion (**18%**) thought **yes**, but nearly a third (**29%**) said they **didn’t know**.

Overall conclusions

Overall, the survey results highlight a strong desire from NICVA member organisations for the immediate return of the devolved government institutions with no pre-conditions in order to address key issues such as transformation of our health service and the cost of living crisis.

Annex A

NICVA's Member Views Survey May 2022

This survey was disseminated in May 2022 to NICVA voluntary and community sector member organisations. The responses received provided a representative sample of the NICVA membership.

1. When should the Northern Ireland Assembly elect a speaker and establish Committees?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Value**  | **Percent**  |
| Immediately  | 93.0%  |
| Once the Northern Ireland Protocol has been abandoned by the UK Government  | 1.0%  |
| Once the Protocol has been amended to allow unimpeded access of GB goods to Northern Ireland  | 6.0%  |
| Total | 100% |

2. When should the Northern Ireland Assembly be established?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Value**  | **Percent**  |
| Immediately  | 92.0%  |
| Once the Northern Ireland Protocol has been abandoned by the UK Government  | 1.0%  |
| Once the Protocol has been amended to allow unimpeded access of GB goods to Northern Ireland  | 7.0%  |
| Total | 100% |

3. Please indicate below what you think should happen if a Northern Ireland Executive is not formed within the 24-week period dictated by law.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Value**  | **Percent**  |
| The Secretary of State should allow for an extended period of negotiation  | 11.0%  |
| The Secretary of State should call a second election  | 30.0%  |
| The Secretary of State should implement Direct Rule  | 28.0%  |
| The Secretary of State should allow the caretakers to continue in post  | 31.0%  |
| Total | 100% |

4. Which of the following do you perceive to be the most important issue facing the Government in Northern Ireland?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Value**  | **Percent**  |
| The transformation of the Heath Service (HSCNI)  | 38.4%  |
| Reducing Health Service (HSCNI) waiting lists  | 13.1%  |
| Employment and the Economy  | 8.1%  |
| The Northern Ireland Protocol  | 4.0%  |
| Education  | 2.0%  |
| Cost of Living  | 34.3%  |
| Total | 100% |

5. The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement states that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland can only be changed by the people of Northern Ireland through voting in a Referendum.

In your opinion, does the UK Withdrawal Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol contradict this provision?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Value**  | **Percent**  |
| Yes  | 18.0%  |
| No  | 53.0%  |
| Don't know  | 29.0%  |
| Total | 100% |