



**Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru**  
**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

# **Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24**

# The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

The Commissioner is taking action to end ageism and age discrimination, stop the abuse of older people and enable everyone to age well.

The Commissioner wants Wales to be the best place in the world to grow older.

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## Foreword

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted why protecting older people's rights is crucial, and how easily people's rights can be eroded. The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the inequalities that older people face every day, especially people from BAME communities, and recent months have demonstrated that ageism remains prevalent across society today, despite it being illegal to discriminate against someone because of their age.

This is unacceptable and should not go unchallenged.

Rights should not diminish as people age. However, many older people find that their rights are not upheld as they grow older. Rights are also often seen as being intangible, unreachable and irrelevant.

Ensuring that older people's rights are upheld and that older people are not discriminated against is central to my role as Commissioner. As the independent voice and champion for older people across Wales, I work to promote equality in all aspects of older people's lives. I have a unique role to play in tackling ageism and discrimination in all its forms, and to ensure that others work to tackle these issues alongside me.

Public bodies also have a crucial role to play in using rights proactively to ensure fairness, dignity, respect and autonomy, to drive meaningful improvements and deliver cultural shifts. Older people, too, will be vital in driving change through the experiences that they share.

As such, the Strategic Equality Objectives outlined in this plan focus on working with both older people and public bodies to embed rights throughout service delivery. I will also seek assurance of compliance with key legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, and I will work to ensure that older people's human rights are promoted at all times.

A Wales free from discrimination, where older people's rights are protected will be the cornerstone of making Wales the best place in the world to grow older.



**Older People's Commissioner for Wales**  
October 2020

## 1. About the Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of people aged 60 years and over throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives.

She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

The Commissioner:

- Promotes awareness of the rights and interests of older people in Wales.
- Challenges discrimination against older people in Wales.
- Encourages best practice in the treatment of older people in Wales.
- Reviews the law affecting the interests of older people in Wales.

The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

The Commissioner wants Wales to be the best place in the world to grow older.

### 1.1 Role and remit of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Commissioner is a Corporation Sole created under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006, an independent legal entity in her own right and a listed authority for the purpose of the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006 sets out a number of statutory duties for the Commissioner.

#### 1. Promote awareness of the interests of older people in Wales and the need to safeguard those interests

The Commissioner uses her status to help set the agenda amongst decisionmakers at all levels about issues affecting older people and promotes public discussion through the media.

A key role for the Commissioner is to be a powerful champion for older people leading and intervening in a wide and increasing range of debates and decision making across Wales.

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

The Commissioner advocates changes to the law, guidance and practice in order to address inequality. She presents realistic and positive images of older people, recognising older people in all their diversity.

Older people are individuals and, whilst they might share some common concerns, their individual status remains undiminished. There should be no one view of older people and the Commissioner aims to reflect this in her work.

The Commissioner promotes understanding of the nature of discrimination against older people in its most evident and its more hidden – but equally damaging – forms and sees tackling discrimination effectively as key to making progress across all policy areas, not just health and social care.

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

The Commissioner aims to achieve this through a variety of methods, including bringing together people and evidence and - where necessary - carrying out research, to demonstrate effective practice.

Most importantly she presses for excellent services to be made widely and consistently available for older people. She encourages change to established practices where alternatives have been shown to work better. She encourages service providers to face the challenge of change so that the needs of older people can be better met.

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

The Commissioner builds the case for change and makes this case to the Welsh Government and the Senedd. She establishes what the issues and opportunities are through bringing together leading legal and other expertise and the experience and views of older people.

## 1.2 Our Values

During 2019-20, the Commissioner collaborated with staff on the design of our organisational values and behaviours. These values drive the culture of the organisation and underpin our personal performance objectives. Decisions and help us to hold ourselves accountable for those decisions:

| Our Values                    | How we demonstrate them   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>One team</b>               | Shared goals above individual agendas<br>Proactive in offering support to others  |
| <b>Respectful</b>             | Actively seek the views of others<br>Demonstrate that value different views and perspectives  |
| <b>Inclusive and friendly</b> | Pay attention to each other's wellbeing<br>Be kind, welcoming and supportive to everyone<br>Consider the impact on others of what we say and do |
| <b>Open</b>                   | Challenge constructively and be open to challenge<br>Seek to learn from others<br>Always look for better ways of doing things                   |
| <b>Ambitious</b>              | Show passion for our vision<br>Strive for excellence<br>Be bold and ready to take considered risks to achieve impact                            |
| <b>Integrity</b>              | Strive to do the right things and take responsibility for our work<br>Do what we say we will do   |

## 1.3 The Commissioner's Strategy 2019-22

From her appointment in August 2018, the Commissioner and her team undertook an extensive programme of engagement with older people throughout Wales – visiting 82 groups and engaging with over 3,000 people – to hear about their experiences of growing older, both positive and negative, and the changes they would like to see that would make Wales the best place in the world to grow older.

