

Assessment report

2022



Helsinki

Helsinki

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Greetings from the Audit Committee

The purpose of the Audit Committee's assessment is to provide the Council with information about achieving the city's set objectives and the effectiveness of its activities. This assessment report presents the Audit Committee's findings and recommendations which the City Council, the City Board, other bodies, the Central Administration, and divisions can use to develop the city's operations. At the end of the year, the City Board will report to the Council on the actions taken based on these recommendations.

The Audit Committee's 2022 assessment report is the first report of the 2021–2025 council term that accounts for the City Strategy adopted in the autumn of 2021. As outlined in the assessment report's table of contents, nine of the City Strategy's priority areas are covered. During the Committee's term, its assessments will focus on all 13 of the City Strategy's priority areas.

In the autumn of 2022, the Audit Committee updated the assessment plan with a topic on the introduction of Sarastia, the new human resources and payroll system. The topic was added following the discovery of a significant number of errors in the city's payroll after implementing the new system. The Audit Committee's related expert hearings started in November and continued in the spring session of 2023. The Audit Committee's findings and recommendations regarding Sarastia cover subjects such as the project's preparation, implementation and management.

The Audit Committee would also like to draw attention to the fact that since the 2022 budget, the City Council has no longer set goals for the City Group's subsidiaries. In practice, the decision-making power for setting goals has been delegated to the City Board in the Group Guidelines adopted on 1 March 2023. The Audit Committee believes that the most significant subsidiaries at least should have goals to report to the City Council.

You can read the assessment report and its background memoranda at www.arviointikertomus.fi/en

You can read all the Committee's findings in the assessment report and on the arviointikertomus.fi website. Both are based on the Audit Committee's findings, and provide residents and anyone else interested in Helsinki's activities with comprehensive information about how the city has performed in its tasks. The findings of the assessment will also be published in Swedish and English during the spring. The key findings are presented in the summary of the assessment report.

The Audit Committee would like to thank the professional staff of the Audit Department and other people involved in preparing the 2022 assessments and hopes that you find the assessment report interesting and engaging!

Best regards,
The City of Helsinki Audit Committee



Summary

The Audit Committee's task is to assess whether the municipality and the municipal group have achieved the operational and financial targets set by the City Council and whether their operations have been organised effectively and appropriately. Below is a selection of results from the 2022 assessments.

The mental health service chain for young people and adults needs to be improved.

The city has taken many development measures in recent years to facilitate access to early-stage mental health services for young people and adults. However, assessments of secondary school students and adults showed that clients are not getting treatment within the intended timeframe. The staging of care, progression through the treatment chain and responsibilities for care are unclear. In addition, student health services and health stations feel that they must support those with more severe symptoms because there is a waiting list for the Youth Station. For adults, the criteria for admission to the psychiatric outpatient clinic are too strict. The Audit Committee gave recommendations for the staging of care and improving access to it.



Further measures are needed to strengthen staff attraction and retention.

There is a national shortage of qualified workers in early childhood education and care and the health sector. Based on the assessment, there have been many efforts to address the labour shortage in day-care centres and senior centres, but the problems with staff availability have increased, and employee well-being has deteriorated. In addition to improving management and well-being at work, there is still a need to improve attraction and retention by reviewing the competitiveness of staff benefits, for example.

Family centre facilities are not conducive to maternity and child health care.

Physically centralised family centres have aimed to improve cooperation between different professional groups, but public health nurses say this is impossible because of the large number of staff and high turnover. Employees also do not have their own offices, and there is a shortage of space. Maternity and child health care services generally meet the needs of families, and the coverage of health examinations at clinics is good. Maternity and child health care clinics can identify special needs, but families do not always receive adequate support quickly enough from other social and health services.

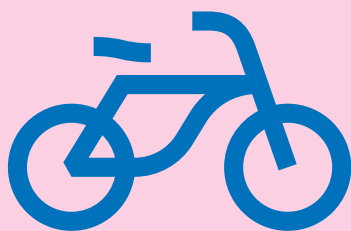


Informal carers caring for persons under the age of 65 cannot always take their statutory leave because there is a shortage of temporary care places to meet their needs.

Clients under 65 years of age receiving informal care support are a heterogeneous group, and the needs of families vary widely. For example, there is a shortage of Swedish-speaking temporary care facilities and places suitable for people over 18 with severe disabilities.

The introduction of Sarastia, the human resources and payroll system, failed in several areas.

