



Aarhus for us all

- a policy for all citizens of Aarhus

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Introduction

Introduction

In Aarhus we want citizens with disabilities to feel that they are valued fellow citizens - just as all other citizens. We want them to have equal opportunities when it comes to making use of the city.

That is why the headline of the Disability Policy of the City of Aarhus 2013-2017 reads "Aarhus for us all".

The Disability Policy indicates objectives and directions as to how the disability perspective is considered in all projects and services of the City of Aarhus from the very beginning.

The primary target group of the Disability Policy is citizens with disabilities, however, the policy also applies to citizens with mental vulnerability, cf. the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2007. The policy also applies to relatives, City employees, and the rest of society. We have a joint responsibility to create a city in which citizens with disabilities may have a good life and also be able to leave their mark on the city.

The Disability Policy includes a vision, objective, four principles for the services that the City of Aarhus offers to citizens with all types of disabilities, four focus areas, and a plan for organizing the attainment of objectives.

In this policy we focus on developing and

rethinking our efforts. One way of accomplishing this is through collaboration across organizational lines and by including the whole city in the vision - Aarhus for us all.

We encourage rethinking and new thinking in order to achieve the best possible conditions of life and solutions within the given framework. The guidelines provided in the policy is a framework that supports the development of a culture which ensures that we interact with each other regardless of our abilities or lack thereof. A policy does not provide sanctioning power but rather indicates a direction.

The policy is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the three values of the City of Aarhus, as well as input and participation of interest groups, industry, cultural institutions, educational institutions, City employees, and other contributors. (please see the website of the Disability Council).

Experiences from London, including "Transport for London", "City of London", "Inclusion London", and also a number of relevant experts has been obtained. The purpose has been to benefit from the London experiences gathered throughout all projects leading up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 which had to consider accessibility.

Vision



The vision of the Disability Policy of the City of Aarhus is:

Aarhus is a city in which citizens with disabilities actively participate and take part in the community and contribute according to their abilities. We consider all citizens to be a resource for our city. We want to ensure that all citizens are given the option to live an independent life and that all have equal opportunities to be an active and full member of society.

The general vision for the City of Aarhus is "Aarhus - a good city for us all", where:

- Everyone must have the opportunity to take responsibility for his or her own life and to utilize his or her abilities
- We have a joint responsibility to help those who need it
- We welcome variety and diversity

The vision reflects the fact that the City of Aarhus has a deliberate view on how the interaction with citizens should take place - specifically expressed in the three values of the City: Reliability, Respect, and Commitment

Focus is on citizen participation and belonging to a community. To have social responsibilities that provide rights and obligations in the development of the community. We must provide citizens with disabilities the opportunity to feel that they are equal members of society - a society that respects and accepts the limitations a disability causes. Citizens with disabilities must be provided with the help and support they need in order to participate in the community on their own terms.

We must work across organizational lines in order for us to create a city where everyone is welcome. The public sector, the private sector, the volunteers, and the rest of society must join forces in order to create a city that is for us all. The knowledge and commitment of everyone must be unified in a continuous effort to rethink and reinvent the framework for "the good life".

The general objective of the Disability Policy of the City of Aarhus

The general objective is that the citizens are provided with the help that best serves their overall situation in life. At the same time the objective is for the urban environment to be adapted in such a way that it provides accessibility for all citizens. This help is provided on basis of a solid and well-considered professionalism from City employees as well as the City.

We also hope that the implementation of the Disability Policy will help strengthen the collaboration - and with that the cohesion - across both the City, the volunteer organizations, industry, cultural institutions, and interest groups.

Our wish is for the primary target group, i.e. citizens with disabilities and their network, to:

- experience cohesion in all efforts, through a coordinated effort across organizational lines in the City
- feel that they are active participants at all levels, through dialogue and follow-up procedures with relevant departments in the City

- receive support in developing usable solutions and strategies that help citizens in developing a good life through a respectful approach to the resources that the citizen and his or her network represents.
- experience being met with reliability, respect, and commitment through an accommodating and inquisitive attitude towards the specific situation of the individual.

