



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Strategic Equality Plan: Annual Report 2025-26

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people throughout Wales.

The Commissioner wants Wales to lead the way in empowering older people, tackling inequality and enabling everyone to live and age well.

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Accessible Formats

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg // This document is available in Welsh

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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.

This report focuses on specific Welsh Duties and the Commissioner's Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024-26:

- Section 3 explains the Commissioner's role
- Section 4 sets out the Commissioner's Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024-26
- Section 5 outlines the Commissioner's progress during 2025-26
- Appendix A – Workforce profile as of 31 March 2026

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 role of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales is to protect and promote the rights of older people aged 60 and over throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives.

The Commissioner provides help and support directly to older people through the Advice and Assistance service and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

The Commissioner's remit is set out in the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006, which established the role.

The Commissioner's remit is to:

- Promote awareness of the interests of older people in Wales and of the need to safeguard those interests;
- Promote the provision of opportunities for, and the elimination of discrimination against, older people in Wales;
- Encourage best practice in the treatment of older people in Wales; and
- Keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law affecting the interests of older people in Wales.

The Commissioner's Equality Objectives for 2024-26

1. Promote an internal culture that is welcoming and supportive, ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees

Year 1&2 Actions:

- Deliver on the Anti-Racist Action Plan
- Monitor the gender pay differences within the workforce
- Review the effectiveness of the recruitment processes relevant to both the workforce and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Review organisational values

2. Increase the awareness and reach of the Advice and Assistance Service

Year 1&2 Actions:

- Maintain and develop more accessible information, for example easy read, different languages, videos, explaining the role and work of the Commissioner
- Review the reach of the Advice and Assistance service

3. Strengthen engagement, communication, and involvement with older people with protected characteristics to ensure their voices inform wider work

Year 2 Actions:

- Review models of engagement and communication with older people to determine if further improvements can be made in engaging with older people with protected characteristics

4. Continue to ensure that the experiences of older people influence and inform public services and systems, as well as planning and practice

Year 1&2 Actions:

- Reporting on and taking forward recommendations from areas of work

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 work to embed and further equality in her work for 2025-26 is outlined below:

Objective 1: Promote an internal culture that is welcoming and supportive, ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees

Action: Deliver on the Anti-racist Action Plan

The Commissioner continued to implement the commitments set out in the Anti-racist Action Plan by:

- Promoting diversity within the workforce and ensuring equality of opportunity for all employees.
- Embedding equality considerations within internal processes and strategic decision-making.
- Strengthening engagement, communication and involvement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic older people to ensure their experiences and views inform the Commissioner's wider work.
- Providing support and assistance to a diverse range of older people to help uphold their rights and challenge discrimination.

Learning from the development and implementation of the Anti-racist Action Plan will inform the development of the Commissioner's Equality Objectives for 2026-30, helping to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion remain central to the organisation's work and decision-making.

Action: Monitor the gender pay differences within the Commissioner's workforce

On 31 March 2025, the median wage for men was higher than women. However, the mean salary of females was higher as my Senior Leadership Team were all female. This means that the gender pay gap for 2024-25 was -1.81%, and that for every £100 men earned, women earned £101.81.

On 31 March 2026, the mean and median wage for men was higher than women, despite all my Senior Leadership Team still being all female. This means that the gender pay gap for 2025-26 is 2.92%, and that for every £100 men earn, women earn £97.08.

The change in the gender pay gap is driven mainly by changes in workforce composition rather than by changes in individual rates of pay. All three male members of staff are employed in mid- to senior-level roles, which increases the male median and mean hourly rate. Although the Senior Leadership Team is all female, women remain more represented throughout all bands. Due to the small numbers reflected, results are more sensitive to small changes in workforce mix.

Action: Review the effectiveness of the recruitment processes relevant to both the workforce and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

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 broad spectrum of protected characteristics.

The Commissioner operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) which provides disabled people and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people who apply and meet the essential job criteria, a guaranteed interview.

Job vacancies are advertised through a variety of networks to ensure as wide a reach as possible in addition to information being available in a wide range of formats on request.

The language used in recruitment documentation was reviewed to ensure no unconscious bias.

The diversity monitoring form was embedded within the application form, which resulted in a significantly higher proportion of equality, diversity and inclusion data from applicants.

Action: Review organisational values

Our organisational values were reviewed by the organisation to ensure they describe the culture we want to build and the change we want to lead.

A dedicated workshop was held to ensure that all staff were able to contribute to reviewing and developing values that are shaped by who we are and what we believe in.

The updated values provide a foundation that guides how we work together and with others on behalf of older people, supporting us to act with integrity, compassion and purpose.

Our values are:

- Bold and Ambitious
- Adaptable and Responsive
- Fair and Inclusive
- Person-centred and Respectful
- Open and Accountable

Objective 2: Increase awareness and reach of the Advice and Assistance Service

Action: Maintain and develop more accessible information

The Commissioner's Communications Style Guide provides guidance on how to communicate with a wide range of audiences in a clear and concise way, using plain language and appropriate imagery.

