



# Enjoy life, Copenhagenerers





# CONTENTS

<b>ENJOYING LIFE IS HEALTHY</b>	<b>p 5</b>
<b>1. A FAR-SIGHTED VISION</b>	<b>p 7</b>
<b>2. COPENHAGENERS' HEALTH 2015</b>	<b>p 9</b>
We live longer, but...	p 9
We lack equal opportunities	p 10
More live with illness	p 10
<b>3. FROM VISION TO REALITY</b>	<b>p 13</b>
We put the Copenhagener and everyday life at the centre	p 13
We provide special support to the Copenhageners in greatest need	p 13
We lend equal weight to mental and physical health	p 15
We collaborate broadly to ensure high-quality solutions for Copenhageners	p 15
We are boosting cohesive health efforts	p 16
We use the best knowledge to seek new paths for ensuring Copenhageners a good life	p 16
<b>4. THIS IS HOW WE FOLLOW UP</b>	<b>p 19</b>



# ENJOYING LIFE IS HEALTHY

Enjoy life, Copenhageners! This is what the City of Copenhagen has called its health policy. For health is more than a goal in itself – it is the means to having a long and enriching life.

We all depend on good physical and mental health to lead the lives we want. Unfortunately, not everyone has the same health opportunities. In Copenhagen we see a great deal of health inequality. This is a situation we find unacceptable. A situation we have to change.

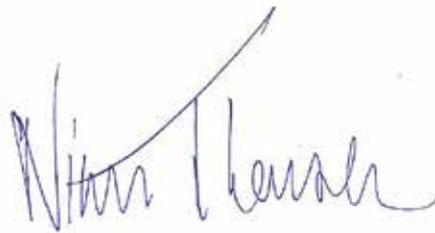
On average, Copenhageners with socioeconomic advantages like higher educations, stable labour market affiliation and strong social relations have markedly better health and fewer mental problems than those who have not had the same opportunities since the moment they were born.

The imbalance in Copenhagen thus concerns more than the size of the pay cheque. It is also deeply rooted in social and health inequalities. Consequently, all public administrations and political parties share a huge responsibility for prioritising health in every aspect of Copenhageners' lives, thus enhancing quality of life equitably throughout the city. Making healthy choices must be easy and natural for everyone.

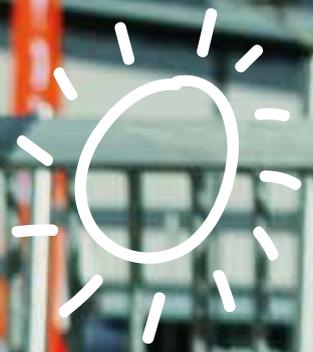
As a local authority we must therefore take a wide-ranging approach. We have to ensure excellent opportunities for education and access to healthy food and exercise during school time. We need green urban spaces for people of all ages, vibrant recreational clubs and societies, healthy workplaces and environmental transport options – such as super bicycle paths, where the big city offers the space to get exercise. We also have to set the right priorities, so help goes where it is most needed. For example, we offer help to quit smoking, tackle stress or deal with alcohol abuse.

And we do not have to do all this alone, but can partner with organisations, businesses, Copenhageners themselves and the wider community. For we believe that taking on the challenge together is healthy.

On behalf of the Health and Care Committee



Mayor, Ninna Thomsen (Socialist People's Party)



# 1. A FAR-SIGHTED VISION

Good health provides a solid basis for our physical, mental and social well-being. People's definitions of the good life vary greatly, as do their ideas about quality of life. Fundamentally, however, good health gives us the freedom to live the lives we want, while illness and poor health can limit our possibilities. This makes health an important resource for the individual Copenhagener and for Copenhagen as a whole if we are to realise the vision of growth and quality of life for our city.

The City of Copenhagen Health Policy 2015-2025 establishes a common framework and direction for Copenhagener's health status in 2025.