The English ship "Tenacious" is constructed in such a manner that it is accessible to the disabled. The ship has room for 16 people with disabilities. The ship at Port of Aarhus during Tall Ships Races 2013



The services provided by the City of Aarhus is based on four principles

In working with the citizen the City of Aarhus bases its approach on a wide range of options and methods that enables the individual citizen to make choices that are as independent as at all possible. In regards to both children, young people, and adults with disabilities the effort is based on a comprehensive and knowledge-based approach which covers a wide range of possibilities in order to ensure that the citizen receives the best possible service.

The citizen has a variety of needs and possibilities for self-realisation and independence. Our range of services offered is at all times dynamic and targeted the current citizens of Aarhus.

Our focus is bilateral in that we work towards both strengthening the individual citizen at a personal level but also at strengthening the surroundings so that they become more accessible and inclusive. This requires the employees to be aware of the specific overall surroundings in which their particular effort takes place.

A disability rarely just disappears by itself. However, the consequences may be reduced through the use of aids, including digital aids. This is why it is important to recognize the challenges that a disability causes. City of Aarhus employees therefore approach a citizen with respect for their needs and resources.

We focus on ensuring that the citizen becomes as independent as possible and to the extent that it makes sense. This means that we focus on:

- The resources of the citizen rather than the limitations.
- The citizen's actual options for making an independent, meaningful and contributing life for him or herself.

- Helping the citizen see and utilize the resources in his or her immediate environment with the objective of improving his or her overall situation in life.
- Ensuring that the City of Aarhus provides a wide range of options and methods enabling individuals to become as independent as possible.
- The citizen experiencing the help of the City as a framework for continued development leading to the citizen being able to make more choices on his or her own behalf.

The leading principles in the Disability Policy of the City of Aarhus for adults with disabilities is 1) Em-powerment, 2) Recovery, 3) Rehabilitation, and 4) Habilitation.

1) Empowerment


Empowerment means that our collaboration with citizens strengthens the resources of the individual. We base our collaboration with the individual on their current situation, and work towards strengthening the individual's ability to better take control of their own life in matters such as education, employment, rec-reation, health, and social life.

2) Recovery

A recovery process is a unique process of the individual citizen towards a life that is both satisfactory and contributory even with the limitations that the disability causes. The City of Aarhus professionals are charged with the task of supporting this process in the best way possible.

3) Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation means focusing on a citizen as "a whole"- physically, mentally, and socially. In our collaboration with the citizen the employee of the City focuses on helping the citizen make a



meaningful and independent life for him or herself. Our help is based on a coordinated, coherent, and knowledge-based effort which must improve the individual citizen's overall situation in life.

4) Habilitation

Habilitation means "to develop new skills" and the purpose is to support the development of a citizen with congenital or early acquired impairment. Habilitation is a general, coherent, and overall effort following the citizen from very early childhood throughout adolescence and into adulthood with a constant focus on learning.

The overall objective of habilitation is to continuously strengthen and develop the potential and the skills that a citizen with disabilities have in order to attain the highest possible degree of independence and quality of life for the individual citizen. This includes implementing efforts that further the best possible physical function, learning capacity, independence, and confidence as well as support the development of the individual citizen's active participation in a social life.

Habilitation is a long-term effort with no time limit in which long-term learning pathways are planned and in which foreseeable transitions between systems are handled.

Focus 1: Participation in society - accessibility

Introduction

In the City of Aarhus we wish to - if at all possible - dissolve the barriers that may hinder all citizens being able to actively take part in society and life in our city. That's why we focus on urban environment and surroundings and how these factors may be optimized in order to provide the best accessibility possible in our city for the most citizens possible.

Objective

It is the objective of the City of Aarhus to ensure both physical and mental accessibility for all citizens. Accessibility must be considered in all activities and areas. This includes IT solutions, signposting, and communication in general. One example is that in any building project we focus on both mental and physical accessibility from the very beginning.

The city must be accessible for citizens with one or more disabilities - whether they be physical, mental or sensorial. Public transportation and transportation for citizens with disabilities must be complementary. We emphasize that the city must offer the best possible conditions for citizens to be able to move around freely.

