

Business Plan 2022-23

Final to DfC, Jan 2022

Background

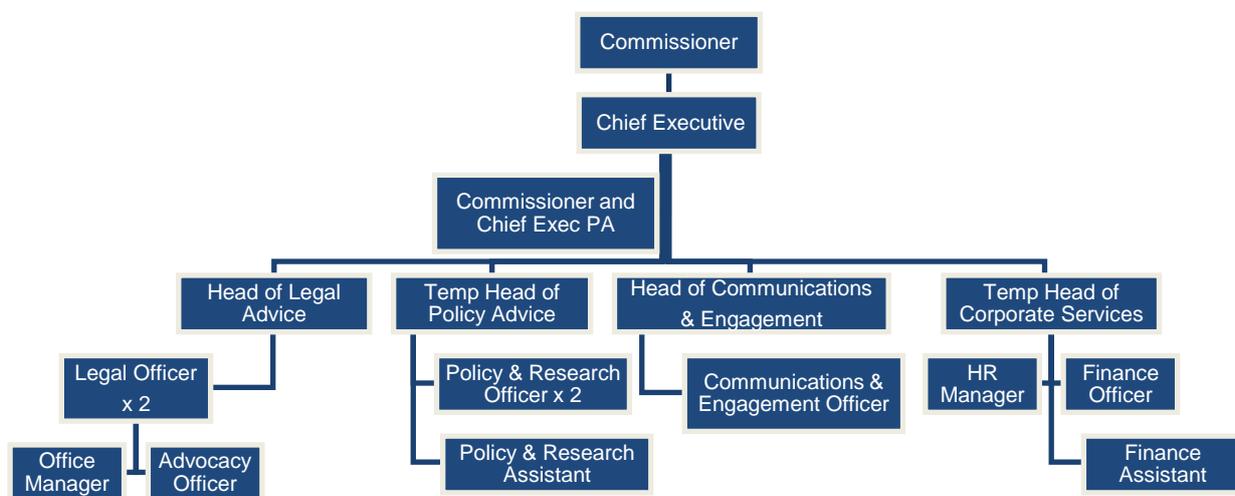
The Office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) was established by the Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which took effect from January 2011. COPNI is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC).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

Staff of the Commissioner for Older People

Organisational Chart (Temporary – January 2022)



Corporate Plan

Corporate activity in 2021/22

It is impossible to consider the work of the Commissioner in 2021/22 without understanding the continued adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on older people. Issues mainly affected by Covid-19 are health and social care (care homes, supported living and domiciliary care), consumer matters (for vulnerable consumers of energy, food and other goods and services), mental health impacts of isolation and reintegration (loneliness, isolation, provision of community services), and the provision of vaccines as a matter of priority.

New Corporate Plan 2022/23

A new Corporate Plan, that was due to be published late in 2020, was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Corporate plan 2022-24 will be sent to DFC for Ministerial approval in February 2022. This business plan relates to the corporate plan.

The year 2021/22 continued to busy with issues for older people arising from the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, particularly about care homes, guidance to Government on Covid recovery, vaccine uptake, loneliness and isolation, the financial impact of covid and the rising energy prices. The level of public enquiries was high, with queries from the public around the rationale and difficulties arising from government decisions, that affected older people. These included, on-going restrictions to care homes, the stepped approach by Government on the safe re-opening of society, the development of the covid passport scheme and roll out of vaccination and the high street voucher scheme and its accessibility for older people.

In developing a new corporate plan, the Commissioner always consults and engages directly with older people. As with the previous year, it was not possible to do this effectively, or as widely as usual with on-going social distancing rules and the reduced level of social activities for older people.

However, the Commissioner continued to engage with older people, and sought their views on what key issues they felt the Commissioner needed to focus on through the new corporate plan for the next 2 years. An online survey was issued, and officers worked with partners on obtaining as many hard copies of the survey as far as possible for those with no digital access.

As a result, the Commissioner received 466 responses from older people and the feedback received, will be invaluable in setting the priorities for the Commissioner's work for next year and in 2023/24.

