
POSTER ABSTRACT

Local Service Centres as Facilitator and Driving Force For Caring Neighbourhoods In The City Of Antwerp: An Important Key To Realise Integrated Care

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Summary: Local service centres (LSC) play an essential role in realising a caring neighbourhood, which relies on three pillars (1) neighbourhood participation and inclusion, (2) linking informal and formal care, (3) intersectoral cooperation between welfare and care partners and partners from other domains in a network aimed at prevention, health promotion and the provision of integrated care and support with a focus on quality of life.

A caring neighbourhood for everyone and all ages: Living at home in the familiar neighbourhood for as long as possible is an ambition for most people, including those with care and support needs. Preferably in a safe, social and inviting neighbourhood where all basic facilities are available (GP, home care, bakery, butcher, pharmacy, bank, etc.). Today, this is no longer obvious in both rural and urban settings.

Today, when care and support are needed, we face an ever-increasing shortage of professional care staff. Therefore, besides professional care, informal care and support in the broad sense has become indispensable.

LSC as a facilitator and driving force for caring neighbourhoods: To keep people independent and self-reliant for as long as possible, a kind of platform or hub is ideally needed in every neighbourhood or district, on the one hand to keep people active and alert (socially, physically and psychologically) through activities in various areas and, on the other, to initiate, support and stimulate informal care and support; and to ensure that all initiatives in this area can be secured and perpetuated.

The LSC can play a central role in this, among other things as a meeting centre where social encounters and social participation are facilitated and stimulated; as a platform for consultation between welfare and care actors, but also as an advice and information centre where, among other things, health skills are strengthened and, where necessary, referral to the appropriate care and welfare actor takes place.

The LSC is therefore an important lever in developing a caring neighbourhood.

LSC in the city of Antwerp as an example

Almost every neighbourhood in the city of Antwerp has a local service centre. Based on the results of a quantitative and qualitative neighbourhood analysis, a multi-year planning is drawn up in cooperation with all relevant actors in the neighbourhood. This also takes into account local social policy priorities.

The LSC acts as a platform where initiators can meet and cooperate. This may concern initiatives on informal care support; organising and coordinating volunteer work; supporting civic initiatives; initiating and stimulating a caring attitude among citizens. But also around activities that can prevent loneliness e.g. taking lunch or participating in recreational, informational or exercise activities.

Key learning points and concerns:

- Diversity in a city and the importance of a culture-sensitive operation
- Quantitative and qualitative staffing of LSC
- A caring attitude between citizens as a basic requirement
- Informal and formal actors: a symbiotic relationship