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Ombudsman speaks to senior citizens

The office of the ombudsman for the City of Johannesburg, in partnership with the city's Social Development Department, visited the Annie Burger Old Age Home situated in the south of Johannesburg on August 19.

They were there to raise awareness of their services, educate the elderly on their right to recourse and address some of the challenges relating to the poor quality of care received from municipal-owned old age homes.

Despite the cold weather, the day's activities kicked off with a warm welcome from Ward 54 Clr Stuart Marais and closed off with a robust Q&A session with the ombudsman, Advocate Siduduzo Gumede.

There was also a candid engagement that saw many

residents take to the stand to voice their concerns about the meagre living conditions namely within the Annie Burger Old Age Home, Xavier Street Old Age Home and Carrick Place Old Age Home, respectively.

"Our visit to the Annie Burger Old Age Home highlights society's disposition towards the protection of the inherent dignity of older persons in general," commented Gumede.

"The nature of complaints that came to the fore is indicative of the unjust reality faced by many elderly residents when it comes to access to basic service delivery and protection of their constitutional rights.

"This has presented our office with an opportunity to

strengthen its collaboration with the City of Johannesburg Social Development Department in conjunction with other key stakeholders and intensify efforts to ensure the rights of all elderly residents are protected within the confines of both the Constitution and ombudsman by-laws," concluded Gumede.

Through this senior citizen engagement, the office received 40 complaints ranging from security concerns and unmaintained facilities to allegations of corrupt selling off units to young couples/families and drug trafficking.

The collective complaints will be considered through an own-instance investigation conducted by the Complaints and Investigations Unit and a systemic report with recommendations will be drafted for the attention of the relevant city departments and entities.

The office of the ombudsman is reachable through the following channels: Helpdesk - 010 288 2800, WhatsApp - 081 365 0225, complaints@joburgombudsman.org.za or Facebook: Joburg Ombudsman. The office is located at the Sappi building, 48 Ameshoff Street.



Senior citizens at Annie Burger Old Age Home during the ombudsman's visit.