



OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE NEWSLETTER

May 2009

Aims and Objectives of the Older People's Advocate

The Older People's Advocate will:

- **facilitate** public consultation events on the proposed role, remit and powers of an Older People's Commissioner;
- **provide** a focus for individual older people and representative groups from the voluntary and community sector to highlight issues that are of concern for older people;
- **bring** these issues and concerns to the attention of the Junior Ministers in the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister;
- **provide** Junior Ministers with analysis based on the views of the voluntary and community sector of the impact and practical out workings of policies and strategies aimed at older people



Dame Joan Harbison is the Older People's Advocate appointed by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. The role of the Older People's Advocate is to identify and address the current problems faced by all older people and to provide the Junior Ministers with independent advice on what needs to be done to address the concerns of older people including the establishment of an Older People's Commissioner's Office.

"In the six months since taking up this post I have been actively meeting with the age sector, listening to individuals, raising key issues of concern with key bodies and agencies in health, transport and PSNI. I will tell you more about all these discussions in future newsletters. I am also preparing a consultation plan to ensure meaningful and accessible discussions with older people in Northern Ireland on the roles and responsibilities of the Older People's Commissioner and again I will keep you informed on progress over the next months."

In the first newsletter are the United Nations Principles for the older person. These principles are set out by the United Nations to encourage Governments to incorporate these into their programme whenever possible. As the Older People's Advocate Dame Joan fully supports these principles and will use them to guide her work in the coming months.



Independence:

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
4. Older persons have a access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation:

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

Care:

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self-fulfilment:

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

Dignity:

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