Snapshot of Survey Results

The survey results highlighted that

- Most respondents were from the 65-74 and 75-84 age groups
- Almost 95% of respondents cited Health & Social Care as one of their top priorities
- 95% of respondents cited Hospital waiting lists as their top priority
- 92% of people highlighted affordable energy as one of their top priorities, with 72% of those people indicating that it was one of the top 3 priorities that should be addressed by the Commissioner.
- 90% & 89% respectively reported Crimes against Older People and scams as one of their top priorities
- 98% agreed that Loneliness and Isolation as an issue that should be tackled with Government
- 93% that Older People should be included in the Programme for Government.
- 88% agreed that Tackling Ageism should be a key priority for the Commissioner
- 65% supported the call for a Public Inquiry.

The Commissioner's Draft Priorities 2022-2024

The Commissioner's priorities over the next 2 years are centred around the overarching theme of Tackling Ageism, focusing around six issues, as illustrated below. These priorities are derived from our engagement with older people through our recent corporate plan survey, of which there were 466 responses.

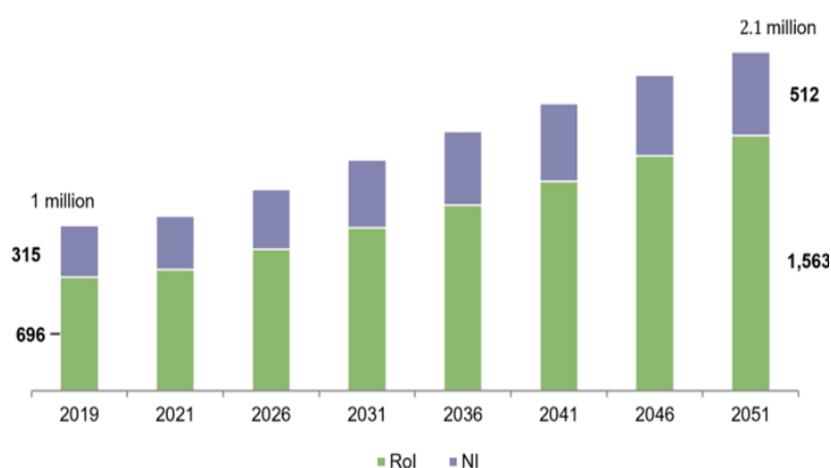
Additionally, our priorities have also been informed from our policy and research and key policy developments across government as well as the nature and theme of the issues that the organisation deals with throughout the year.



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 across, 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

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.

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 will be focus on a number of key themes that will be determined in line with the finalisation of the new Corporate Plan in January 2022.

International Framework

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

- Independence
- Care
- Participation
- Self fulfilment, and
- Dignity

High Level Outcomes

With the elections planned to take place in 2022 and the formation of a new government in Northern Ireland, it is anticipated that activity around a new draft Programme for Government will arise.

The Commissioner will once again, be advising government on the need for prioritising the needs of older people in the new draft PFG, including specific measures and outcomes. The Commissioner will also be seeking progress on the introduction of legislation to protect older people from discrimination in the provision of facilities, goods and services (Age GFS). This work is broadly in the policy and engagement strands of work in this plan but may require a more specific approach if the pace of progress changes.

The focus of the Commissioner is to secure the inclusion of high-level outcomes within the new Programme for Government (PFG), and working with government to understand the potential for this within the PFG and in collaboration within other plans

Additionally, the review of the Active Ageing Strategy is important for The Commissioner because it provides the strategic framework to support an ageing

society in NI, and therefore needs to be a strategy which firmly meet the needs of older people in NI.

Business Plan 2022-23

This year's business plan sets out the business activities to be taken forward in 2022/23. It identifies the key pieces of work to be undertaken and the key targets to be met during 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 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 2022/23 business plan provides details of all the individual high-level projects to be delivered in support of the Corporate Plan.

The tables below, divide the work into each of the Commissioner's priorities and provide details of the governance activities planned for this year. The plan will outline the following.

