

APPENDIX 1



To All Members of the Council

Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle
Cabinet Member for Health and
Adult Social Care
Labour Member
for Camberwell Green Ward

Date: 12 March 2012

Ref: DDF

Dear Colleague,

Council Assembly 28 March 2012 – Themed Debate on Older People

Britain's population is getting older. In the last sixty years there has been an 80% increase in the number of people in the UK aged over 65 and in the next 25 years a 4 million increase in the number of people of pension age is projected. As a result, the future of pension contributions, the pension age, care and the NHS are all currently being discussed by politicians and wider society to make them sustainable for the long term.

While the profile of Southwark's population is not changing exactly in line with the national trend – the proportion of people aged over 65 in Southwark has actually been dropping, whilst the number of those over 80 has increased – it is clear that national changes will affect older people locally too.

There can be no doubt that these changes will be hugely important for Southwark's existing population of older people and for the wider community at large. But debates about older people can all too quickly focus on how we will support older people in the future, without even considering the considerable contribution that older people are making to our community now. Far too often debates focus on specialist services for older people without recognising that older people are users of the full spectrum of council services, as tenants, homeowners, library goers, gym and leisure centre users, carers, grandparents, mentors, employers and employees and everything else in-between.

Our work as a council should focus on giving everyone the opportunity to take full advantage of their later life and to live independent, healthy, active and fruitful lives as a full part of their community. In line with this, I hope that during the themed debate on older people at the council assembly meeting on 28 March, members will bring forward constructive comments and suggestions on the following areas:

- How the council can recognise the role that people in later life often play in their communities, through volunteering, caring and by playing an active role in neighbourhood life
- How people in Southwark can take advantage of the wide variety of sporting, educational and social activities available as they get older
- How the council can promote the greater role that more active grandparents play in their families' lives

- How the council can work with the NHS and other partners to give older people more choice in the services they receive, enabling them to live healthy lives and stay in their own homes and communities for longer.

Comments from the debate will be considered as part of the further development of how the council works with older people in the borough. I would like to encourage all councillors to speak in the debate and to bring your local knowledge and those of your constituents.

Yours faithfully,

COUNCILLOR DORA DIXON-FYLE
CABINET MEMBER for HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE