

Business Plan 2023-24

Background

The Office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) was established by the Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which took effect from January 2011. COPNI is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC). The principal aim of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) is to safeguard and promote the interests of older people.

The Commissioner

The First Minister and deputy First Minister appoint the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland. The term of office is four years. A Commissioner can serve for two terms by mutual agreement. Mr. Eddie Lynch, who was reappointed to a second term of office in June 2020, currently holds the post of Commissioner.

Vision

COPNI's vision is that:

“Northern Ireland is a great place to age.”

Purpose

COPNI's purpose is:

“To be an authoritative and independent champion that safeguards and promotes the interests of older people.”

Focus

COPNI's focus for the Commissioner's term of office is across a number of key themes as determined in the Corporate Plan 2022-24, that was approved by the then Minister for Communities, Deirdre Hargey, on 21 November 2022.

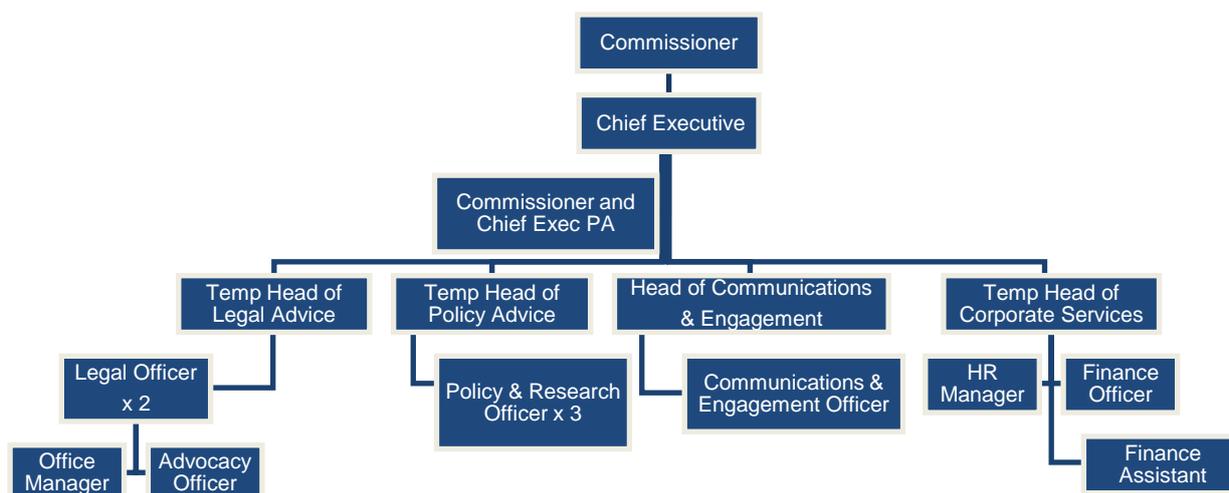
International Framework

COPNI's work is underpinned by the UN Principles for Older Persons (1991), which are.

- Independence;
- Participation;
- Care;
- Self fulfilment; and
- Dignity.

Staff of the Commissioner for Older People

Organisational Chart (Temporary pilot structure)



Review of activity in 2022/23

The year 2022/2023 proved to be particularly busy with significant issues facing older people caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. These policy issues included care home visiting, the easing of pandemic restrictions, bereavement support, vaccine uptake, and rising energy prices.

It has become evident that the COVID-19 pandemic was most devastating to older people in our society. The majority of those who got profoundly ill, and who died, were in the older age category. Those older people who didn't get ill, had to cope with long periods of shielding and self-isolation. As a result of the serious adverse impact the pandemic has had on older people, the Commissioner applied for, and was granted, core participant status in the second module of the UK wide Public Inquiry. Work on this and future modules of the Inquiry will be an important focus of our work in 2023/24 and beyond, to ensure lessons have been learned from the public health crisis.

During 2022/23, COPNI continued to receive a large volume of enquiries from the public centring on: hospital waiting lists, evictions from care homes, restrictions on care home visiting and cost-of-living concerns. COPNI continued to engage with public bodies to advocate for older citizens on perennial issues such as utility provision, wellbeing and crime.