---

**Our vision for 2025 embodies a Copenhagen whose citizens enjoy the world's best quality of life – a quality of life that every Copenhagener should be able to enjoy. To realise this vision, we must eliminate health inequality so everyone has equal opportunities to live a good and long life.**

---

Copenhagener's today have a quality of life below the rest of Denmark's population. As a result, we die two years earlier and live more years with illness than other Danes. Meanwhile, social inequality in health is pronounced and continues to widen, which means that the half of Copenhagener's with the shortest educations are hit with illness far harder than Copenhagener's with long ones. Social inequality in health starts at birth and continues throughout life. As such, we do not all have equal opportunities to get the best out of life. Inequality is neither fair nor acceptable. It impacts each Copenhagener's personal growth, his or her children and families and the cohesiveness of Copenhagen as a



In 2015 we  
launched action  
plans for:

Mental health

Alcohol and drugs

city. This is why we want to eliminate social inequality in health, so all Copenhagener's can enjoy good conditions for living their lives. People with physical or mental illnesses must also be able to live good lives.

With our health policy as a framework, we will spend the next 10 years addressing the greatest challenges to Copenhagener's health. To this end, we are giving priority to initiatives aimed at aspects such as alcohol, physical inactivity, smoking and poor mental well-being. Together with everyone who can and wishes to realise our vision, we are regularly launching action plans to meet these challenges.



## 2. COPENHAGENERS' HEALTH 2015

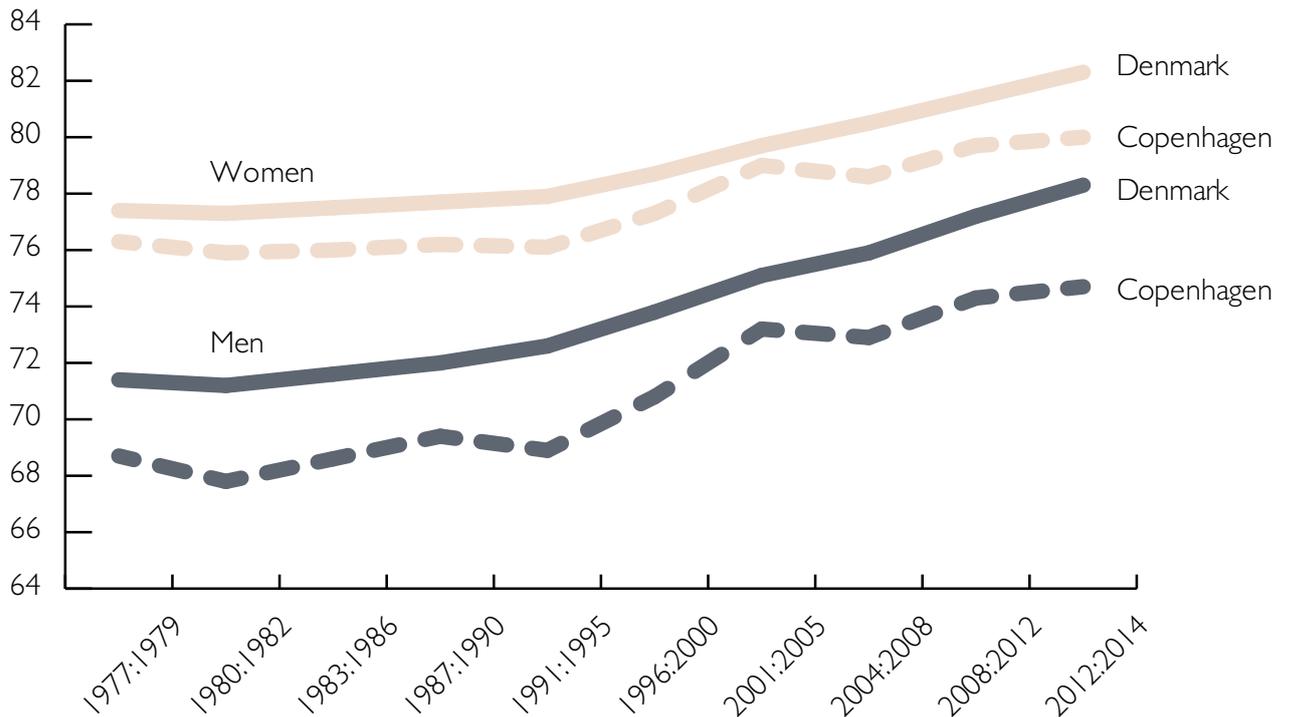
Copenhageners' health has improved in recent years – for example, fewer Copenhageners smoke on a daily basis or consume large quantities of alcohol. This is a consequence of general social trends and targeted initiatives in Copenhagen. We have launched campaigns to promote health equality among Copenhageners. We have invested in urban spaces that encourage exercise, healthy school meals free of charge for the poorest children, urban renewal and social programmes in disadvantaged areas, open and free prevention offers as well as effective rehabilitation. But we are still

