

# Ljubljana – Healthy City

Social care and health protection programmes  
co-financed by the City of Ljubljana



Ljubljana  
*Zdravo  
mesto  
Healthy  
City*





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# Preface

Our mayor Mr Zoran Janković often says that Ljubljana is the most beautiful city in the world. Indeed it really is the most beautiful, because it is clean, safe, accessible, pleasant, friendly, hospitable and much more. Among other things, we in the City of Ljubljana City Administration, within the scope of our competences, are responsible for the field of social care and health in the local community and believe that the special care given to the most vulnerable people in the city falls into this impressive list.

Slovenian legislation requires certain obligations in the field of social and health care at local level to be carried out. These include (supplementary) payments for institutional care, provision of a public service network for family assistance at home, provision of funding for the payment of family carers working with people with disabilities and the provision of primary health care and pharmacy activities. In addition, in Ljubljana we provide City funding for municipal financial care and, through regular annual public tenders, which are not obliged by the law and generously support numerous activities, programmes and projects that significantly complement and upgrade the public service network in this area.

Our efforts in the field of social care and health in the local community are led by our strong faith in the idea of social cohesion. This, as opposed to segregation and 'ghettoisation', means constant efforts to ensure that as many people as possible are socially included. We believe that the marginalisation of certain groups of people is not as much due to their personal circumstances or any resulting unfavourable situation but is above all a consequence of the way that society behaves in relation to these people after these circumstances or this situation have arisen. Therefore, in its selection of programmes for co-financing in this

field, the City of Ljubljana includes programmes that contribute to the empowerment and the enhancement of the social skills of included individuals so that they can meet the challenges of daily life more easily, more effectively and more competently. As the effects of the global recession are striking people ever deeper and deeper, the City of Ljubljana is dedicating more funds from the city budget each year to co-finance these programmes. The annual distribution of funds by the City of Ljubljana for this purpose exceeded €2 million as early as 2007 and has continued to increase in subsequent years.

About a hundred diverse programmes in the field of social care and health protection are regularly included in co-financing by the City of Ljubljana each year. Every single one of them is important and forms an essential part of care for the most vulnerable groups of people in our city. The co-financed programmes are intended for children and young people, the elderly, people with mental health problems, people with various forms of disability, people who risk falling into poverty and its consequences, women and children who are victims of violence, people with problems caused by the use of legal or illegal drugs and people with eating disorders, Roma, immigrants, homosexuals, the terminally ill and preventative and health care to all population groups.

In this brochure we not only highlight the fields in which the programmes are implemented but also give you an overview of the range of programmes of social care and health protection co-financed by the City of Ljubljana, with their key content emphases and methods of work.

We are pleased and proud to invite you to discover Ljubljana as an inclusive and healthy city.

## Activities and programmes for the elderly

The elderly are a numerous and thus a significant segment of society, who, given increased longevity and the fast pace of life are playing increasingly active lives and are more and more involved in the decision-making processes which shape our daily lives. With this, the range of activities and services that are specifically adapted to the wishes and needs of the elderly and enhance their quality of life is becoming increasingly diversified and broadened.

Special attention is paid to the elderly at the City of Ljubljana in the field of social care. The measures taken and tasks performed are those that are required by law as well as measures that the City of Ljubljana decides to assume in order to raise the quality of life of the elderly in the city.

Duties imposed by legislation are (supplementary) payments for institutional care, provision of family assistance at home and subsidisation of this service, while we also support and through public tenders co-finance a range of programmes intended for the elderly carried out by various NGOs and public institutes, as they are an indispensable addition to the programmes and services provided by public services. In this, our priority objective is a higher quality of life for the elderly and to enable them to live independently at home for as long as possible.

The field of social care covers programmes of daily activity centres (DACs) for the elderly, programmes to promote intergenerational co-operation, self-help groups, a counselling office to improve elderly accommodation and so on.

