



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Strategic Equality Plan: Annual Report 2019-20

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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Introduction

Protecting and promoting older people's rights is a key part of my role as Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and I welcome this opportunity to highlight the action I have taken during 2019-20 to comply with duties set out in the Equality Act.

Whilst the rights we have are often taken for granted, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the inequalities faced by many older people and has demonstrated just how easily people's rights can be eroded. We all need to be proactive to ensure that people's rights are upheld.

For me, this means not only taking forward my own work to tackle ageism and age discrimination, as well as making the case for a rights-based approach across our public services, but also building equality and rights into all I do as Commissioner to ensure I engage with and represent older people in all of their diversity.

Many of the issues faced by older people today are underpinned by inequality, by a failure to recognise and uphold their rights. So as Commissioner I will continue to do all I can to promote equality and protect the rights of all older people in Wales.



Heléna Herklots, CBE

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Summary requirements and structure of the report

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is a listed authority under the Equality Act (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and must adhere to the general duty to promote equality laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

Other reporting requirements included the publication, by April 2012, of a Strategic Equality Plan incorporating specific objectives and the annual publication of a progress report. This seventh annual report must be published no later than 31 March 2020.

This report focuses on the specific Welsh duties and the Commissioner's Strategic Equality Objectives:

- Section 3 explains the Commissioner's role
- Section 4 sets out the Commissioner's Equality Objectives
- Section 5 outlines the Commissioner's work on embedding equality, including progress for 2018-19 against Strategic Equality Objectives
- Appendix A – Workforce profile as at 31 March 2019

Copies of the Commissioner's Strategic Equality Plan and prior year annual reports can be found on the Commissioner's [website](#).

Role 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 decision makers 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, e.g. giving older people early support in order to prevent greater dependency at a later stage.

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 National Assembly. She establishes what the issues and opportunities are through bringing together leading legal and other expertise and the experience and views of older people.

The law is a vital part of empowering and protecting older people and providing redress, and yet it is often complex, confusing, and hard to access and in need of reform. The Commissioner has already played a strong role in recommending changes that will benefit older people and others.

Illustrations of the types of activity that have or may be undertaken by the Commissioner are set out below:

- Providing leadership on the issues that matter to older people
- Raising the profile of older people within Welsh Public Services
- Making representation to Welsh Government
- Reviewing how devolved organisations discharge their functions
- Publishing guidance and standards
- Assisting individuals to make complaints or representations
- Commissioning research or assisting others in doing so
- Carrying out, commissioning or assisting others with educational activities
- Undertaking examinations (investigations)
- Issuing non-statutory guidance
- Advocating for changes to legislation, guidance and practice
- Speaking out publicly about service failures
- Promoting good practice

It is important to note that the Commissioner does not provide frontline services other than through direct advice and support provided to older people through our casework and the work led by the Communications and Engagement team in delivering events and producing publications. The majority of the Commissioner's business involves working with others to effect changes in policies and practices.

The Commissioner's Equality Objectives

The Commissioner published a Strategic Equality Plan in March 2016 following consultation with older people and stakeholders, replacing the Strategic Equality Plan that was published in March 2012.

The Strategic Equality Plan identifies specific equality objectives and sets out the way ahead for future years. The strategy was published to ensure that equality and human rights are embedded in the thinking and working practices of the Commissioner and her staff.

The Commissioner set out the following objectives for 2016-20:

1. To ensure that in my employment of staff I am non-discriminatory, promote equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations between staff members.

- I will aim to increase the diversity of my workforce
- All staff will have development and advancement opportunities to ensure they maximise their potential
- I will ensure that all staff are rewarded and remunerated on an equal basis regardless of protected characteristic
- I will ensure there is a culture within my organisation in which all staff feel comfortable to be open about their protected characteristics and feel that they are a person of value to me as an employer and across the organisation

2. To ensure that my procurement policies and practices and associated tender documentation take account of the need to meet legal equality requirements.

- I will review annually all of my procurement policies, practices and tender documentation to ensure they meet the public sector equality duty
- I will ensure that contractors are made fully aware of my equality duties

3. To ensure that my work is relevant to, and is seen as being relevant to, older people in all their diversity.

- I will increase my engagement with older people across the breadth of protected characteristics
- I will ensure that my work is informed by what older people across the breadth of protected characteristics tell me about what matters to them, and that my work draws specific attention to impacts for those with differing combinations of protected characteristics
- I will strengthen the impact assessment that underpin the key deliverables of my work to ensure that they take full account of the impact of protected characteristics upon the outcome sought for older people

4. I will ensure that my work is underpinned increasingly by a rights-based approach and that across Wales a rights-based agenda is developed.

