

– STRATEGIC FOCUS ON RELATIVES AND NEXT-OF-KIN SUPPORT

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<b><u>Organisation(s):</u></b>	Municipality of Esbjerg	
<b><u>Country:</u></b>	Denmark	
<b><u>Contact Person:</u></b>	<a href="mailto:policy@esn-eu.org">policy@esn-eu.org</a>	
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ageing & Care <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum & Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Young People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children & Families <input type="checkbox"/> Community Care <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Production <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/> Active Inclusion & Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality & Management <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Support <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum Income <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b><u>Principles of European Pillar of Social Rights:</u></b> <i>Check the 20 principles <a href="#">here</a>.</i>	Principle 9. Work-life balance Principle 16. Health care Principle 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities Principle 18. Long-term care	
<b><u>Current status of the practice:</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Concept and design phase <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Execution & monitoring phase <input type="checkbox"/> Consolidation phase <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
<b><u>Social issues addressed</u></b> <i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve</i>	<b>Reshaping social services to lead better lives:</b> In May 2020, the local third sector in the Municipality of Esbjerg called for a stronger focus on supporting relatives/next of kin to a person with physical or mental illness, disability, or social vulnerability. They saw an unfulfilled need and a cry for help from relatives, for instance, with complex problems such as stress, isolation, and feeling of helplessness - ruining the quality of life of the relatives with negative consequences for the person in need. The fact is that 45% of the relatives feel depressed; 38% suffer from sleeplessness 36% develop stress; and 18% get a chronic illness themselves.	

	<p>It also addresses the social issues of an ageing population. More and more adults and children need social services, yet there is a lack of labour forces in the future, and recruitment is getting more difficult. Additionally, focusing on relatives/ next of kin leads to the prevention of worsening mental health difficulties, which ensures the avoidance of large expenses in the long-term.</p>
<p><b>Objectives:</b>  <i>Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieving a stronger focus on supporting relatives and informal carers of persons with physical or mental illness, disability, or social vulnerability</li> <li>• To provide individual guidance to relatives and next-of-kin in the social and health services in the municipality</li> <li>• To serve as a bridge-builder to the regional hospitals and the local NGOs</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Activities:</u></b> <i>Please summarise the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 200 words).</i></p>	<p>The Municipality has developed a specific strategy and has implemented a new position in the organisation as a Counsellor of Relatives. The counsellor's job is to provide individual guidance to relatives. The counsellor offers personal guidance and coaching on what the relative currently needs to discuss. This can be specific concerns, the relative's well-being and how to care for oneself as a relative. Examples can be practical challenges in everyday life or emotional reactions that can be difficult to deal with by yourself. The Counsellor for Relatives works as a bridge-builder for the next of kin in the municipality's local social and health services to the regional hospitals and the local NGOs. S/he is not involved in case management but is a neutral body that can be approached anonymously. To be able to provide support for relatives who work during the day, the relatives' counsellor is reachable outside core working hours. S/he can be reached by phone but is also available to meet in person in her office or outside for a walk (especially in times of social distancing).</p>
<p><b><u>Evaluation of practice:</u></b> <i>Please explain how you evaluate the practice, and what the results were/are so far</i></p>	<p>After eight months, the first evaluation was launched on December 7, 2021. It confirms the need for neutral help to relatives. During the first eight months, the Counsellor of Relatives has already given her services to 109 persons. The plan is to evaluate the project using qualitative and quantitative approaches in 2022. The evaluation and the experiences until now give the impression that the dialogue with a counsellor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a preventive effect and gives the relatives a better overview of their situation and opportunities</li> <li>• Reduces stress</li> <li>• Reduces dissatisfaction and limits the number of complaints about social services</li> <li>• Breaks isolation and loneliness of the relatives – being met and heard creates energy</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>List three key elements for successful implementation</u></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The unique thing about the Strategy of Relatives and the employment of the Counsellor of Relatives is that it focuses on the relatives, not the person in need.</li> <li>2. The Strategy of Relatives is created with input from the relatives themselves, representatives of the social services, and the local politicians. Afterwards, a public hearing was held involving, among others, the regional psychiatric and somatic hospitals.</li> <li>3. Focus on relatives, dialogue, and cooperation, focus on children and families, offers for relatives where the Counsellor of Relatives is one of them</li> </ol>

<b><u>Sources of Funding</u></b>	It is funded by the municipality for a pilot period of two years with the possibility of making it permanent.
<b><u>Links to supporting documents:</u></b> <i>e.g. website or report of the practice</i>	<a href="https://www.esbjerg.dk/sundhed-og-sygdom/paaroerende">https://www.esbjerg.dk/sundhed-og-sygdom/paaroerende</a>