



PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

Västra Götaland

THE PRESENT PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY was developed by Region Västra Götaland and the municipalities, the non-profit sector and other public health actors in unison. Formulating the contents of the policy has been done as a process of dialogue meetings in a number of places in the region.

The Public Health Policy was approved on March 31st 2009 by the Regional Council of the Region Västra Götaland.

CONTENTS

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY	4
PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD HEALTH	6
PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES	7
LIVING CONDITIONS BASED ON EQUITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	8
SAFE AND SATISFACTORY GROWING-UP CONDITIONS	9
LIFELONG LEARNING	10
INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN WORKING LIFE.	11
AGEING WITH QUALITY OF LIFE	12
GOOD LIVING HABITS.	13
FINAL WORDS	14
CORE DOCUMENTS	15
VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE POLICY	16

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY

“The policy is a unanimous platform for Västra Götaland. Cooperation and joint efforts are the common denominators.”

PUBLIC HEALTH WORK MEANS LONG-TERM EFFORTS to strengthen and develop living conditions that promote health and prevent disease. The process is based on knowledge of the population's health and of the relationships between the design of society and public health. The public health perspective must be part of all phases of social planning.

Public health politics should create a basis and opportunities for positive health development in the population, levelling out health differences through political decisions.

DIRECTION, VALUES AND APPROACH

This policy has a direction to promote health and is part of the process to realise the *Vision Västra Götaland – a Good Life*. The policy states direction, values and approach and should serve as a guide to promotive and preventive public health work in Västra Götaland. With the policy as a basis public health actors could develop their own aims

and action plans – for their own organisation and in cooperation with others.

The policy derives its values from the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the overarching aim of Sweden’s national public health policy *to create social conditions that will ensure good health, on equal terms, for the entire population* – regardless of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnic identity, religion or other religious beliefs, functional disorders, sexual orientation or age.

The Public Health Policy is the result of a process involving Region Västra Götaland, the municipalities, the non-profit sector and others active in the field of public health. The policy is a unanimous platform for Västra Götaland and its common denominators are cooperation and joint efforts. This and the management of public health work are basic factors to improve the prerequisites for good and equal health through united efforts.

Processes that bridge sectors and activities are required to arrive at

successful public health procedures and continued welfare development. It is of vital importance that every actor acknowledges his responsibility for public health work.

PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES IN VÄSTRA GÖTALAND

The health of the population in Västra Götaland is generally good but not equally distributed. This policy identifies six challenges that are crucial in the efforts to achieve health based on equity and equal opportunities in Västra Götaland.

The challenges are mutually dependent on one another and reinforce each other. They adhere to the overarching national aim for public health and its intermediate goals.

The process to meet the challenges of the policy will be jointly followed by the Public Health Committee together with other public health actors, universities and university colleges in Västra Götaland.

CONDITIONS FOR GOOD HEALTH

A GOOD HEALTH IN THE POPULATION is a basis for sustainable development and growth. The reverse is also true – sustainable development is a prerequisite for good health.

The basis of the *Vision Västra Götaland – A Good Life* is sustainable development, implying that economic, social and environmental dimensions depend on each other and reinforce each other. Public health is present in all the dimensions but is most obvious in the social dimension with its democratic values such as equal rights, accessibility for all and opportunities for all to participate in society's development.

Participation in social life and influence on one's own living conditions are fundamental for good health. All sectors of society in Västra Götaland – the business sector, the public and non-profit sectors – are arenas where the individual can participate.

The basis for good and equal health is a coherent region with good life environments where the various sectors interplay with each

other and reinforce each other. Public health efforts should help to make people feel safe and secure both in society and in their neighbourhood.

All efforts should be permeated by equity, integration and internationalisation. Processes that strengthen equal rights and opportunities create faith in the future and the development powers in a multi-cultural society.

In a changing society culture plays an important role in public health. Cultural expressions highlight existential and social issues and people can express and understand themselves and meet others through culture.

Man's close social relationships and lifestyle have an impact on health. But social, economic and environmental conditions are crucial for giving individuals tools to take on responsibility for their own health.

“*All sectors of society in Västra Götaland – the business sector, the public and non-profit sectors – are arenas where the individual can participate.***”**

PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

VISION VÄSTRA GÖTALAND – A GOOD LIFE has five focus areas and one of them is *Good Health*. The focus area and the overarching national public health objective and its intermediate objective domains are the basis of Västra Götaland’s six public health challenges.

The challenges have been developed in cooperation with public health actors in the region and are based on regional and local circumstances which influence people’s living conditions.