Since the lifting of social distancing measures and the return to more face-to-face meetings in 2022/23, the Commissioner has attended more in-person engagements with older people, attending 39 engagements overall. Engagements continue to be a

vital part of the Commissioner's role, providing valuable opportunities to meet with older people and listen to their views on key issues.

Pressures across Health and Social Care settings, particularly within Emergency Departments and hospital wards, has resulted in the discharging of older people to care homes, who would not normally have been considered for such an option. Chronic and persistent staff shortages in domiciliary care have also reduced or eliminated some service provision to older people. Throughout 2022/23, the COPNI team worked diligently with Department of Health and Trust officials to ameliorate such service provision issues for older people accessing health and social care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on ageism in our society by exposing deep-seated, negative attitudes towards older people. During the crisis, public and media commentary regularly characterised older people in a negative way, offering little appreciation of the contribution that older people make to our community. The prominence of such attitudes played a key part in shaping the focus and intention of the current Corporate Plan, 'Right here, right now'.

The Commissioner will address the deeply destructive set of beliefs and assumptions that comprise ageism through his 'Tackling Ageism' workstream. This overarching priority area will highlight the extent of the issue of ageism in our society and advise on necessary first steps for addressing this form of discrimination.

The World Health Organisation tells us that: *"Ageism affects how we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves based on age. It imposes powerful barriers to the development of good policies and programmes for older people and has profound negative consequences on older adults' health and well-being."*

Northern Ireland (NI) remains the only part of the UK or Ireland where older people are not protected in law against discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities, and services.

The Commissioner will continue to promote the provision of opportunities for older people, and the elimination of discrimination against them.

Corporate Plan 2022-24

The Corporate Plan 2022-24 was approved by the Department for Communities (DFC), on 21 November 2022. This Business Plan is based on the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan as highlighted below.

The Commissioner's Priorities 2022-2024

The Commissioner's priorities are centred around the overarching theme of Tackling Ageism, focusing on the six issues, as illustrated below. These priorities derived from engagement with older people and key organisations via a survey. The key priorities have also been informed from research and key policy developments across government as well as the nature and theme of the issues the organisation deals with throughout the year.

Corporate Plan Priorities 2022-2024



With the staffing constraints caused by the initial budgetary cuts in 2023-24, the Commissioner has been forced to reduce the scope of the Business Plan for 2023-24 and focus on areas where COPNI can have most direct impact. Whilst the Commissioner will continue to speak passionately on behalf of older people in respect of the issues of provision of affordable energy and loneliness and isolation, these are deemed areas where COPNI can be less effective in directly impacting change. Consequently, they do not feature in the core priorities for the 2023-24 year.

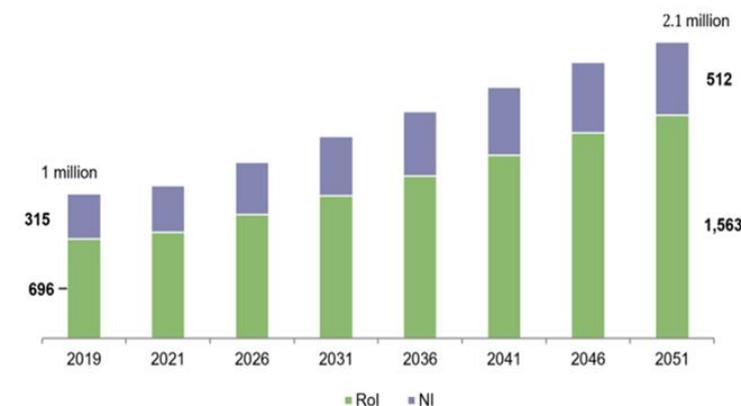
The continued political stalemate and lack of a functioning Government in Northern Ireland, also presents difficulties for the Commissioner in terms of continued calls for the development of a high-level Programme for Government outcome that drives the inclusion of older people and an ageing society across all government activity.