DACs for the elderly are demonstrating themselves to be ever more necessary and important, and we are receiving positive feedback from the general lay and expert public, both at home and abroad. Their programmes are very extensive and in addition to the opportunity for their daily social inclusion, users are offered fitness, yoga, dancing, IT and foreign language lessons, creative workshops and others. With the support of the City of Ljubljana, the seventh such DAC opened in 2012, and we are planning to broaden the DAC network even further in the future. One of these is also intended for people with total hearing loss, hearing impairments and dual sensory impairment, and enables users' more independent lives, reduce their isolation, connect them to one another and give them a sense of greater inclusion.

As part of programmes for the elderly, informational and awareness-raising work is carried out with users about taking care of their active and quality aging, training is provided to relatives and others who provide non-professional and unpaid elderly care, volunteers are trained and self-help groups (intergenerational, relatives' groups) and intergenerational companionship are also available.

## **Activities and programmes for people with various forms of disability**

The modern view of the situation of people with disabilities is based on the concept of independent living, on the idea of assuring equal opportunities, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and the fight against discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes. We adhere to these themes in Ljubljana, as one of our fundamental principles is to assure the most favourable conditions for the all-round welfare of all our citizens, which we also achieve by creating

conditions for an equal access to communal benefits, public services, quality accommodation and full participation in the social life of the city.

Social care programmes by disability NGOs, which we co-finance through regular annual public tenders, provide personal assistance based on the idea of independent living by people with disabilities and offer many other activities adapted to the specific needs and interests of people with disabilities such as a variety of leisure activities (adapted recreational exercise, artistic creativity and cultural activities, excursions, holidays, social gatherings and so on), provide transport for wheelchair users, visits and specific forms of help at home, counselling and talks to offer help to those in personal distress, information and empowerment to enforce legal rights and many others.

These activities by disability NGOs contribute significantly to the preservation of mental and physical fitness and health and to maintaining and strengthening the comprehensive social inclusion of people with disabilities.

In addition to financing these indispensable programmes, the efforts of the City of Ljubljana aimed at creating a friendly and inclusive living environment for all people are widely recognised, this confirmed among other things by the title 'Municipality Tailor-made for those with Disabilities' received in 2009 and a European Commission award received in 2011 as part of the Access City Award 2012 competition, for strengthening the accessibility of public transport and related infrastructure.

## Activities and programmes for women and children victims of violence and for perpetrators of violence

Violence against women and children was ignored socially for a long time in Slovenia as elsewhere. Its complexity makes recognition of problems difficult, because violence against women and children can appear in psychological, physical, economic or sexual forms, but often remains hidden, as to a great extent it occurs in the family. In addition, violence against women and children in the past was not perceived as a societal but above all as a private and moral problem. Non-governmental forms of aid for this purpose started to develop in Slovenia at the end of the 1980s, but it was only in the 1990s that they became more prominent. The development of programmes and services took place mainly in women's organisations, which managed to publicly highlight this form of violence.

In the last decade a large number of programmes and projects have developed which are striving to achieve zero tolerance of violence and are increasingly effectively responding to the needs of women and children, who have survived or are still experiencing violence. In addition to these there are also successful programmes intended for perpetrators of violence.

The City of Ljubljana is intensively involved in the process of providing various forms of support where the phenomenon of violence against women and children in the domestic environment arises via the substantial co-financing of NGO programmes through public tenders. These programmes offer various forms of psychosocial help for women, who have experienced or are still experiencing violence, such as personal, telephone or online counselling programmes,

informing programmes, supportive therapeutic work, advocacy and guiding users, integrated assistance to and support for women who have suffered sexual abuse and other forms of violence and self-help groups for women who are experiencing violence. Safe houses for women who are victims of violence have been set up in secret locations, where the emphasis is on their safety. Six safe houses are already open in Ljubljana – one of these is also intended for people with disabilities who experience violence; one is intended for women who are victims of violence and are users of illegal drugs and a safe house for users who are victims of human trafficking. In addition to the safe houses, crisis accommodation is also available in the crisis centre for women and children who are victims of violence in Ljubljana. The crisis centre operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year and is the only centre of its kind in Slovenia enabling an immediate safe withdrawal from violence. Admission to a safe house is possible only after a specific process of exploratory discussions and agreements. Preventative campaigns in which the City of Ljubljana is frequently involved at the initiative of NGOs make a very significant contribution to raising awareness in people about the unacceptability of and preventing violence and the use of various forms of assistance.

