

Commissioner for Older People legislation Team
Equality, Rights and Social Need Division
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Consultation on the Proposals for a Commissioner for Older People

The Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. NIWEP established the Older Women's Network (OWN NI) and has continued to support older women's issues throughout its work.

Sanctions: Although NIWEP would stress the need to address issues through a negotiation process, the Commissioner should have the power to deliver strong sanctions to those unwilling to negotiate or comply with the Commissioner, naming and shaming will not suffice.

Victim Standing: NIWEP would argue that the Commissioner should have full powers but if the NI Act 2008 is not to be amended to give the Commissioner the powers of Victim Standing then a financial budget is essential for the Commissioner to engage the services of the Human Rights Commission to ensure the HRC has sufficient funds in order that older people's issues are addressed. This approach to equality issues could also be adopted with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Mediation/Arbitration: NIWEP would recommend that the Commissioner have a body that would provide a mediation/arbitration service for her/him. This would allow the Commissioner to remain independent and not be accused of being one sided.

Public/Private: NIWEP is most concerned about those people who may not have access to the Commissioner because of private funding for nursing care. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure equality for older people. A suggestion is that if 1p is paid by government to the cost then older people would be entitled to access to the Commissioner.

NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S EUROPEAN PLATFORM