- Description of projects and activities
- Aims
- Senior Responsible Officer
- Outputs
- Measurement and KPI's
- Resource Allocation (which includes staff and overhead allocation and programme budget)

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

The Commissioner also anticipates full engagement with MLAs and NI Assembly Committees in pursuit of implementation of his advice to government on a number of areas. This work is included specifically in the plan.

Covid-19 update.

As a result of the global pandemic of Covid-19, in common with all other government bodies, COPNI continues to follow the Government guidance in relation to working at home, with staff fully occupied and equipped in their normal duties.

Sadly, this year again, has been busy with the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. It has become evident that, as feared, the pandemic was most devastating to the older people in our society. The majority of those who got profoundly ill, and who died, were in the older age category. Thankfully those older people who didn't get ill, nevertheless had to cope with long periods of shielding and self-isolation. However, this has increased the loneliness and isolation suffered by many older people

As a result of the serious adverse impact the covid pandemic has had on older people, The Commissioner has called for a Public Inquiry specifically in relation to care homes, and if granted, will be an important focus of our work over the next year and beyond.

Over the past year, the COPNI team worked tirelessly with relevant authorities and providers of health and social care to see what could be done to better protect older people living across a range of settings. As well as dealing with many serious matters, including ensuring support for people shielding and trying to organise visiting for care home residents in the second half of the year, we also saw a large increase in cases helping older people and their families. As we move forward into next year and beyond the impact that covid has had on the lives of older people will be a key focus of the Commissioner's work, particularly in relation to issues such as bereavement support, loneliness and isolation, the adequacy of the health & social care system for older people and the reforms that are required.

The spectre of Covid-19 has also shone a light on ageism in our society and exposed negative attitudes on how we treat older people. There were too many occasions when social and media commentary painted our older society in a negative way and there was little appreciation of the positive and important contribution that older people make to our community.

Tackling Ageism will be the overarching priority for the Commissioner in his new Corporate Plan and it is planned to develop projects and initiatives to challenge this issue over the months and years ahead.

Human Resources

Throughout this year, the nature of work for some staff has changed, due to the need for organisational change, the vacancy of a number of key posts from the Senior Management Team and the pace and quantum of work that is required to support an Ageing society, during a time of crisis within the health system and the on-going challenges associated with the Covid Pandemic is paramount.

A review of organisational structure and staffing is in progress. The Commissioner will work with DFC to assess and approve any changes to the human resources of COPNI. The Commissioner will also co-operate with a forth coming review of Arm's Length Bodies being conducted on behalf of the Minister for Communities.

A profile of expenditure is included at the end of the business plan. The plan also reflects linkages to the Programme for Government, and the relevant section of the COPNI Act 2011 and the Commissioner's high-level outcomes.

Work Stream 1. Communications & engagement with older people

Overall Responsibility: Head of Communications

Summary: Whilst covid restrictions remain in place engagement will remain virtual until face-to-face meetings with older people are deemed safe. Increased use of social media and virtual visiting/meeting has been relatively successful. It is hoped that safe face-to-face meetings may be possible throughout 2022. Planned engagement 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.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Attendance at events on a geographical basis across NI.</p> <p>Meetings with key stakeholders on priority issues as identified in the corporate plan.</p> <p>Engagement with Media, social media, Radio, TV and website.</p> <p>Focus on section 75 groups/ to include women, diversity, and inclusion of minority groups.</p> <p>Procure new website designer to ensure optimum functionality and that website is up to date with latest accessibility requirements.</p>	<p>Monitoring attendance levels at events, and amongst groups/ areas where previous engagement has been lower.</p> <p>No. of partners and advisory groups met on priority issues</p> <p>Monitoring website visitors and the impact/reduction in calls to the office seeking information which can now found on website.</p>	<p>Impact on legislation/policy changes affecting older people’s lived experience.</p>

Workstream 2: Responding to individuals who contact the Commissioner for assistance. *(Signposting, advocacy, legal support etc)*