- I will ensure staff integrate a human rights-based approach in their work
- I will promote the UN principles and awareness of Ageism
- I will work with government to promote the use of UN principles and a rights-based approach in forming legislation

5. To empower and equip older people to challenge the discrimination they face.

- I will equip older people with the knowledge and tools to empower them to challenge discrimination

6. To promote an accurate and balanced view of older people in all their diversity, grow understanding about older people and their needs and to challenge stereotypes, both within my organisation and amongst other organisations.

- I will increase the depth of understanding amongst my staff about the diversity of older people and the extent to which protected characteristics impact upon their lived experiences and access to services
- I will increase the depth of understanding amongst my staff about the diversity of older people and I will increase the depth of understanding amongst key public services about the diversity of older people and the extent to which protected characteristics impact upon their access to services and their wider lives
- I will on an ongoing basis challenge stereotypes and myths about older people and lay down clear expectations for change
- I will strengthen our partnership working with other equality and human rights-based organisations to strengthen the voices of older people and increase the impact of our work

7. To encourage and support other public bodies to comply with their own duties under the Equality Act 2010 as they apply to older people and to challenge significant breaches of legal duties.

- I will provide guidance to public bodies undertaking key service changes to assist them in ensuring they comply with their statutory duties in relation to engagement, impact assessment and proportionality
- I will keep under review service delivery and changes that have the potential for significant detriment or disproportionate impact on older people

Commissioner's work on embedding equality

As a publicly funded body, the Commissioner and her staff have a range of statutory functions and other administrative responsibilities, these include:

- Promoting the interests of older people, including challenging discrimination, encouraging best practice and reviewing the law.
- Making the role known to older people across Wales.
- The recruitment, engagement, training, and management of staff.
- The procurement of services including tendering for goods and services such as research.
- Reward, recognition, and payment of staff.
- Providing assistance to older people who wish to make a complaint or representation to public bodies or other service providers.

The Commissioner's progress against her Equality Objectives for the Financial Year 2019/20 is outlined below:

Objective 1: To ensure that in my employment of staff I am non-discriminatory, promote equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations between staff members.

The Commissioner undertakes a review of her recruitment practices following each appointment to better understand the potential barriers and ensure that when recruiting, practices are inclusive and are accessible to a wide range of candidates with a broader spectrum of protected characteristics. Job vacancies are advertised through a variety of networks to ensure as wide a reach as is possible in addition to information being available in a wide range of formats on request.

Information on protected characteristics of all candidates is collected and monitored to ensure equity of opportunity. Additionally, the Commissioner continues to collect, monitor and publish equality data on the profile of her workforce. This data is available in Appendix A. The Commissioner continues to monitor the gender pay gap of her workforce which currently is in favour of women. This data is also available in Appendix A.

The Commissioner undertakes an on-going review of contract types and working patterns across her workforce to understand and deal with potential barriers with a view to retaining candidates with a broader spectrum of protected characteristics.

As part of her commitment to ensuring the review and application of good practice to promote an inclusive working environment which promotes learning, development and overall wellbeing, the Commissioner's office is Small Workplace Health Award (Gold) accredited. The Award is a national recognition scheme for businesses that look after the health and wellbeing of their

employees and is independent evidence of the Commissioner's commitment to create a positive workplace environment for all staff. Achieving the Gold Award requires employers to evidence the organisation's commitment to having a culture that promotes positive behaviour among all staff and does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour (e.g. bullying and harassment) and to evidence flexible working practices to contribute to staff well-being.

Staff participate in six-monthly performance management reviews to identify and put in place appropriate plans to meet learning and development objectives. Learning and development objectives are discussed as part of the six-monthly performance reviews and also during monthly one-to-one meetings, to ensure staff are enabled to maximise their potential. Where identified training and development needs are relevant to multiple staff, this was progressed through in-house training mandated to all relevant staff.

To further embed a culture of openness where staff feel comfortable to be open about their protected characteristics, the Commissioner continued to ensure appropriate awareness raising of the Equality Act 2010 and protected characteristics amongst her staff team.

Objective 2: To ensure that my procurement policies and practices and associated tender documentation take account of the need to meet legal equality requirements.

The Commissioner undertakes a periodic review of all procurement policies and practices to reflect statutory duties, good practice and learning. This includes ensuring that all tender documents are reviewed as part of any tender evaluation. All contractors for lower value contracts are aware of equality duties and the Commissioner's expectations when work is being undertaken on her behalf.

