

11 January 2010

Commissioner for Older People Legislation Team  
Equality Rights and Social Need Division  
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## **A Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland**

### **Consultation Response**

The Stroke Association Northern Ireland welcomes the opportunity to participate in the consultation process for a Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland.

The Stroke Association NI is a community based charity, providing vital, high quality, professionally led services such as speech & language therapy, family and carer support, training, information and advice to stroke survivors and people living with aphasia, their carers and families right across Northern Ireland. The majority of stroke survivors and the majority of our service users are over the age of 50.

The Stroke Association NI's response to the consultation proposals are the following:

- The Commissioner must be empowered to act independently from all other government and public authorities.
- The Commissioner must be endowed with the capacity to undertake casework and take cases that will force a point in law for the good of many.
- The Commissioner must have the power to mediate on issues of contention between service providers and older people.

Telephone	Fax	Website
028 9050 8020	028 9050 8025	<a href="http://www.strokeni.org.uk">www.strokeni.org.uk</a>

Registered office: Stroke House, 240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)  
Registered Charity No. 211015



- The Commissioner must have an arbitration function exercisable where time is a critical factor (this could be facilitated by a third party at the Commissioners request to maintain the Commissioners obligation to act in the older persons interest).
- The Commissioner should be empowered to conduct formal investigations, issue directives, conduct audits of compliance and reviews of performance in the interests of improving practice.
- The Commissioner must have strong powers of sanction to promote compliance among providers of goods and services.
- The Commissioner should be endowed with 'victim status' to enable cases to be taken without the requirement to name an individual.
- They should have the power to commission and publish research on issues affecting older people, provide information and stimulate debate on issues and models of good practice.
- The Commissioner should have a duty to communicate widely, seek the opinions of older people and take their views into account.

Yours sincerely

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