Programmes intended for perpetrators of violence raise awareness among users and the public of the forms of violence and its consequences, offer professional psychosocial counselling for people who cause violence, offer information to victims of violence, discussions, non-professional counselling, training for perpetrators of violence in the form of social skills training for men, who cause violence against women, and events and awareness-raising campaigns are organised in public.

## **Activities and programmes for people with mental health problems**

More and more research shows that the number of people with mental health problems is growing. This escalation is due to social insecurity related to labour market instability, disparity between work and family obligations, alienation etc. Poverty and social exclusion also play an important role in influencing the development of mental health problems. There is a trend in Europe for people with mental health problems to be in various movements to demand the right to live in the community as opposed to institutionalisation and hospitalisation. In Slovenia, the tendency towards de-institutionalisation in the mental health field began to emerge in the 1980s. These influenced changes in social care where the emphasis on psychiatric institutions on the outskirts of urban areas moved to community work where people with mental health problems are offered assistance in their local environment. Despite these tendencies, Slovenia still remains one of the more institutionalised countries so an especially important role is played by the options to co-finance supplementary programmes for people with mental health problems, such as day centres and counselling centres, which are offered by the City of Ljubljana via regular annual public tenders.

As well as socialisation and various workshops, day centres also provide information to its users about their legal rights and offer a variety of self-help groups, individual support and guidance in asserting their individual rights, professional psychosocial counselling, accompaniment and advocacy and the organisation and carrying out of camps and holidays.

Counselling centres offer information and awareness-raising to users about mental disorders and crisis management, while providing information to and awareness raising among the general public in order to destigmatise and remove taboos about mental disorders; they offer individual support and accompaniment in asserting the user's individual rights, professional psychosocial counselling, advocacy, self-help groups, etc.

## **Activities and programmes for the homeless and people in existential distress**

In the past two decades the issue of homelessness has grown both globally as well as in Slovenia; as a consequence of the economic crisis and the global recession, poverty has expanded its presence in our everyday lives. The actual number of homeless people is difficult to estimate because by European classification this is a category which includes open and visible as well as hidden or less visible homelessness. Homeless people are thus not only those who do not have a roof over their heads or a home, but also those living in insecure and unsuitable conditions.

It would be no exaggeration to say that in Slovenia the emergence of homelessness is most directly and to its fullest extent faced in Ljubljana where alongside the residents, many other people from other parts of Slovenia are seeking the shelter of anonymity. This issue has been known in the urban environment for many years now and therefore our measures and activities have a rich history and nowadays form a stable part of City policy in the social care field.

In addition to providing accommodation as a temporary solution to housing needs and

providing financial care from the municipal budget for the socially most vulnerable citizens, we also ensure the operation of various assistance and care programmes. Among these are a clinic for people without health insurance, programmes of shelters and housing with support for homeless people and programmes with other forms of assistance for people in existential distress such as day centres in which the homeless are offered a safe place, food and beverages, professional counselling, a variety of leisure and educational activities, programmes for the distribution of food parcels and used clothes and shoes and programmes for the hygiene care of the homeless where showers, hygiene facilities and fresh clothes are available and so on.

In addition, through public tenders we support the operation of two maternity homes where mothers with young children under 14 years of age, pregnant women and women in distress with no other possible accommodation options are provided with accommodation, professional psychosocial counselling, individual therapeutic work, relief and motivational conversations, accompaniment to various institutions (kindergarten, school, the police, social work centres), information and awareness-raising about rights in the social care field, help and support in finding active solutions to existential problems and diverse training and companionship.

