

SOUTHAMPTON SENIORS COUNCIL STATEMENT ON AGEISM

Adopted February 2007

Southampton's Senior Council opposes ageism in all its forms. Ageism undermines senior citizens and the Seniors Council will work hard to eradicate ageism and its consequences for our society.

Ageism is direct and indirect discrimination or prejudice against people on the grounds of their age. This includes both negative attitudes towards seniors and making negative judgements about their abilities and their contribution to society. Ageism stereotypes individuals and labels them a burden to society, and it creates barriers. We see ageism throughout society, and particularly in employment, access to learning, care and medical services, and in the media.

Ageism undermines and excludes senior citizens. As we get older ageism labels us as incapable, worthless, vulnerable and dependent, in spite of our wisdom, our life experience and our skills. Ageist attitudes and systems limit our opportunities and our chances of fulfillment. Ageism erodes our quality of life.

Everyone should be valued for their contribution to their community and for the richness and diversity they bring to the city. As we get older our past contribution deserves respect and our future contribution demands opportunity. As our society ages, we must learn from those cultures that consider old age a positive and fulfilling chapter in life, and respect their elders' dignity.

Under the United Nations Principles, 'older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status'. Being treated fairly as we age is a fundamental and human right.

None of us expect to be excluded, marginalised, or discriminated against as we get older. That is why we must challenge ageism now, and we encourage everybody to consider their attitudes and actions. Southampton Seniors Council will work alongside, and support individuals, groups and organizations' that share our commitment to tackle ageism.

Tackling ageism will directly benefit the lives of seniors now. But the real benefit is for society as a whole. Our involvement and contribution can make a better city now and for generations to come.

The Seniors Council is the voice of senior citizens in Southampton. It is committed to improving quality of life and encouraging a healthy and dignified old age for seniors from all our communities.