



Commissioner for **Older People**
for Northern Ireland

COPNI Business Plan

2018/19

Submitted to DfC 29-01-18

CONTENTS

	Page No
Background	3
Corporate Plan	3
International Framework	5
Business Plan 2018/19	5
Resource Assumptions	6
Objective 1 - RESPECT: Supporting our Ageing Population by Promoting Positive Ageing and Ending Age Discrimination	8
Objective 2 – VALUE: Advocating for Improvements for Older People - Better Health & Social Care	9 - 10
Objective 3 – PROTECT: Tackling Financial Abuse and Scams & Protecting Older Victims of Crime	11
Objective 4 – Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice corporate governance	11 - 15
Budget Summary	16

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).

Mr. Eddie Lynch, commenced his term as Northern Ireland's second Commissioner for Older People on 14 June 2016. This draft business plan outlines the work planned to be undertaken from April 2018 to March 2019.

Corporate Plan

The draft Corporate Plan 2016-2020, *Respect, Value and Protect* links directly to the statutory duties and powers of the Commissioner. The Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious programme of work proposed by the Commissioner during his term. These objectives are to:

1. Support our Ageing Population by Promoting Positive Ageing and Ending Age Discrimination
2. Better Health and Social Care
3. Tackle Financial Abuse and Scams and Protecting Older Victims of Crime

As Accounting Officer the Commissioner is committed to ensuring effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance.

At the time of drafting this business plan, Commissioner Lynch's Corporate Plan remains in draft form, subject to approval by the Department/Minister for Communities.

This document is to be submitted to the Department for Communities for approval by the Minister (or alternative if the institutions are not re-established).

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 who safeguards and promotes the interests of older people.”

Focus

COPNI's focus for the Commissioner's term of office will be on the following three themes:

Respect, Value and Protect

Respect

- That our society respects older people, the role they play and the contributions they make to society, community and family life.
- That the Government invests in the health and wellbeing of the current and future generations of older people.
- That future generations of older people will see lower levels of chronic illness and disability, reduced pensioner poverty, better protection from abuse, improved health and social care services, and equal and fair treatment.

Value

- That older people will be recognised as individuals who have rights, who have made and continue to make a contribution to our society, and who make choices and decisions about their own lives, preferences, activities and opinions.
- That older people will receive equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination on the basis of their age.
- That older people feel that their contribution to society is recognised and valued.

Protect

- That if older people become vulnerable, the support, services, respect and care they need will be available in ways that help them to live dignified and fulfilled lives through to the end of life.
- That adequate protection and support for vulnerable older people is a priority for our society and is made available to them when they need it.

International Framework

COPNI's work is underpinned by the UN Principles for Older Persons (1991). These international standards are important as COPNI assesses how well public bodies and other organisations deliver services for older people here in Northern Ireland.

Business Plan 2018/19

This business plan sets out the business activities to be taken forward in 2018/19. As with previous business plans, it identifies the key pieces of work to be undertaken and the key targets to be met during the course of the year. The purpose of the business plan is to clearly demonstrate the level of progress required in year towards the achievement of the priority objectives.

Due to budgets being decreased every year and costs increasing, financial pressures are evident immediately. The Commissioner understands that budgets are decreasing year on year and the need to work as efficiently as possible within the grant in aid allocated. In 2016/17, the Commissioner wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the DfC and informed him that within the current baseline funding it would not be possible to deliver his statutory powers without affecting the current staffing profile or services to older people.

The Commissioner has been instructed by the DfC to assume a baseline grant in aid of £785k for the FY 2018/19. This plan demonstrates the absolute de minimis expenditure for the Commissioner with the existing staff and overhead costs. **There is an immediate pressure of £41k on the assumed baseline grant in aid of £785k.** However there are additional pressures arising from the delivery of programme activity as outlined in the Corporate Plan. These additional items of programme work are demonstrated in a separate document for consideration by the Department.