Objective 3: To ensure that my work is relevant to, and is seen as being relevant to, older people in all their diversity.

The Commissioner and her team met and spoke with over 3,300 older people during 2019-20, visiting 98 groups throughout Wales to hear directly about people's experiences of growing older, the challenges and barriers they face, and the changes they would like to see that would improve their lives.

In determining the groups to engage with, particular focus was given to reaching older people in all of their diversity, to ensure that older people with protected characteristics had an opportunity to share their experiences and make their voices heard. This included working with Stonewall Cymru to engage with LGBTQ+ older people, alongside increased engagement with BAME older people through groups and organisations including Windrush Elders Cymru, the EYST All Wales BAME forum and Diverse Cymru. This engagement provided a great deal of useful evidence about the specific experiences of these groups, and the particular barriers they may face when engaging with services or accessing advice and support.

These engagement sessions and events allow the Commissioner and her team to share useful resources with older people – such as information guides and leaflets – and highlight the Commissioner's role and work, including the support she provides to older people through her casework team. Any concerns raised by older people at engagement events are taken forward by the Commissioner's casework team, where an older person needed advice or support, or

were used to inform the Commissioner's work and priorities to ensure that the Commissioner's work is relevant to a diverse range of older people.

The Commissioner also engages regularly with the Chairs of national older people's groups and forums throughout Wales to hear from them about the views and experiences of their members and to identify potential solutions to the problems they face. Whilst all of the engagement undertaken by the Commissioner and her team relates to the protected characteristic of 'age' and the Commissioner monitors engagement with specialist groups for older people who have more than one protected characteristic (such as a group for older LGBT+ people), it should be noted that there will be many older people who also have additional protected characteristics who engage with the Commissioner and her team through 'generic' older people's groups (such as a 50+ Forums). As such, equality information on those older people who are part of a 'generic' older people's group who may also have additional protected characteristic will not be captured. Ensuring that a true reflection of the engagement undertaken by the Commissioner and her team with older people with more than one additional protected characteristic is an on-going area for development.

In response to the issues raised by older people during engagement sessions and through casework, the Commissioner has been examining the potential barriers and challenges that older people can face when using different transport options to access health services. To capture the experiences of older people and ensure their voices were at the heart of this work, the Commissioner gathered evidence over a six-month period, initially through a questionnaire (available online and in hard copy), that was shared via older people's groups and forums throughout Wales, with a total of 632 responses received in total. Equality monitoring of responses show that over 80% of people were aged 60+, just over 6% of people identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual, 72% of responders were female and, just over 2% described themselves as Mixed race, Black/African/Caribbean, Asian or other.

Alongside the questionnaire, the Commissioner also ran a series of engagement events and focus group sessions with older people throughout Wales, which provided opportunities for more detailed conversations and discussions about their experiences of accessing health services.

The report based on the Commissioner's findings will set out the challenges faced by older people when using different types of transport to access health services, as well as highlighting good practice that is making a positive difference to the lives of older people in some parts of Wales. The report will also include calls for a number of public bodies and organisations to take action to ensure that the issues identified by the Commissioner are tackled and older people can easily access appropriate transport options to get them to their health appointments.

The Commissioner's publications aim to reflect the diversity of older people in Wales. The Commissioner is committed to ensuring that her publications are accessible to all older people through embedding her Publications Style Guide throughout all materials and adhering to RNIB Guidelines. Publications that are produced specifically for older people are made available both electronically and in hard copy, with accessible versions of documents made available on request (such as in BSL).

The Commissioner's team complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all work undertaken as part of the Commissioner's programme of work. EIAs are designed to ensure that staff 'stop, think and discuss equality' and how it applies to the project which is to be undertaken. The Commissioner's EIAs must be completed by at least two people who will

be involved with work being assessed. The purpose of the EIAs is to improve the way work is carried out and to ensure that each project or programme of work pays attention to the opinions and needs of older people with protected characteristics. To compliment EIAs, where appropriate, an Engagement Plan is created to ensure that engagement includes older people with additional protected characteristics so that research undertaken by the Commissioner's office is further strengthened by the voices of a diverse range of older people.

Objective 4. I will ensure that my work is underpinned increasingly by a rights-based approach and that across Wales a rights-based agenda is developed.

