

## Message from the Commissioner

Welcome to the second edition of the COPNI e-briefing.

As I enter the final year of my term as Commissioner, I will be reflecting on the impact of the work and research that my office has carried out, as well as looking at what the next set of priorities are for the next Corporate Plan.

The past six months have been a very busy period for the office, with the publication of four important reports, including Supporting Older Carers, Protecting our Older People, Appreciating Age and Changing the Culture of Care Provision.



The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Claire Keatinge

There has been a lot of discussion and debate about the Executive's budget and the huge challenges this presents to older people in particular. There have been suggestions that domiciliary care packages and hospital beds are to be reduced. It is unacceptable that when it comes to cuts, older people may be hardest hit. Older people must be able to have confidence that government will plan and provide the health and social care services that they need, today and in the future, and ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

I hope you will find this e-briefing useful and I look forward to working with you to champion the interests of older people and make Northern Ireland a great place to age.

## Appreciating Age



Over the next 50 years older people will contribute almost £25 billion to the economy, dispelling the myth that our ageing population is an economic burden.

This was the finding of COPNI research *Appreciating Age: Valuing the positive contributions made by older people in Northern Ireland*, the first report of its kind.

Attaching an economic value to the contributions made by older people through caring, childcare, volunteering, replacement parenting, working and paying taxes, the report highlights the often unrecognised but vital contributions older people make across our community. It also takes account of the costs associated with older age-related spending, showing the true financial benefits of an ageing society.

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unrecognised but vital contributions older people make across our community. It also takes account of the costs associated with older age-related spending, showing the true financial benefits of an ageing society.

Over 100 older people from across Northern Ireland attended the launch of the report and it was also debated in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 17 November 2014, receiving unanimous support from all parties. To download the official report [click here](#).

The full *Appreciating Age* report is available for download [here](#).

[Watch our Appreciating Age DVD](#)

## Commissioner Calls for Adult Safeguarding Legislation

The Commissioner has called for the introduction of adult safeguarding legislation in June at the launch of her report, *Protecting our Older People: A Call for Adult Safeguarding Legislation* in the Stormont Hotel.

The report highlights the need for a specific law to better protect older people from harm or abuse, and has drawn widespread support from a range of organisations. The Commissioner has met with the Ministers for Health and Justice, who have recently launched a [public consultation on the issue](#), and she has briefed the Health Committee in the NI Assembly on her findings.

To download *Protecting our Older People: A Call for Adult Safeguarding Legislation* and the press release, [click here](#).



*Commissioner briefing the Health Committee*

# Supporting Older Carers

Older carers play a vital role in enabling thousands of people to live dignified lives in their own homes, and save the Northern Ireland economy an estimated £1.02 billion every year.

Whilst Health and Social Care Trusts are legally obliged to make sure that carers are aware of their right to a Carers Assessment, a report by the Commissioner for Older People, *Supporting Older Carers*, found that 70% of older carers said that they had not been offered an assessment. It also found that many older carers do not consider themselves to be carers, and so do not realise that there is support available to help them.

The Commissioner has made a series of recommendations which include increasing the provision of information, practical, emotional and respite support that older carers need to ensure that they are supported in the valuable role they play. To download the report, [click here](#).

## Changing the Culture of Care Provision in Northern Ireland

On 4 November, the Commissioner met with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to brief him on her thirteen recommendations for changes to care provision for older people which emerged in her report, *Changing the Culture of Care Provision in Northern Ireland*.



Speaking at the meeting, she said: "Vulnerable older people must be protected – and the public must be able to have confidence that residential and nursing homes, as well as domiciliary care providers, place the care, dignity and respect of their residents at the centre of everything they do.

"It is essential that the rights, quality of life, dignity and care needs of vulnerable older people must be at the heart of planning, delivering, regulating and inspecting care services to give confidence and certainty to the older people of today and tomorrow."

To download the report, [click here](#).



The Commissioner visiting Crozier House in Banbridge  
Pictured with Iris Cromie (Manager) and resident



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Dear reader, we have identified you as one of our key stakeholders and therefore we would like to keep you updated on our work and progress in safeguarding and promoting the interests of older people.

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