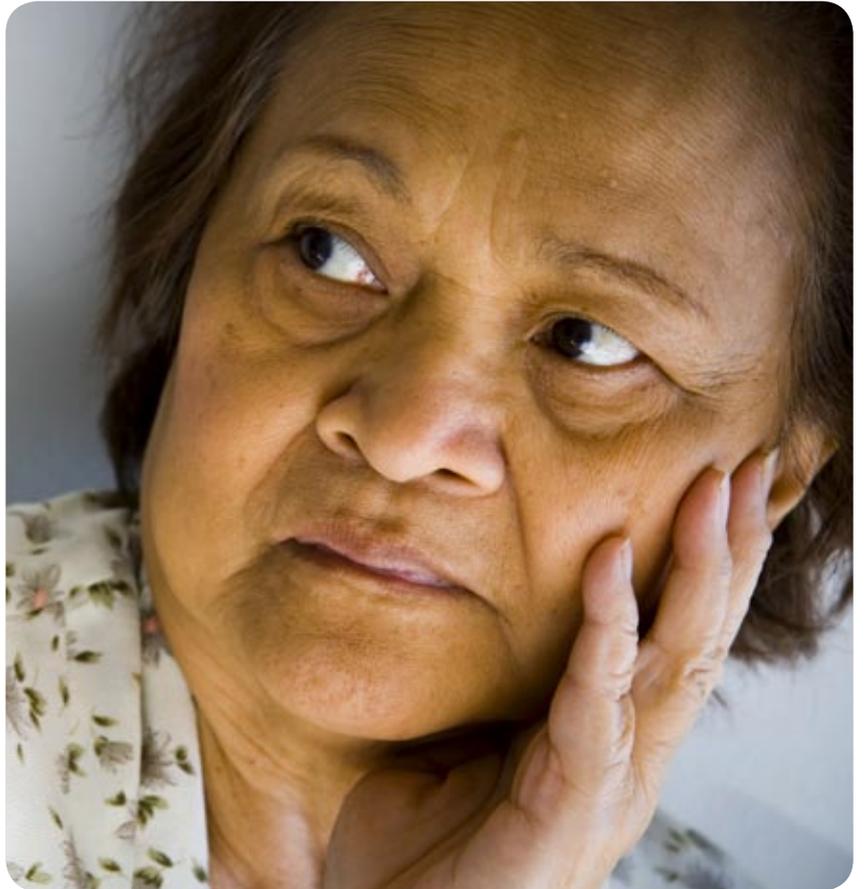
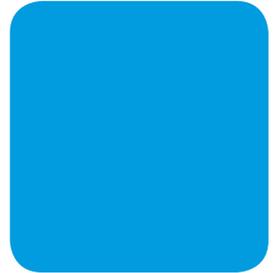




Older People's Commissioner for Wales  
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru



Strategic Plan **2010-2013**

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## Accessible formats

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# Foreword

My guiding principle as the independent Older People's Commissioner is to listen to all older people across Wales and those who work with them. Older people and many organisations worked hard for the establishment of a Commissioner with unique powers to benefit people aged 60 and above.



Since taking up my post in April 2008 I have listened to and learned from many older people, who have provided really useful information about their interests and the issues they are concerned about. From 2008–9, I gathered information and evidence and set up robust systems to assist me in my task. During 2009-10 the interim strategic plan established a permanent staff team, increased our engagement with older people and extended our policy influencing and intervention.

I have always said that it is vital that I develop appropriate partnerships with the many organisations that work with and for older people, including statutory agencies, charities and private companies. Of course, in relation to many public bodies in Wales this requires me to maintain a careful balance as I also have the power to review, scrutinise and challenge their work as it impacts on the lives of older people.

The UN Principles for Older Persons are the invaluable foundation on which the Commission is based and assist me to test how public bodies and others are delivering for older people. In taking forward our work we will recognise the importance of the attitudes of the general public towards older people and towards the role the Principles have to play.

I am firmly of the opinion that lasting change is more likely to be made if we develop open and honest partnerships. I am grateful for the collaborative response from the many organisations I have met and worked with to date.

Many of the issues and concerns of older people are subjects that have been deemed 'too difficult to deal with' for many years. These issues include paying for care, establishing fair and transparent systems, providing clear and accessible information, dignity and respect,

variation in services within small geographical areas or even within individual organisations. I believe that there are solutions to these challenges, but they will need a fundamental shift in society's attitude to older people and funding priorities. I intend to use my powers wisely in order to make progress on these issues, as is appropriate within my remit.

We are faced with challenging times financially, in the public services and elsewhere. It is vital that we look to change the way we operate in Wales to be more effective and that we promote working practices and structures which work towards effective collaboration.

In developing a three-year strategy from 2010-13, I am setting out an important new phase for the Older People's Commission. It sets out our direction and headline activities and will be supported by annual operational plans and regular review.

We have identified a number of key priorities based on substantial information and evidence from older people. In order to make the most effective use of our resources we have had to make tough decisions about our priorities.

We have a unique role to fulfill and this strategy sets out how we plan to achieve it.

**Ruth Marks**

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

## Vision: where we want to be

We want to see a Wales in which respect for the rights and dignity of older people is a practical reality in all areas of life, where age discrimination is a thing of the past and where a positive view of ageing and of older people prevails.

## Mission: purpose and desired level of performance

We will be a world-class Commission, utilising our powers to further the interests of older people in Wales and make a lasting difference.