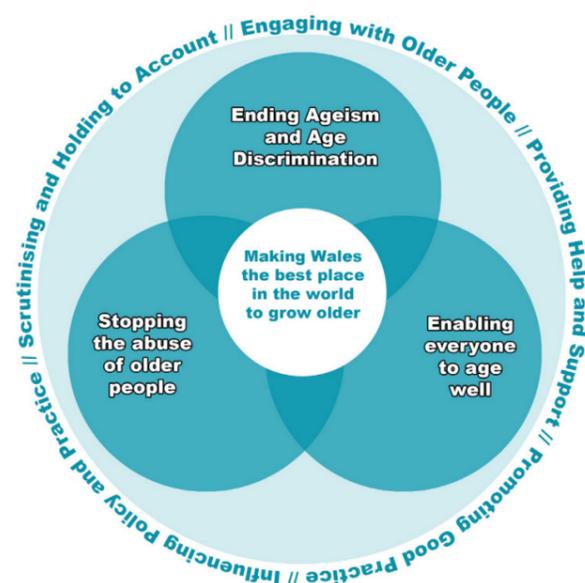
Alongside this, the Commissioner and her team also engaged and consulted with a range of organisations and other stakeholders, as well as reviewing, and identifying gaps within, current evidence and policy, and drawing upon years of knowledge, experience and research.

This engagement and consultation supported the development of the Commissioner's three-year strategy – Making Wales the Best Place in the World to grow older – which is focused on three key priorities:

- Ending ageism and age discrimination
- Stopping the abuse of older people
- Enabling everyone to age well

Alongside delivering a wide range of work against these priorities, the Commissioner is also working with partners to influence policy and practice across these priorities, at both a national and local level, as well as scrutinising public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

[You can read the Commissioner's Strategy here.](#)



## 2. Overview of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplified and strengthened the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it.

The Act contains a public sector equality duty which replaces the previously separate duties on race, disability and gender equality.

The aim of the equality duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This should achieve better outcomes for all.

The three aims of the equality duty are to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)

# 3. Context

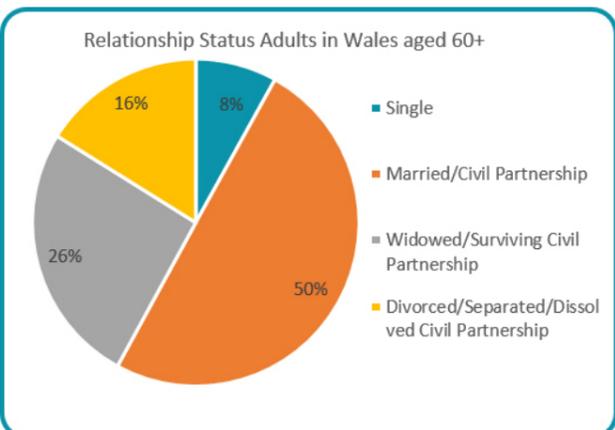
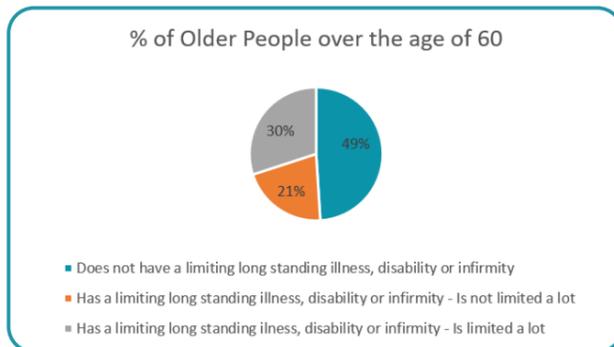
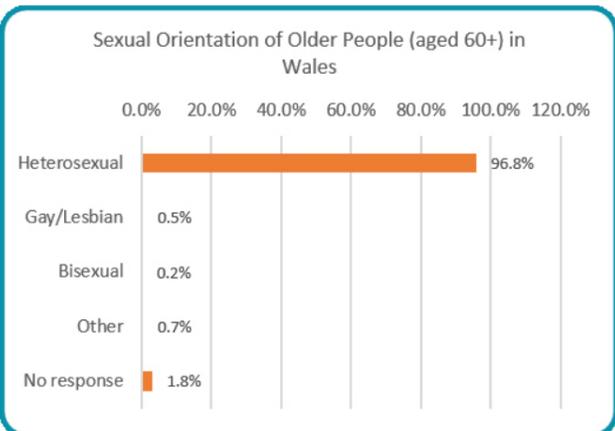
## Older People in Wales: Key Facts and Figures