There were shortcomings in management, operational models, staff competence and system performance. Not enough effort was put into deployment and into change management in particular. Payroll errors have complicated the daily lives of city workers and their families in various ways and have caused the city a loss of reputation and significant additional costs. The responsibility for managing the project should have been clearly assigned to one person, and the change management should have been invested in throughout the organisation.



The percentage of sustainable forms of transport did not increase in the previous strategy period.

Sustainable transport modes have not been sufficiently promoted in accordance with the City Strategy to increase their share during the 2017–2021 strategy period. While there is strong investment in trams, the target network for bicycle traffic has been slow to develop. Promoting walking is in its initial stages and is operating with limited resources. There are problems in cooperation between the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office that make it difficult to promote sustainable transport.

Land-use planning aims to preserve green areas, but they are also designated for development.

The Urban Environment Division has largely ensured that green spaces are preserved. However, case studies have shown that local detailed plans designate natural areas with endangered habitats or species for housing development. Nonetheless, development has been well justified in the examined cases, and efforts have been made in preparing the plans to investigate and consider the relevant current studies and ecological data for the planned area as far as possible. Land-use planning must reconcile objectives for natural and recreational areas with those for housing production.

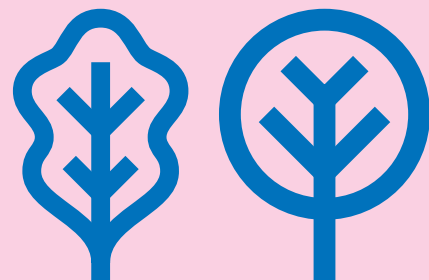


The city has taken measures for streamlining walking, driving and logistics in the city centre.

However, there have yet to be significant discernible effects from these measures. Efforts have been made to promote the use of the underground service tunnel, but there is insufficient incentive to do so thus far. There are differences of opinion within the city about how to develop the city centre regarding how significant of an impact motorists have on its vitality, for example.

There have been no major changes in residents' perception of safety.

Helsinki is primarily viewed as a very safe place, but the perception of safety has decreased slightly. There are significant differences in the perception of safety between areas, but they have already remained consistent for several years. Serious criminal offences against persons committed by young people are on the rise. On the other hand, there has been a marked decline in police alerts for disorderly behaviour and vandalism. The safety of children's commutes to school has improved over the long term.



The Audit Committee's activities

Audit Committee's duties and composition

The Audit Committee is a statutory body directly accountable to the City Council, tasked with ensuring that the City of Helsinki's and the City Group's administration and finances are assessed and to carry out target, effectiveness and suitability assessments according to the Local Government Act. The Committee prepares the administrative and financial audit matters, which the City Council decides on, and supervises compliance with the obligation to declare private interests as defined in the Local Government Act. The Audit Committee is independent of the City's executive management and other organisational bodies.

On 2 August 2021, the City Council appointed the Audit Committee for the 2021–2025 term. The Committee has nine members, each of whom has a personal deputy. The Committee's assessments are prepared in two commissions whose compositions are described on the next page. The division of responsibilities between the commissions is attached to the assessment report.

The Audit Department assists the Audit Committee in assessing the achievement of the objectives set by the Council and the effective and appropriate organisation of activities, as well as in monitoring declarations of private interest. The Audit Department also assists the City Auditor in the statutory audit of the City's accounts.

In 2022, Audit Director Timo Terävä was the head of the Audit Department and the rapporteur for the Audit Committee. Assessment Manager Minna Tiili was responsible for assessment activities, Audit Manager Arto Ahlqvist for auditing activities, and Controller Vilma Lamminpää for monitoring the declaration of private interests. Senior Performance Auditor Liisa Kähkönen served as secretary of the Audit Committee. A total of 17 people worked in the Audit Department.

Assessment operations

In accordance with its role defined in the Local Government Act, the Committee annually assesses whether the City and the City Group have achieved the operational and financial targets set by the City Council, and whether their operations have been organised effectively and appropriately. The findings and

recommendations of the assessment are presented in this assessment report.

The background memoranda of the assessment report are publicly available at www.arviointikertomus.fi/en.

The assessment report will be considered by the City Council on 21 June 2023. Before the City Council considers the assessment report, the Audit Committee will request the necessary statements from the City Board and other bodies and submit them to the City Council for information. Later in the year, the City Board must give the City Council an account of the measures the persons responsible for the operations and those accountable have taken as a result of the assessment report.