The continued focus of the Commissioner is to secure the inclusion of high-level outcomes within the new Programme for Government (PfG), working with Government once reformed, to understand the potential for inclusion of outcomes relating specifically to older people within the PfG and in collaboration within other plans. In the absence of a functioning Government, the Commissioner, will continue to advise politicians and Departmental officials of the importance to prioritise the needs of older people in the context of an ageing society, highlighting specific measures and outcomes to be included in a new draft PfG. The Commissioner will also continue to seek progress on the introduction of legislation to protect older people from discrimination in the provision of facilities, goods, and services (Age GFS).

An Ageing Society

People worldwide are living longer than ever, and this is also true in Northern Ireland where life expectancy has risen by several decades in the last 100 years. The population aged 65 or over in 2019 is estimated to have reached 314,700 in NI, and over 630,000 in the ROI, meaning the combined total on the island has exceeded 1 million for the first time (CSO, 2019a, NISRA, 2019). Figure 1 below, shows the projected number of people aged 65+ doubling to almost 1.6 million in ROI by 2051 and exceeding half a million in NI - bringing the total in this age group to over 2 million on the island (CSO, 2018, NISRA, 2019). The number of people aged 60 or over is estimated at 950,000 in ROI in 2019 and is projected to rise to 1.9m by 2051. In NI there are currently 421,000 people aged 60+ and this is projected to rise to **631,000 by 2051**.

Figure 1: Projected number of people aged 65+, thousands, 2019-2051



Source: CSO, 2018; CSO, 2019a¹; NISRA, 2019

Furthermore, recent statistics by NISRA, show that the number of people aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to nearly one-third of a million people in Census 2021 - a near 25% increase on 2011 and demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing. (NISRA 2022).

The Challenge for an Ageing Society

While increased life expectancy is a great achievement of public health, and one which we should celebrate, the key challenge for Government, is not only the extension of life expectancy but to ensure those extra years are healthy and disability free for as long as possible. All countries, including NI, face major challenges to ensure that their public services, including health and social systems, are ready to make the most of this demographic shift and meet the needs of the population.

Ageing is a life-long process and ensuring people can age healthily and maintain independence in old age requires a life-course approach. Public health interventions can have a significant impact on the quality of ageing in terms of health outcomes, disability, and quality of life.

As a result, the Commissioner's work will continue to be important and he will continue to work closely with Government, within the context of 2011 Act to ensure that public

services are fit for purpose, adequate and effective in meeting the needs of the ageing population in NI.

Business Plan 2023-24

This year's Business Plan sets out the key priorities and the areas of continued focus to be taken forward in 2023-24. The plan identifies the key pieces of work to be undertaken and the minimum targets to be met during the year. The plan is deliverable within COPNI's budget allocation for 2023-24, and progress will be reviewed on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

The purpose of the Business Plan is to implement the priority objectives set out in the Commissioner's Corporate Plan 2022-24, establish the key performance indicators (KPI) by which progress will be measured and demonstrate the level of progress required in year towards the delivery or achievement of them.

This plan is high level and is not intended to capture all the operational activities and day-to-day tasks of all staff. COPNI will continue to exercise flexibility around the movement of budget and human resources across the work programme as required.

All work will be taken forward with a proportionate project management approach. All expenditure will be made in accordance with internal controls and compliance with the requirements of Managing Public Money NI.

The information which follows in the action plan summarises the work planned under the Commissioner's priorities and provide details of the activities planned for this year.

The plan outlines the following.

- Key priority and objective/s;
- A description of what activities will be delivered;
- Senior Responsible Officer;
- Targets;
- Outcome/s; and
- An overall programme budget.

Key financial pressures

Pilot of new staffing structure – As part of a wider strategic review of the organisation's human resource needs, COPNI has been piloting a new staffing structure during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. This pilot has proven to be very successful in relieving pressures across the organisation, and consequently, a business case has been submitted to the Department for Communities requesting that this structure now be made permanent. It is essential that this business case is approved during the 2023/24 year, along with confirmation of increased baseline funding for future years, to enable recruitment of new permanent roles in the revised

structure in the 2023/24 year. A failure to provide this assurance will continue to have a significant impact on COPNI's staffing complement.

UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry – COPNI has been successful in obtaining Core Participant status for Module 2c of the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry, representing the experiences of older people during the pandemic. COPNI has applied for funding directly from the Inquiry for involvement in this work, and despite an initial request being rejected, COPNI has resubmitted an application for funding, setting out a strong rationale for this requirement, and the implications of a failure to secure this resource. It is critical that COPNI is able to obtain adequate funding to enable full participation in the Inquiry, however the Department of Finance has advised that HM Treasury has not provided any additional funding to Northern Ireland for COVID-19 Inquiry responses and it should be noted that Public Inquiry funding is not included in the Budget projections (Page 25).

Human Resources

The Commissioner will also co-operate with the Department on any required improvements identified through internal and external audits and put in place improvement plans to ensure robust procedures are in place for the effective operation of COPNI.

As a result of the global pandemic of COVID-19, in common with all other government bodies, COPNI has introduced a hybrid working policy, with an annual review of these arrangements to enable changes to be made, where required. Staff are fully equipped to undertake their normal duties through this hybrid approach and management will continue to review this approach in this financial year. The organisation will review and seek improvements to ensure business needs and the objectives of this plan are met.

Monitoring

Progress against each KPI is monitored and reported to the Senior Management Team and the Commissioner using a RAG status. The definition for each RAG status is detailed below. Periodically such details will be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee for their information, and as always, the Commissioner will compile and provide quarterly performance reports to the Department for Communities (DfC).

- **Red** – Significant slippages, lack of funding or not to be completed within target.
- **Amber** – Delayed but is expected to meet objectives.
- **Green** - Progressing as planned or already delivered.

Priority 1. Tackling Ageism

Objectives: The Commissioner will promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against older people and support the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) campaign on Tackling Ageism.

Commissioner Duty: The Commissioner must promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against, older people.

Responsible Officer: Head of Policy & Advice & Head of Communications – with input from SMT

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Carry out a prevalence study to gain a better understanding of ageism and its impact on older people. The findings of the study will be used to inform Government policy and other policy makers.</p> <p>Challenge the narrative around age and ageing by developing an awareness campaign on the impact of Ageism on NI society and work with key stakeholders including the media.</p> <p>Work with Government to bring forward the relevant legislation required to end the discrimination for Older People in relation to accessing goods, facilities and services and push for the development and introduction of legislation in NI in the next mandate. (Subject to the return of the Assembly).</p>	<p>6 engagements across NI with older people to gain their insight and experience on ageism.</p> <p>Survey circulated widely and press release issued with the findings.</p> <p>Publish a comprehensive report on Ageism.</p> <p>Hold meetings with the leaders of the 5 political parties on the issues of Ageism as identified in from the prevalence study.</p> <p>Request Government action on addressing key issues and implementing the relevant Age GFS legislation in NI.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of Ageism in society.</p> <p>Tackle Discrimination against Older People.</p> <p>Progress on the development of Age GFS Legislation.</p>

Priority 2. Participation in the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry

Objective: The Commissioner will participate fully in the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.

Commissioner Duty: The Commissioner must promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of older people and of the need to safeguard those interests.

Responsible Officer: Head of Legal Services (with support from Heads of Service)

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcome
<p>Participate fully in the UK Public Inquiry as both a core participant and a key stakeholder.</p>	<p>Apply for the relevant modules in the UK Public Inquiry within the requisite deadline set by the Inquiry.</p> <p>Respond to all requests for information and all calls for evidence within the deadline period set by the Inquiry.</p> <p>Review and consider evidence provided by the Inquiry as and when it is received.</p> <p>Participate in the hearing for Module 2 of the Inquiry.</p> <p>Meet with the Legal representatives when required, to discuss progress and next steps.</p> <p>Publish a minimum of 2 press statements (<i>when appropriate</i>) in relation to the Commissioner's involvement in the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.</p>	<p>Ensure the COVID-19 Inquiry examines the NI response to and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in NI and learn lessons for the future.</p>

Priority 3. Human Rights of Older People in Care Homes (Improving Health & Social Care)

Objectives: Promote and protect the human rights of older people in care homes through the Regional Contract.

