

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

### 1. Title of the practice

- *'CONTACT VISITS – PUBLIC MANDATE FOR VISITS TO OLDER PEOPLE'* -

### 2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Vienna Social Fund, Vienna, Austria

### 3. Contact person(s)

E-mail

[policy@esn-eu.org](mailto:policy@esn-eu.org)

### 4. Summary of the practice

The initiative takes place in all 23 districts within the authority of the City of Vienna. Employees of a non-profit organisation called 'Wiener Sozialdienste' organise visits to older people through volunteers – 'contact visitors'. The volunteers inform people aged 65 and above about social services provision, and if they see a need for more support, they contact the case management team of the Vienna Social Fund to organise the required social care service for the client. NGOs offer various activities, including centres for older people, physical activities, computer and internet training for seniors, community colleges, involvement in charity work, and becoming a representative of the City of Vienna.

The purpose of this initiative is to provide timely advice. This enables service providers to respond quickly to needs and to promote inclusion as well as the participation of older people in local decisions, social networks, and the local community. The initiative seeks to support older people to live a more self-determined life in old age, which also includes encouraging them to consider volunteering for the contact visits themselves once they do not need them anymore. Another purpose of the initiative is to gather socio-demographic data of the target group to advance knowledge for social service planning.

Lessons learnt:

- Contact visits are as important as they are preventive.
- Social networking is beneficial to older people's social and mental well-being.
- Support to live a self-determined life in old age is vital.

### 5. National/regional/local context of the practice

This service is provided through publicly funded social services and financed mainly through taxes and donations. The municipal contract ('Stadtverfassung') stipulates that contact visits should be a compulsory service for older people.

The local policies and administration, the Viennese Municipal Constitution, and social legislation play a part in deciding who should be stakeholders in the initiative.

6. Staff involved					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of the local administration</li> <li>• Employees of the local administration</li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees of Vienna Social Services ('Wiener Sozialdienste') who train and supervise the visitors</li> <li>• Employees of social services where needs are urgent</li> <li>• An employee of the Vienna Social Fund who is responsible for managing the initiative and the effective transfer of knowledge</li> <li>• The senior citizens' representative of the City of Vienna</li> </ul>					
7. Target group					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People from the age of 65, which will change to people from the age of 75 from 2016</li> </ul>					
8. Aims of the practice					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely information</li> <li>• Increase the use of social services</li> <li>• Prevent illness and morbidity</li> <li>• Promote active ageing</li> </ul>					
9. Issues for social services					
Service Integration/ Cooperation across Services		Service Planning	x	Contracting	
Technology	x	Skills development (of the workforce)	x	Quality of services	
Others: Prevention and rehabilitation					
ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE					
10. Status					
Pilot project (ongoing)		Project (ongoing)		Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)		Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	x

## 11. Scope of the practice

*Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:*

- *Micro-level practice:* a practice that involves individuals at the local level
- *Meso-level practice:* a practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice:* a practice that involves large population groups

Macro-level initiative across different regions in Austria.

## 12. Leadership and management of the practice

*Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:*

- *Collaborative management:* shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional, and local representation
- *Organisational management:* by one organisation
- *Professional management:* managed by a single person

- *Shared management:* shared with no defined leadership

**Collaborative management:** The City of Vienna and the Vienna Social Fund (VSF) developed the strategy and lead the initiative in collaboration with the councillor. The Vienna Social Services (Wiener Sozialdienste), a non-profit organisation, runs the service and is responsible for coordination, training events etc.

There are challenges for the Vienna Social Fund in how the content of the volunteers' visits and the work of the Vienna Social Services (Wiener Sozialdienste) are regulated.

## 13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

*Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:*

- *Individual practice:* individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach:* one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach:* large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

**Access to services:** The district managers select people to be visited based on various criteria (age, district, etc). These people are informed with a standardised notification letter about the visit including a suggestion for a visit date by the District Administration Office. It is possible to cancel or postpone the visit by telephone.

**Volunteers:** The recruitment of volunteers that will act as contact visitors is done through the City of Vienna's website "Freiwillig für Wien (Volunteer for Vienna)", a volunteer database, promotion in the media and also directly by the districts. The contact visitors are selected together with the districts after successful completion of training which is provided by the Vienna Social Services where the volunteers are also subsequently employed on a minimum contract. During the initial visit the volunteers provide information on social services, regional bodies and initiatives; conduct an assessment of the client's individual needs; and collect data on their living circumstances using a standardised interview guide. In case of immediate need for care or support, services are organised by the Vienna Social Services in cooperation with the Vienna Social Fund (FSW). The volunteers receive a small compensation for every completed visit (currently approx. €8).

#### 14. Involvement of service users and their families

Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:

- *Team involvement: service users and carers were part of the practice team*
- *Consultative: a consultative body of users was set up for ongoing dialogue and feedback*
- *Involvement in care: person-centred approaches to care/support*

Team involvement: There are monthly meetings attended by the contact visitors, the district managers, the FSW and other district stakeholders (e.g., representatives of social housing). These meetings are used for sharing information, discussing of the follow-up contact visits carried out and giving information to the Vienna Social Fund regarding social needs in the district (use of social services, visits by social workers or senior consultants etc.).

#### 15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:

- *Within existing resources: staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house'*
- *Staffing costs: costs for staff investment*
- *Joint/Pooled budgets: two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services*
- *Funded project: external investment*

Funded project: external investment: The Vienna Social Fund, a wholly owned subsidiary of the City of Vienna, funds the Vienna Social Services, and the budget is released by the council. It is approximately EUR 433,000 per year.

#### 16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method: use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach*
- *Single method: a qualitative or quantitative approach*
- *Audit: looks at data sources such as existing medical records and/or other routinely collected service data.*
- *Informal: refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback*
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

Multi-method: With the help of a range of approaches, including standardised questionnaires, formal interviews, and client feedback, the volunteers gather information which is important for urban development and planning. The Vienna Social Fund has an electronic tool to evaluate the data and uses an automatic data processing method.

#### 17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	Measurable effects include stronger involvement of older people, timely provision of information and support, and improved social support.
Formal caregivers	n. a.

Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	In addition, through the use of standardised questionnaires, the organisations involved were able to improve the type of data they receive from older people and can use this for future care planning.
Other	Things that worked particularly well included the contact visits with the volunteers, who had enough time to personally engage with the older people, allowing them to fully discuss their problems and ideas and to assist with filling out the questionnaire.

### 18. Anticipated or 'aspirational' effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

*This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified, or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.*

Service users	n. a.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	n. a.

### 19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)

The contact visits do not change the care provided, but they are an important mechanism to present the programme to the public and identify demand, thereby improving the quality of life of older people before a critical situation may arise.

### 20. Sustainability of the practice

*Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:*

- *Potential for sustainability:* practice was newly started or is ongoing/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)?
- *Organic sustainability:* service users have been empowered to take the practice forward • *Established:* the project has been operational for several years

Established: Since its inception in 1977, the initiative has become an established programme, and the visits are now compulsory.

### 21. Transferability of the practice

*Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:*

- *Transferred:* transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc.
- *Potential for transferability:* there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed

Transferred: This initiative has already been implemented in all districts of Vienna. The following elements are transferrable to other areas and regions:

- Contact visits
- Local policies and administration
- Involvement of social services

## 22. Further information

[http://www.senior-in-wien.at/freizeit/aktives\\_altern/](http://www.senior-in-wien.at/freizeit/aktives_altern/)

<https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/senioren/aktiv-leben.html>

<https://www.wien.gv.at/gesundheit/einrichtungen/planung/soziales/index.html>