

Written Ministerial Statement

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The Executive Office

APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Published at noon on Thursday 6 March 2025

Ms O'Neill and Mrs Little-Pengelly (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): We are delighted to announce the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland. Siobhan Casey will take up the post on 7 April, bringing a wealth of experience in promoting the needs of older people.

Older people are a unique group in society. They play a vital role in our local communities and contribute in so many positive ways and it is important to us that we do everything we can to support them, across all areas of their lives.

Our investment in active ageing, in empowering older people, and in ensuring that welfare and rights are respected and protected, demonstrate the value we place on this group, and how we acknowledge them as members of our society with vital and important contributions to make. The role of Commissioner is critical in ensuring that our older people have the right support and services, targeted at individual need, so that they can continue to contribute all they can. We also want to ensure they will be looked after when they need it.

We recognise that for a variety of reasons, some members of our older population may be struggling to make their voices heard, making it difficult to ensure their specific wants and needs are met. We know they can face challenges when it comes to dealing with issues such as cost of living, digital inclusion and access to healthcare, and these are areas in which the Commissioner has a particular role.

Siobhan has worked for, and with, older people across our communities for the last 15 years, developing programmes, campaigns and services to meet their needs. Driving change to improve the wellbeing of older people has been central to her work and we are confident that she will be a strong champion for the needs of older people.

The position of Commissioner for Older People is intrinsically linked to supporting the cornerstone of our wider society. It is incumbent upon us all to show respect and to do everything we can to support and protect our older people. We wish Siobhan well as she undertakes this important role and look forward to engaging with her as she works to bring about real improvements to the lives of our older people.



MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA
First Minister



EMMA LITTLE-PENGELLY MLA
deputy First Minister