Commissioner Duty: To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for older people by relevant authorities & to encourage best practice in the treatment of older people.

Responsible Officer: Head of Policy & Advice/with advice and input from SMT

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Secure additional legal advice on the regional care home contract aiming to publish a commissioner’s view document on the findings of the D Heenan research and take appropriate action with the relevant authorities to seek improvements.</p> <p><i>The Policy Team will also have continued focus on the following.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provide advice to Government on the introduction of the Adult Protection Bill. (b) Liaise with the Departmental officials and Perm Sec (<i>in the absence of a gov’t minister</i>) on the progress of the Reform of Adult Social Care in NI, and timetable for implementation. 	<p>Publish the Commissioner’s view report by Autumn 2023.</p> <p>Meet with Department of Health officials on a quarterly basis to consider progress and ensure the contents of the Adult Protection bill are adequate.</p> <p>Hold monthly meetings with the Director of Older People Services which will include discussion on the progress of the Reform of Adult Social Care.</p>	<p>Improved engagement of the human rights of older people within the regional contract for care homes.</p>

Priority 4. Crime and Older People (including Scamwise Partnership)

Objective: (a) Work with partners in the criminal justice system and offenders to increase understanding of whether older people are deliberately targeted by offenders due to their age and/or vulnerability. (b) Provide advice to relevant agencies on the recommendations of the research and consider appropriate actions/improvements. (c) To provide advice to government and to older people that will strengthen prevention of crime against older people.

Commissioner Duty: Keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the interests of older people and the effectiveness of services provided for older people by relevant authorities.

Responsible Officer: Head of Policy & Advice, Head of Legal Services & Head of Communications

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Provide advice to Government and relevant agencies on the key recommendations of the recently launched “A Different Crime” report and seek appropriate actions/improvements.</p> <p>Work with criminal justice agencies, including the Criminal Justice Inspectorate to ensure the recommendations in COPNI’s <i>Crime and Justice: The Experience of Older People in Northern Ireland Commissioner’s report 2019</i>; are embedded in their investigatory work.</p> <p>Examine the potential for further partnership working through engagement with the PSNI Strategic Lead for Older People to improve the safety of older people. Work with the relevant voluntary and community sector to better support older people who have been victims of crime.</p> <p>Fully participate in the Scamwise partnership, enable the sharing of information through social media and through the organisation’s website to raise awareness amongst older people of how to identify and protect themselves from scams.</p>	<p>Hold a minimum of 3 meetings with the PBNI/PSNI/CJI/CVC on the findings of “A Different Crime” report.</p> <p>Hold a review meeting with the CJI in 2023/24 to assess improvements for older people in the CJ system.</p> <p>Hold a minimum of 2 meetings with community and voluntary organisations on supporting older victims of crime.</p> <p>Continue to manage the Scamwise Facebook page,</p>	<p>Reduction in Older People being a victim of Crime.</p> <p>Reduction in Fear of Crime amongst Older People.</p> <p>Increased awareness and understanding on the impact of crime on Older People and why they are targeted.</p>

	<p>co ordinating content from the partnership and providing monthly reports on engagement and reach.</p> <p>Attend and participate in Scamwise Partnership meetings.</p>	
--	--	--

Policy & Research – areas of continuing focus

(a) Programme for Government

Objective: The Commissioner will continue to call on Government (*via Gov't officials in the absence of an NI Executive*) and seek high level commitments to older people in a new Programme for Government (PfG).

Commissioner Duty: **(a)**The Commissioner must promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of older people and of the need to safeguard those interests. **(b)**The Commissioner must keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for older people by relevant authorities. **(c)**The Commissioner must promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against, older people, **(d)** The Commissioner must encourage best practice in the treatment of older people.