The Audit Committee carries out its assessment work systematically. In its action plan adopted on 14 December 2021, the Committee has outlined that most of the changing assessment topics will be linked to the City Strategy and will focus on all its main elements during the council term.

In fact, the assessment report's table of contents is mainly based on the priorities in the City Strategy. Annually recurring assessment topics include progress towards binding objectives, financial assessment, and monitoring the effectiveness of recommendations. The annually changing assessment topics are decided in each year's assessment plan.

The 2022 assessment plan was prepared jointly by the Audit Committee and Audit Department and approved by the Committee on 10 May 2022. The preparations for the plan took into account the suggestions for assessment topics put forward by councillors, council groups and city management, as well as suggestions made by residents through the Kerro kantasi (Voice your opinion) service. On 13 September 2022, the Committee updated the assessment plan to include the topic of implementing Sarastia, the human resources and payroll system.

Two commissions prepared the assessment report throughout the year. They met to discuss the implementation plans, memoranda and draft text of the assessment report. In addition, the commissions made a total of six assessment visits to the Central Administration, divisions and group entities. Most of the practical assessment work is carried out by Audit

Composition of the Audit Committee

First commission



Vice-chair Dani Niskanen
Deputy Leila Kaleva



Iida Haglund
Deputy Juha Christensen



Jussi Junni
Deputy Virve Magdaleno



Terhi Peltokorpi
Deputy Jukka Ihanus

Second commission



Chair Nuutti Hyttinen
Deputy Marika Sorja



Nita Austero
Deputy Pertti Hyvärinen



Sandra Hagman
Deputy Jani Valpio



Mikael Jungner
Deputy Kimmo Niemelä



Petrus Pennanen
Deputy Antonia Åkerberg

Department employees. The assessment is based on criteria that may be set out in legislation, City Strategy or other relevant city policies. The knowledge base for the assessment typically consists of documents, interviews, written requests for information and statistical data. The conclusions and recommendations in the assessment report are based on findings from the assessment materials.

The secretaries of the commissions coordinate the assessment work by the commissions. Senior Performance Auditor Petri Jäske served as secretary of the Committee's first commission, and Senior Performance Auditor Liisa Kähkönen served as secretary of the second commission. Senior Performance Auditor Aija Kaartinen was responsible for methodological support and training for the assessment work. The Assessment Manager and the Senior Performance Auditors are responsible for the quality assurance of the assessment work. In addition to internal quality assurance, the correctness of the content of the assessment memoranda and assessment report texts is verified by the subject of the assessment.

Figure 1 shows how the Audit Committee's assessment work proceeds chronologically.