Publications produced specifically for older people are made available in the following formats:

- Digital
- Hard copy
- Easy Read
- BSL
- Audio Versions

Large print and braille versions of documents are also available upon request.

The Commissioner also engages with older people to seek feedback on draft publications, including feedback on accessibility.

Action: Review the reach of the Advice and Assistance service

In 2025-26, we reviewed the reach of the Advice and Assistance service by analysing enquiry volumes, contact routes, locations, issues raised and the types of people contacting the service.

The service supported 707 enquiries during the year, an increase of 15% compared to the previous year. Of these, 544 were new enquiries, a 4% increase compared to 2024-25. The majority of contacts came directly from older people and their families, showing that the service is reaching its intended audience.

The data shows that enquiries were received from across Wales and covered a wide range of issues affecting older people's equality and rights, including care, health, housing, financial issues, access to services, disability, digital exclusion, dementia and unpaid caring.

The review also highlighted areas for further development. In particular, the data suggests there is scope to strengthen awareness and understanding of the service among professionals and stakeholder organisations, supporting more appropriate referrals and helping to extend the reach of the service to older people who may not contact us directly.

Objective 3: Strengthen engagement, communication and involvement with older people with protected characteristics to ensure that their voices inform wider work

Action: Review models of engagement and communication with older people to determine if further improvements can be made in engaging with older people with protected characteristics

During 2025-26, we reviewed our approaches to engagement and communication to ensure they remained accessible, inclusive and effective in reaching older people from a wide range of backgrounds and communities. This included consideration of both digital and non-digital

communication channels, recognising that some older people may face barriers to online engagement. Paper copies of information guides and resources continued to be distributed across Wales, alongside newsletters, posters, media coverage and face-to-face engagement opportunities. Information about the Commissioner's work was also shared through social media channels, particularly Facebook, helping to reach a broad audience of older people.

The review informed the development of the Commissioner's Engagement Strategy, which emphasises accessible communication, collaboration, relationship-building with groups representing older people with protected characteristics, and targeted efforts to reach underrepresented and harder-to-reach communities. The strategy also includes actions to strengthen partnerships with organisations representing diverse groups of older people and to use engagement data to identify gaps and opportunities for further improvement.

As a result, the Commissioner has strengthened the framework for engaging with older people with protected characteristics and will continue to monitor and refine engagement approaches to ensure that a diverse range of voices inform the organisation's work and priorities.

Objective 4: Ensure the experiences of older people influence and inform public services and systems as well as planning and practice

Action: Report on and take forward recommendations from areas of work

Action against ageism learning module

Working in collaboration with the Open University in Wales, an online learning module was developed to empower people across Wales to recognise and challenge ageism, which is often still seen as acceptable despite the significant harm it causes.

The interactive course draws on a wide range of evidence and older people's lived experiences to help participants understand the scale of ageism and its impact – both on individuals and society more widely.

The course covers a number of key areas where ageism and age discrimination are common, including access to services, employment and recruitment, and within the media and advertising. As well as growing knowledge and understanding, the course also offers practical information about how to take action against ageism, together with links to other helpful resources and organisations that can provide information and support.

The course is primarily being targeted at staff working across the public sector in Wales, but can be accessed for free by anyone who wants to learn more about the role they can play in tackling ageism and age discrimination, and why this is so important.

Growing older in Wales: A snapshot of older people's experiences

The Commissioner examined a wide range of available data and research, tracking trends over time where possible, to help ensure greater recognition of people's experiences of growing older across various key aspects of their lives.

The data highlighted through the 'Growing older in Wales' report provides important insights into the kinds of issues and barriers older people are currently facing, as well as inequalities amongst different groups and different areas, which often limit the opportunities people need to live and age well.

The report found that while later life is a time of fulfilment and empowerment for many older people, others find themselves at significant risk being left behind or excluded.

The report was shared with the Welsh Government and other key public bodies, alongside calling for action to respond to the issues identified.

Spotlights on Ageism

The Commissioner worked in collaboration with public service leaders and other experts to create a series of published articles to shine a light on the realities of ageism in a Welsh context, increase awareness and inspire action.

The contributions painted a vivid picture of some of the challenges and barriers older people are facing within their everyday lives, drawing both on people's lived experiences and the latest research and evidence.

The series covered a number of key areas where people may face exclusion or discrimination due to their age – including mental health services, transport and the built environment – highlighting a number of common themes and issues that provide helpful insights into how the required actions might be prioritised effectively.

Appendix A Workforce profiles as at 31/03/26

Headcount Information

1. 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 2025/26, 18 responses were received out of a possible 18. However, due to the size of the organisation, where figures account for less than 10%, details are removed to prevent individuals from being identified.

