



Call for an older people's champion

Description



A campaigning politician and the charity [Independent Age](#) have called for a champion to represent older people at national level.

[MP Jo Gideon](#) of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ageing and Old People said a pensioner should be appointed to help pull two million older people out of poverty.

“Addressing the challenges of one generation addresses the challenges of others”

She joined Independent Age at an event in Westminster, pushing for a UK-wide Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to advocate for pensioners and elderly people.

“The next government needs to be aspirational because addressing the challenges of one generation addresses the challenges of others,” said Ms Gideon, in a recent issue of [The i newspaper](#).

“The language we use and the expectations we have lend themselves to social tensions and intergenerational conflict,” said Ms Gideon, who is MP for Stoke-on-Trent central.

“I’m sure you’ve all heard of older people being described as bed blockers and occupying houses needed by younger generations or taking their jobs.”

Independent Age slammed the “damaging stereotype” that “everyone in later life is enjoying a comfortable retirement with a large pension pot”.

The charity claim this allegation is untrue. There are about 350,000 more older people in poverty than in 2012/13 amounting to more than two million overall.

Independent Age Chief Executive Joanna Elson said the commissioner is needed to give older people a voice. “In Wales and in Northern Ireland, they have a commissioner for older people very effectively,” she explained.

“It could make a huge difference”

“We don’t have one in England and we don’t have one in Scotland and we would really like to see that change. It would cost a very small amount of money and I think it could make a huge difference.”

Independent Age are pushing political parties to commit to introducing a commissioner to operate across the UK.

The charity have been known as Independent Age since 2005, but have a history stretching well beyond that to 1863, when the United Kingdom Beneficent Association (UKBA) was established.

UKBA was incorporated under the Royal Charter to become RUKBA, later merging with Counsel and Care and the Universal Beneficent Society (UBS). Today Independent Age are a modern charity, helping to build a better future for older people in the UK.

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