The Commissioner will ensure appropriate monthly, quarterly and annual performance management processes are implemented as necessary.

Resource Assumptions

COPNI's opening budget allocation in 2017/18 was £785k. This was a 4% reduction from the opening allocation in 2016/17. COPNI advised DfC that it would not be able to continue with normal operations and current staffing levels at this level of funding. DfC confirmed that the Department would meet this 4% pressure in year.

DfC has indicated that the opening allocation for 2018/19 will be £785k. Overheads and staff costs have increased due to a significant rent increase and the revalorisation of pay scales.

An opening allocation of £785k in 2018-19 creates the following immediate pressures:

- No commissioned research
- No capacity to publish existing findings and advice to government
- A massive reduction in engagement directly with older people
- No provision for staff recruitment, development and training
- Inability to provide an adequate level of legal support and funding
- Inability to provide mediation or alternative dispute resolution services for older people seeking redress from public authorities.
- Inability to afford the increased rent advised by ECNI, and
- No flexibility for unplanned expenditure.

COPNI has consistently advised the Department of the disproportionate impact of the austere baseline since its establishment. The position has been exacerbated each year with successive budget cuts. COPNI is now in the position that the opening budget allocation does not cover the basic salary and overhead costs of the existing organisation.

To be able to operate in 2018-19 (i.e. to be able to meet existing salary and overhead commitments) COPNI requires an opening allocation of £826k. In order to carry out programme activity in 2018-19 COPNI needs further additional funding. The proposed programme activity is set out in a separate document and will be subject to negotiation with the Department of Communities.

Year on year COPNI has had to rely on in-year funding bids to meet operating costs and to carry out any programme activity. This has made effective planning almost impossible as most programme activity has a long lead-in time. It is not possible to carry out such programme activity (such as commissioned research) if COPNI does not receive the approval for funding in the first quarter of the financial year. In 2017-18 COPNI was allocated additional funding of £156k to fund a 4% budget cut, to carry out an investigation into failure of care in a nursing home and to meet the pressures of a 54% rent increase (unplanned for).

In 2016-17 additional in-year funding of £75K was allocated to fund engagement and promotional activities, development of external communication and to commence the investigation.

In 2015-16 additional in-year funding of £21k was allocated. COPNI was also able to use £35k of Commissioner's salary when the term of the inaugural Commissioner ended mid-year and a new Commissioner was not appointed immediately.

The allocation of resources against each objective in the plan represents a proportion of 100% of the overall budget. However, as noted this level of budget does not allow for all financial pressures to be met. This is a high level plan 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.

Eddie Lynch
Commissioner & Accounting Officer

Corporate Plan Objective 1: RESPECT

Supporting our Ageing Population – Positive Ageing & Ending Age Discrimination

Ref No.	Project	Statutory Requirement	Aim (Expected impacts)	Lead Officer	Outputs	Key Performance Indicators	Budget
1.1	A Programme for Government which prioritises older people	COPNI Act 2011	Watching brief – no funding to support engagement		Media comment or any no cost event permitting comment.	Media monitoring	£75,500
1.2	An Active Ageing Strategy (AAS) for N. Ireland that is resourced and implemented	COPNI Act 2011	Watching brief – no funding to support engagement	Head of Legal and Policy Advice	Media comment or any no cost event permitting comment.	Media monitoring	£21,500
1.3	Introduction of legislation to prevent discrimination against older people in the provision of goods, facilities and services - AGFS	COPNI Act 2011	Watching brief – no funding to support engagement		Media comment or any no cost event permitting comment.	Media monitoring	£28,500
1.4	Engagement with older people and stakeholders	COPNI Act 2011	Focus on free events and invitations where the host organisation will pay travel and expenses Online communications with older people – website, social media and e-zine.	Commissioner and Chief Executive	Media comment or any no cost event permitting comment.	Media monitoring and internal meetings run in Equality House with older people and stakeholders.	£194,000