Overall Responsibility: Head of Legal Services *-with support from policy team as required.*

Summary: 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.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Deal with approximately 100+ live and complex cases.</p> <p>Responding to public enquiries and complex cases.</p> <p>Support requests for funding support in line with criteria.</p> <p>Engagement with key partners (PSNI, DoJ, Office of Care and Protection) to identify strategic themes emerging from case work.</p>	<p>Recording and management of cases by legal officers in accordance with existing policies.</p> <p>Review case work progress at SMT on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Work with Policy Team to review the management of enquiries across the teams and transfer as appropriate.</p> <p>Monthly reporting of enquiries and caseload management information to SMT meeting.</p> <p>Record Management of enquiries and case work on ALB system.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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> <p>Increased awareness of the impact of financial abuse.</p>

Work Stream 3: Responding to public consultations by relevant authorities regarding matters that may impact older people and those who care for them.

Overall Responsibility: Head of Policy

Summary: To continue to develop responses to relevant public consultation exercises on issues of strategic relevance and importance to older people. Primarily, these will be in response to public consultations from key public authorities. These responses are key to affecting change at government level on the key issues specifically impacting older peoples as identified in the Commissioners corporate plan.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	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>Publish responses on COPNI's website within 2 days of submission to the consulting authority.</p>	<p>No. of consultation responses drafted and approved at SMT level.</p> <p>No. of consultation responses submitted.</p> <p>Publication on website and social media.</p> <p>No. of engagement with older people and media engagements on serious issues.</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>

Workstream 4. Covid 19 Pandemic Recovery Support

Overall Responsibility: Commissioner/Chief Executive (with support from Heads of Service)

Summary: As we move forward into the 2022 year and beyond the impact that covid has had on the lives of older people will be a key focus of the Commissioner's work, particularly in relation to issues such as bereavement support, loneliness and isolation, the adequacy of the health & social care system for older people and the reforms that are required.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Regular provision of advice to government on issues of support and protection required to protect the interests of older people.</p> <p>Participation in the PHA led Care Home Pathway Group. Specifically, providing advice on the progress of the Pathway, representing older peoples interest to ensure Human Rights are protected.</p> <p>Gathering information and data in support of the Public Inquiry to ensure the Commissioner is fully informed of issues.</p> <p>Working with partner authorities to support families of older people in care homes and support living settings.</p> <p>Scope the future needs of older people requiring bereavement support post Covid. 19.</p>	<p>Evidence based advice to government.</p> <p>Careful consideration of public comment that could increase fears in older people.</p> <p>Regularly updated and refreshed media lines for the Commissioner, when called for public comment.</p> <p>Supporting all efforts by other bodies that address or provide services to older people to increase support and protection.</p>	<p>Ensuring that older people are aware of all support available to them.</p> <p>Improved awareness around testing processes and on-going vaccination programmes.</p> <p>Older people are supported when they contact the Commissioner for assistance with their individual difficulties and challenges.</p>

Workstream 5. Improving Health & Social Care for Older People (incl Care Home Contracts)

Overall Responsibility: Head of Policy/with advice and input from SMT

Summary: The Commissioner must keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the interests of older people. The Commissioner must keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for older persons by relevant authorities, in the context of Home Truths.