## **Activities and programmes for immigrants**

Migration is a mass global process of people moving within or between countries for economic, political, demographic, religious, personal and other reasons. Capital cities in more developed parts of the world are becoming multicultural crossroads, which on the one hand expands our

horizons and enriches our everyday lives while on the other hand bringing about many new challenges in ensuring social cohesion and the stability of social care.

Ljubljana is subject to migration flows and while some immigrants easily integrate into everyday life, for others it is necessary to provide programmes and services to help them to integrate into the new environment. Some of these activities and programmes carried out by NGOs in Ljubljana are co-financed by the City of Ljubljana.

These programmes include activities such as informing and awareness-raising among users and the public about the difficulties facing immigrants, discussions and professional and lay counselling, individual help and guidance to users in processes with official authorities and doctors, legal counselling for users, companionship, various workshops, educational assistance and training volunteers to work with users.

## **Activities and programmes for Roma people**

A relatively small number of especially recently arrived Roma people live in Ljubljana. Despite their low number, the City of Ljubljana is aware of the importance of relationships to vulnerable groups and the importance of their effective integration into the local environment which contributes to the general wellbeing and the quality of life of all the people of Ljubljana. As in the case of migration, Roma people bring different cultural patterns into the local environment which enrich us, but at the same time represent a major challenge. We do not want to lose their specificity and in the meantime we are striving for coexistence which contributes to the better functioning of society as a whole.



Alongside the recognition and acceptance of Roma people and through co-financing appropriate activities and programmes, the City of Ljubljana is striving to maximise the integration of the Roma into the wider local community.

This is mainly a matter of supporting Roma children and women on the ground and at home, informing and raising awareness about discrimination against the Roma and its identification, about their legal rights, user advocacy, training volunteers to work with users, educating staff in various institutions that come into contact with the Roma, training users in acquiring social skills and encouraging assertiveness.

## Activities and programmes for children and young people

There are many young people in Ljubljana, including those with permanent residence in the City of Ljubljana, as well as secondary school pupils and students who commute into the city daily or are temporarily resident here. These exercise their social rights where they are permanently resident but in many cases also in Ljubljana.

As an especially vulnerable group, children and adolescents must receive additional protection tailored to their needs, life circumstances and the challenges that they face in adolescence. Nowadays young people are significantly touched by a precarious social climate and there are ever more of those who, as a result of a changed social environment or problems with interpersonal relationships in their immediate social network, face new demands that cannot be dealt with without adult help.

The City of Ljubljana pays great attention to these circumstances and the newly emerging needs of young people. In addition to assuring the operation of a special public institute called *Mladi zmaji* (Young Dragons), under whose wing district youth centres operate successfully, the City of Ljubljana regularly co-finances numerous primary preventative programmes for young people and innovative projects that young people themselves (co)create and carry out. The central focus of social care programmes for young people co-financed by the City of Ljubljana is on the needs of young people from disadvantaged social backgrounds with pre-observed difficulties and hardship.

These are programmes which offer young people from vulnerable population groups (such as families affected by alcohol problems, families in grave material and social distress, immigrants, Roma people) and young people in hardship due to various personal problems diverse led group activities (workshops, camps and so on), personal counselling and with the intention of raising awareness, providing information or merely with the purpose of providing the possibility of spending leisure time in a constructive manner organise diverse community activities. These are activities that offer help to children and young people in overcoming their problems, contribute to creating positive experiences, establish constructive interpersonal relationships, foster young people's belief in themselves and generally contribute to preserving their social inclusion.

## Activities and programmes for people with addiction problems

Addiction is basically the loss of control over harmful and repetitive behaviour which a person is well aware of but cannot give up. The term brings together various forms of addiction or behavioural forms arising from them, from addiction to alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, to eating disorders and addiction to computers, gambling, work, money, risk, competition etc.