Corporate Plan Objective 2: VALUE

Advocating for Improvements for Older People - Better Health & Social Care

Ref No.	Project	Statutory Requirement	Aim (Expected impacts)	Lead Officer	Outputs	Key Performance Indicators	Programme Budget
2.1	Follow-up on Investigation Findings & Recommendations with Relevant Authorities	COPNI Act 2011	Non-cost based dissemination and follow-up meetings and events	Commissioner & Chief Executive	Adequate dissemination of Investigation Findings and Report via no cost event(s) or invitations	Follow-up action plans and projects from Relevant Authorities	£157,000
2.2	Responding to public consultations by relevant authorities regarding matters that may impact older people and those who care for them.	COPNI Act 2011	To continue to raise issues of relevance and importance to older people to all relevant public authorities through their public consultation exercises.	Head of Legal and Policy Advice	<p>Issues of importance to older people, their families, relatives and carers are robustly represented at the heart of public policy and services.</p> <p>Selected responses within the capacity (knowledge and time) of existing policy team.</p>	Consultation responses are submitted on time to the relevant authorities and to the professional standard expected from COPNI.	£78,000

Corporate Plan Objective 2: VALUE

Advocating for Improvements for Older People - Better Health & Social Care

Ref No.	Project	Statutory Requirement	Aim (Expected impacts)	Lead Officer	Outputs	Key Performance Indicators	Programme Budget
2.3	Responding to individuals who contact the Commissioner for assistance	COPNI Act 2011	<p>To continue to accept cases for further investigation in accordance with the case acceptance policy.</p> <p>To act as an “independent champion” for older people who are experiencing difficulty in their interaction with other public authorities.</p>	Chief Executive	<p>Conducting the investigation of cases for individual older people in compliance with all internal policies and good practice.</p> <p>Log of live casework fully updated as enquiries arise.</p> <p>Regular supervision meetings with Chief Executive (CE) and, as required, with Senior Management Team (SMT).</p>	<p>95% compliance to Case Acceptance policy.</p> <p>95% compliance to call handling and signposting policy.</p> <p>Maintenance of log of incoming enquiries with 99% accuracy.</p> <p>Fortnightly reporting of case work progress to Chief Executive. Quarterly caseload review (deep dive), monitoring by Chief Executive.</p> <p>Monthly reporting of enquiries and caseload statistics to SMT meeting.</p>	£153,500

Corporate Plan Objective 3: PROTECT

Tackling Financial Abuse and Scams & Protecting Older Victims of Crime

Ref No.	Project	Statutory Requirement	Aim (Expected impacts)	Lead Officer	Outputs	Key Performance Indicators	Programme Budget
No funding available for any programme activity under this priority.							

Corporate Plan Objective 4 : GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance

Ref No.	Project	Statutory Requirement	Aim (Expected impacts)	Lead Officer	Outputs	Key Performance Indicators	Programme Budget
4.1	Monitoring of annual business plans	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM)	To monitor 2018-19 objectives in the annual business plan approved by DfC.	Chief Executive	Approved Annual business plan 2018/19 Development of oversight of project plans where appropriate for specific pieces of work. Monthly performance management	Delivery of internally approved business plan for submission to DfC by date agreed. Approval of bi-annual Reports to DfC. Attendance at quarterly Accountability Meetings.	£34,500

Corporate Plan Objective 4 : GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance

					through managers' meetings and 1:1s. Performance management information provided to Senior Management Team monthly.	Ongoing liaison between the Department and COPNI in relation to business plans.	
4.2	Prepare, monitor and report on expenditure and budgets annually, quarterly and monthly.	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM)	Provide SMT with monthly management information including budget profile, drawdown and consumption of funding. To ensure the Accounting Officer can access and understand all elements of the budget process as and when required.	Chief Executive	Monthly Management Accounts Consumption Reports Drawdown requests Annual Financial Statements Advice and guidance to the Accounting Officer on all financial matters relating to COPNI spend.	Monthly management accounts within 10 working days of the end of the month. 98% of departmental returns submitted on time.	£11,400
4.3	To ensure an appropriate and	Management Statement and	To provide a secretariat service to	Chief Executive	Training for new ARAC members	Provision of papers to committee	£12,500