# Values

The following values reflect comments from older people and will define the culture of the Commission:



- **Older people focussed:** Older people will be at the heart of the Commission. We will listen and where necessary, take action. Our work will have an emphasis on those who at times are more vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>
- **For all Wales:** The Commission will be relevant and accessible to people in all parts of Wales.
- **Independent:** The Commission will conduct its work to further the interests of older people in Wales in a way that is independent of government or any other bodies.
- **Authoritative:** We will be an organisation with integrity and purpose, clear about our evidence base and strongly connected to the wishes and interests of older people.
- **Communicative:** We will seek to communicate regularly and effectively with our external stakeholders and internally about issues affecting older people, our work and our progress. We will see this as a two way process.
- **Collaborative:** We will work in partnership with others as appropriate to avoid unnecessary duplication, making best use of energy and resources.

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<sup>1</sup> We will develop our thinking on this issue of vulnerability: ie, we can all be vulnerable at various times, for various reasons.

## Our work

The Commissioner acquired her powers of office in April 2008. Developing the capacity to exercise those powers fully, particularly in relation to the Review and Examination functions, has required time and exploration of their scope and nature. The establishment of the Older People's Commission as an organisation has progressed substantially over 2009-2010. Consultation has been carried out in relation to priorities and methodology. The potential



demand on our limited resources is considerable and the best use of these resources has been, and will continue to be, vital. The management of expectations is of great importance, both in the early development of the Commission and for the future.

In 2009 our interim strategic plan was determined and drove recruitment to a range of posts. In parallel with this the Commission undertook a range of actions to press for improvements in policy and practice affecting older people.

We will go further in the coming years to define the unique space the Commission needs to occupy in relation to other bodies operating in Wales. We need to ensure that we add value and do not duplicate work already being done.

This three year strategic plan for the Commission will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. It sets out the direction and headline activities of the Commission and will be supported by more detailed operational plans. It is also important to note that while we will make progress on all our priority activities over the three year period covered by this plan, many will remain relevant for a longer period than that. This plan is based on extensive consultation with older people, and with relevant organisations and individuals in Wales.

# Objectives and Activities

The objectives reflect the four main functions set out in the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act. The following core activities will deliver the objectives during 2010-2013. We will seek to work in partnership, whenever possible, to achieve these objectives and make a positive difference to the lives of older people. The numbers against the objectives are for ease of reference only and do not reflect priority.

## 1. Promote awareness of the interests of older people in Wales

### We will:

Recognise and celebrate the contribution of older people to life in Wales. We will challenge negative stereotypes and engage in public debate about attitudes to ageing, recognising the importance of the views of the general public to older people and ageing.

Listen to and champion the voices and concerns of the diversity of older people to policy and decision makers.

Press for the issue of pensioner poverty to be effectively addressed.

Look at the adequacy of complaints, advocacy and whistle-blowing arrangements and where necessary make recommendations for improvement.

Look at the effectiveness of provision of information and advice services, recognising their key role in tackling poverty and enabling choice and autonomy.

Promote the use of the UN Principles for Older Persons as a means of assessing policy and practice.

## **2. Promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against, older people in Wales**

### **We will:**

Identify where age discrimination exists, the activity necessary to address it and call for effective work in Wales to eliminate it. Help to shape and build on the opportunity offered by legislation in Wales and Westminster.

Identify best practice in, and solutions to, the provision of transport which meets the needs of older people, recognising the vital role this plays in the lives of older people, particularly in relation to their ability to participate in community life.

Check that the arrangements for paying for care comply with the need to end age discrimination and with the UN Principles for Older Persons.

## **3. Encourage best practice in the treatment of older people in Wales**

### **We will:**

Identify variations in, and make recommendations about, best practice in preventing avoidable hospital admission.

Seek and consider evidence about the experience of older people in some specific care settings, especially in relation to dignity and respect, identify best practice, variation and make recommendations for improvement.

Press for effective implementation of improvements in the provision of aids and adaptations.

#### **4. Keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law affecting the interests of older people in Wales**

**We will:**

Monitor legislation and potential legislation that particularly affects the well-being of older people in Wales.

Produce a guide to help clarify existing legislation designed to safeguard the interests of older people therefore making it easier to understand and use to protect older people from abuse.

Engage with others to consider the adequacy of existing adult protection legislation. We may suggest areas in which the law could be strengthened.

#### **5. Enable the delivery of objectives 1 – 4 listed above in ways which are proper and regular, prudent and economical, make efficient and effective use of resources and identify and manage risks**

**We will:**

Engage with and listen to older people throughout Wales.

Respond appropriately to enquiries and contacts with older people, working effectively with other organisations. Capture, analyse and where appropriate, act on the issues brought to our attention through this work.

Engage with and listen to other key stakeholders throughout Wales.

Build appropriate partnerships in order to progress our objectives.

Develop our evidence base to underpin our work.

Consolidate and build staff training and development, our IT and business systems, controls and risk management.

Measure the effectiveness of our performance through an external evaluation, seeking to learn lessons as the process progresses.

Ensure compliance across all activities.

# Outcomes

We will measure the achievement of these objectives through the following outcomes:

- Greater awareness of older people's interests
- Reduced age discrimination
- Maintenance of, availability of and increased recognition of services which work well for older people
- More effective law
- A demonstrably dynamic, effective and efficient organisation making a lasting difference

# Conclusion

The progress of the Strategic Plan will be measured through the delivery of our annual operational plan and be reported in our annual review.

Additional information on the activities of the Commission can be found on our website [www.olderpeoplewales.com](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com) and through our news bulletin.

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