

Pledges Directorate for Youth Family and Sport of the Capital City of Hannover
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EuroCities

Commitment to principle 11 „Childcare and support to children“

Being a provider of childcare and youth welfare services, the City of Hannover places youngsters' needs at the very heart of its policy design process. We are committed to empower and engage children and young people living in the City of Hannover. To this respect, we adopt an eye-level communication approach, to ensure that the priorities driving the services of our city administration reflect the diverse needs and life situations of Hannover's families.

Our city administration developed robust local partnerships through fostering links and collaboration with practitioners and representatives of youth welfare organisations. We work together to improve and expand childhood service provisions, both in our childcare facilities as well as in professional home-to-home childcare offered by childminders. Empowering youngsters to be active citizens and members of democratic societies is a crosscutting priority of the city of Hannover. **We are committed to changing the negative narrative about young people and promoting a positive political discourse that fosters trust with youngsters, promotes intergenerational solidarity, and boosts youth representation.** We believe that youth participation means more than just listening to young people: our municipality is interested in understanding and addressing the social and environmental factors that lead to violent and aggressive behaviour of younger people. In order to address children's needs, the city of Hannover applies a science-based framework in designing the city's early childhood policy.

Our actions focus on three main policy areas:

1. **Marginalised young people and children:** the city of Hannover developed specific offers for different target groups. We regard children as right holders and competent social actors. Therefore, we promote an effective communication at eye-level rather than a top-down approach.
 - **High-risk marginalised youth:** When working with high-risk marginalised children and youth, we take into account the prevalence of disconnection and mistrust they often experience in their social environment. These children have often experienced multiple relationship breakdowns in their early childhood. As a core element of its children's policy, Hannover has developed specific measures for children at high risk of social exclusion. The aim is to improve the early identification of marginalisation and to offer individualised services.
 - **Unaccompanied minor refugees:** unaccompanied minors with experiences of migration, refugee, and asylum seeker status have special needs. The City of Hannover is developing its care system based on these special needs. Our aim is that all unaccompanied minor refugees receive the help they deserve.
 - **Sinti and Roma families:** the city of Hannover works directly with the local Sinti and Roma communities, focusing on children and families. Involving the local communities improves the acceptance of the local support services and helps to overcome mistrust towards public institutions.

- Reducing the **under-representation of children and young people with international biographies** (so called migrant background) and **ensuring non-discriminatory access to day-care facilities** is essential for developing an equal society in our city. Early language learning is an important milestone for a successful educational career. That is why, Hannover is strongly promoting multilingual education through the science-based local initiatives: *Griffbereit* (ready to hand) and *Rucksack KiTa* (backpack daycare). These programmes, developed by the city of Hannover, are aimed not only at young pupils, but also at their parents or other persons responsible for the children's education. Both programmes encourage the participation of children from low-income and disadvantaged households. We strongly believe that early childhood education can be an effective way to break the cycle of poverty.
 - **Children living in poverty:** the local figures on families benefitting from social assistance ("community of need" according to the German social assistance system) show that income and monetary poverty are concentrated in certain neighbourhoods in our city. In these areas of concentrated urban poverty, the majority of children grow up in poor financial conditions. Hannover has developed several instruments to combat poverty among children and young people: the *Hannover Active Pass* enables the participation in local leisure activities. The *Hannoverfonds* finances measures against child poverty by supporting the social participation of disadvantaged young people.
2. **Participation and involvement in the decision-making process.** The Coronavirus severely limited young people's opportunities to participate. For almost 2 years, children had little or no access to their peers. The City of Hannover is committed to encouraging the participation and contribution of young people in different policy areas. **We believe that promoting the active participation of our youth contributes to the development of critical thinking**, which is an essential tool in times of misinformation and a growing anti-democratic spirit. Civic participation in the decision-making process is a fundamental prerequisite for a functioning democratic society. **In Hannover, we are committed to addressing and implementing children's rights, starting with early childhood education. The city council is supporting a group of young people to set up a local youth parliament.** With the support of local politicians, we are confident that the Youth Parliament will be up and running by the end of 2025. **The city administration supports a group of young people in establishing a local youth parliament.** With the backing of the local politics, we are confident that the youth parliament will start its work by the end of 2025.
3. Finally, the city of Hannover is in the process of **obtaining the certification as a child-friendly municipality**. Being committed to integrate the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children in our local public policies, the city administration will review all our services and offers from a child-friendly perspective. After all, the political decisions we make today will have a lasting impact on the lives of future generations here in Hannover.

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