Welsh 60+ Population Estimate 2019 and 60+ Population Projections for 2030 and 2040

|  | 2019           | 2030             | 2040             |
|--|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>60+ Population Estimate</b>                     | <b>855,229</b> | <b>1,004,000</b> | <b>1,036,000</b> |
| <b>Older People (60+) as % of Total Population</b> | <b>27%</b>     | <b>31%</b>       | <b>32%</b>       |

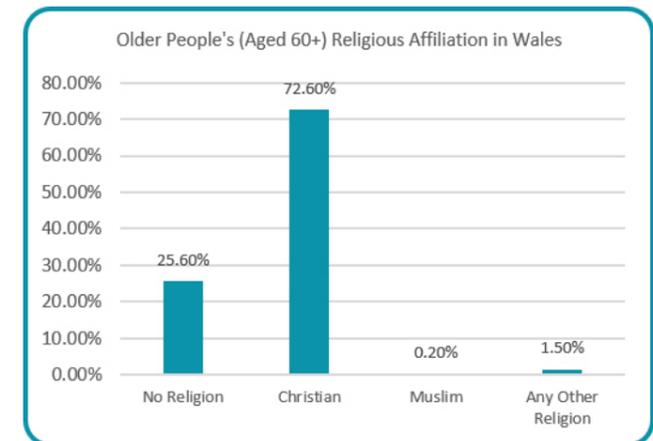
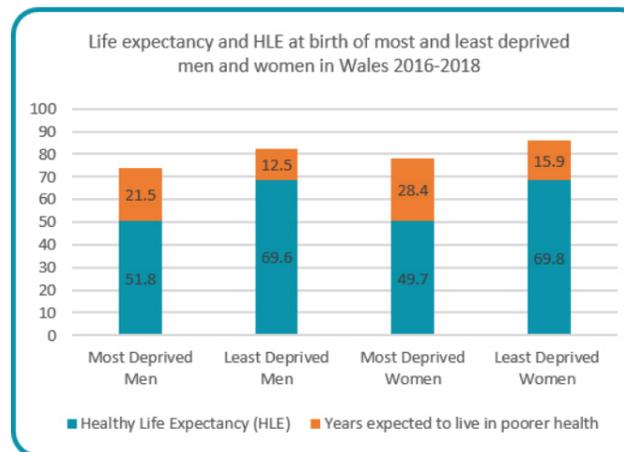
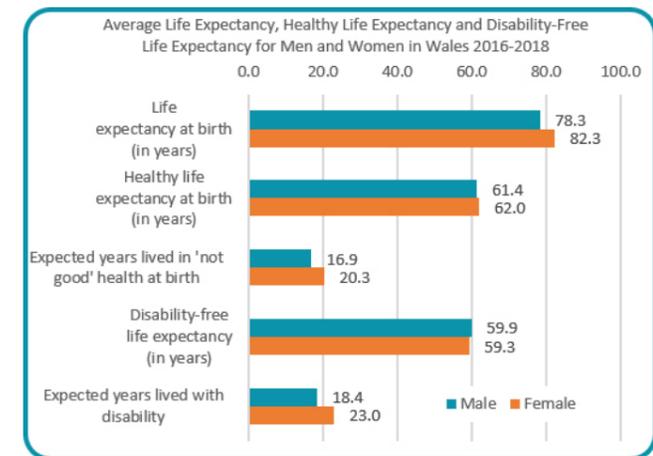
Estimated number of Older People in Wales of different ethnicities 2018-19

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>White British</b>   | <b>833,763</b> |
| <b>Other White Ethnicity</b><br>[Irish, Gypsy/Traveller, Polish, Other White]  | <b>9,845</b>   |
| <b>Non-White</b><br>[Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Other Black, Arabic, All Other Ethnic Groups] | <b>11,620</b>  |



An estimated **140,978** older people (**17%**) speak Welsh  
**95,330** (**11%**) older people consider themselves to have some Welsh speaking ability  
**618,919** (**72%**) older people do not speak Welsh

An estimated **32,818** older people over the age of 60 are believed to have poor eyesight.  
 An estimated **297,955** older people have difficulty with hearing



In 2018-19, 16144 people aged 65 or over lived in a care home (10610 in a home without nursing provision; 5534 in a home with nursing care). This represents 2.4% of people over the age of 65.

