

DENMARK

Training and rehabilitation

Training as an alternative to conventional compensatory home-care services can help frail elderly people to gain the ability to master their own lives.

There is an increased focus in Denmark on how to motivate older persons to engage themselves in training and rehabilitation and how to upgrade the methods used by the municipalities. Preventive and health-promoting efforts are made at both national and local levels.

For 2012 - 2015, DKK 26.5 million are allocated to qualify the work with rehabilitation in the municipalities. The objective of the project is to secure a basis for the municipals to work by the everyday rehabilitation method that is currently believed to be the best, so that the best results for the elderly can be achieved. This is done by mapping and communicating the best methods for everyday rehabilitation. Furthermore support is given to implementation in the municipalities and to upgrade the employees of the municipalities. Finally it is an objective of the project to create a foundation for documentation of the effects of everyday rehabilitation.

A recent development that seems promising in relation to limiting the demand for elderly care is a revitalisation of the activating dimension of elderly policy in the social sector that has taken place in the Danish municipalities in recent years. According to a report by Gallup carried out on behalf of DaneAge Association in 2012, 94 percent of the Danish municipalities have offered training as an alternative to conventional more compensatory home-care services in line with a focus on rehabilitation.

Several Danish municipalities already report that their increased focus on training and rehabilitation helps limit the resources spent on elderly care as well as it increases the individuals' quality of life.

One of the municipalities that report excellent results from the new focus on training and rehabilitation is Fredericia. The Municipality of Fredericia last year received a "Best practice certificate" from the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). EIPA thus proclaims the city's ambient assisted living programme as one of the best, most innovative and effective initiatives within the public sector in Europe. Fredericia has reformed its social system in order to develop a model for interaction between senior citizens and the municipality concerning rehabilitation and training rather than traditional and expensive compensatory initiatives. The aim is to assist senior citizens in mastering their own lives – daily lives of greater enthusiasm and self-reliance.

Everyday Rehabilitation is a central part of Fredericia Municipality's ambient assisted living programme. Fredericia has developed a model for everyday rehabilitation where new applicants for home-care services who are perceived to have a rehabilitation potential are referred to an intensive programme of everyday rehabilitation carried out by a newly established, specialised unit. In this unit therapists work out rehabilitation plans for the individuals and co-operate closely with social and healthcare assistants and -aides who work as home trainers for the persons in the programme.

An evaluation shows that of the persons who have been part of the everyday rehabilitation programme, only 15 % were afterwards referred to the same level of home-care services that they would have received, had they been referred to traditional home-care from the start. The rest are referred to less help than they would have otherwise received or no help at all after finishing the programme. The everyday rehabilitation model employed in Fredericia has proved to have positive consequences for both citizens, employees in the programme as well as for the local public finances.

Welfare technology

Denmark has a strong focus on welfare technology which has great potentials for helping elderly people stay active and independent. Technology can also improve the quality of life and at the same time increased use of technology can have labour and cost saving potentials.

The new Danish Government will cooperate with the municipalities in looking into the possibility of bringing about an increased use of welfare technology in the area of the elderly. The Government will analyse the possibility of giving elderly people rights of receiving digital solutions as a part of their welfare whenever this may increase the quality and reduce costs (e.g. replacing some home visits with video interviews).

The municipalities are looking for new ways of implementing welfare technology in their care of elderly and disabled persons. The state level has subsidised rigorous testing of the impacts of certain welfare technologies. For instance the use of lifts for moving and lifting elderly persons has proved a large labour saving potential when used correctly. Also using vacuum cleaning robots in nursing homes and robots for eating has shown great potential.

An increased focus and implementation of welfare technologies can create greater self-reliance, independence, participation and dignity for those in need of care. At the same time welfare technologies is a way to enhance the feeling of security among elderly people.

In 2008, the former Danish Government allocated 400 million Euros (DKK 3 billion) to a programme (2009 to 2015) directed towards developing and improving public sector services through the implementation of labour-saving technologies and more efficient working processes. A foundation (the Danish PWT Foundation – Investments in Public Welfare Technology; in Danish: ABT-fonden) was set up to administer the programme. The programme spans across all public sector activities (e.g. not only the social area). Two different types of projects are funded: Local demonstration projects where new labour-saving technologies and organisational models are tested in pilot settings; and national implementation projects where well-proven technologies and practices are implemented at a national scale. The PWT Foundation has funded ten demonstration projects in the area of elderly care. The National Board of Social Services is responsible for five of these demonstration projects. In collaboration with municipalities The National Board of Social Services tests and evaluates chosen technologies' impacts on the elderly care focusing on the technology's labour-saving effect, and also evaluating the impact on service and work environment. The Board's demonstration projects result in business cases showing the economic benefits in introducing the technology.

Strategy on Dementia

In 2010, a new dementia strategy with 14 specific recommendations to strengthen and improve performance for persons with dementia was unveiled. Some of the key points in the strategy are:

- Better efforts towards demented people with severe behavioral disorders.
- Developing new and better respite services for carers.
- Continuation of the National Centre for Dementia.
- Development of clinical guidelines for assessment and treatment of dementia.
- Specific programs of dementia in all regions.
- National information campaign on dementia.

Furthermore in the recent years the Danish Parliament has appropriated funds for intensifying efforts in the field of dementia. The funds have been used to support a number of activities for people suffering from dementia and their families and to reinforce continuing education, method development, etc.