

# Loos for Southwark

What older Southwark residents would like to see to improve public toilet provision in the borough

## Loos for Southwark

### Background

Loos for Southwark are a campaign group of Southwark residents brought together and supported by Age UK London as part of the London Loos campaign. 'Age UK London campaign' to make London more age-friendly, they work with, but are separate from 'Age UK Lewisham and Southwark').

**The residents are calling for improvements to the provision of public toilets in Southwark to reduce social isolation and make the borough more inclusive for residents and visitors.** The group believe improving public toilet provision benefits all residents. Some groups of people, such as those with specific health conditions, some older and disabled people, families with young children et.al., benefit even more than others.

The group consists of nine residents, all over the age of 60, from across the borough.

### Improving public toilet provision in Southwark

The following are a list of improvements that members of the group would like to see.

- An assessment of the current state of public toilet provision in the borough. What are the geographical gaps (Southwark's 'loo deserts')? Is there provision in the locations where it is most needed (town centre provision and other places of high footfall)?
- More investment to improve the maintenance and cleanliness of public toilets.
- Exploration into whether public toilets that have been closed, could be reopened.
- Less restrictive opening hours. Where public toilets exist, the limited opening hours are restrictive. There is particular concern about availability in the evenings.
- Meaningful listening to residents about the situation. This should include proactive outreach to community organisations, especially groups representing older and disabled residents. Engagement must not be 'online only'.
- Clarification about the current status of the Community Toilet Scheme in Southwark.
- Engage local businesses to open their toilets as part of an improved Community Toilet Scheme.
- Community Toilet Schemes should receive regular support and monitoring.
- Members should have a sticker they can display in windows.
- Improve street signage to toilets.
- Use new and existing communication channels to increase awareness among residents about the location of public toilets in Southwark.
- There should be hard-copy materials available in a range of accessible formats.
- All town centres in the borough to have good provision of public toilets.
- Increase the number of toilets for disabled users, ensuring that these adhere to 'M' design standards.
- Public toilet provision should be included and understood as a public health responsibility.
- Stave Hill Ecological Park should have public toilets.

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### **Priorities for action**

*The Loos for Southwark campaign group call on the London Borough of Southwark to:*

- **Develop, publish, implement, and monitor a Public Toilet Strategy. This should be based on a needs assessment and meaningful engagement with residents. The Strategy could include or be separate from an action plan that is monitored and scrutinised.**
  - **Improve public information about provision (signs, maps, awareness raising, hard copy materials, et.al.)**
  - **Improve provision in parks so that all reasonable sized parks had toilets.**
  - **Identify a Councillor as a Toilet Champion for Southwark,**
  - **Improve provision of accessible public toilets.**
  - **Meaningful resident participation in the current review of public toilet provision.**
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We recommend this document is considered alongside the findings of the report, '[Public toilets in London: The views of older Londoners](#)', Age UK London, 2022

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