In April 2019, the Commissioner published a three-year strategy – [Making Wales the Best Place in the World to Grow older](#). The Strategy sets out the Commissioner's work priorities, including the outcomes she wants to see for older people, and the action that she will take as Commissioner to help to make Wales the best place in the world to grow older. The strategy was developed following extensive engagement and consultation with older people and stakeholders throughout Wales and is focused on three key priorities: Ending ageism and age discrimination, Stopping the abuse of older people and, Enabling everyone to age well.

The Commissioner's key priorities focus on rights and embed equality at the core of her work. The Strategy recognises that, whilst Wales has much to be proud of in terms of its work to ensure growing older is a positive experience for many older people, this is not the case for everyone, particularly those who are most vulnerable. The outcomes in the Commissioner's three-year Strategy embed rights and equality throughout the key priorities to help ensure that all older people can have the best possible quality of life, remain active and engaged, access the services and support they need, and do the things that matter to them.

The Commissioner's website continues to provide helpful information and toolkits that can be used by older people to understand their rights and challenge discrimination. In late March 2020, the Commissioner developed a coronavirus [Information Hub](#) and accessible 'Q&A' section on her website to provide older people and their families with up-to-date information and guidance, as well as details about local services and support. To date, the Hub and FAQs section have been visited by over 3,000 individuals, with some visiting multiple times.

The Commissioner also uses her social media channels to share the latest information and guidance from the Welsh Government and other key bodies and organisations, and set up a new Facebook group – Together We Are Stronger – which provides a space for older people, their families and professionals to connect and chat, ask questions, post information and find out about help and support available to them.

To further embed rights in the Commissioner's day-to-day work, in October 2019 the Commissioner launched a campaign to encourage older people to claim Pension Credit, responding to data that revealed that over 40% of eligible households do not claim, meaning that around £214 million of Pension Credit went unclaimed in Wales during 2018-19. The Commissioner developed an information leaflet about their rights in relation to claiming Pension Credit and work was undertaken, in partnership with Transport for Wales and with support from the Welsh Government, to distribute over half a million leaflets directly to older people throughout Wales, posted out with renewed bus passes.

Alongside distributing the leaflet, the Commissioner also called upon the Welsh and UK Governments to take action to ensure that older people understand what they may be entitled

to and can access the support they need to check their eligibility and make a claim. The Commissioner is monitoring DWP data on Pension Credit take-up to determine the impact of her campaign, and to demonstrate the positive difference that could be made by a larger, government-led campaign.

Objective 5. To empower and equip older people to challenge the discrimination they face.

Research undertaken by the Commissioner found that a significant number of older people in Wales, around 1 in 5, would not be confident in identifying or challenging ageism if they encountered it. To help address this, the Commissioner developed a training course to empower older people and equip them with the information they need to take action against ageism. The training sessions examined the ways that ageism and age discrimination may manifest themselves in a number of settings – including the workplace, in health, care and other services, and within the media – and helped participants to understand the ways that ageism can be challenged. The sessions gave participants a better understanding of the legislation that can be used to challenge ageism, as well as the organisations that can provide information, advice and support if someone sees or experiences ageism.

Equality monitoring of attendees at the sessions showed that just over 18% were people aged over 65, 22% were people aged between 55-64, 11% described themselves as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual and, just over 18% of attendees described themselves as having a disability. Nine sessions were delivered in total (held in Cardiff, Wrexham, Monmouth and Bangor) with one Welsh language session. Feedback from the sessions was very positive, with participants telling us that the training would help them to recognise ageism, particularly in its more subtle forms, and that they felt more empowered to challenge ageism and discrimination.

To ensure that the messages and information from the Taking Action Against Ageism training could reach and empower a much larger number of older people throughout Wales, the course content was adapted into an information booklet, to provide older people with the information they need to recognise and challenge ageism, together with details of the help and support available if needed. The booklet has been distributed directly to older people at events and engagement sessions, while copies have also been widely distributed to organisations and older people's groups so they can be shared with older people throughout Wales.

During 2019-20, the Commissioner distributed around 7,000 Ageing Well cards throughout Wales, building on the launch of the cards in August 2018. The cards include simple messages that older people can use in a variety of situations and places to let people know they might need extra help or support, helping older people to challenge stereotypes of older people and disability. To ensure that the Ageing Well Card is widely recognised and older people can access the help they need, the Commissioner has also been working with businesses and community partners throughout Wales to promote the scheme, distributing information and resources packs to support them. The scheme has also been promoted by Business Wales, which encouraged businesses in Wales to get involved and demonstrate their commitment to supporting older people. Buy-in from businesses across Wales helps ensure that business are more age-friendly and promote equality.