Corporate Plan Objective 4 : GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance

	<p>effective Audit and Risk Framework is in place</p>	<p>Financial Memorandum (MSFM</p>	<p>the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and enable the committee to carry out its functions efficiently and effectively</p> <p>To ensure a fully compliant and appropriate system of internal audit is in place and is carried out by external service providers. Ensure effective management of risk.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting of risk management to the ARAC.</p>		<p>Four (minimum) meetings of the ARAC each year</p> <p>Papers are fully compliant with internal policies and procedures.</p> <p>Annual Audit Strategy for 2017/18.</p> <p>Audit reports in line with the strategy.</p> <p>Action plans relating to audit recommendations.</p> <p>Efficient and effective internal control environment.</p> <p>Updated risk register reported to the ARAC.</p>	<p>members and attendees, five days prior to the meetings.</p> <p>Accurate and timely minutes of the ARAC meetings signed and published.</p> <p>Strategy agreed by June 17</p> <p>To action all recommendations leading from previous and current audit reports.</p> <p>Accurate and timely reporting of the audit results and recommendations to ARAC.</p> <p>Satisfactory internal audit reports.</p>	
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Corporate Plan Objective 4 : GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance

						Quarterly reporting of risk management register to all risk holders and ARAC.	
4.4	Continued development of good practice in financial management, policy development and planning.	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM)	<p>Ongoing review and improvement of the COPNI Financial Manual.</p> <p>Ongoing review of all policies</p> <p>Completion and review of all information management policies and procedures to ensure compliance.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with all Health and Safety statutory duties.</p>	Finance and Governance Manager	Up to date policies and procedures that comply with all guidance	<p>Review of policy register</p> <p>Up to date policies</p> <p>Annual review of SLA's and contracts</p> <p>Act as Information Manager.</p> <p>Convene and chair twice yearly formal meetings of the Information Group - report to SMT on FOI, DP and Equality Monitoring.</p> <p>Attend tenancy meetings and fulfil our obligations as tenants in respect of H&S policies and procedures</p>	£10,300

Corporate Plan Objective 4 : GOOD GOVERNANCE

Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance

4.5	Mandatory Training and Development (T&D) of staff No funding available for training and development	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM)	To develop a training plan prioritising continuing professional development. To maximise the opportunities to avail of free training opportunities for staff To track and monitor training and development of staff To ensure full attendance at all booked courses and that on return line managers meet with trainees to ensure that the training met the stated objectives.	HR Officer	Skills Audit. Training and Development Plan. Monthly monitoring information in relation to T&D undertaken. Bids for additional funding to undertake training and development of staff Skills Audit.	To deliver the completed Skills Audit to CE by end of Q1. To deliver a T&D plan by of end Q2. To ensure all staff have considered T&D as part of the annual performance process and that T&D opportunities are being undertaken by all staff. To monitor and report on T&D monthly.	£8,300
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2018/19 Projected Expenditure

	£	Totals £
18/19 Salaries		664,114
Non-Discretionary Expenditure		6,621
Overheads		145,265
Immediate pressure on overheads		(41,000)
Commissioned Work		-
Objectives		
1. RESPECT: Supporting our Ageing Population by Promoting Positive Ageing & Ending Age Discrimination	319,500	
2. VALUE: Advocating for Improvements for Older People – Better Health & Social Care	388,500	
3. PROTECT: Tackling Financial Abuse and Scams & Protecting Older Victims of Crime	0	
4. GOOD GOVERNANCE: Ensure effective, efficient and economical good practice in corporate governance	77,000	
Total projected expenditure excluding depreciation and capital		775,000
Depreciation		10,000
Capital		-
Total projected expenditure including depreciation and capital	785,000	785,000