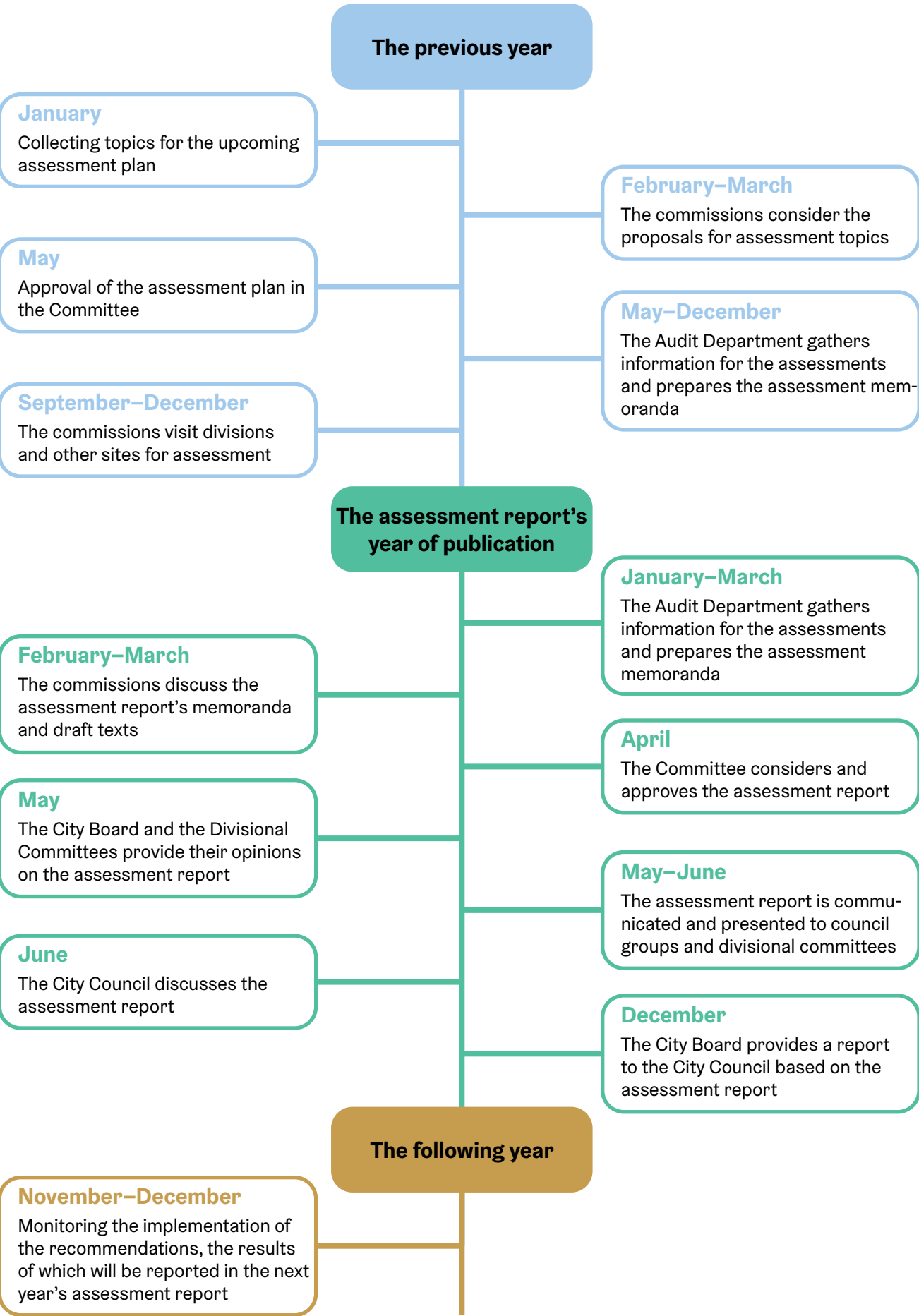
Auditing operations

The auditor for the City of Helsinki's financial periods from 2019 to 2022 was KPMG Oy Ab. The principal auditor, Jorma Nurkkala, a public administration auditor (JHT) approved by the Central Chamber of Commerce (KHT), gave the Committee three reports on the 2022 audit and presented the findings at the Committee meetings. The City Council will discuss the audit report and the public summary report of the 2022 audit on 21 June 2023.

Monitoring the declaration of private interests

Under the Local Government Act, elected officials and officeholders are obligated to declare their private interests publicly. The Audit Committee is tasked with monitoring compliance with the obligation to declare interests and notifying the City Council of such declarations. In 2022, the Audit Committee recorded the private interests declared by elected officials and officeholders in its meetings on 31 June and 8 November 2022. The declarations were discussed by the City Council on 22 June and 7 December 2022. The Audit Department assisted the Audit Committee in monitoring the declarations of private interests.

Figure 1. Annual plan for the Audit Committee’s assessment work



Assessing the binding operational targets

Fewer targets were met than before

The 2022 budget had a total of 33 binding operational targets for the divisions, municipal enterprises and departments, which the City Council had approved. According to the Audit Committee's assessment, 14 targets, or 42 per cent, were achieved. The financial statements also assessed 14 targets as met. The rate at which the targets were met was 14 percentage points lower than in the previous year, 2021.

The financial statements assessed 19 binding operational targets as unmet, which is one more than the Audit Committee estimated. According to the Audit Committee's assessment, it was impossible to comment on the achievement of one of the targets. The Social Services and Health Care Division's objective was to ensure that services were near residents and easily accessible. However, the budget did not set target values for the indicators for the care guarantee at health stations and the ability to contact oral health care. These values were not specified until the first budget forecast was submitted to the City Executive Office with a description of their documentation. In addition, the division found the indicators partly unreliable due to the lack of job titles in the database. As a result of these factors, the Audit Committee considers that it was impossible to assess the achievement of the objective and its two indicators.

The rate at which target indicators were met was better than in 2021.

There were a total of 59 indicators to measure the achievement of the objectives. Of these, 58% were achieved (Figure 2), a slightly higher percentage than in the previous year (55%). According to the Audit Committee's assessment, the achievement of two indicators could not be assessed because the budget had not set a target level for these indicators. The indicators were those mentioned above for the care guarantee and oral health care.

