

Policy Position Paper

Commissioner for Older People in England

England

February 2026

Re-engage supports the establishment of a Commissioner for Older People in England. This role would ensure that the rights, needs, and voices of older people are heard at the highest levels of decision-making, helping to address issues of loneliness, social isolation, and ageism.

What is a commissioner?

Commissioners are usually created to give under-represented groups a voice, and function independently of the government, allowing the ability to hold the government to account.

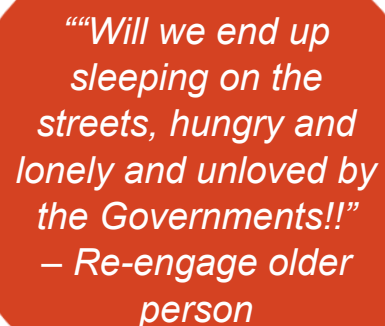
The roles and responsibilities of commissioners are generally set out in the law, and their power can vary.

Our statement

Re-engage supports thousands of older people who face loneliness and social isolation. Many of them feel that government decisions do not reflect their needs and in some cases cause harm.

We believe that creating a Commissioner for Older People in England is essential to: amplify the voices of older people; protect older people's rights; rebuild trust between older people and the government; improve cooperation between services, charities, and communities.

This role would send a powerful message that older people are valued, respected and have equal rights.

A large orange speech bubble containing a quote in white text. The quote is: "“Will we end up sleeping on the streets, hungry and lonely and unloved by the Governments!!” – Re-engage older person".

*“Will we end up sleeping on the streets, hungry and lonely and unloved by the Governments!!”
– Re-engage older person*


Background

In April 2023 Re-engage signed a statement of support, along with over 70 other organisations, calling for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing in England.¹

Consultations at Re-engage have revealed older people often feel their voices are ignored in decision making. As an organisation we would welcome a Commissioner who will:

- Give older people a strong, independent voice in government;
- Help make sure policies reflect the real-life experiences and needs of older people;
- Work with charities, communities, and government to create meaningful change;
- Commit to hearing and valuing diverse perspectives of older people.

Appointing a Commissioner for Older People would show a clear commitment to treating older people equally, recognising their contributions, and taking real action to support their needs.

A large red speech bubble containing a quote.

*“Stop punishing the pensioners”
– Re-engage older person*



2.6 million

It is expected in the next 25 years the number of people age 85 and over will double to 2.6 million.²

52%

In the last 40 years, the number of people 65 and over has increased by over 3.5 million (a 52% increase).³

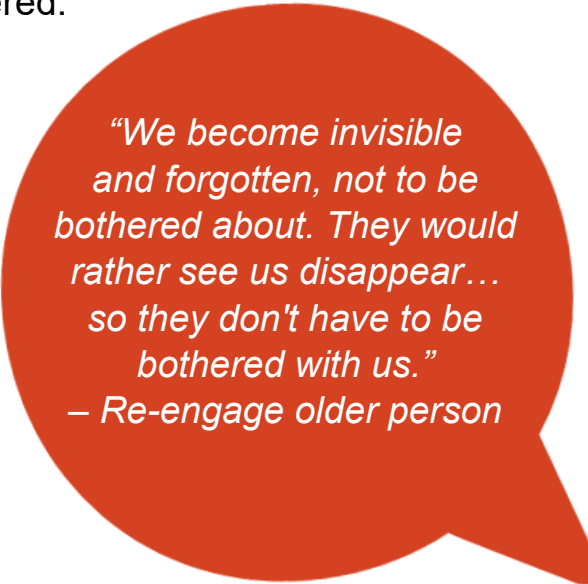
Implications and recommendations

The Commissioner for Older People in England should play a distinct and complementary role. To achieve this, we recommend the Commissioner:

- Focuses specifically on the rights, wellbeing, and lived experiences of older people, tackling key issues like loneliness, isolation, ageism, digital exclusion, access to services, the built environment and social participation.
- Works in partnership with existing organisations who actively consult and co-produce work with older people, avoiding duplication and ensure work is guided by the real needs and experiences of older people.
- Focuses on long-term, systemic change and long-term impact, by focusing on shaping policy and influencing culture.

To ensure meaningful impact, we believe that the Commissioner for Older People in England should:

- Operate independently, free from political influence, to act as a strong unconstrained voice for older people.
- Prioritise systemic issues such as loneliness, social isolation, ageism, digital exclusion, and access to services.
- Engage directly with older people across England, including those in remote or rural areas and those without digital access.
- Acknowledging the depth of adversity faced by those aged 75 and over within the age range covered.

A large orange speech bubble containing a quote in white italicized text.

*“We become invisible and forgotten, not to be bothered about. They would rather see us disappear... so they don't have to be bothered with us.”
– Re-engage older person*

Want to find out more?

Re-engage has policy statements on a wide range of public issues. You can read our policy papers here:

[Policy positions](#)

References

- ¹ Consensus statement on a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing in England ([2023](#))
- ² Our ageing population: How ageing affects health and care need in England (The Health Foundation, [2021](#))
- ³ Our Ageing Population | The State of Ageing 2023-24 (Centre for Ageing Better, [2024](#))

Published: February 2026

Next review: February 2027