The Commissioner's casework team is a key way in which older people are empowered and assisted to challenge discrimination. During 2019-20, the Commissioner provided assistance

to 681 older people, either directly or through family members who contacted the Commissioner on their behalf. This represents an increase of 71% compared with the previous year. This is likely to reflect a growing awareness of the Commissioner's role and the ways she can support older people, as indicated by polling undertaken in previous years.

The Commissioner's casework team received a number of enquiries from older people relating to potential age discrimination, raising concerns that they were unable to access certain treatments and services due to their age, such as bowel cancer screening, and that a move towards online services would exclude them, with examples of online only GP appointment booking systems that older people were unable to access. The information, assistance and guidance provided by the casework team directly empowers older people and their families and helps them to understand and claim their rights.

In November 2019, the Commissioner published a Guide for older people on [Advance Care Planning](#). The guide highlights the ways in which Advance Care Planning can help individuals to maintain control and continue to be part of the decision making for their care should their needs change, and contains a wide range of information, including creating an advance statement, lasting power of attorney, writing a will and organ donation.

Objective 6. To promote an accurate and balanced view of older people in all their diversity, grow understanding about older people and their needs and to challenge stereotypes, both within my organisation and amongst other organisations.

The Commissioner published her [State of the Nation report](#) on October 1st 2019, the International Day of Older Persons, which brings together a wide range of evidence, research and data to provide a comprehensive overview of people's experiences of growing older in Wales. The report examined a range of issues relating to the Commissioner's strategic priorities – ending ageism, stopping abuse and enabling everyone to age well – and also considered how wider factors, such as poverty and housing, and access to services and support, can impact upon people as they get older and affect their quality of life.

The report's findings demonstrated the stark inequalities that exist within the older population in Wales, which lead to significant differences in people's health and life expectancy between the least and most deprived areas of Wales. It also highlighted that significant numbers of older people in Wales are unable to access the services and support they need to age well and do not know about their rights. The report also identified serious and concerning gaps in the data collected relating to older people, particularly in relation to abuse, which can lead to assumptions that they are not affected by an issue despite the opposite being the case. The report warned that these data gaps presented a risk that older people would be rendered 'invisible' to policy- and decision-makers in Wales as they are not currently able to fully understand older people's experiences, and potentially further embedding stereotypes about older people and their needs.

The report sets out the change and action required in a number of areas to improve older people's lives and continue to make progress against the priority areas identified by the Commissioner as being crucial to transform the experience of growing older in Wales, and ensuring greater equality for older people. The Commissioner also called on public bodies and organisations working with and for older people to work together and ensure that Wales leads the way in tackling the issues identified within the report and delivering change.

To challenge negative stereotypes held by society and older people themselves about growing older as highlighted by the Commissioner's State of the Nation Report, the Commissioner undertook research to examine the ways that older people are portrayed within the news media, given the crucial role this plays in influencing public opinion and attitudes. Older people often tell the Commissioner they feel that the way that growing older portrayed in the news often does not reflect their experiences and often presents a very narrow view of what it means to be an older person, something that the Commissioner was keen to explore in more detail to support her work to end ageism.

The research examined whether reporting on older people and the issues that affect their lives tends to be positive, negative or neutral, as well as the kind of language commonly used when reporting on older people and the impact this may have on older people and wider society. The research also considered how entrenched views on older people within society, and the pervasive nature of myths and stereotypes, might influence the ways in which older people are portrayed in the news.

The research found that over two-thirds of the articles examined portrayed older people negatively, reinforcing stereotypes about older people as being in ill-health and needing care, as victims and a burden to society, and that older people's voices were often lacking in these stories, with comments and quotes provided by other stakeholders speaking on their behalf. The Commissioner is determining how she will tackle the issues highlighted by the report, in particular the ways she can work with the media and trainee journalists, across Wales and the UK, to ensure that the portrayal of older people better reflects their experiences of growing older and does not reinforce negative stereotypes about older people.

During 2019-20, the Commissioner's office delivered training on abuse to 853 frontline professionals working in health boards and local authorities at 27 sessions held throughout Wales. The seminars aimed to help professionals to better understand the scale and impact of the abuse of older people, and the particular ways that abuse may affect them, including the barriers that may prevent older people who are experiencing or at risk of abuse from seeking or accessing help and support. Alongside this, the seminars also provide practical information so that professionals can recognise potential signs of abuse and ensure that older people can get the help and support they may need.