According to the budget compliance guidelines, a binding target is considered achieved if all of its indicators specified in the budget are met. Failure to achieve even a single indicator means that the target is not met. The divisions' targets have a varying number of indicators. If a target has many indicators, and even a single one is not met, the target will not be achieved.

The Central Administration had the most success in meeting its binding targets

Figure 3 shows that the Central Administration and the Culture and Leisure Division had the most success in meeting their targets. The Central Administration includes the City Executive Office, Audit Committee and the Central Administration's enterprises. Just over half the Central Administration's targets were met. This was influenced by the fact that only two of the Central Administration's 14 objectives had more than one indicator.

The City Executive Office had six targets, and five were achieved. The targets had eight indicators, seven of which were achieved. The target for the number of started housing units, which was shared with the Urban Environment Division, was not met. Reasons for the slowdown in housing production include the sharp increase in construction costs that started in late 2021 and the sharp increase in energy prices, consumer prices and interest rates triggered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. Examples of achieved targets include the preparation of an investment plan for urban renewal areas and targets that guide the growth of current expenditures and the level of total investments.

Both the Audit Department and the Service Centre municipal enterprise had one binding target with a single indicator that was achieved. The construction service Stara had three targets, one of which was achieved. The targets for accident frequency and the share of renewable diesel were not met. According to Stara, the renewable diesel target was not met because the staff had doubts about the suitability of renewable diesel for their machinery, and because they believed they were saving money by using fossil-based fuel. However, at Stara's contract price, renewable diesel is nearly the same price as fossil-based diesel.

The financial management service enterprise (Talpa) had two binding operational targets, and both had one indicator. Both the financial performance and customer satisfaction targets remained unmet. The only target for the occupational health enterprise was related to customer experience, and its indicator did not reach its target level.

Figure 2. Percentage of achieved binding target indicators for divisions, enterprises and departments in 2022

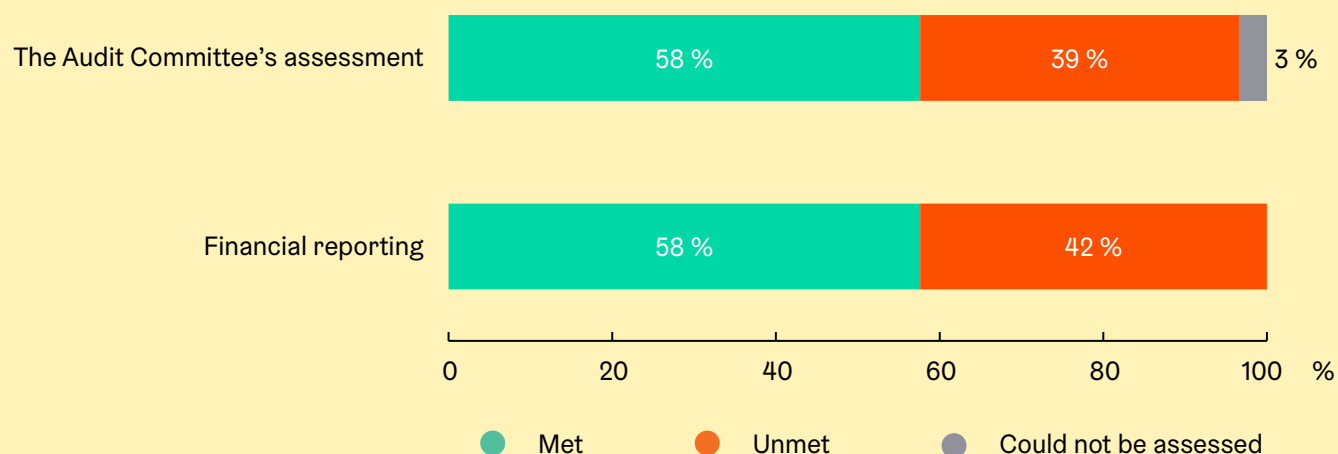
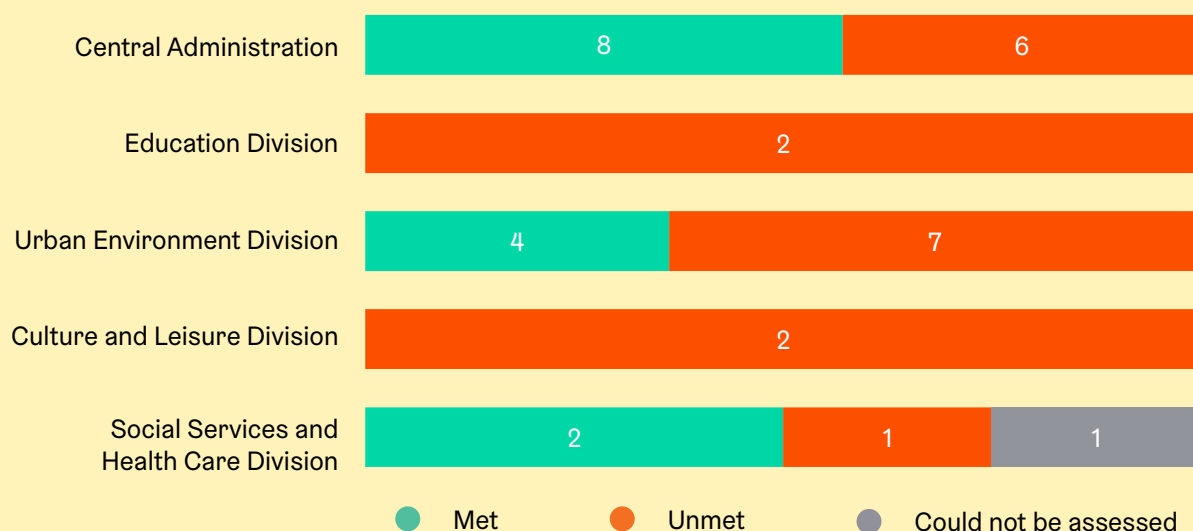


