

Response from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh to the Scottish Parliament Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee's call for views on the Commissioner for Older People Bill.

- 1. What impact do you think the creation of a Commissioner for Older People would have on different individuals and groups within Scottish society? Please provide a brief explanation of the reasons for your views.**

Most Fellows consider that the creation of a Commissioner for Older People will be a positive development and will benefit older people in Scotland by having someone in a prominent position who can represent their voice at a strategic, national level, something which is lacking at present, and speak up for their specific interests and challenges.

- 2. Do you have any comments on the proposed roles and responsibilities of a Commissioner for Older People in Scotland as set out in the Bill?**

The College considers that the proposed roles and responsibilities are broadly appropriate and comprehensive. We particularly welcome the requirement to consult older people, and organisations that work for or with older people, on the work to be undertaken by the Commissioner. In this context, and in relation to health and care, we would highlight the significant expertise our College and others like the British Geriatrics Society have in relation to geriatric medicine and care for older patients.

- 3. What are your views on the proposed age range (over 60s) covered by the Commissioner's remit?**

The College considers that the proposed age range is appropriate. As we suggested previously, we understand that this age range would capture the vast majority of people living with frailty but would also include a huge number of well, fit and active people; the Commissioner may have a useful role in promoting the prevention of frailty among this group.

- 4. What are your views on the proposal that the Commissioner should be independent of Government?**

We consider that it is essential that the Commissioner is independent of Government so that it can enjoy credibility and public support and be able to speak up on all relevant issues of concern to older people with complete impartiality. We are aware that other equivalent Commissioners have this independence and this is seen as being important to their success.

- 5. Given that a number of other bodies have similar functions to some of those proposed for the Commissioner, how best do you think the proposed Commissioner's remit can avoid duplication with existing officeholders?**

We consider that it is important that duplication is avoided and that the remit of the Commissioner is obviously specifically focused on the interests of older people. A mapping exercise of all organisations working in relation to older people's rights, welfare, and services may be helpful. We would also want to see close cooperation and potentially joint working between the Commissioner and other organisations and agencies where that adds value.

- 6. Please provide any other comments you have on the Bill.**

While the College remains generally supportive of the Bill and its aims, a number of our Lay Advisory Committee members- whose views we sought when preparing a response to this

consultation- were less convinced about its potential effectiveness. They suggested that the focus should be on service delivery within existing structures in areas like the NHS and social care and not on the creation of another Commissioner which may raise expectations unfairly.