Responsible Officer: Head of Policy & Advice (with input from wider SMT)

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>The Commissioner will meet departmental officials/party leaders, MLAs, and officials to further promote inclusion of a specific older people's outcome in the PfG and seek commitment the addition of specific objectives targeted at improving the lives of older people.</p> <p>The Commissioner will work with DFC to ensure the timely development of a new and meaningful Active Ageing Strategy for NI.</p>	<p>Engage with Departmental officials on a new PFG that meets the needs of an ageing population.</p> <p>Engage with DFC on a regular basis to assess progress on the new Active Ageing Strategy for NI.</p>	<p>PFG outcome for Older People.</p> <p>1 Active Strategy in place.</p>

(b) Responding to public consultations from relevant authorities regarding matters that may impact older people and those who care for them.

Objective: To develop and submit responses to relevant public consultation exercises on issues of strategic relevance and importance to older people from (1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024).

Commissioner Duty: To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for older people by relevant authorities & the Commissioner must promote positive attitudes towards older people and encourage participation by older people in public life.

Responsible Officer: Head of Policy & Advice

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Ensure that COPNI is a key consultee with all relevant public bodies.</p> <p>Ensure officer resources are allocated to adequately respond to consultations that are most impactful on older people.</p> <p>COPNI consultation responses are submitted to a high quality and professional standard. within published deadlines.</p> <p>If the consultation topic is of serious or significant nature, the Commissioner may engage directly with older people on the specific issue, and/or issue a media release drawing attention to the Commissioner’s/older peoples’ views.</p>	<p>Submit a minimum of 10 consultation responses from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.</p> <p>Publish consultation responses on the website within 2 days of submission to the relevant body.</p> <p>Hold an engagement with older people on a topic that has a significant impact on older people.</p>	<p>Ensuring that the interests of older people are promoted and safeguarded when policy or legislative changes are being considered.</p> <p>Continued development of a body of knowledge/expertise at COPNI that assists the Commissioner to promote awareness of the issues and rights of older people.</p>

Communications and Engagement – areas of continuing focus

(a) Communications & engagement with older people

Objectives: Planned engagement with older people will be organised around the themes and key actions contained within the Corporate Plan and will involve the following.

1. Attendance at seminars, consultation events, key stakeholder meetings and conferences.
2. Visits to Older people (OP) where they live, work, and socialise.
3. Ongoing responses to invitations from OP groups & other key statutory stakeholders – DFC, DOH, Welsh Commissioner, Consumer Council, Utility Regulator, All Party groups, etc.
4. Engagement with Media, social media & TV.
5. Engagement with Government focused on key legislation and policy issues and producing advice to government based on technical or academic/professional evidence.
6. Re-development of organisation’s website to enhance platform engagement, accessibility and provide users with easier access to information. Due to delay in approvals of the Business Case, this was unable to be completed in 2021 / 22 due to budget restrictions and is a key priority for the coming year.

Commissioner Duty: The Commissioner must promote an awareness of matters relating to the interests of older people and of the need to safeguard those interests & the Commissioner must promote positive attitudes towards older people and encourage participation by older people in public life.

Responsible Officer: Head of Communications

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
Attendance at events on a geographical basis across NI. Meetings with key stakeholders on priority issues as identified in the Corporate Plan.	Attend 30 engagement events throughout the year, with emphasis on groups/ areas where previous engagement has been lower.	Impact on legislation/policy changes affecting older people’s lived experience.
Engagement with Media, social media, Radio, TV and website. Focus on section 75 groups/ to include women, diversity, and inclusion of minority groups.	Attend 20 meetings with partners and advisory groups on priority issues.	
	Issue 20 statements / press releases.	

<p>Procure new website designer to ensure optimum functionality and that website is up to date with latest accessibility requirements.</p>	<p>Increase Facebook likes/followers by 200.</p> <p>See a steady increase in website visitors and length of time spent on website and monitor reduction in calls to the office once information is available on website.</p>	
--	--	--

Legal and Advocacy – areas of continuing focus

(a) Responding to Older People who contact the Commissioner for assistance. (*Signposting, advocacy, legal support etc.*)

Objectives: This work stream focuses on the management of legal cases, advocating for individual older people in compliance with all internal policies and good practice. This primarily involves alternative dispute resolution or provision of financial support in the preparation and litigation of cases where resolution has not been successful.