far from the goal. And we have to recognise that there is no quick and easy fix for improving Copenhageners' health and enabling them to enjoy good, healthy lives and a high quality of life.

### We live longer, but...

Copenhageners live longer than ever, but still lag behind the country as a whole. Copenhagen's men live 2.9 years less, and women 1.7 years less. At the same time, pain and illness force many Copenhageners to endure a lower life quality.

Average lifespan, yrs.



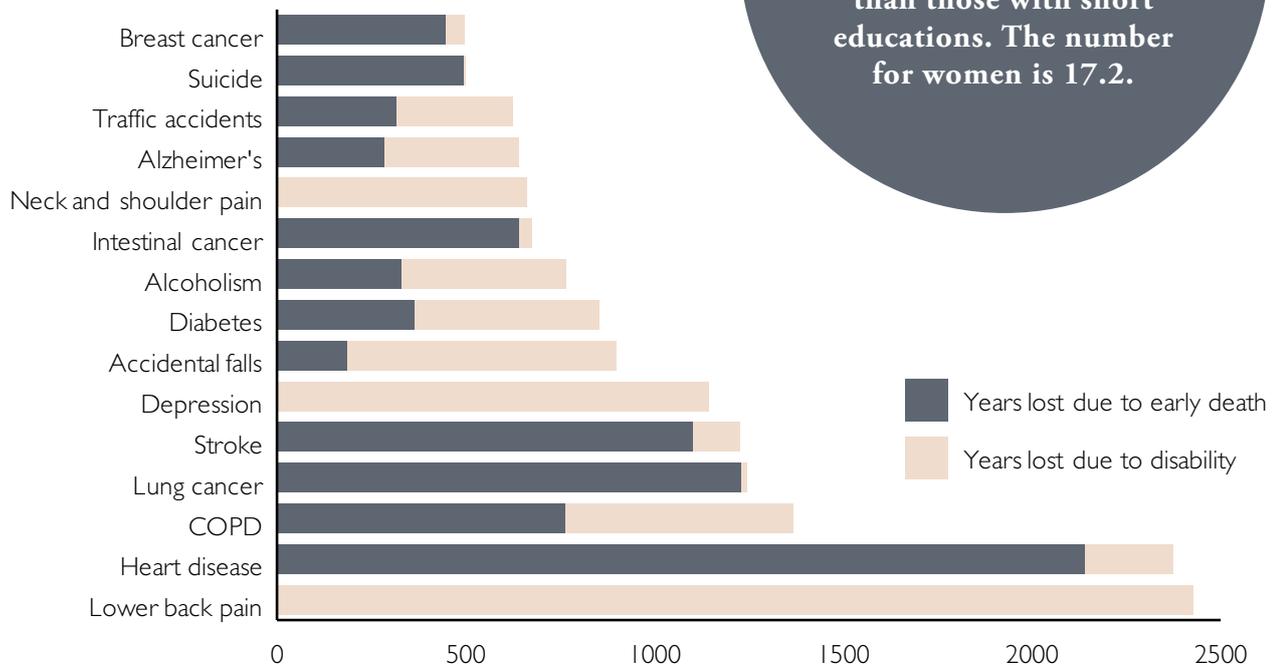
### We lack equal opportunities

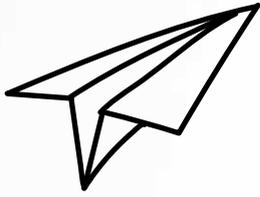
Copenhageners with short educations live more years with illness and die earlier than those with long educations. Excess mortality among young people who have not completed a youth education programme is already significant by the age of 20. This inequality is thus a consequence of not only debilitating occupational health problems or an unhealthy lifestyle, but also to a great extent conditions established early in life. Children of unskilled parents or parents with short educations are at greater risk of having problems with schooling and education, and of experiencing symptoms of mental problems at school. Similarly, they are at greater risk of developing illnesses later in life and of experiencing inequality as regards the consequences of being ill, for example in relation to job retention and survival.

