# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Appointment of Commissioner for Older People** |
| **DATE**  | **5 June 2018** |
| **BY**  | **Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales** |

I have great pleasure in making this statement on the appointment of our third Commissioner for Older People in Wales. The successful candidate is Heléna Herklots CBE who will begin her role on 20 August. Heléna is currently the Chief Executive of Carers UK, a role that she has held since 2012.

Wales was the first country in the UK to establish a Commissioner for Older People. We attach great importance to the role and invested in it a wide range of powers to help deliver the change older people want to see.

The recruitment process to appoint a new Commissioner complies with the Governance Code for Public Appointments which sets out the principles that should underpin all public appointments. As part of this process a cross-party panel of Assembly Members assessed candidates’ skills and experiences against the requirements of the post. In addition we also involved older people throughout the recruitment process. A panel of representatives from across the sector interviewed and tested the abilities of the shortlisted candidates against the realities of life for all kinds of older people in Wales.

Both panels were independently-chaired and the findings of both informed my own decision.

I am very grateful to all participants, including all candidates who made this a competitive exercise, for giving so freely of their time and experience in contributing to the appointment process.

I commend Sarah Rochira, for the sterling work she has undertaken as the current Commissioner. She led the way in championing older people and has raised the profile of the work we are doing on older people’s issues in the international community. She will leave a legacy on which our new Commissioner will, I am sure, build. I wish her well in her future career.

I congratulate Heléna on her appointment and warmly welcome her to this important role. We must value older people more, and robustly tackle discrimination on the grounds of age. We must challenge unfair and outdated stereotypes, attitudes and practices that adversely affect older people. I am sure that our new Commissioner will define her own role in her own way and I look forward to hearing more about the progress she makes in this unique and challenging role.