Additionally, between June and October 2019, the Commissioner held a series of Stopping Abuse Roundtable sessions, bringing together key organisations (including the Welsh Government, the Police, Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, and other key public bodies, as well as older people and organisations working with and for them) to identify action to protect and safeguard older people, and opportunities for joint working to influence change and deliver improvements. The sessions were aimed at exploring the action and good practice underway and the ways this could be rolled out more widely. They also helped to promote greater understanding about older people and their experiences of different types of abuse to help improve the response to older people experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect and to ensure that they are protected and safeguarded.

In October 2019, the Commissioner launched her [#EverydayAgeism Campaign](#) to highlight and robustly challenge the ageism faced by many older people throughout Wales. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the negative impact that ageism has – on individuals, the economy and wider society – and change attitudes so that ageism and age-discrimination are no longer seen as being acceptable. The campaign encouraged older people and the wider

public to share examples of the ageism they have seen or encountered, so the Commissioner could challenge and hold to account those who use ageist language, perpetuate ageist stereotypes, or discriminate against older people.

The campaign also encouraged people to make a pledge, publicly stating the action they will take, however big or small, to play their part in tackling ageism. Pledges have been made by members of the Welsh Government - Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething MS; the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS; and Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS - as well as by public bodies and third sector organisations, including Social Care Wales, the Wales Ambulance Services Trust, Digital Communities Wales, Alzheimer's Society, Care and Repair and the Stroke Association.

To support the campaign, the Commissioner also developed a range of [campaign materials and resources](#), which challenge myths and misconceptions about older people and growing older, and highlight the benefits of ending ageism, both to individuals and to society. These were widely shared across social media by the Commissioner, as well as organisations and individuals supporting the campaign.

All staff are required to consider the diversity of older people and their rights within their work. To ensure an accurate and balanced view of older people in all their diversity is reflected within each project, staff undertake Equality Impact Assessments which require on-going consideration of equality throughout the course of each project. In addition to this, the Commissioner expects all staff to undertake engagement with a diverse range of older people to continue to grow their understanding about older people and the challenges they face.

In order to increase the depth of understanding amongst public services about the diversity of older people, the Commissioner's Ageing Well team continues to work closely with statutory and public services in Wales to influence the adoption of policies which focus on the wellbeing of older people as individuals at a strategic level. Additionally, the Commissioner continues to scrutinise public bodies on the basis that they will be unable to deliver wellbeing outcomes for everyone until stereotypes about older people are challenged.

The Commissioner continues to engage with a wide range of equality and human rights-based organisations to ensure that the issues facing older people are recognised as equality and human rights issues. In September 2019 the Commissioner convened a Roundtable on Older People's Rights, responding to the Welsh Government's discussions on a potential Human Rights Act for Wales. The Roundtable brought together a range of experts on rights to discuss the most effective ways of progressing older people's rights, both within Wales and at an international level. The work has helped further increase understanding of older people's need for additional protection in relation to age-discrimination and will help increase the impact of the work undertaken by organisations working on older people's rights across the UK.

Objective 7. To encourage and support other public bodies to comply with their own duties under the Equality Act 2010 as they apply to older people and to challenge significant breaches of legal duties.

Through her casework function, the Commissioner continues to raise individual equality and human rights issues with public bodies. During the 2019-20, the Commissioner provided assistance to 681 older people, either directly or through family members – who contacted the Commissioner on their behalf. The Commissioner received a number of enquiries from older people relating to potential age discrimination, raising concerns that they were unable to access certain treatments and services due to their age, such as bowel cancer screening, and that a move towards online services would exclude them, with examples of online only GP appointment booking systems that older people were unable to access.

The information, assistance and guidance provided by the casework team directly empowers older people and their families and helps them to understand and claim their rights. As the circumstances of everyone who contacts the Commissioner are different, the assistance and support provided by the casework team is tailored to reflect people’s individual needs, and in some cases, particularly the most complex, the team will intervene on behalf of an older person (subject to their consent). Support is provided to enable older people and their families to challenge the decision-making process and working practices of public bodies, helping them to navigate complex systems, policies and processes, often in the most difficult and distressing of circumstances. Where significant breaches of legal duties occur, the Commissioner uses her legal powers to challenge public bodies.

