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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 22 December 2009 17:34

To: Older Peoples Legislation Team

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Response to Consultation Paper

[REDACTED]

On behalf of Oaklee Housing Association I would like to respond to the Consultation Document 'A Commissioner for Older People in NI'

Oaklee provides rented social housing accommodation and services to over 2,800 older tenants in Northern Ireland, as well as Day Care services to over 100 pensioners in three centres. We manage 60 sheltered housing schemes for those who are 55 plus with non-residential scheme co-ordinator management at most locations. To complement this work we are developing extra care facilities at a number of schemes to provide 24 hour support and enhanced care services, including tenants who suffer dementia and the onset of other debilitating illnesses

In this context we very much welcome the proposal to appoint a Commissioner and also welcome the powers to be vested in this role. It is important that the Commissioner has the powers to investigate and take action to protect the rights of older people. Specific comments we would make include:

- That representative groups such as Oaklee Tenants Forum be included in any process to help select a new Commissioner due to their practical expertise in dealing with issues affecting older people needs
- That a simple complaints procedure be put in place to make the system as accessible as possible for older people and their advocates
- That a compensatory system be agreed for categories of complaints to recognise loss or poor treatment
- That careful consideration is given to the means and scope of any publicity about the role of the Commissioner to ensure public awareness, as such awareness appears rather limited at present. This should include the enhanced use of ICT technology and systems for communication and which are readily used by older people, and helps develop their skills
- That generational bonding be supported for younger people to become involved with the role and promote support for older people through awards and youth schemes which recognise helpfulness between generations, local schools working with older people schemes and

services, exchanging skills and so forth

- That the Commissioner and office be the point of accreditation for good practice in supporting the rights of older people
- That the needs of older people with special support needs and vulnerabilities be recognised as a priority and encourage the rights to independent living and to play a full part in society, in association with other agencies specialising in special needs services

I hope that these are helpful

Yours Sincerely


Chief Executive

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