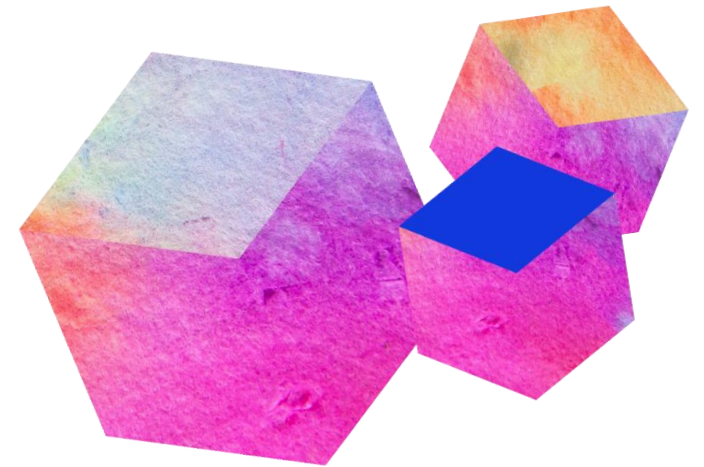


# CULTURE & HEALTH

A joint plan for Aarhus



## Culture and health go hand in hand

Most of us know the uplifting sensation that comes from listening to music. Or the sense of peace that fills you when you become absorbed in a creative process, such as painting, writing, or playing an instrument. Many of us feel solidarity and joy when joining a community on singing, fiction, or other cultural activities.

Art and culture touch something in us as human beings. We don't need science to tell us that they create life, relations, and well-being – we can feel that. Even so, we should listen to the science in this area that demonstrates the many positive effects of applying art and culture to promote health and welfare, as well as treatment and rehabilitation.

To this end, we need a Culture & Health Plan. Although this is the first of its kind in Aarhus, a whole string of initiatives that link art and culture with health already exist.

The Culture & Health Plan is part of the legacy from European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017, which showed that art and culture play a key role in solving welfare challenges.

Many of the city's stakeholders have contributed through their projects to a mapping of existing initiatives within the culture and health field in Aarhus, and we would like to thank you for that.

The mapping and the growing knowledge base reveal the opportunity space that we now face, i.e. that art and culture can contribute to shaping welfare in entirely new ways. In other words, when we close ranks about culture and health, we are neither alone nor embarking on a new field.

With the Culture & Health Plan, we gather the city's forces in a collaboration between Health and Care, Culture and Citizens' Services, and the players of Aarhus. Together, we must drive this movement forward by combining and strengthening existing activities in a joint plan, which at the same time creates new initiatives and new knowledge within the field, so that even more citizens can experience the health-related effects of art and culture.

We would like to thank all of you who have contributed. Thank you for sharing your amazing work. You show us that Aarhus already has great core strengths and the momentum to develop the culture and health field.

We look forward to doing this with you!



Rabih Azad-Ahmad  
Alderman for  
Culture and  
Citizens' Services



Jette Skive  
Alderman for  
Health and Care



# Vision and aims

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## **Aarhus has a solid foundation within culture and health**

Aarhus is a city with a professional and strong cultural life, a solid citizenship, a diverse association life as well as a strong business community and educational and growth environment. It provides a unique starting point for supporting and developing the strengths between culture and health in Aarhus.

Both national and international research shows that there is much to be gained at the crossroads between culture and health, and there are therefore good arguments for incorporating art and cultural activities into welfare tasks. Many stakeholders are already working in the field and there are good experiences to be gained.

Art and culture are essential elements of our understanding of the concept of cultural wellbeing.

The aim is to integrate art and culture through initiatives that promote health and well-being among citizens in Aarhus.

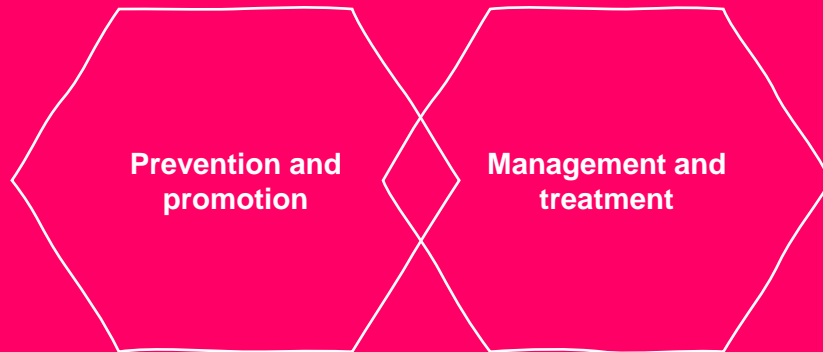
Aarhus' Health Policy and Cultural Policy form the framework for the joint plan for Aarhus within culture and health, which branches out across welfare areas.





## The area of culture and health

Following the international model, the joint plan for Aarhus within culture and health focuses on the use of art forms within two broad themes:



The themes will naturally overlap, but the division must make it clear that efforts with art and culture operate in both fields.

While there is both a tradition and experience of integrating culture in a health promotion and prevention context, the use of culture in a rehabilitation and treatment context moves on more untrodden ground.