To help ensure greater compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the Commissioner worked with older people’s groups as well as with transport organisations and providers to develop Age-friendly Transport Guidelines to improve older people’s experiences of bus travel and make bus services more age-friendly. The guidelines set out the action and good practice transport providers need to be delivering to ensure that older people can easily and safely use their services to get where they need to go and remove the challenges and barriers that may prevent older people from using public transport. They are grouped together under four key themes which reflect different aspects of an older person’s journey – waiting for the bus, getting support, travelling on the bus and having a say. The Commissioner has also drafted similar guidelines for train travel and active travel, which will be finalised with further input from older people and key stakeholders during 2020-21.

During -2019-20, the Commissioner successfully called for the reversal of the decision to increase the qualifying age for the concessionary bus pass, using equality considerations as a key area for her challenge. Under proposals set out by the Welsh Government, the eligibility age for the bus pass was set to increase from 60 to State Pension Age, a change that would have affected up to 300,000 older people. The Commissioner had consistently voiced her opposition to the proposals, highlighting the disproportionate impact they would have on older people living in poverty, women and carers.

The Commissioner had particular concerns about the Welsh Government’s Regulatory Impact Assessment relating to this decision, which appeared to make a number of incorrect assumptions about the impact that the proposals would have on older people, and the ways in which the proposals seemed incompatible with wider policy aims relating to health and well-being and the environment. The Minister announced in December 2019 that the decision would be reversed, an announcement strongly welcomed by the Commissioner.

Appendix A: Workforce profiles as at 31/03/20

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

The Commissioner undertakes an annual staff survey to gather regular equality data. This survey is confidential and responses are anonymous. For the reporting year 2019/20, 20 responses were received out of a possible 21. However, due to the size of the organisation, where figures account for 10% or less, details are removed to prevent individuals from being identified.

Number of people employed by Protected Characteristic:

Age	
16-24	-
25-34	4
35-44	8
45-54	-
55-64	5
65 & Over	-
Prefer not to say	-

Gender / Sex	
Male	8
Female	12
Prefer not to say	-

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?	
Yes	20
No	-
Prefer not to say	-

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	-
Gay Man	-
Gay Woman / Lesbian	-
Heterosexual / Straight	18
Asexual	-
Other	-
Prefer not to say	-

Relationship Status	
Married	9
Divorced	-
Civil Partnership	-
Single	-
Co-habiting	8
Separated	-
Widowed	-
Prefer not to say	-

Religion	
No religion or belief	11
Christian (all denominations)	8
Buddhist	-
Hindu	-
Jewish	-
Muslim	-
Sikh	-
Any other religion or belief	-
Prefer not to say	-

National Identity	
Welsh	17
Scottish	-
English	-
Northern Irish	-
Irish	-
British	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-
Prefer not to say	-
Prefer not to say	-

Ethnic Origin	
White	20
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	-
Asian	-
Black/African/Caribbean	-
Other – please specify	-

Dependents	
None	12
Children under 18	6
Children under 25 and in full time education	-
Person aged 60+	-
Prefer not to say	-

Disability	Yes	No / N/A	Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	-	18	-
Do you have a disability as defined by the Equality Act?	-	19	-
At least one of my dependents has a disability.	-	17	-

The below data is drawn from HR records rather than via the annual staff survey:

Pregnancy & Maternity	
Number of pregnant employees during 2018/19	1
Number of employees taking Maternity Leave during 2018/19	1

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	Men	Women	Total
Administrator	0	0	0
Support Officer/Assistant	1	4	5
Officer	3	4	7
Head / Lead	4	4	8
Chief Operating Officer	0	1	1
Commissioner	0	1	1

Pay & Grade	Men	Women	Total
18,750 – 20,950 / A	0	0	0
21,800 – 26,450 / B	1	4	5
27,700 – 33,600 / C	3	4	7
35,200 – 42,850 / D	4	3	7
43,750 – 50,950 / E	0	1	1
54,050 – 64,300 / F	0	1	1
90,000* / Commissioner	0	1	1

*Pay Level set by Welsh Government

Contract Type	Men	Women	Total
Permanent	6	10	16
Fixed Term	2	4	6
Temporary	0	0	0

Working Pattern	Men	Women	Total
Full time	8	11	19
Part time	0	3	3
Compressed hours	0	0	0

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.

The Commissioner monitors her recruitment process on an on-going basis to ensure that all measures are undertaken to try and increase the diversity of her staff.

Application forms are already available in alternative formats and recruitment adverts are placed widely using a variety of media. The Commissioner has a formal Dignity at Work Policy and adopts good practice regarding its recruitment process; all information containing protected characteristics within application forms is seen by HR only and is not shared with the selection panel. In addition, reasonable adjustments are available to all candidates requesting them.

During 2019/20, the Commissioner recruited for 9 posts via external recruitment.