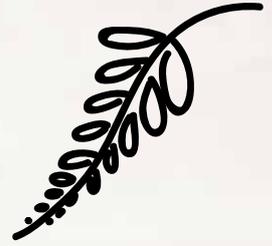
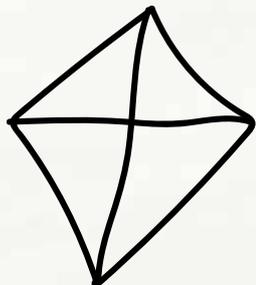
### More live with illness

Many Copenhageners live with one or more chronic illnesses. Long-term conditions like back pain, heart disease, COPD and depression have a major impact on daily life and quality of life. These illnesses are caused by factors like smoking, inadequate exercise, poor diet, excess alcohol and stress, which leave their mark in the form of high blood pressure, overweight and well-being issues.

**30-year-old male Copenhageners with long educations can expect to live in good health 15.5 years longer than those with short educations. The number for women is 17.2.**







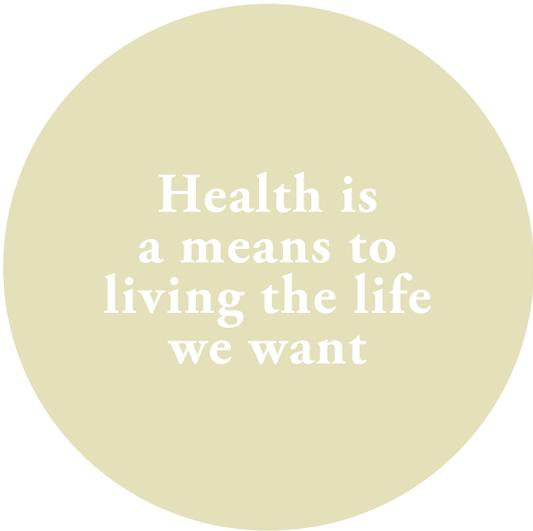
# 3. FROM VISION TO REALITY

We will base the work of realising our vision for Copenhageners on six fundamental principles. In the next 10 years they will underpin all strategies, action plans and initiatives we launch to improve Copenhageners' health. The same principles will guide how we meet Copenhageners in their everyday lives.

## **We put the Copenhageners and everyday life at the centre**

In Copenhagen we promote health and illness prevention everywhere we encounter Copenhageners as they go about their daily lives – by making it attractive to cycle, by serving nutritious lunches in our institutions or by enabling educational institutions to offer quit smoking programmes. When we have a sense of well-being and enjoy good health, we have a better chance of reaping the best from life. Physical activities and sport enhance the well-being of children and young people as well as their learning, and can also improve the daily lives of socially disadvantaged and crime-prone young people. Healthy, thriving people are also more likely to complete an education and find employment. In other words, health enables us to live the life we want. When health is a means to this end, the small steps are also important, more important than an exclusive focus on the need to meet a myriad of daily recommendations about how much alcohol we can drink or exercise we should take.

For this reason, we have based our health initiatives on citizens' own wishes and everyday experiences. We believe each citizen is the expert on his or her own life, and we want to work with citizens to give them the opportunity to act and create the space for lasting changes and improvements, not only when it comes to health but also to the environment in which they live. In this manner, we can support active citizenship that puts self-determination, participation and responsibility for one's own life at the centre.



Health is  
a means to  
living the life  
we want

## **We provide special support to the Copenhageners in greatest need**

In Copenhagen we dare to treat citizens differently. Our programmes and offers must be open to all Copenhageners, but our initiatives must be differentiated to ensure that those with the greatest need receive special support. We must take preventive measures and offer early help to individuals we know are at risk of having problems later in life. This applies, for example, to children growing up in families with alcohol abuse. These children have a high risk of becoming alcohol abusers themselves, a problem that can affect their well-being and their ability to complete a youth education programme. We need to fight inequality and give all Copenhageners an equal opportunity to live a long and good life.