This is how we work

In accordance with article 9 regarding accessibility as well as article 19 regarding the right to live an independent life of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we work to ensure that citizens with disabilities "have equal

access to physical surroundings and transportation, to information and communication (including information and communication technology and systems) as well as other conveniences and services open to the public in both urban and rural districts".

This means that:

- City employees communicate with the contributors in the local community regarding considerations on accessibility when establishing new facilities, buildings, and public areas. In order to support this effort the Department of Social Affairs and Employment held a conference in October 2013 titled "My entrance to my own life" focusing on the living conditions of the future as well as public spaces in Aarhus.
- We insist on maintaining a line of communication with cultural players in regards to considerations on both physical and mental accessibility from day one in order to ensure the highest possible degree of accessibility at all cultural events for all citizens.
- We make use of welfare technological solutions, including digital services, which support independence in regards to planning one's daily life and which may also provide virtual communities for citizens with disabilities such as autism and ADHD - citizens who may at times find it challenging to take part in physical communities for extended periods at a time.





- This means we aim to ensure that citizens be able to participate in public events, cultural events, etc. without actually being physically present. Digital aids support the objective that public events, cultural events, websites, and public areas be accessible for all citizens*.
- The City has a special obligation towards ensuring that those citizens that struggle the most and those citizens with disabilities that are most at-risk are included in the local communities.

Focus 2: Health and well-being

Introduction

The Disability Policy is developed in connection with the City of Aarhus Health Policy and based hereupon all citizens must have the option to live good, healthy, and long lives. Any citizen, regardless of their disabilities, must be afforded equal opportunities.

Objective

Citizens with disabilities must be afforded the opportunity to live a life with a high degree of quality of life and good health.

Citizens with disabilities must be afforded the opportunity to disengage from treatment, care and assistance to the extent that this is possible.

The citizens must share in the responsibility of their own health and well-being to the extent that this is possible. In cases where a professional assessment deems it necessary the City must provide a citizen the support needed to achieve good health and well-being.

This is how we work

In order to support article 25 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "Health", we will:

- Provide help for citizens to ensure they have the option of living healthy lives because we believe that equal opportunities regarding health also paves the way for equal opportunities to live an active life.
- Help the individual citizen to achieve an active life with education, employment, culture, sports, and an active social life. Well-being and health are closely linked and are often two sides of the same coin.
- Strive to enable the individual citizen the ability to act as independently as possible in order to ensure the highest possible sense of well-being.

This is done by making sure we always offer a wide range of options and methods and continuously strive to enable the individual citizen to be as resourceful and independent as possible. This is always done in dialogue with the individual citizen and his or her relatives because that way we can meet the individual needs within the given framework.

- To consider the health perspective in every choice we make. Citizens are all individuals - therefore we target our work towards all social groups, including citizens with disabilities.
- Ensure diversity in our services so that all citizens have equal opportunities to live a good and healthy life.



Focus 3: Education and employment

Introduction

Citizens with disabilities must - to the extent possible - be included in daytime services, club services, the public school system, educational environments and in all communities. One way to do this is through continued focus on inclusive environments.

Objective

That a citizen can achieve an education and employment despite his or her disabilities. That a minimum of 95% of a year group should achieve an education and this includes children and young people with disabilities.

To establish dialogue and collaboration with both the public and private sector to ensure that citizens with disabilities have access to the labour market.

To support the development of equal opportunity communities in which all citizens are welcome.

This is how we work

In accordance with article 24 and 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities we work to ensure that citizens with disabilities have genuine access to both education and employment.

This means that:

- We make sure the needed dialogue with industry and educational institutions is in existence.
- We support and help further develop communities.

- We lead the way when it comes to including citizens with disabilities on the labour market. Through meet-ings and by providing information we bridge the gap between knowledge and practical experiences.
- We invite relevant collaborators, such as employment services and representatives from industry, to work with us to ensure that our labour market is accessible for citizens with disabilities.
- We contribute to ensure that citizens with disabilities are viewed as a resource in both the educational system as well as the labour market.
- We ensure that our employees have the needed qualifications to meet the various needs of the citizens.
- We make sure to support the individual citizen in his or her transition from childhood to adulthood.

