

Policy for Health and Culture

midt
Central Denmark Region

Culture as part of an integrated solution
in tomorrow's Health Service



More culture in the health service of the future

Our health and well-being are under pressure. This is a challenge to our health service, which means that we must re-think the ways we deal with both sickness and health. The new Danish health sector reform focuses on increasing the effectiveness of local health initiatives, while reducing inequality of health measured in geographical and social terms. The reform will create a better cohesion in preventative measures and treatments for patients and citizens according to their individual needs. We must support the citizens' own self-management as well as the civilian community's supportive initiatives in taking care of each person. Therefore, we will invest in new methods and forms of collaboration.

Clearly, arts and culture will play a greater role when we address the future needs of the health service. It has been well documented that cultural activities can promote our health, well-being and quality of life. New findings and methods show how we can inhibit the development of illness and contribute to pain relief and coping with illness by including e.g. music, dance, visual arts, literature and handicrafts in our catalogue of health initiatives.

In Central Denmark Region we will make arts and culture an integrated part of the health service of the future. We will increase the use of cultural activities both prior to, during and after illness; this will benefit patients, their families, citizens in the community, actors in the cultural sector and healthcare personnel. This applies to both the region's hospitals and social institutions as well as local municipal health centres.



Photo: Niels Åge Skovbo



Photo: Esben Skouboe

We prioritise culture in the health service

In Central Denmark Region we work every day to provide a world-class health service. But the health service is also facing pressure, which calls for change. If we are to solve the challenges of the future, we need to have the courage to go off the beaten track. The Regional Council believes that arts and culture will be a part of this change.

Studies show that arts and culture can make a big difference for our health and well-being. Cultural activities can bring people together. They can give us respite from sickness and feelings that are hard to manage. This can be felt – and measured – in both our physical health and our feelings of well-being. Cultural activities can create feelings of closeness, give meaning and relief during some of life's most challenging situations, and in the long term they can save resources in our health service. This has been demonstrated by our work with health and culture over many years.

Now we are in a new situation. We are taking our good experiences with us into the future and strengthening our initiatives for health and culture. The aim of this policy is to increase the involvement of culture in the health service. We want to move away from single projects that rely on local enthusiasts to making the activities an integrated part of our health service. This requires a new mindset and investment – including patient- and citizen-facing preventive measures and rehabilitation. It also calls for closer collaboration between the region, municipalities and civil society. This is where the new health councils play an important part.

Partnerships are at the heart of our work with health and culture. The initiatives are critically dependent on good cooperation between health personnel and culture workers. We must develop strong alliances between hospitals, municipalities, research and educational institutions, civil society (e.g., patient associations and NGO's) and cultural actors. Together, we must develop cultural activities that answer the needs and challenges that we face every day – so that we will also have a world-class health service in the future.

What impact can arts and culture have on health service?

Cultural activities in the health service are specifically tailored for patients, and can take place anywhere: at the hospital, at the local library or in the privacy of one's own home.

Arts and culture in the health service could be:

- An additional element in treatment or rehabilitation that can relieve or help recovering patients back to normal life after physical or mental illness.
- A free space where people can meet one another and take their minds off their illness. It can embrace, keep a hold of and strengthen a return to the person one is and was before illness and discomfort hit.
- A tool for patients' and citizens' own self-management, one that can help bring about fewer illnesses, fewer admissions and readmissions to hospital and fewer escalations of medicine.

The effect of culture activities in the health service

Arts and culture in the health service are research-based activities which have been documented to:

- Calm and reduce anxiety and stress
- Reduce the perception of pain
- Reduce the need for medication
- Motivate patients for necessary rehabilitation
- Improve recovery – to live a good, meaningful life after or with mental illness
- Increase job satisfaction and create better options for health workers
- Improve the quality of life and well-being for patients and their relatives
- Empower citizens and patients.

Central Denmark Region's policy for Health and Culture

This illustration visualizes the three different key areas of the policy for Health and Culture. All of the themes will contribute to the overall goal of the policy: More culture in the health service of the future. Each theme contains a set of principles, which you will find on the following pages.



The **three** key areas of the policy

More culture in the health service of the future – for citizens and patients



From project to operation

The initiative for health and culture in Central Denmark Region must pave the way for viable concepts that can be expanded and spread to the region's hospitals, its social institutions and the municipalities.