With the known facts showing the widespread onerous consequences of addiction in every aspect of life of an individual, and of society in general, the City of Ljubljana has devoted significant attention to this diverse and complex topic. In addition to supporting diverse primary prevention programmes and projects, we substantially co-finance social care programmes for those facing problems arising from drug or alcohol abuse or other behaviour leading to addiction and who are in need of support or professional help to overcome these problems. In addition to programmes responding to pre-established needs in the target population, we also follow the latest trends or initiatives in help and support in dealing with new forms of addiction.

## Illegal drug use and addiction

Using and especially addiction to illegal drugs affects individuals physically, mentally and socially, and has an adverse impact on society as a whole. In response to the increasing phenomenon of illegal drug use that we have witnessed in Slovenia since the early 1990s, and the consequent newly-emerging needs of the target population, a whole range of NGO programmes are active in Ljubljana.

The range of social care programmes in the field of illegal drug abuse co-financed by the City of Ljubljana includes high-threshold social rehabilitation programmes and low-threshold programmes to reduce the damaging and harmful consequences of illegal drug abuse. The former offer a complex range of activities from primary prevention (workshops for primary school pupils and their parents) to counselling and therapeutic services for those people who want to give up and for their families. Self-help groups are a frequent activity in such programmes. These forms of care run in counselling centres and day and residential centres for social rehabilitation and reintegration. Activities to reduce drug-related harm go on in day centres and on the ground (in places where drug users gather). Active illegal drug users are offered needle exchange (used needles for sterile ones) and professional help in solving current life and personal problems (help in arranging documents and social care, advocacy, help with personal problems and so on). The counselling element of the programme for reducing the damage of drug abuse is also active in prisons. In Ljubljana, we have the only homeless shelter for illegal drug users in Slovenia and a safe house programme for female active illegal drug users who are victims of violence.

In the illegal drug field, in Ljubljana we also pay special attention to club drugs among which cocaine is most significant, followed by many other different drugs that often and quickly change. In response to potential problems in this area, or with the intention to prevent or reduce the harmful consequences of club drugs, the City of Ljubljana co-finances a programme which is a flexible and effective response to the current situation in this area. Through a team of trained practitioners, the programme offers basic first aid for problems and complications due to drug use

at larger and smaller dance events (from clubs to outdoor events). The programme also offers professional therapeutic treatment and operates more broadly preventatively through a web site and attractively-designed printed material.

## **Alcohol use and addiction**

Due to its numerous adverse effects, excessive alcohol consumption among young people and the frequent occurrence of alcoholism among adults are one of the most pressing problems and challenges in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe. The adverse effects are not limited to the health of an individual, but extend into interpersonal partner and family relationships and have broad negative social and economic consequences. In addition to a broad network of medical programmes for treating or giving up alcohol which are carried out in health institutions, many primary preventive and social care programmes by numerous contractors, mainly NGOs, make a significant contribution to actively confronting the problems associated with the excessive consumption of or addiction to alcohol. Social care programmes in this field co-financed by the City of Ljubljana are oriented towards prevention and reducing the harmful consequences of alcohol and towards the social rehabilitation of addicts. Among them there is a very active and well-received programme of field work with young people, which introduces them to cases of excessive drinking. An essential element of the programme content is peer operation and many preventative workshops are also organised in schools. A programme with individual therapeutic meetings and monthly gatherings and themed group discussions is available to adults who decide to give up alcohol.

## **Eating disorders**

Despite their common physical manifestations, eating disorders are classified as mental disorders, as food becomes the focus of human thoughts, struggles and guilt. It is the loss of control or excessive control over eating, accompanied by deep mental and emotional distress and lack of self-acceptance. In the fast pace and alienation of the modern world, where there is ever greater emphasis on appearance, eating disorders are becoming considerably more pronounced. They occur in every population segment, and with increasing numbers of men with eating disorders what should be a disorder widespread mainly in the female population is ever more consistently seen. The problem of eating disorders is recognised as one of the most important aspects of modern society, and therefore we regularly co-finance social care programmes related specifically to this topic.

Social care programmes for people with eating disorders offer complex psychosocial support with counselling (personal, telephone and online), individual therapeutic work, self-help groups and therapeutic groups. Activities intended for the direct resolution of problems with eating disorders are supplemented by organised free time activities and broad preventative activities (workshops in primary schools, awareness-raising campaigns and so on).

## **Other forms of addiction**

For the category of other forms of addiction, we chose to organise City of Ljubljana funding tenders for co-financing social care programmes because we are aware of the breadth, diversity and dynamic nature of addiction problems. We thereby regularly enable new initiatives, we try

to be as flexible as possible and promptly recognise new forms of addiction which require additional attention in the city in any given period.

One of the specific contemporary addictions that probably mainly threatens young people is addiction to modern technology and the internet. In an ever less manageable and relatively alienated world, computers and other new-age technological products are almost indispensable companions for learning, work and play. At the same time they offer an escape into virtual reality or a safe and anonymous refuge where direct social contact is unnecessary. Abandoning normal social contact, alienation, apathy and difficulty managing everyday tasks can quite imperceptibly lead to addiction.

A novelty among social care programmes co-financed by the City of Ljubljana is a specialised programme for people encountering difficulties and/or addiction due to the uncontrolled use of modern technologies and the internet. By informing the public, this promotes the possibilities for the creative and intended use of the internet; work with individuals is based on a specially developed daily plan or schedule of activities with the goal of redesigning the so called 'off-line life'.

## Other social care programmes

As the social care field is extremely diverse, and we seek to assure our residents the most comprehensive set of programmes and services, City of Ljubljana public tenders also address certain other social care programmes, which due to their specificity are not classified in other categories, but at the same time supplement them significantly.

These are, for example, programmes intended for homosexuals, in the scope of which the primary provision is of counselling and self-help, awareness-raising and informing about the rights of homosexuals, discussions and the organisation of events and awareness campaigns, meetings of same-sex families and various workshops.

Furthermore, there is also a programme intended to assist the terminally ill and their relatives aimed at counselling and work with the terminally ill, to inform and raise public awareness with the intention of breaking taboos on death, dying and grief, professional psychosocial counselling for the terminally ill and their relatives at the time of terminal illness, death and grieving after death, user counselling, in addition to which the programme includes training volunteers to work with users.



## Programmes

### for the preservation and promotion of health among children and adolescents

From a medical perspective, children and adolescents are a highly vulnerable group that require special attention. Their health problems are mainly related to the characteristics of growth and development, lifestyle and the immediate and wider social environment. The essence of programmes co-financed by the City of Ljubljana which fall under this title is awareness-raising and motivating children and adolescents to take care of their health by forming points of view and behavioural patterns which contribute to a healthy lifestyle and prevent the emergence and development of disease and injury.

Nutrition is an important behavioural risk factor for health. Dietary intake, dietary habits and nutritional status are the main determinants of most chronic non-communicable diseases, especially later in life, either as risk factors that endanger health or as safety factors that enhance health and so improve the quality of life.

Physical activity or movement is also an important behavioural factor that affects health. The frequency, intensity, duration and type of physical activity, an (in)active lifestyle or exercise habits are - just as with nutrition - important determinants of most chronic non-communicable diseases. It is still the case that too few people attain the recommended levels of physical activity for health. Children and adolescents are no exception.

The third aspect on which co-financed programmes focus is the development and uptake of patterns of personal hygiene. A child is capable

of awareness of personal healthcare and basic hygiene as early as in kindergarten and even more so later at school. The field of personal hygiene is sensitive and is not dealt with adequately. This is confirmed by the lack of teaching and learning aids.