The six challenges are to create opportunities for:

- Living conditions based on equity and equal opportunities
- Safe and satisfactory growing-up conditions
- Lifelong learning
- Increased participation in working life
- Ageing with quality of life
- Good living habits

The challenge is to create opportunities for

LIVING CONDITIONS BASED ON EQUITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



THE PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD HEALTH vary in different parts of Västra Götaland. Health is unequally distributed among socio-economic groups, women and men, girls and boys.

Living conditions based on equity, equal opportunities and social integration are of importance for good health and sustainable development. Opportunities to participate and exert an influence have a positive effect on integration and oppose discrimination that might lead to social exclusion. Access to social networks and arenas creates opportunities for participation, commitment and an ability to act.

To feel safe is a right and basic for the opportunities to take part in social life.

The challenge is to create opportunities for

SAFE AND SATISFACTORY GROWING-UP CONDITIONS

IN A CONSTANTLY CHANGING REALITY children and young people are particularly vulnerable. Growing-up conditions may have consequences much later in life. Prerequisites for good mental and physical health are established in childhood. Special focus should be given to the different growing-up conditions of girls and boys.

The life situation of the family is important to the child's growing-up conditions and future. The family should be provided with a basis to make it the child's most important resource.

Children's and young people's participation and influence make the development of the individual and of the democratic process of society possible. Children and young people should have opportunities to boost their social identities and gain experience and knowledge that are required in their choices of life and life as adults. Examples of arenas are family centres, pre-schools and schools, guidance centres for young people, centres for leisure activities and voluntary activities.



The challenge is to create opportunities for

LIFELONG LEARNING



OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION and other competence development vary between groups and geographic areas.

People's life chances and health are influenced by the opportunities of education and training and competence development. This in turn has an impact on their choice of life style and occupation. Women and men should be given equal opportunities to choose courses of study and job positions that do not depend on traditional gender preferences.

Education opportunities and competence development in the education system, in working life and the non-profit sector should be provided in the various phases of life and adapted to individual abilities and needs.

Lifelong learning contributes to increased self-esteem and awareness for the individual and an increased readiness to act for the individual as well as the society.

The challenge is to create opportunities for

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN WORKING LIFE

CHANCES TO TAKE PART IN WORKING LIFE is fundamental in a welfare society. Jobs contribute to sustainable development and create an added value by offering participation and influence.

Work is a health promoting factor provided that the work environment is adapted to individual qualities and needs. The basis for a healthy working life is a working environment that is mentally and physically healthy. This is of crucial importance to people's health and to public health in general. Women and men should be offered a chance of work participation without being faced with discrimination.

An easily accessible working life adapted to the various qualities and needs of people and of the different phases of life contributes to welfare development and could help to prevent social exclusion.

The non-profit sector is an arena for work participation and an important part of social economy stimulating social development through private initiatives and entrepreneurship.



The challenge is to create opportunities for

AGEING WITH QUALITY OF LIFE



THE NUMBER OF ELDERLY PEOPLE INCREASES. The experience of the elderly, their knowledge and competence are social resources to be valued.

Social, physical, mental and economic living conditions are important for ageing with a maintained quality of life. The difference in conditions for women and men in particular should be considered.

Improved and maintained health increases the chances to live an independent life. To be able to keep up and create social networks and live an active life are important factors promoting health. Ageing with quality of life must be based on the qualities and needs of the individual.

The challenge is to create opportunities for

GOOD LIVING HABITS

MAN'S POWERS AND AMBITIONS towards change should be made the most of. Everyone should be given means to shoulder responsibility for his own health. In the process of promoting health and preventing disease it is of vital importance to incorporate the entire life situation of the individual, not as separate factors one by one.

Health and lifestyle are greatly influenced by society's social, economic, environmental and cultural conditions. In order to promote healthy living habits, venues and activities that are positive for people's health and health development are important.

A non-profit sector that works well and is active is an important part of society's efforts towards equal health and a resource in the process for good living habits.

Healthcare and dental care should support a development towards equity in health. Health promoting healthcare and dental care have key roles in the efforts for good living conditions through their specific skills and means of contact with the public.



FINAL WORDS

JOINT EFFORTS to draw up the contents of this public health policy has meant a unique opportunity for public health actors of Västra Götaland to meet and look ahead. The policy is part of the efforts to create prerequisites to even out health gaps, implementing the vision *A good life* for all inhabitants of Västra Götaland.

