



Ms. Lisa Warth,
Department of Ageing and Life Course,
World Health Organization

April 2015

Dear Ms Warth,

We are really excited on behalf of Southwark Council to submit with this letter an application to join the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Our age-friendly activities to date

In July 2014, Southwark Council made a commitment to become an age-friendly borough as part of our draft Council Plan 2014-18. As part of this commitment the council also implemented a new Southwark ethical care charter for its main home care contracts in August 2014 and through the re-commissioning of all home care services later this year, we will fully deliver the charter by the end of 2015. In November 2014, we also agreed to work towards becoming a dementia friendly borough and became a member of the newly formed Southwark Dementia Action Alliance. In February 2015 Council Assembly endorsed our Council plan and with it our promise to become an age friendly borough.

Some of the services we have in place or are planning for older people include:

- Free "Silver" swim and gym sessions for over 60's from May 2015.
- Working with National Health Service (NHS) partners through both the Better Care Fund and the local Southwark and Lambeth Integrated Care Programme to deliver services that will benefit older people who are physically or mentally frail.
- Maintaining a continued commitment to fund our voluntary sector partners to provide advice, befriending and wellbeing planning for our older residents
- Delivering the Southwark home library service to over 300 residents each month, many of whom are housebound due to old age.

Our key strategies also reflect the importance we place on this guide:

- We agreed our first age-friendly housing strategy in January 2015.
- Through our economic wellbeing strategy we have commissioned targeted employment support to those over 50 who face barriers to the labour market.
- Our health and wellbeing strategy helps people with existing long term health conditions to remain healthier and live longer lives by improving detection and management of health conditions including self-management and support.

How we are engaging with older people

We have a number of mechanisms in place for engaging with our residents, both formally and informally. One of the main forums for engaging with older people and the agencies providing services for older people in Southwark is the Older People's Partnership Board.

We will launch our approach to becoming an age-friendly borough by holding a 'community conversation'. This will involve Southwark's residents talking to us about how we make the borough a place where ageing is positively celebrated and embraced. While we will be talking to all residents, there will be a particular focus on older residents. This will commence this Spring, and older people will be recruited to assist with this process. The responses to the community conversation, together with an assessment of how age-friendly our services are, will help with the development of an action plan for this agenda. We will also identify a group of older residents that we can continue to work with on our action plans on a longer term basis.

How we are involving partners

We understand that the commitment to become an age-friendly and dementia-friendly borough affects not just residents, but also our statutory and non-statutory partners, other service providers, local businesses, voluntary and community sector, faith groups and beyond. The community conversation aims to capture these views. A stakeholder group consisting of the Consortium of Older Peoples' Services in Southwark (COPSINS), Healthwatch, a representative from Southwark Pensioners' Forum and council officers has been meeting to help develop the proposals for the community conversation. We will continue to work with this group, older people and other key partners and stakeholders, including the Centre for Policy on Ageing. We will also continue to work with partners in the NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Older people will of course be crucial partners.

How we will contribute to the Global Network

We are aware that there is currently only one other London borough that has achieved age-friendly city status. We hope that by attaining the status and joining the global network, we will be able to help promote the benefits of age-friendly communities in London. We believe that our work on becoming a dementia friendly borough and the development of our ethical care charter has provided us with a wealth of information that will be of benefit to existing members of the network.

Our motivations for becoming a member of the Global Network

Our review of the benefits of becoming an age-friendly borough provided many motivations for this application.

Our older residents are at the centre of our communities. Some have lived in Southwark since the Second World War. Others moved here from the Caribbean in the 1950's, or came here as refugees from Vietnam in the 1970's. We have one of the largest African communities in the country, and we also have new and emerging populations, such as Spanish-speaking Latin American communities. Southwark is home to older people who originated from every continent and culture, as well as those born and bred in the borough.

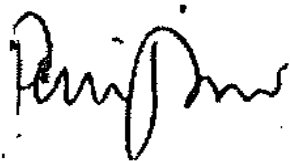
Our application also acknowledges the contributions that our older citizens make-through caring, volunteering, working, as well as through their knowledge and experience. We also recognise the benefits that these activities bring in improving health and mental wellbeing, which in turn will help to reduce dependency and in the longer-term reduce cost pressures on hard pressed public services.

Finally and most importantly, we also recognise the contribution that older people make to the community through:

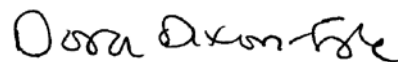
- **Employment** (older people remaining/returning to work helps to support the local economy through retaining expertise, and through benefiting from enhanced spending power. Remaining active has positive benefits for individuals' health and wellbeing).
- **Volunteering** (older people giving their time and expertise benefits the voluntary and community sector (VCS) which in turn benefits the borough's residents who receive the services the VCS provides. Remaining active has positive benefits for individuals' health and wellbeing).
- **Caring** (older people caring for sick and disabled relatives reduces the impact on hard-pressed social care and health services).
- **Child care** (older people providing child care for grandchildren etc. enables their parents to return to work, benefiting the local economy).

As a result of the above, the council has committed to becoming an 'age-friendly borough', and we look forward to your support in achieving our ambition.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Peter John
Leader of the Council



Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle
Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Arts
and Culture