Figure 3. Number of achieved binding targets by division in 2022



Two of the Urban Environment Division's five binding targets were achieved. There were 14 indicators, nine of which were met. For the objectives for urban experience and promoting urban growth, the indicators did not meet their target levels for customer satisfaction in street maintenance, responding to customer feedback within the target timeframe, and starting new housing. For the target of promoting the building stock's environmental sustainability, the indicators related to long-term planning for buildings (LTP) were not met because the maintenance log system was not ready. Consequently, the number of plans was low. The targets and all their indicators were met for the investment plan for urban renewal areas and promoting their environmental sustainability. The indicators for the

latter target included the installation of heat pumps in buildings and the run times of ventilation units.

The Urban Environment Division also included the Rescue Department and the public transport company. One of the Rescue Department's three binding targets was met. Each target had one indicator. The targets for accident prevention and emergency care remained unmet. The safety score was just short of the target for the indicator of the first objective, and the response time delay did not reach the target threshold in a sufficiently large number of tasks for the emergency care indicator. The target for rescue service preparedness was met.

Helsinki City Transport (HKL) achieved one of its three targets: HKL's finances were to remain balanced, i.e. the result for the financial year had to be at least zero. The targets for the number of unscheduled metro departures and customer satisfaction were not met. Since the creation of Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd (Pääkaupunkiseudun kaupunkiliikenne Oy) at the beginning of 2022, HKL has only been responsible for metro operations and infrastructure.

The Maisa customer portal is widely used in the Social Services and Health Care Division's services

The Social Services and Health Care Division had four targets, two of which were achieved. The targets had ten indicators, of which five were met, three remained unmet, and two could not be assessed, according to the Audit Committee. Two targets were met, as the Maisa customer portal was used for every service, and the proportion of people in 24-hour institutional care was reduced. The objective of promoting well-being and health and preventing exclusion was not met, as one of its five indicators was not achieved. This indicator was the percentage of home care clients who had mobility agreements. The Audit Committee's view is that it was impossible to assess one of the objectives because the budget did not set target values for the indicators for the health stations' care guarantee. These were not provided until later with the description of the documentation process. According to the division, the indicators were also partly unreliable.

The Education Division's two targets were not met, but seven out of ten indicators reached their target level. The unmet indicators concerned the social skills scores in the well-being profile, the introduction of materials related to sustainable development in early childhood education, and students' perception of their inclusion. In turn, indicators such as children's friends in early childhood education, high school students' experience of inclusion, and growth in the number of apprenticeships were met.

