



Southampton Seniors Council

The Southampton Seniors Council is committed to improving life for senior citizens in Southampton by making sure that our voices are heard and our needs and opinions are taken into account by those who make decisions and run services in the city.

Progress Report to 2010

Who we are

The Seniors Council was established in 2006. It is made up of 30 members from Southampton. We are not tied to a political party or any other organisation.

Our purpose

We are committed to representing the interests of people in their later years in Southampton, to influencing and achieving changes in the services provided, and to ensuring Southampton is a good city to grow older in.

Our aims

- To improve services
- To work alongside voluntary and statutory organisations
- To utilise life skills and experiences to enhance and develop services
- To influence and achieve change

Cities in Balance

This year we worked with Southampton City Council and Age Concern Southampton on a successful European bid to bring €250,000 to the city through the Cities in Balance project. This is a project with nine other European cities, improving mainstream opportunities for seniors.



As part of the project, the Seniors Council now has a short term development worker to build our strength and increase our influence.

We were involved in shaping the rest of Southampton's bid to make sure that the projects included will make the differences we want to see.

As part of the project, members of the Seniors Council have visited other cities in Europe to find out what they are doing, and bring this learning back to Southampton.

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Our Achievements

Ageism and discrimination

We are committed to tackling ageism and discrimination, and have produced a statement on fighting ageism. We comment on the city council's equality plans to make sure age equality is properly covered.

- Our ageism statement has been endorsed by the city council. The Later Years Partnership has agreed to promote it with other organisations in the city.

We submitted a response to the government's Discrimination Law Review, emphasising how important it is to legislate against age discrimination, and responded to the Human Rights Inquiry to voice our concern about seniors in some care homes not being covered by the Human Rights Act.

- The new Equalities Act will outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age.

Dignity

We have produced a set of standards on how we expect to be treated if we are using home care services, stressing the importance of continuity, clear information, and being respected.

- The city council told care inspectors that it was working to our dignity standards.

We have visited the elderly care unit at the General Hospital to discuss issues of dignity with the matrons and Patient Support, and produced a report on dignity for the city's Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

- We are able to raise issues of dignity with all health and care agencies in the city.

Care

We were involved in vetting and interviewing new home care providers for the city council.

- Care providers were challenged on our standards for dignity.
- We have consistently raised the issue of charges in day care centres and problems seniors have faced over care bills.
- We made representations over plans to close care homes in the city.

International Day of Older People

We have celebrated International Day of Older People for the last three years. We produced the Few Amongst Many exhibition highlighting the contribution seniors make in Southampton, and had an information stall in the Mall. This year we were represented on board the Full of Life bus, which toured Southampton providing on the spot information to passers-by.

Dementia

We proposed and jointly organised the Memory Matters conference on improving life for people with dementia in Southampton to make sure the important issues were discussed.

- We have been asked by NHS Southampton to set up a group to work with it to put our ideas into practice, and monitor its performance.
- We will continue to raise awareness about this important issue.

Recession

We have pressed the city council on support for seniors during the recession.

- The city council published top tips for older people during the credit crunch.
- There has been better promotion of benefits and entitlements including leaflets on pension credit and financial help.

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Working with Southampton City Council

Southampton Senior Citizens Charter commits the city council to working together with Southampton's seniors to make this a city that is good to grow older in.

- Under the charter, we give annual feedback on the city council's performance against the commitments in the charter.
- We were also invited to give our views on candidates for the recently appointed new Executive Director of Health and Adult Social Care.

Falls

We have taken part in a seminar with all the agencies involved in preventing falls in the city, and submitted our views on how we expect to be treated if we have a fall to have the best chance of keeping our independence. We are also working with the city council to address the issue of falls on buses. Footcare can play a big part in reducing falls, and we have produced a wish list of what we want to see from a footcare service in Southampton.

Transport

We toured Southampton to take pictures of some of the worst pavements, which we then presented to the city council's highways team. We also take part in a transport task group exploring alternatives for people who can't use public transport.

Information

We are working with the city council to make information more accessible and widely available to seniors.

- The city council is planning a twice yearly seniors' magazine.

Elder abuse

In 2007 we held a conference highlighting the issue of elder abuse, and produced a statement on elder abuse.

- This influenced the setting up of the Citizens Forum to influence the city council's safeguarding work.

Health

We take part in the hospital Patient and Public Involvement Forum, and contributed to the health service vision document for 'A Bright Future in Later Years.'

Public toilets

We have pressed the city council on the provision of toilets, and discussed with them a scheme to make more toilets available to senior citizens.

Housing

We were involved in the city council's Housing Strategy for Older People, and put forward our views on what's important for housing in our later years. We are also part of the monitoring board to check on the progress of the strategy.

Age-friendly neighbourhoods

We have given our views on how we can make the city more 'age-friendly'.

- We will be working with the city council on this project over the next year.

Partnership working

We take part in the Later Years Partnership and secured a place on the Health and Wellbeing Partnership to make sure our voice is heard and we are involved in the highest level of discussions.

Our Plan for 2010

Southampton – an age-friendly city

We will explore what needs to be improved in Southampton to offer seniors a fuller life. This could be improved access to toilets, transport options for those who can't use public transport, and design that helps people to use shops, cinemas, parks and gardens.

Community safety

We will work with local services including the police, fire brigade and city council representatives to help them to understand what is important to senior citizens.

Health and social care

We will work in partnership with social services and health and care providers to make sure services are based on dignity and choice.

Groups we are involved with:

Bus Users' Group
Citizens Forum
Dementia reference group
Health and Wellbeing Partnership
Housing Strategy for Older People group
Later Years Get Active Grants Fund
Later Years Partnership
Life to the Full
Patient Users Group
Southampton Inter-Generational Network
The Mayor's Challenge to those over 60
Your Voice Advocacy

We want more people to get involved with the Seniors Council and help us to increase the influence of senior citizens. If you would like to help, or just want to find out a bit more, get in touch:

The Southampton Seniors Council is based at The 3rd Age Centre.

You can **call** us on 023 8023 8250

You can **write** to us at: Southampton Seniors Council
 The 3rd Age Centre
 11 Cranbury Terrace
 Southampton
 SO14 0LH

You can get **more information** at

www.southamptonlateryears.org/welcome/ssc

The Seniors Council is supported by