[For references, see page 21]

## 4. How we developed our Equality Objectives

The Commissioner's Equality Objectives for 2020-24 build on the work undertaken by former Commissioners and their commitment to advancing the rights of an increasingly diverse group of older people.

To ensure that equality is embedded throughout all her activity, the Commissioner's Equality Objectives for 2020-24 closely reflect both the organisation's vision and values, as well as closely aligning to her Strategy.

Engagement with older people in Wales played a vital role in shaping the Commissioner's Equality Objectives. Alongside a public consultation, the Commissioner's team visited a number of older people's groups to talk about the Commissioner's Equality Objectives and listen to the equality issues that were most important to them. Engagement centred on groups that brought together older people with specific protected characteristics to ensure that the diversity of the lived experiences of older people in Wales was captured.

The Commissioner is grateful to the older people and stakeholders that took part in the consultation on her Equality Objectives.

In October 2019, the Commissioner published her 'State of the Nation' report, which provided a comprehensive overview of the experience of growing older in Wales and the key areas that impact upon older people's lives. The report draws on research from a range of sources and highlighted any data gaps about older people. This evidence was also used to inform the development of the Commissioner's Equality Objectives, together with data from the Equality and Human Rights Commission 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' report.

## 5. Equality Objectives

The Commissioner's Equality Objectives for 2020-24 build on the actions already taken to embed equality throughout her work, both as an employer and as a champion for older people in Wales. The Equality Objectives are closely aligned to her published Strategy – Making Wales the Best Place in the World to Grow Older 2019-22.

As the Commissioner's role and statutory powers are defined by the [Commissioner for Older People \(Wales\) Act 2006](#) and accompanying [Regulations](#), the Equality Objectives are focused on advancing equality for people aged 60 years and over in Wales.

### Objective 1: Promote diversity within the Commissioner's workforce and ensure equality of opportunity for all employees

#### Actions:

- Keep under review the effectiveness of the Commissioner's recruitment process to encourage a diverse range of applicants.
- Capture comprehensive and meaningful equality employment data.
- Promote a high-level of understanding of equality and diversity issues throughout the Commissioner's workforce, with specialist training for specific roles.
- Continue to monitor gender pay differences within the Commissioner's workforce.

### Objective 2: Ensure that equality guides internal processes, including within strategic decision making

#### Actions:

- Evaluate the Commissioner's procurement practices to ensure that they advance equality whilst continuing to meet legal equality requirements.
- Review and strengthen the role of the Commissioner's Equality Impact Assessment process to inform decision-making.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Commissioner's Equality Impact Assessment processes.

### **Objective 3: Ensure that the diversity of older people is reflected throughout the Commissioner’s work to make Wales the best place in the world to grow older**

#### **Actions:**

- Work to ensure that public bodies reduce inequalities experienced by older people.
- Work to ensure that all older people are empowered to know their rights and are able to challenge discrimination in all its forms.
- Work to ensure that the impact of ageism upon older people and society is understood.
- Work to ensure that communities meet the needs of a diverse range of older people.
- Work to ensure that support for people experiencing abuse reflects the needs of older people in all their diversity.
- Work to ensure that health and social care meets the needs of a diverse range of older people.
- Scrutinise public bodies and hold to account those responsible for instances of age discrimination.
- Work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to advance the rights of older people at a national and international level.
- Work with the Children’s Commissioner for Wales to promote intergenerational solidarity.

### **Objective 4: Provide help and support to a diverse range of older people to ensure their rights are upheld and they are not discriminated against**

#### **Actions:**

- Capture equality data from enquirers to the Casework Team to increase diversity.
- Evaluate the diversity profile of older people in contact with the Casework Team.
- Increase the awareness of the Casework Team amongst older people with protected characteristics.
- Ensure that the Casework Team is accessible to all older people.

### **Objective 5: Ensure that the Commissioner’s work is underpinned by the experiences of a diverse range of older people and is fully accessible.**

#### **Actions:**

- Engage with the diversity of the older population to learn and understand, inform and empower.
- Regularly audit and continually improve the accessibility of the Commissioner’s website.
- Ensure that the Commissioner’s communications are accessible to all and reflect the diversity of older people.

## 6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Progress against the Commissioner's Equality Objectives and on the identified actions will be monitored by the Chief Operating Officer and the Equality and Rights Lead on an ongoing basis. An action plan detailing timescales and responsible officers can be found in Appendix 2.