With the policy as a basis public health actors can draw up their own goals and action plans based on local and regional prerequisites. It is of vital importance that all actors take on their responsibility to achieve success in public health efforts.

The process to meet the challenges of the policy will be followed. We hope that the implementation and follow-up will be carried out in the same spirit of cooperation, as was the case in the development of the public health policy.

CORE DOCUMENTS

Report of the Brundtland Commission, *Our common future*

The Swedish National environmental quality objectives

Discrimination Act (2008:567)

EU Public Health Programme 2008-2013 *Together for Health*

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

UN Convention on economic, social and cultural rights

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Swedish Government Bill 2007/08:110 *A renewed public health policy*

Vision Västra Götaland – A Good Life

CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY IN THE POLICY

Explanations of concepts and vocabulary should be read and understood from the context in which they appear in the text.

ARENAS Places where people get together and can be reached such as family centres, schools, workplaces, housing areas, libraries and interest groups

PUBLIC HEALTH Expression of the health situation of the population including level and distribution of health. Good health means not only the best possible health but also states that health should be as equally distributed as possible. (*Public health dictionary, Janlert 2000*)

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTORS People working with public health are responsible for and/or take an interest in the development of the field.

PROMOTE Benefit, facilitate, support, favour and be good for. A health-promoting programme should keep up and/or improve the health of the population.

PREVENT Prevent something unwanted to happen. Preventive

public health efforts are aimed at preventing health hazards and/or disease.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Development that meets today's needs without jeopardizing the opportunities of future generations. It has three dimensions: social, economic and environmental dimensions that are mutually dependent on one another. Sustainable development is achieved when all three dimensions are given equal importance.

HEALTH PROMOTING HEALTHCARE A health-promoting and disease preventing perspective should permeate the entire healthcare sector and be an obvious part of all care and treatment.

THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR Organisations alongside the public and business sectors driven by what benefits the members or society. Activities managed by these organisations could be described as non-profit or driven by ideas.

EQUAL – EQUITY *All people* should have equal rights, opportunities and obligations in all important areas of life.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
Women and men should have the same rights, opportunities and obligations in all important areas of life.

TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES Giving people the freedom not to identify themselves as women or men or express affiliation to a certain sex by way of dressing or otherwise. (*Discrimination Act 2008:567*)

LIVING HABITS, LIFE STYLES Eating and physical exercise habits, use of alcohol and tobacco, social participation and other factors.

LIVING CONDITIONS Social, economic and environmental conditions influencing the opportunities of the individual to shoulder responsibility for his health. Examples are family conditions, social networks, housing and surrounding areas, level of education, economy, and labour market connections.

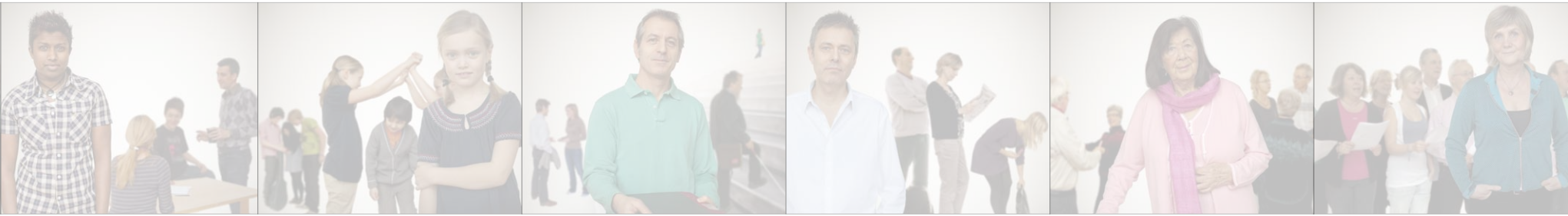
VENUES Places where people meet others, make contacts, exchange ideas and take part in activities.

SOCIAL ECONOMY Social economy contains organised activities with primarily social aims, based on democratic values and without ties to the public sector. Such social and economic activities are mainly run by associations, cooperative organisations, foundations and similar bodies. Activities in social economy are driven mainly by the general good or the good of the members, not by profit. (*Ministry of the interior 1998*)

SOCIAL INTEGRATION Concerns uninhibited access to all of society's opportunities, rights and services.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS Groups described by hierarchical structures, such as level of education, profession and income.







You can order more copies of this brochure from:
Adress och Distributionscentrum, Drottninggatan 1, 542 87 Mariestad, Sweden
Telephone: + 46 501 620 84, E-mail: adress.distributionscentrum@vgregion.se