This area of work increases steadily year on year, which is evident in the number of requests for assistance. Cases dealt with are complex and require specialist legal advice and advocacy focused work.

Commissioner Duty: Keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law as it affects older people, and the effectiveness of services provided to older people.

Responsible Officer: Head of Legal Services *-with support from policy team as required.*

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
Responding to public enquiries and complex cases. Support requests for funding support in line with criteria. Engagement with key partners (PSNI, DoJ, Office of Care and Protection) to identify strategic themes emerging from case work.	Deal with approximately 100+ live and complex cases. Recording and management of cases by legal officers in accordance with existing policies. Generate weekly reports for review of all existing casework by Head of Legal. Review case work progress at SMT on a weekly basis.	Available support for older people in need of advocacy to solve a problem or resolve a complaint with a Relevant Authority as determined by the COPNI Act 2011. Improved awareness of issues impacting OP because of case and advocacy work and improvements in policy development, legislation, and improved awareness at government level.

	<p>Work with Policy Team to review the management of enquiries across the teams and transfer as appropriate.</p> <p>Preparation and review of statistics in relation to enquiries and casework monthly to ensure targets are being met.</p> <p>Monthly reporting of enquiries and caseload management information to SMT meeting.</p> <p>Preparation of briefing papers to SMT on receipt of 3 or more cases of a similar nature within a one-month period.</p> <p>Record Management of enquires and case work on ALB system.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of the impact of financial abuse.</p>
--	---	--

Corporate Services – areas of continuing focus

(a) Corporate Governance

Objectives: The Commissioner (Accounting Officer) will ensure the efficient and effective management of staff and resources to support the achievement of all the Commissioner’s objectives. The Commissioner will ensure that appropriate internal controls and governance systems for Finance, Human Resources, Planning, Performance Management and Reporting are in place.

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive & Head of Corporate Services

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
Submit a costed outcomes-based Business Plan to DfC.	Business Plan to be forwarded to DfC by 31 January	Effective and timely delivery of all planned work.
Develop, monitor, and report on project plans for specific pieces of work.	Monitor and report on performance against key targets and objectives monthly at SMT meeting, including review of budget allocation and pressures.	Effective use of budget within funding allocation.
Regular review of policies.	Monthly review and update of key systems and policies	Policies and procedures that are in line with current legislation, to support the achievement of the corporate objectives.
Timely completion of internal and external audit recommendations	Recommendations to be completed as per internal deadline date, and prior to internal audit year-end review.	Use internal reviews and audit recommendations to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the support service.
Complete staff skills audit & training plan.	Information from staff objective setting and PPA’s to be compiled into an HR training plan, along with wider organisational training.	Highly skilled staff with excellent internal and external relationships.
Contract Management	Contracts spend to be tracked and contract end dates to be communicated to project leads, with	Effective Management of all Service Level Agreements for outsourced services and

Section 21 Review of COPNI Legislation	<p>completion of Post Project Evaluations to inform future planning.</p> <p>Legal counsel to review the existing legislation with a view to updating where requested.</p> <p>Submit a report to DfC highlighting any changes required to the COPNI legislation.</p>	<p>contracts with external suppliers of services and goods.</p> <p>Ensure COPNI can advocate fully for the rights of older people.</p>
--	---	--

(b) Financial Management

Objectives: The Commissioner (Accounting Officer) will ensure the efficient and effective management of financial resources to support the achievement of all the Commissioner’s objectives. The Commissioner will ensure that appropriate internal financial controls and systems are in place to ensure regularity and probity of expenditure and reduce the risk of fraudulent activity.