It calls for different approaches, and it is this consideration that is the driving force behind the individual initiatives in the joint plan for culture and health.



**Performing  
arts**



**Visual arts, design,  
and craft**



**Literature**



**Culture**



**Online, digital, and  
electronic arts**



## **A movement that we create together**

In connection with the preparation of the plan, cultural stakeholders, welfare stakeholders, business community, associations, and education and knowledge institutions have contributed with the cultural and health initiatives that each of them works with.

The mapping confirms an increasing tendency towards the cultural area introducing new possible solutions, while welfare areas reach out to invite participation in the search for solutions that create value for and with the citizens.

At the same time, the Culture & Health Plan is based on a growing knowledge foundation and underlying international recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The work related to culture and health is a movement that we create together, and the Culture & Health Plan should therefore be seen as a framework for us to develop, test, and define the field together.









## The joint plan for Aarhus

Good cross-disciplinary collaboration is crucial for establishing and strengthening the culture and health area.

In recent years, the focus has been on documenting, gathering, and disseminating knowledge about culture's health-promoting potential and relevance in welfare.

More and more initiatives with culture for health promotion are being tested, also in Denmark and Aarhus – we must support this.

To build a strong cultural and health field, we work with **three main tracks**:

1

**Knowledge,  
experience, and  
network**

2

**New models for  
collaboration and  
practice across  
disciplines**

3

**Development of  
new welfare  
solutions**



## Knowledge, experience, and network

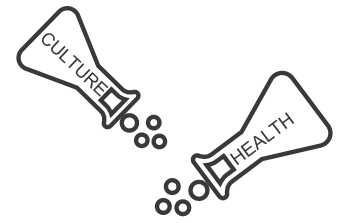
Development and dissemination of new initiatives must be based on knowledge of what works, and we must use experience from other municipalities, countries, and domains.

It is about making existing knowledge available, and about spreading experience.

We want to inspire the use of art and culture through knowledge-sharing and at the same time support and contribute to knowledge-building.

Thus, we recommend:

- That the City of Aarhus participate in **partnerships and networks for knowledge-sharing**. Including looking for opportunities to join international initiatives such as **EU-based knowledge**.
  - **Developing a communication strategy to support knowledge-sharing on the benefits of participating in cultural activities**. Part of the strategy incorporates citizen-oriented health communication.
  - **That the City of Aarhus prioritises evaluation and research within culture and health initiatives** with the aim of building knowledge on the benefits for society. This also encompasses knowledge that can be incorporated within long-term investment models (in the area), which further support an active and value-creating cultural environment.
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## New models for collaboration and practice across disciplines

It is essential for the development of the area of culture and health that we develop models that strengthen partnerships across disciplines.

A common practice between culture and health requires a joint effort, which is both based on and mandates common interests.

We will also be working strategically with how trials and projects with good results can proceed to implementation and operation.

All with the goal of integrating culture and health in practice.

Thus, we recommend:

- **Developing a joint model with financial and organisational structures**, which clarifies the co-production and that it is not a provider/recipient situation. This calls for new practice communities between social and healthcare professionals and other professional players. This should be realised through co-financing and joint ownership.
  - **Working with a targeted aim of building bridges between municipal activities and specialised cultural events**, as well as current cultural options in the city. The initiative includes testing of referral procedures inspired by 'culture by prescription' ('kultur på recept').
  - **Increased accessibility** of culture and health initiatives for all. Equal participation for all requires a lot of diverse efforts.
  - **Supporting a targeted implementation and long-term dissemination** of the cultural interventions that are well-founded by research, so that art and culture become an integrated part of the welfare services. This applies, for example, to music therapy in dementia care.
  - Working with a **specialised area of competence** within welfare and culture.
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## Development of new welfare solutions

In Aarhus, there are already many projects and initiatives where the city's stakeholders create welfare for the citizens within art & culture\*.

There are both initiatives where art and culture can increase the welfare of the general population, but also targeted efforts for, for example, children with autism, dementia sufferers, lonely citizens, or citizens with mental vulnerability.

The city's broad field of stakeholders reflects a willingness to cooperate, which is also a good platform for testing new, innovative links between culture and health.

We will support this potential by developing and testing new welfare solutions for the citizens based on art and culture.

Thus, we recommend:

- **Focused investment in the existing movement and the local involvement**, which develop and test target cultural and health initiatives to citizens.
- **Testing the cultural effects on three chosen welfare areas**. The areas represent themes of great societal relevance, where a targeted use of art and culture has potential in creating value for citizens:

# Children and teenagers

# Rehabilitation

# Employment

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\*Examples from the Mapping: The mapping is a collection of cases with (so far) 81 projects that apply art and culture in a welfare context in different ways. The survey is published as a publication that you can explore and be inspired by.

**Culture & Health. A joint plan for Aarhus.**

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References: WHO; *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping report (2019)*. Knocks; *En systematisk gennemgang af den internationale litteratur om Kultur og Sundhed (2017)*.

DK June 2020 / UK August 2021.