## Programmes

### **to raise awareness and promote a healthy attitude towards alcohol and prevent its abuse**

Excessive and harmful alcohol consumption is one of the most important preventable causes of death in Slovenia and a reason for the loss of 'healthy' years of life due to premature death or reduced capabilities. The consequences of excessive and harmful alcohol use affect not only individuals but also those around them and are a significant financial burden on society.

Slovenia is characterised by high alcohol consumption per capita and Slovenia ranks above the EU average according to selected indicators of the consequences of excessive and harmful alcohol consumption. What is especially worrying is drinking behaviour among adolescents because Slovenia ranks above the EU average in the number of 15 and 16 year-olds who consume alcohol and have already been drunk, and the number is still rising.

Young people are educated about the dangers of alcohol use but it is possible that they do not perceive them in an appropriate manner. Research focusing on attitudes of adolescents towards alcohol use usually show shocking data. The increase in high-risk forms of drinking, which in the past was mostly typical of boys, whereas nowadays the more frequent occurrence of high-risk drinking among girls has reduced the gender

gap. Young people say that they drink alcohol because in this way they have fun, relax, are more adventurous and communicative, it's easier to make contact under the influence of alcohol and one's self-confidence is higher. In certain environments where alcohol is acceptable, young people see alcohol use as a way of becoming socially accepted.

## Awareness-raising programmes

### **on responsible sexual behaviour and on sexually transmitted diseases**

Preventing sexually transmitted diseases and infections is based primarily on limiting risky sexual behaviour. Monitoring certain indicators of risky behaviour among men who have sex with other men is a basis for the effective prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. With recent unfavourable indicators of the position regarding HIV infection among the high-risk group of mainly men who have sex with other men, prevention in this area has regained recognition even among the general public.

Some programmes are aimed at same-sex oriented people who expose themselves to risky sexual behaviour, while others focus on educating young people about sexual health. Through these programmes we are striving to promote honest and responsible attitudes to sex among the young, encourage people to test for sexually transmitted diseases and decrease stigmatisation of the same-sex oriented.

## Programmes

### **to promote healthy lifestyles in the area of reproductive health (pregnancy, preparation for childbirth, the birth itself, breastfeeding)**

Slovenia has well-organised healthcare in the field of reproductive health. To this end, a number of prevention programmes have been developed which provide people with knowledge and skills regarding decision making on their reproductive health. Young women and men are fairly well informed about rights to the protection of their sexual and reproductive health and about a healthy attitude towards sex.

Less attention is given to young mothers and fathers who in this period of life encounter a number of changes to their previous lifestyle. How to move into this - new - way of life in which there is much less time for a mutual relationship on previous foundations, for leisure activities, where great responsibility is at the forefront and the frequent loneliness and uncertainty of young parents are questions to which our healthcare system does not offer answers to an appropriate extent and where there is open space for various forms of assistance. These programmes contribute greatly to modifying inappropriate concepts of motherhood, parenthood and the family.

This segment of healthcare is of long-term social importance as it has proven positive preventative effects on a healthy lifestyle and consequently on social inclusion, informing and encouraging personal responsibility in caring for the psychosocial health of individuals, families and society as a whole.

## Programmes

### **for legal counselling for healthcare service users**

Despite the fact that we ever more directly contribute to treatment costs, health care still remains one of the areas where service users are not an equal partner and increasing participation in the costs is still not an automatic lever to regulating service quality. On the other hand, in relation to the doctor, medical service users are increasingly becoming equal partners who are aware of their shared responsibility for their health and the importance of the quality and cost of treatment.

Quality and safe medical treatment are fundamental patients' rights, from which derive all other rights in the health area. Legislation defines users' rights but in the course of these rights being exercised there is patchy understanding of statutory rights, in particular due to disorganised and unequal complaint procedures which partially overlap, are insufficiently formalised and standardised and are in practice often left to the will and implementation of individual medical institutions.