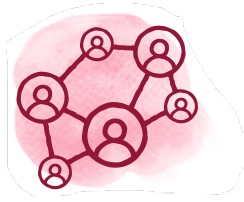
We must continue to ensure an ability to innovate in this area through the development of new initiatives and concepts. We will help with the difficult transition from project to sustainable operation in the health service. In this way we ensure that effective projects can reach even more people, creating beneficial results and value.

Our principles:

- We scale up, distribute and embed well-tested projects throughout the health service.
- We advise and support the development of new projects, initiatives and methods within the area – and we ensure constant innovation and growth.
- We identify successful support and business models as an (early) assistance for developing viable projects.
- We measure the effects of increased investment in culture within the health service on the health economy (ROI) – including indirect effects, such as increased job satisfaction, better quality of treatment, patients' and citizens' satisfaction and their experience of interacting with the health service, their self-management, etc.

Photo: Niels Åge Skovbo





Strong partnerships

The initiative for health and culture in the Central Denmark Region crosses both medical, organisational and political structures – both locally, nationally and internationally. We must therefore ensure that there is cohesion in the work, both:

- Inward, that is to say, in the region, directed at the hospitals and the region's social institutions.
- Outward, to the local health service and relevant partners in municipalities and civil society.
- Outward, to national and international collaborating partners.

Taking as our point of departure the health reform's subsidiarity principle, our special focus is on the interplay between local health and cultural actors. We want to bring the many different interested parties together and create connections between them in an easily-understood infrastructure, which in practice will make it easier to establish contacts in new partnerships and collaborative forms – and we invest in it.

Our principles:

- We bring together and create a network between the many stakeholders as a step towards building a strong ecosystem within the field, with an emphasis on local collaboration – amongst other things, via hArts, the mid-Jutland partnership for health and culture.
- We handle and strengthen national and international expertise and political interest in the field via alliances and collaboration, including the Danish parliament's subcommittee for culture and health.
- We collaborate with international actors such as WHO and Central Denmark EU Office and we apply for funding for shared development and research projects.
- We work together with private funds on complex challenges that cut across several sectors.



Photo: Niels Åge Skovbo



A new expertise

The initiative for health and culture in Central Denmark Region must support the development of the new universe of expertise that is created when two worlds merge.

The source of our work is the meeting on equal terms of two different areas of expertise, each with their own competencies, methods and ways of thinking. This meeting brings to light new needs and challenges that require us to create a new shared expertise and shared language.

It places new demands on both health professionals, culture actors and educational institutions. Therefore, it is important to create possibilities for education, further training and skills development of both cultural and healthcare institutions, co-workers and associations, so that they can develop and operate these specific initiatives.

Our principles:

- We work based on knowledge and the measured effectiveness of the methods and areas of expertise that we create with the help of the arts and culture.
- We develop and strengthen specialists in the field – with a focus on the necessary representation of competencies from both the cultural and health service areas.
- We put health and culture on the health and cultural educational agenda.
- We give advice on upskilling project developers in the field with a focus on work methods and long-lasting business models.



Photo: Niels Åge Skovbo

Examples

Central Denmark Region has contributed to positive outcomes for citizens, patients, relatives and healthcare professionals through activities such as:

- Lung choirs, where patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease experience improved quality of life via improved respiration and relief of shortness of breath in daily life.
- Reading groups, where patients suffering from stress and depression find a way to recovery.
- Music in intensive care units, where, for example, patients experience a reduction in their pain levels, and together with their relatives can have a break from illness and the high-tech ICU environment.
- Dance with Parkinsons, in which patients experience improved coordination, balance, walking and memory, while lifting their spirits and improving their quality of life through the social aspect of the dancing.
- Singing with vulnerable mothers, where mothers and pregnant women can meet and share the difficult feelings and worries that can come with motherhood.



From policy to real life

The initiative for health and culture in Central Denmark Region is handled by the Regional Council in close collaboration with the five Central Denmark health councils. The Regional Council determines the overall direction for the area.

The health councils are responsible for converting these ambitions into specific initiatives and prioritising resources for the area. A precondition for putting the policy's three tracks into practice is that the health councils choose to prioritise the selected initiatives.

The Department of Health Innovation supports development work and ensures cohesion between health councils, hospitals, social institutions, municipalities and health experts as well as functioning as a central, expert liaison to the cultural world.





Photo: Tonny Foghmar

From project
to operation

Strong
partnerships

More culture in the health service of the future

- for citizens and patients

A new
expertise