We must ensure that children in socially disadvantaged families in particular get the extra support they need to have the best opportunities in life. Meeting these challenges will require collective efforts across the board. From health care, day-care facilities, schools, youth educations and employment to residential care homes, our initiatives must all focus on minimising inequality. Across the local authority, general practice and hospitals, we aim to ensure special support for our most seriously challenged citizens throughout all stages of their lives and to follow up on that support, thus giving them the highest quality and return on our efforts as regards prevention, treatment, care and rehabilitation.



To achieve this goal, we are launching targeted initiatives adapted to the individual's specific needs and resources. We are also ensuring that our communication and dialogue with Copenhagengers is targeted and takes into account those who may have difficulty reading or who lack the resources or energy to attend to their own well-being. This will earn Copenhagengers' trust and increase their sense of security, thus enabling them to make the most of health offers like rehabilitation and physical therapy programmes.

### **We lend equal weight to mental and physical health**

Health is about more than feeling good physically. Poor well-being and mental problems affect our quality of life at least as much as physical illnesses do. What is more, mental challenges have a major impact on social inequality in health. A person suffering from stress or not thriving in his or her daily life is less able to care for him- or herself, much less family or friends. Similarly, a person's mental well-being is at greater risk when he or she has a physical illness.

Consequently, we want to make sure that mental problems are taken just as seriously as physical ones, and we will strive to create openness and acceptance of mental illnesses and disabilities by lifting the taboo on them. We want to strengthen Copenhagengers' mental health and well-being and to work to ensure that Copenhagengers with mental challenges can get the help and support they need on a par with those that have physical illnesses. We will bolster cooperation and initiatives aimed at Copenhagengers with mental problems, thus enabling more people to enjoy good, high-quality lives and take an active part in society and reducing the instance of mental illness.

### **We collaborate broadly to ensure high-quality solutions for Copenhagengers**

Health pertains to a lot more than the choices individual Copenhagengers make about what to embrace or avoid in their daily lives. Our living conditions and family relations play a key role in our well-being and quality of life. The structural and physical frameworks of day-care facilities, schools, workplaces and our cultural activities also have a significant impact on our everyday lives. Similarly, the urban environment, with its noise and air pollution, affects Copenhagengers' health, while the city's physical layout and accessibility impact the way Copenhagengers of all ages use the squares and parks for activities, contemplation and tranquillity.

Accordingly, we must all work more intently and broadly together to include prevention and early initiatives systematically in every part of life – from health care, day-care facilities, schools, youth educations, urban planning, workplaces, sheltered homes, activity centres and nursing care to rehabilitation therapy. We must also focus on maintaining the effects we achieve. We need to make Copenhagengers' ability to live a high quality life a top priority and a collective responsibility throughout the local authority.

Through cooperation and partnership with others, we want to do things in a new and different way – because this generates learning and makes other players involved and committed. These players also impact Copenhagengers' daily lives and quality of life and encounter Copenhagengers under other circumstances than the local authority does.

To this end, we are establishing partnerships and cooperation with volunteers, patient and sports associations, housing organisations, workplaces, research institutions and private and socioeconomic businesses. All of these play an important role in paving the way and creating a framework that helps Copenhagengers make healthy choices in their daily lives, regardless of social background. Partnerships with businesses can open new opportunities and produce welfare technologies that enhance both quality of life and growth in Copenhagen.



**Through  
cooperation  
and partnerships  
we want to do  
things in a new  
and different  
way**

Together, we must create the conditions and solutions that best benefit Copenhageners. New partnerships and increased cooperation will be a cornerstone of this drive to ensure Copenhageners attain a well-being and quality of life that pervade their daily lives. We want to make everyone a bearer of this common vision for Copenhageners.

### **We are boosting cohesive health efforts**

In the next 10 years, more Copenhageners are expected to develop chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cancer. This is a challenge we cannot meet alone.