The reform of Adult Social Care is a key priority for the Commissioner and comprises of a range of services including domiciliary care, residential and nursing care, respite for carers, day care, community meals and the provision of aids and adaptations. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated Health and Social Care service provision, including issues around staff shortages and care package waiting lists. Additionally, the timely introduction of the Adult Protection Bill and Regulations will continue to be a key focus for 2022/23. The continued advice to Government departments on the contents of the Bill and ensuring it is brought forward as soon as possible within the next mandate will be a key focus of work for the Commissioner.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Provide advice to Government on the introduction of the Adult Protection Bill.</p> <p>Meet with Department of Health officials on a quarterly basis to consider progress and the contents of the bill are adequate and meet as far as possible the needs as outlined in COPNI consultation submission.</p> <p>Liaise with the Minister of Health on the Reform of Adult Social Care in NI, its progress and timetable for implementation. Consider the consultation proposals and respond by the deadline.</p> <p>Work with the relevant authorities to progress and advise on the implementation plan for the review.</p> <p>Carry out research to assess the adequacy of care being provided to older people in NI prisons.</p> <p>Implement the research findings of the contractual arrangements and human rights of older people living in care home settings and take appropriate action with the relevant authorities to seek improvements.</p>	<p>Collate the evidence-based advice (from casework) for ongoing difficulties arising from older peoples' experiences of living in care settings.</p> <p>Record of meetings held with DOH and note the progress of the APB.</p> <p>Record of meeting with Minister and officials on ASC Reform.</p> <p>Consider the findings of the research into the regional care home contract and highlight issues to the relevant authorities.</p> <p>Evidence based ongoing advice on the development of an Adult Protection Bill.</p> <p>Identification of key issues, and improvements required within the research report.</p> <p>Track progress on the implementation plan and note the improvements made in relation to Adult Social Care in NI.</p>	<p>Improved system of Adult Social Care in NI.</p>

Workstream 6. Tackling Ageism

Overall Responsibility: Head of Policy & Head of Communications – with input from SMT

Summary: Ageism is important because it can cause a huge range of harms in a wide range of contexts, including employment, health and social care, and media and culture. 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 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 must 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 through adopting its recommendations to Tackle Ageism.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Develop awareness of Ageism through Communication and Engagement mechanisms and investing time in implementing in educational and intergenerational contact interventions.</p> <p>Carry out additional research in conjunction with relevant partners to gain a better understanding of ageism and its impact on older people and use to inform Government policy and other policy makers.</p> <p>Change 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.</p>	<p>No. of awareness campaigns carried out.</p> <p>No. of educational and intergenerational contact interventions completed.</p> <p>Carry out attitudinal survey pre and post campaign.</p> <p>Consideration of research piece and its findings.</p> <p>Impact of government policy discussions.</p> <p>No. of meetings and note impact of discussions with Government on relevant legislation required.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of Ageism in society.</p> <p>End of Discrimination for Older People.</p> <p>Legislation in place (Goods, Services and Facilities).</p>

Workstream 7: Affordable Energy for Vulnerable Customers

Overall Responsibility: Commissioner & Head of Policy

Summary: Households across NI are experiencing a steep increase in their energy prices this winter due to supply and demand on the global wholesale market. This combined with the impacts of Covid-19 present great difficulties for older person in Northern Ireland (NI).

The Commissioner is highly concerned about the health impact that rising energy prices will have on older people and the most vulnerable in our society. He has called on immediate government intervention to support older people during this time of crisis and is calling for progress on the development of new Fuel Poverty Strategy.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Hold regular meetings with the Utility Regulator and the Consumer Council on a regular basis under the Commissioner's remit to advocate on the matters relating to the interests of older persons, and the need to safeguard those interests.</p> <p>The Commissioner to advocate for both the CCNI and UREG to focus on both consumer education and applying pressure on Energy Supplier and Network Operators to help reduce cost and make more efforts to assist vulnerable customers.</p> <p>Work with the relevant government departments and the Executive to ensure financial support is provided to older people during the Winter periods.</p> <p>Work alongside the Department for Communities & Department for Economy and other relevant agencies on the urgent development of a fuel poverty strategy for NI.</p>	<p>No. of meetings held and note the outcome of discussions.</p> <p>Note the provisions made in relation to assist with the reduction of costs to vulnerable customers.</p> <p>No. of support interventions provided by Government in Winter 2022.</p> <p>Participation in relevant strategic advisory group on the development of the fuel poverty strategy and implementation of actions contained in the Energy Strategy.</p> <p>Progress on the development of fuel poverty strategy.</p>	<p>Reduction in Excess Winter Deaths because of cold homes.</p> <p>Updated Fuel Poverty strategy for NI.</p> <p>Older people have access to energy on an affordable basis.</p> <p>Increased financial support to older people during Winter months.</p>

Work Stream 8: Loneliness and Isolation of Older People

Overall Responsibility: Head of Policy with input from Head of Communications

Summary: The impact of the Covid pandemic has exacerbated the feelings of loneliness and isolation amongst older people in NI. Lockdowns, shielding, self-isolation and social distancing have meant separation from family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues.