A bi-annual update on progress against the Equality Objectives will be discussed by the Business Management Team and an annual update on progress will also be discussed by the Commissioner's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Equality Objectives and identified actions identified within this Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, in line with the Commissioner's strategic planning process. A new Strategic Equality Plan will be produced by the end of March 2024.

## 7. Publication and Reporting

The Commissioner's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 will be published on her website, alongside previous Equality Plans. The Plan will be promoted through appropriate channels and versions of the report in alternative formats will be made available on request.

In compliance with the duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Commissioner will continue to report annually on progress made since the publication of her Strategic Equality Plan. All annual equality reports will be published on the website and copies will be made available on request.

## Appendix 1: Workforce profile data

As required by the Equality Act 2010, the Commissioner will continue to collect data on the profile of her workforce in relation to the areas listed below.

This data is reported annually and previous reports can be found [here](#). Trends from this data have been analysed and used in the formation of the Commissioner's Equality Objectives.

Required workforce data collected by the Commissioner:

### Headcount Information

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of people employed by the authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of men and women employed, broken down by the following categories:

- Job
- Pay & Grade
- Contract Type
- Working Pattern

### Recruitment

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of people who have applied for jobs with the organisation over the last year.

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees who have applied to change position within the authority, identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not.

## Learning & Development

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application.

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees who completed the training.

## Grievance Procedures

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made.

## Disciplinary Procedures

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees subject to disciplinary procedures.

## Leavers

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of employees who have left an authority's employment.

## Gender Pay Gap

Publish data on the gender pay differences

# Appendix 2: Action Plan for implementing and monitoring the Commissioner's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24

| Objective   | Action  | Timescale   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Promote diversity within the Commissioner's workforce and ensure equality of opportunity for all employees</b> | Keep under review the effectiveness of the recruitment process to encourage a diverse range of applicants.                                    | Ongoing, prior to and after recruitment campaigns |
|   | Capture comprehensive and meaningful equality employment data.  | April 2021 and annually thereafter                |
|   | Promote a high-level of understanding of equality and diversity issues throughout the workforce, with specialist training for specific roles. | April 2021 and annually thereafter                |
|   | Continue to monitor gender pay differences within the Commissioner's workforce.   | April 2021 and annually thereafter                |
| <b>Ensure that equality guides internal processes, including within strategic decision making</b>                 | Evaluate the procurement practices to ensure they advance equality whilst ensuring that we continue to meet legal equality requirements.      | October 2021                                      |
|   | Review and strengthen the role of the EIA process to inform decision-making.  | April 2021  |
|   | Evaluate the effectiveness of the EIA processes.  | October 2021                                      |
| <b>Ensure that equality guides internal processes, including within strategic decision making</b>                 | Work to ensure that public bodies reduce inequalities experienced by older people.  | Ongoing   |
|   | Work to ensure that all older people are empowered to know their rights and are able to challenge discrimination in all its forms.            | Ongoing   |
|   | Work to ensure that the impact of ageism upon older people and society is understood.   | Ongoing   |

|   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| <b>Ensure that equality guides internal processes, including within strategic decision making (cont.)</b>                                   | Work to ensure that communities meet the needs of a diverse range of older people.                                   | Ongoing        |
|   | Work to ensure that support for people experiencing abuse reflects the needs of older people in all their diversity. | Ongoing        |
|   | Work to ensure that health and social care meets the needs of a diverse range of older people.                       | Ongoing        |
|   | Scrutinise public bodies and hold to account those responsible for instances of age-discrimination.                  | Ongoing        |
|   | Work with partner organisations to advance the rights of older people at a national and international level.         | Ongoing        |
| <b>Provide help and support to a diverse range of older people to ensure their rights are upheld and they are not discriminated against</b> | Capture equality data from enquirers to the Casework Team to increase diversity.                                     | October 2021   |
|   | Evaluate the diversity profile of older people in contact with the Casework Team.                                    | March 2022     |
|   | Increase awareness of the Casework Team amongst older people with protected characteristics.                         | April 2022     |
|   | Ensure that the Casework Team is accessible to all older people.   | December 2021  |
| <b>Ensure that the Commissioner's work is underpinned by the experiences of a diverse range of older people and is fully accessible</b>     | Engage with the diversity of the older population to learn and understand, inform and empower.                       | Ongoing        |
|   | Regularly audit the accessibility of the website.  | September 2021 |
|   | Ensure that communications are accessible to all and reflect the diversity of older people.                          | July 2021      |

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