Number of people employed by Protected Characteristic:

Age	
16-24	-
25-34	2
35-44	3
45-54	11
55-64	-
65 & Over	-
Prefer Not to Say	-

Gender / Sex	
Male	3
Female	15
Prefer Not to Say	-

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were originally assigned at birth?	
Yes	18
No	-
Prefer Not to Say	-

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	-
Gay Man	-
Gay Woman / Lesbian	-
Heterosexual / Straight	16
Asexual	-
Other	-
Prefer Not to Say	-

Relationship Status	
Married	12
Divorced	-
Civil Partnership	-
Single	3
Co-habiting	-
Separated	-
Widowed	-
Prefer not to say	-

Religion or Belief	
No religion or belief	11
Christian (all denominations)	6
Buddhist	-
Hindu	-
Jewish	-
Muslim	-
Sikh	-
Any other religion or belief	-
Prefer not to say	-

National Identity	
Welsh	16
Scottish	-
English	-
Northern Irish	-
Irish	-
British	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-
Prefer not to say	-

Ethnic Origin	
White	17
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	-
Asian	-
Black/African/Caribbean	-
Other – please specify	-

Dependents	
None	8
Children under 18	2
Children under 25 and in full time education	5
Person aged 60+	2
Prefer Not to Say	-

Disability	Yes	No / NA	Prefer Not To Say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	3	14	-
Do you have a disability as defined by the Equality Act?	4	13	-
At least one of my dependents has a disability	4	12	2

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

Pregnancy & Maternity	
Number of pregnant employees during 2025/26	0
Number of employees taking Maternity Leave during 2025/26	0

2. 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	0	1	1
Officer	0	6	6
Head / Lead	3	5	8
Director / Chief Operating Officer	0	2	2
Commissioner	0	1	1

Pay & Grade	Men	Women	Total
25,352 – 28,995 / A	0	0	0
30,780 – 33,923 / B	0	1	1
37,149 – 42,850 / C	0	6	6
47,730 – 54,753 / D	3	5	8
61,156 – 66,656 / E	0	0	0
68,441 – 75,045 / F	0	2	2
90,000* / Commissioner	0	1	1

*Pay Level set by the Welsh Government

Contract Type	Men	Women	Total
Permanent	3	14	17
Fixed Term	0	1	1
Temporary	0	0	0

Working Pattern	Men	Women	Total
Full Time	3	11	14
Part Time	0	4	4
Compressed Hours	0	0	0

Recruitment

3. 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 2025/26, the Commissioner recruited for two posts via external recruitment. The table below details the number of candidates who applied for each role:

Role	Number of candidates
Communications Officer	53
Head of Finance	8

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 52 complete Diversity Monitoring Forms associated with external recruitment conducted during 2025/26.

Number of applications for jobs within 2025/2026 received from the following protected groups:

Age	
16-24	17
25-34	24
35-44	3
45-54	5
55-64	2
65 & Over	0
Prefer Not to Say	1

Sex	
Male	15
Female	36
Prefer Not to Say	1

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were originally assigned at birth?	
Yes	48
No	0
Prefer not to say	4

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	10
Gay / Lesbian	1
Heterosexual	33
Asexual	0
Other	1
Prefer Not to Say	7

Relationship Status	
Married	17
Divorced	0
Civil Partnership	0
Single	28
Co-habiting	7
Separated	0
Widowed	0
Prefer not to say	0

Religion or Belief	
No religion or belief	33
Christian (all denominations)	11
Buddhist	0
Hindu	2
Jewish	0
Muslim	3
Sikh	0
Any other religion or belief	0
Prefer not to say	3

National Identity	
Welsh	31
Scottish	0
English	2
Northern Irish	0
Irish	0
British	12
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
Other	7
Prefer Not to Say	0

Ethnic Origin	
White	46
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1
Asian	2
Black/African/Caribbean	3
Other	0
Prefer not to say	0

Disability	Yes	No / N/A	Prefer Not to Say
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	3	46	3
Do you have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010?	5	41	6

Dependents	
Children under 18	7
Children under 25 in full time education	3
Person aged 60+	0
Other dependents	0
None	40
Prefer not to say	2

At least one of my dependents has a disability	
Yes	0
No / Not applicable	51
Prefer not to say	1

No data relating to pregnancy and maternity was collected in relation to recruitment activity for 2025/26.

4. 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

5. 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 equal opportunity regarding training. The Commissioner approved all employee applications for learning and development (training) activity during 2025/26.

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

All employees completed the training, which was undertaken either as individual training or as corporate training where all employees attended.

Grievance Procedures

7. 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.

No employees were involved in grievance procedures.

Disciplinary Procedures

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

No employees were subject to disciplinary procedures.

Leavers

9. 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 2025/26, one employee 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	-
35-44	-
45-54	1
55-64	-
65 & Over	-

Gender	
Male	0
Female	1