We want to boost coordination across the Capital Region of Denmark, GPs and the City of Copenhagen. We must focus more strongly on health promotion, prevention and early detection, helping more Copenhageners to stay healthy and ensuring early assistance to those who are ill. Our motto is "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". At the same time we have to make sure that the health system does not play a part in increasing health inequality. Easy and equal access is a fundamental principle of the Danish healthcare system. Nonetheless, some Copenhageners today fail to get the help they need or have difficulty accepting it. To address this problem, we want to develop and implement initiatives that create greater health equality and ensure that the Copenhageners that need treatment receive the right help and support as early as possible. This is why we are making binding agreements with Capital Region of Denmark and GPs.

Early treatment and measures improve the chances of surviving serious illness, and physical therapy and rehabilitation play a decisive role in minimising the period of illness for Copenhageners. This is crucial to working people, who need to maintain their capacity for work and education. Older Copenhageners can also look forward to healthy aging because their functional capacity is preserved after illness, so they can manage their daily lives with limited or no support. We aim to focus on the challenges that Copenhageners face when sick or living with illness, because this strongly influences life quality and the return to everyday activities. Copenhageners need support in managing their own illnesses on the basis of their personal resources and needs. We must also focus on supporting Copenhageners in maintaining their improved functional capacity and quality of life – also in the long run.

### **We use the best knowledge to seek new paths for ensuring Copenhageners a good life**

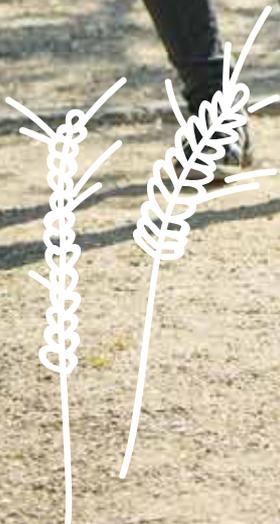
In our pursuit of enhancing Copenhageners' life quality by launching initiatives that improve their health and well-being, we set priorities according to what experience and knowledge tell us works, and we make citizens' lives our starting point. We do this to ensure that Copenhageners get the most out of our initiatives. However, we also have to recognise that our knowledge about what is effective still falls short in some areas, especially when it comes to reducing social inequality in health. Consequently, we are exploring new avenues to find other solutions and initiatives based on our knowledge of the causes, but cannot be certain of the effect of these initiatives. Whenever we try a new approach, we want to take advantage of the opportunity to generate new knowledge by involving citizens as experts, as well as universities and other research institutions to qualify our efforts.

We want to be at the fore of developments in welfare solutions that benefit Copenhageners. New welfare technologies must aid in creating more equity in health and quality of life. They must also ensure that Copenhageners with chronic illnesses, for example, obtain the inspiration and help to manage their illnesses and get the care and attention they need. We aim to use technology such as telehealth to create the security and freedom to live a good life despite chronic illness. One ambition is to give Copenhageners more flexible local authority services with the aid of technologies that enable people to train in their own homes when it suits them. In this way we can give Copenhageners greater health and care that adds to their quality of life and growth and creates new jobs in Copenhagen.



**We prioritise  
what we know  
works**





## 4. THIS IS HOW WE FOLLOW UP

For Copenhageners to achieve a noticeable change in their everyday lives, we must take collective ownership of this change across the board, with everyone concerned committing him- or herself to helping meet the challenges and ensuring that Copenhageners attain the high quality of life that realises our vision.

This is why we are launching action plans across all committees, to be followed up with concrete initiatives and efforts based on a holistic view of the citizen's life situation. The action plans are intended to ensure attention is focused on the factors that have the greatest impact on Copenhageners' health and create cohesive offers and measures for Copenhageners across all sectors. The plans might cover mental health, overweight, physical inactivity in children or alcohol. The action plans are to be underpinned by specific budget requirements, and subsequent initiatives will be integrated into the operation of our core tasks throughout the local authority.

We will continually hold theme meetings across the City's political committees and administrations. We will involve citizens, experts and partners by organising, for example, work seminars and events in order to determine where the challenges are greatest and to gain input regarding how best to solve them.

---

**Every year we present a status report to the Health and Care Committee and Copenhagen City Council on our progress in improving Copenhageners' health and realising our vision.**

---