We prepare an annual employment plan for Jobcenter Aarhus (i.e. the local employment office). Among other things, the plan describes how citizens with physical and mental disabilities can be further integrated in the labour market and educational system.

The City of Aarhus maintains focus on the interaction between businesses and citizens with disabilities. We strive to make it easier for businesses to hire and include citizens with disabilities.



Focus 4: Culture and recreation

Introduction

The options in Aarhus are plentiful when it comes to cultural services and facilities as well as leisure activities. We believe that an active cultural and leisure life is a source of joy and well-being for all. Aarhus must be a diverse and inclusive city - also when it comes to cultural services and facilities as well as leisure activities.

Objective

All citizens must have access to participate and contribute to communities and to cultural services and facilities.

This is how we work

In order to comply with article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding access to participation in cultural services and facilities, recreational services, leisure time activities, and sports we strive to create the framework in the following way:

- We focus on accessibility at sports facilities, libraries, and cultural institutions - this covers both building planning and information for citizens on things such as which buildings are ADA accessible.

We support activities and services that have a special focus on citizens with disabilities.

- The City of Aarhus will contribute to the development of new initiatives when possible and relevant and we are open for new ideas as to how to handle known challenges - therefore we ensure strong dialogue across various authoritative bodies and volunteers.
- We support the build-up of social coherence in local communities that include citizens with disabilities.



Organization

Introduction

The City of Aarhus works to ensure that the realization of the objectives in the Disability Policy is a joint effort in which all departments of the City take part and also in collaboration with industry, shopping centres, the public transportation sector, educational institutions, interest groups on tourism and industry, interest groups on athletics and sports, athletic associations for citizens with disabilities, disability associations, employees of the City of Aarhus, and a number of other contributors.

We strive to ensure that the implementation of the Disability Policy contributes to further cohesion and active citizenship in Aarhus.

For this to be possible we encourage dialogue and involvement. The intent is to ensure that the policy becomes an active tool in specific collaboration on efforts that further the objectives described under the sections of the four focus areas.

Objective

Our objective is to ensure collaboration across sectors in order to create a city that is functional for citizens with disabilities. We want our city to be one in which the four focus areas are guidelines and in which the specific efforts are coherent.

This is how we work

The City of Aarhus strives for a non-bureaucratic and involving organization that creates collaboration and synergy in the effort to reach the objectives in the four focus areas.

The Disability Council Office in the Mayor's Department is responsible for arranging annual meetings in the form of large workshops. Representatives from industry, shopping centres, public transportation, educational institutions, the city association, Visit Aarhus, disability

organizations, City employees and a number of other contributors are invited to participate.

At these annual workshops the City of Aarhus provides a framework in which new ideas can emerge and existing practice can be reconsidered. In this manner we attempt to create a network across organizations etc. that can gain use of each others' knowledge, experience, and resources.

The Disability Council Office is in charge of the organization and information regarding the annual workshops but we invite any interested party to participate in the planning and holding of the event. The first workshop is held in the first quarter of 2014 and all four focus areas are on the agenda.

At the workshop we will collect ideas as to which elements should be part of an effort catalogue and consequent action plans for the individual areas. Also, how to best organize a collaboration on these elements that reach across organizational lines. This ensures that the action plan will contribute to Aarhus becoming a city in which citizens with disabilities participate actively and contributes to the best of their abilities.

The workshop is repeated every year in June which will ensure that the Disability Policy is continuously considered in relation to other policies, perhaps a future policy on active citizenship.

To ensure the internal anchorage within the City of Aarhus' own organization the plan is for the Disability Policy to be discussed and adjusted annually in both the City's strategic management forum and the City Council.

Would you like more information?

To find more information on the services provided by the City of Aarhus for citizens with disabilities please see www.aarhus.dk

The Disability Council of the City of Aarhus may be contacted through:

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