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u3a PR Advisor for Scotland Allana, along with Edinburgh u3a Chair George, Penicuik & District u3a Chair Hugh and Glasgow West End member Ellen joined over 30 other representatives at the parliamentary launch event.

It was organised by Colin Smyth MSP who has started a consultation process to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Scotland. He was supported by Monica Lennon MSP.

Organisations working with older people in Scotland, and members of the public, have until 12 September 2023 to register their views and evidence the case for this new independent public body.

Mr Smyth believes Scotland needs an independent Commissioner for Older People because the pandemic showed how the rights, needs and interests of older people can be ignored, bypassed or overruled.

Living to a ripe old age is not an option for everyone given Scotland has the lowest life expectancy of all the UK countries. A fifth of the population today is aged over 65 while a fifth of those are now experiencing poverty.

Allana said: "The media, and this includes daytime tv advertising, often portrays older people as infirm or a burden to society. However, u3a reflects positive ageing where older people freely contribute their time and energy to help others in their community. Having our own Commissioner will facilitate best practice examples across Scotland.

"Moreover, a new Commissioner can scrutinise legislation, encourage joined up working, and has legal powers to hold Government and public bodies to account.

"Wales and Northern Ireland already have Commissioners for Older People which work well. We want the same, to see an older people's champion here in Scotland."

It comes after u3a also signed a statement in March, along with 70 other organisations, calling for a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing in England.

Find out more about the proposed Scottish Bill and the consultation survey, [on the Scottish Parliament website](#).

Find out more about how u3a is using the movement's voice on [Our Impact page](#).