Overall Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Monthly approval of Consumption Report to be forwarded to DfC</p> <p>Monthly cash drawdowns</p>	<p>Commissioner Review and approval within 5 working days of the end of the month.</p> <p>Monthly submission of cash needs to DfC, within 5 working days of the end of the month.</p> <p>Draft Financial Statements by June 2023, and final Financial Statements by August 2023.</p> <p>Obtain an unqualified audit opinion from NIAO.</p>	<p>Transparency of expenditure and budget projections, including pressures.</p> <p>Cashflow maintained to ensure smooth operation of services to older people.</p> <p>High degree of financial transparency and probity</p>

<p>Transparency of expenditure and budget projections, including pressures.</p> <p>Funding for the COVID-19 UK Public Inquiry in place and managed effectively.</p>	<p>Do not exceed budget allocation in financial year.</p> <p>Monthly review of requirements, and bids for additional funding where required.</p> <p>Communication of financial position to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Written assurance of funding from either DfC or the Inquiry for modules where COPNI is a Core Participant.</p>	<p>UK Public Inquiry work can be completed without risk of funding arising as an issue.</p>
---	---	---

(c) Risk Management

Objectives: The Commissioner (Accounting Officer) will ensure the efficient and effective management of risk to support the achievement of all the Commissioner’s objectives.

Overall Responsibility: Head of Corporate Services

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
<p>Ensure a robust risk management process is in place and followed.</p> <p>Prepare, approve, and submit monthly and quarterly departmental reports on</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with SMT to discuss existing and emerging risks.</p>	<p>Assurance over COPNI management of risk</p> <p>Appropriate mitigating strategies applied to identified risks.</p>

<p>accountability and performance and attend Accountability meetings.</p> <p>Meet every quarter with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p>	<p>Risk Register shared with DfC in Quarterly Assurance Report, for discussion in Accountability meetings.</p> <p>All reports to be forwarded to DfC within 2 weeks of the end of the quarter.</p> <p>Committee papers to be sent to all ARAC attendees no later than one week in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Induction of new ARAC members.</p> <p>Training of ARAC and key staff.</p>	<p>High degree of transparency of financial and governance arrangements.</p>
--	--	--

(d) Pay Dispute

Objectives: Resolve the ongoing pay dispute with staff relating to the provision of pay progression.

Overall Responsibility: Commissioner/ Chief Executive (with input from Human Resources)

How we will deliver	Targets	Outcomes
Secure DoF and DfC approval of Commissioner's business case to uplift staff pay in accordance with the relevant pay progression scales. Pay eligible staff back pay in accordance with legal advice. Make payment of retrospective entitlements to staff.	Ensure accuracy of all calculations of payments. Prompt payment of all outstanding salary. Ensure staff are paid on the correct new level of their scale. Deal fully and promptly with staff queries.	All current staff to be paid at the correct level. Improvement in staff morale regarding pay equity. Improvement in staff retention based on dissatisfaction re pay equity.

(e) Organisational Review

Objectives: Seeking approval of the implementation of the organisational review including recruitment of new staff, re-organisation of existing divisions, adjustment to scheme of delegation. Programme of settlement and stability moving forward.

Overall Responsibility: Chief Executive (with input from Human Resources and wider management team)

How we will deliver	Target	Outcomes
<p>Seek approval by the submission of business case and any associated documentation to DFC/DOF.</p> <p>Recruitment and induction of new staff and re-organisation of existing divisions.</p>	<p>Increased staffing and productivity for the Commissioner's term.</p> <p>All permanent staff to be in place in 2023/24 financial year.</p> <p>Implement the formal Hybrid Working policy from April 2023, based on learnings from the pilot.</p>	<p>Ensure the ongoing fitness for purpose of COPNI to deliver the Commissioner's statutory duties effectively and efficiently.</p>

Proposed Budget 2023/24

Budget Category	Allocation
	Total £
Salaries	1,019,000
Overheads	202,000
Programme Expenditure	85,000
Advocacy and Legal	60,000
Comms and Engagement	15,000
Corporate Services	10,000
IFRS 16 depreciation (Leases)	39,000
Total Projected Expenditure (exc. depreciation and capital)	1,345,000
Depreciation	23,000
Capital	80,000
Website development	55,000
Replacement of IT equipment and telephony	25,000
Total Expenditure	1,448,000