The below table details the number of candidates who applied for each role:

Role	Number of candidates
Advice & Support Caseworker	3
Age Discrimination Lead	19
Ageing Well Lead	26
ARAC member	6
Communications Officer	15
Data & Research Analyst	9
Health & Care Lead	17
Policy Officer	16
Senior Executive Officer	6

All candidates are provided with the opportunity to complete a Diversity Monitoring form at point of application, however not all candidates choose to complete and submit a form. The Commissioner received 84 completed Diversity Monitoring Forms associated with external recruitment conducted during 2019/20.

Number of applications for jobs within 2019/2020 received from the following protected groups:

Age	Number of candidates
16-24	12
25-34	25
35-44	13
45-54	20
55-64	14
65 & Over	0
Prefer not to say	0

Gender	
Male	20
Female	63
Prefer not to say	1

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?	
Yes	81
No	0
Prefer not to say	3

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	4
Gay / Lesbian	1
Heterosexual / Straight	69
Asexual	0
Other	0
Prefer not to say	10

Relationship Status	
Married	26
Divorced	8
Civil Partnership	0
Single	25
Co-habiting	18
Separated	0
Widowed	0
Prefer not to say	7

Religion	
No religion or belief	41
Christian (all denominations)	29
Buddhist	0
Hindu	0
Jewish	1
Muslim	1
Sikh	0
Any other religion or belief	0
Prefer not to say	12

National Identity	
Welsh	46
Scottish	1
English	4
Northern Irish	0
Irish	0
British	26
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
Other	7
Prefer not to say	0

Ethnic Origin	
White	79
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	0
Asian	2
Black/African/Caribbean	2
Other – please specify	1

Disability	Yes	No / N/A	Prefer not to say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	14	66	4
Do you have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	13	66	5

Dependents	
Children under 18	20
Children under 25 and in full time education	7
Person aged 60+	1
Other dependents	1
None	55
Prefer not to say	0

At least one of my dependents has a disability	
Yes	2
No	32
Prefer not to say	0
Not applicable	50

No data relating to pregnancy and maternity was collected in relation to recruitment activity for 2019/20.

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.

No members of staff applied to change position within the organisation.

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.

As stated in the Commissioner's Learning and Development Policy, the Commissioner aspires to be a learning organisation and will nurture the skills and knowledge that staff will need to succeed in their roles. This policy therefore supports a culture of learning and developing excellent staff at all levels. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their jobs and personal development.

The Commissioner will:

- provide a challenging work environment, where staff are encouraged to develop and acquire new skills and experience.
- provide a range of development opportunities for staff consistent with the strategic and operational needs of the Commissioner.
- deliver to all new staff a basic understanding of the role, function, policies and procedures of the Commissioner at induction.
- undertake and agree with all staff individual training and development plans as part of the performance appraisal process.
- review individual and Commissioner plans at least annually; assess effectiveness of training interventions and feed this back into subsequent planning.

All employees have equality of opportunity regarding training. The Commissioner approved all employee applications for learning and development (training) activity during 2019/20, bar one, which was rejected on the grounds that it was not relevant to the role and the learning would not be able to be used in the organisation. All training was undertaken either as individual training or as corporate training where all employees attended.

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

All employees attended a team training session on 'Equality and Diversity' in November 2019 run by Diverse Cymru, as well as a team training session on 'Ageism and Age Discrimination' in January 2020.

Individual members of staff received training on equalities and human rights legislation, a wider guide to working with Gypsy Roma and Traveller Communities, understanding mental toughness, and dealing with clients with mental health issues.

The Commissioner has provided opportunities during work hours for all employees to receive Welsh language training, fully funded by the organisation. A total of 11 members of staff (50% of the organisation) took part in Welsh language lessons in a variety of formats comprising of weekly sessions with a tutor in the office, attending external classes, accessing online training, and attending a residential intensive course.

All training undertaken during 2019/20 by the Commissioner's employees was completed.

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.

The Commissioner had no employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made during 2019/20.

Disciplinary Procedures

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

The Commissioner had no employees subject to disciplinary procedures during 2019/20.

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.

During 2019/20, four employees left the Commissioner's employment.

As all employee equality data is anonymised, no specific data relating to the protected characteristics of these employees is available. However, the Commissioner does hold information relating to age and gender for HR purposes relating to these specific employees; this information is provided below.

Age	
16-24	-
25-34	2
35-44	1
45-54	1
55-64	-
65 & Over	-

Gender	
Male	2
Female	2