It's reminded us how much we value our relationships – and given us some insight into the one in five people who are lonely in Northern Ireland. Loneliness affects one in 20 people in Northern Ireland, and it is impossible to consider the work of the Commissioner in 22/24 without understanding the disproportionate adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on older people and how this has contributed to the issue of Loneliness and Social Isolation.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Review policy and governance arrangements on in relation to Loneliness and Isolation Strategies and their implementation, and the impact of these in other EU and international countries.</p> <p>Consider the responsibilities of the NI Government Departments and identify which Govt department had primary responsibility for leading on reducing LSI.</p> <p>Participate in the North South Loneliness Group, review its TOR with other partners and agree strategic interventions to enable progress on the development of an LSI Strategy for NI.</p> <p>Participation in the All-Party Working Group and agree interventions to progress the development for the LSI Strategy in NI.</p> <p>Advise Government on the need for the development of a Loneliness and Isolation strategy for NI and identify and advise the relevant Gov't department to take this forward.</p> <p>Actively participate in the North South Loneliness and Ageing Group.</p> <p>Delivery of engagement events with older people and key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Results and recommendations of research.</p> <p>No. of meetings held with N/S and All-Party group and impact of meetings and interventions agreed.</p> <p>No. of meetings with Government, MLAs/Party Leaders and the impact of discussions.</p> <p>Progress on the development of an LSI Strategy for NI.</p>	<p>Reduction in Loneliness and Isolation amongst Older People in NI.</p> <p>LSI Strategy in place for NI.</p>

Work Stream 9: Programme for Government

Overall Responsibility: Commissioner, Head of Policy (with input from wider SMT)

Summary: The Commissioner has a statutory duty to promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against older people. Older people deserve to have a decent quality of life, to be healthy and happy, to feel safe and warm, to remain connected to society and to feel valued and respected. Government needs to respond in many ways to ensure the needs of older people are better met.

The ageing population is one of the great success stories of modern times. It is vital that the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly make older people's issues a top priority.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>The Commissioner will do this by continuing to seek high level commitments to older people by the newly formed Government in the Programme for Government (PfG) which better reflects the needs and interests of older people as a distinct group.</p> <p>To undertake research into other countries PFG's and for e.g., the 11 community plans of local councils to assess the extent to which an Older People are identified as a distinct priority and the investment strategies in place to ensure older people are protected.</p> <p>The Commissioner will meet post-election with new Executive Ministers, 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>No. of new policies in place that enhance the quality of life of older people.</p> <p>No. of new policies developed.</p> <p>Research findings and key actions required.</p> <p>No. of meetings held with 11 Councils.</p> <p>No. of meetings held and outcome with Ministers/party leaders on the need for PFG.</p>	<p>PFG outcome for Older People.</p>

Work Stream 10. Crime and Older People (including Scamwise Partnership)

Overall Responsibility: Head of Policy, Head of Legal Services & Head of Communications

Summary: Whilst statistics show that older people are less likely to be victims of crime, typically crimes committed against older people in Northern Ireland were less likely to result in a conviction and prosecution. However, the reality is that whilst incidents of crime against older people are not high, the impact of those crimes is significant. Crimes committed against older people, particularly burglary, tend to be intrusions into what should be a safe space or place. Being a victim of crime can be a traumatic experience for anyone, but there are factors that make older people more vulnerable to the effects of crime. These include: a higher rate of fear of crime; a higher rate of physical and mental impairment and disability; a greater likelihood of living alone; a greater likelihood of the absence of support networks; and higher rates of feelings of insecurity.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>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.</p> <p>Consider and publish the research findings from the Crime and Research project (2021/22) and carry out additional research if required.</p> <p>Provide advice to relevant agencies on the recommendations of the research and consider appropriate actions/improvements.</p> <p>To provide advice to government and to older people that will strengthen prevention of crime against older people.</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 in 2022/23.</p> <p>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>No. of partnership meetings held with the relevant agencies as listed.</p> <p>No. of initiatives carried out to increase understanding and strengthen prevention of crime against older people.</p> <p>No. of recommendations taken forward by CJI in 2022/23.</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>