Experience demonstrates that the involvement of healthcare service users in the formulation of health care policy may be small, but there exists in both healthcare service users and their organisations and on the side of the State and service providers a strong interest in greater mutual co-operation. Therefore programmes co-financed by the City of Ljubljana in this area include individual counselling, awareness-raising, informing and opening a wider public debate on health service users' rights and assuring professional assistance in resolving conflict situations in this area.

## Programmes

### **to improve the quality of healthcare for vulnerable groups**

Targeted measures for particularly vulnerable groups are based on specific measures and programmes intended for population groups who are especially vulnerable from the socio-economic and public health perspective. These groups include homeless people, foreigners without legal status, Roma people and so on. Regardless of the fact that Slovenian legislation provides access to organised healthcare services to most inhabitants of Slovenia, there exists a certain segment of people that do not have access to healthcare services. These are mostly individuals who do not have permanent residence, citizenship, or simply do not have any option to insure themselves or enter the system at their own expense. Therefore there may be observed increases of some diseases closely associated with socio-economic factors which are also a risk to the community. 2012 legislative changes relating to health insurance have only aggravated the situation and have expanded the number of Slovenian citizens who for whatever reason do not have access to the public healthcare system through compulsory healthcare insurance. Therefore we at the City of Ljubljana attribute part funding to programmes that offer health and hygiene care to people without compulsory health insurance.

## Programmes

### **for raise awareness-raising and counselling individuals and families in distress in the mental health field and to prevent and manage stress**

People are vulnerable and often life can be tough. The consequences of these difficult moments are personal distress. Even adolescents and children suffer from periods of depression. Significant numbers of those who visit their family doctor are mainly in need of psychological help. Every year many lives are lost in Slovenia due to suicide. But is all this necessary?

We all face stressful situations every day of our lives but the way we respond to them differs. Problems arise when we have a sense of helplessness, fear, depression or even despair. When we feel that the distress is too strong to bear it is time to seek professional help.

This is why the City of Ljubljana has decided to help people with problems that do not fall into the category of pathological psychiatric disorders, but can, in the event a person does not receive timely professional help, grow into more serious forms which do not disappear without consequences, and ultimately require at the very least much more complex and expensive treatment and can also end tragically. Helping with words, counselling, learning and care - this is the main goal of this group of co-financed programmes.



## to prevent and minimise traffic injuries

Statistical data on mortality among young people in traffic accidents speak for themselves. In road traffic, young people are one of the most vulnerable groups as illustrated by the telling fact that the 15-30 age group have a disproportionately high share of fatalities in road traffic accidents. Road traffic fatalities are considerably higher in young people than in all other age groups. Young men are particularly at risk, accounting for three quarters of all deaths on the road. The most frequent fatalities are of car drivers, followed by motorcyclists.

The elderly, due to psychophysical changes, are often victims of road traffic accidents. They are involved in all traffic segments: as pedestrians, cyclists, public transport passengers and drivers. Reduced psychophysical abilities, a characteristic of ageing, reduces the capability of safe involvement in traffic. Above all, degraded senses have a significant impact on behaviour in traffic. The weak physical state slows road users down and decreases the ability to change direction when coming across an obstacle and thus avoid an accident.

Slovenia is high among countries that have made the greatest progress and minimised the number of deaths in traffic accidents among young people, by more than 9% (the EU average being 7%). Nonetheless, we have decided to try to minimise traffic accidents in local communities via programmes aimed at preventing and reducing traffic injuries by leading driving instructions for young and senior drivers.

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## Ljubljana - Healthy City

Social care and health protection programmes  
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*“A healthy city is like a healthy person:  
attractive, pleasant and happy. Let's build  
it together - hand in hand and step by step  
we can further strengthen the friendly,  
tolerant and coexistence-minded Ljubljana  
and care for the quality of life of every  
generation in the city”.*

Tjaša Ficko  
City of Ljubljana Deputy Mayor