Work Stream 11. Corporate Governance

Overall Responsibility: Chief Executive & Head of Corporate Services

Summary: 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 are in place that include Finance, Human Resources, Planning, Performance Management and Reporting.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Submit a costed outcomes-based business plan to DfC by 31 Jan</p> <p>Develop, monitor, and report on project plans for specific pieces of work.</p> <p>Approve management accounts within 10 working days of the end of the month.</p> <p>Prepare Annual Report & Financial Statements to comply with FREM and timeframes.</p> <p>Prepare, approve, and submit monthly and quarterly departmental reports on accountability and performance and attend Accountability meetings.</p> <p>Meet every quarter with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p> <p>Regular review of policies.</p> <p>Complete staff skills audit & training plan.</p>	<p>Deliver business plan targets within the allocated budget.</p> <p>Use internal reviews and audit recommendations to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the support service.</p> <p>Monitor and report on performance against key targets and objectives.</p> <p>Review and update key systems and policies to support the achievement of the corporate objectives.</p> <p>Ensure the highest quality of reporting on Equality issues annually.</p> <p>Effective Management of all Service Level Agreements for outsourced services and contracts with external suppliers of services and goods.</p>	<p>Effective and timely delivery of all planned work.</p> <p>Effective use of budget within funding allocation.</p> <p>High degree of financial transparency and probity</p> <p>Effective management and reporting of risk.</p> <p>Continuous development and improvement in financial management, policy development and planning.</p> <p>Highly skilled staff with excellent internal and external relationships.</p>

Work Stream 12. Pay Dispute

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

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

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

Work Stream 13. Organisational Review

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

Summary: 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.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
<p>Seek approval by the submission of business case and any associated documentation to DFC/DOF.</p> <p>To co-operate with the forth coming review of ALB's. Field work to commence Feb/March 2022.</p> <p>Recruitment and induction of new staff and re-organisation of existing divisions.</p> <p>Subject to approval of capital bid – physical changes to the footprint of COPNI in Equality House to maximise efficiency of hybrid working.</p>	<p>Increased staffing and productivity for the Commissioner's term.</p> <p>All new staff to be in place in financial year 22/23.</p> <p>Smooth transition to hybrid working between office and home bases.</p>	<p>Ensure the ongoing fitness for purpose of COPNI to deliver the Commissioner's statutory duties effectively and efficiently.</p>

Work Stream 14. Migration to MS Teams from j drive

Overall Responsibility: Head of Communications (with input from wider staff teams)

Summary: To migrate all files and folders from j drive to MS teams and co-ordinate staff training to ensure all individuals have relevant skills to use MS Teams to its full potential.

How we will deliver	How we will measure impact	Outcomes
To set a realistic timescale for all files to be migrated over to teams from the j drive and for all staff to be using MS teams to its full potential.	In consultation with staff to arrange effective tailored MS teams training. Managers to assess and report on staff usage and competence.	All staff will be adept at using teams to its full potential. Increased staff productivity and efficiency. Effective file system/architecture which can be easily navigated by all staff/new staff.

Proposed Budget 2022/23*

Budget Category	Allocation
	Total £
Salaries	1,160,000
Non-discretionary expenditure	11,000
Overheads	172,000
Programme Expenditure	71,000
Total Projected Expenditure (exc. depreciation and capital)	1,414,000
Depreciation	10,000
Capital	0
Total Expenditure	1,424,000

*Budget is based on approved allocation at time of submission.