The Culture and Leisure Division had two binding operational targets, neither of which was met. The indicator for the target of rebuilding operations was to restore the number of visits to pre-pandemic levels. The indicator was 98% achieved, and the result was affected by services that had still been closed due to restrictions in early 2022. The indicator for the operational efficiency target was euro limits on unit costs for all services. This indicator was not met, as unit costs were only below the target level in cultural services.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on meeting binding targets

In 2022, the coronavirus pandemic was still evident in some indicators such as those for the Education

Division measuring the experience of inclusion. In the Social Services and Health Care Division, clearing the care backlog caused by the coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on meeting targets. Due to restrictions, Culture and leisure services were still closed at the beginning of 2022, which directly affected meeting the binding targets.

The City Council considered and approved the deviations from the targets in its meeting on 01 March 2023.

Conclusions on the achievement of objectives

Forty-two per cent of the binding operational targets and 58% of the indicators in the 2022 budget were met. The City Executive Office had the most success in meeting binding targets, although the majority of these only had one indicator. However, an important joint target with the Urban Environment Division on the number of started housing units was not met. In 2022, the coronavirus pandemic still had an impact on meeting the targets of the Education Division, Social Services and Health Care Division, and the Culture and Leisure Division in particular. Stara did not meet its binding operational target to increase the share of renewable diesel because the personnel were not committed to this goal.

The Audit Committee's assessment of meeting the objectives deviated from the financial statements assessment regarding two indicators. In the Audit Committee's opinion, their achievement could not be assessed because the budget did not set target values for the indicators for the health stations' care guarantee. These were not provided until later in the description of the documentation process. According to the division, the indicators were also partly unreliable.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division should

- ▶ set the indicators for binding targets so that their target values are also described in the budget.

the city's construction service (Stara) should

- ▶ ensure that personnel are committed to achieving binding operational objectives in future.

Targets set for the Group

Setting targets for group entities changed in the 2022 budget

Until the 2021 budget, the City Council set “performance targets specific to each subsidiary receiving city subsidies, as well as for other key subsidiaries”. The 2021 budget specified 32 targets for a total of 26 subsidiaries, which were to be reported to the City Council. Until 2021, the targets were therefore set by and reported to the City Council, which meant that not meeting the targets was addressed by the City Council.

Starting with the 2022 budget, the City Council has no longer set operational objectives for the subsidiaries. The budget states that “ownership strategies will eliminate the separate annual process of setting budget targets”. At the same time, the practice of referring unmet targets to the City Council has been abandoned. For companies operating on market terms, a financial target is set as follows: “The City’s goal for the distribution of dividends by its key subsidiaries operating on market terms is that the companies will distribute approximately half their earnings as dividends over the planning period. In 2022, the city is expected to receive a dividend of roughly 43 million euros from its shareholdings.”

The operational objectives were set by the City Council when it decided on the ownership strategies. The 2022 budget sets out the objectives of the ownership strategies for the subsidiaries receiving a city subsidy and of certain other key subsidiaries.

According to section 14(2) of the Local Government Act, the council decides, among other things, on the municipal strategy, budget, financial plan, principles of corporate governance, and Group Guidelines. According to section 110(2) of the Local Government Act, the budget and financial plan must be drawn up to implement the municipal strategy and secure the preconditions for performing the municipality’s functions. The budget and financial plan are used to approve the operational and financial objectives of the municipality and the municipal group.

According to chapter 7(1)(18) of the City of Helsinki’s Administrative Regulations, unless otherwise provided for or prescribed, the City Council shall, as part of the budget and financial plan, decide on the operational and financial objectives for divisions and municipal enterprises, set objectives for subsidiaries and City-controlled foundations, and set common objectives for the City Group.

In the opinion of the City Executive Office’s Legal Services, the City Council has set objectives for the City Group in the budget to the extent it wants, as required by the Local Government Act and the Administrative Regulations. In addition to the City Council, the City Board sets targets under delegated authority when adopting subsidiary-specific ownership strategies. Legal Services considers that the City Council’s decision on the budget includes which objectives and indicators set out in the subsidiaries’ ownership strategies will be presented as part of the budget.

The City Council has delegated the decision on the Group’s objectives to the City Council

On 1 March 2023, the City Council approved Group Guidelines that changed its role in setting the objectives of the subsidiaries. According to the previous Group Guidelines, the City Council set “financial and/or operational objectives in the budget for market-operating subsidiaries and the City’s other significant subsidiaries to ensure that their activities are in the City Group’s overall interest”. When the 2022 budget was decided in the autumn of 2021, and likewise when the 2023 budget was decided in the autumn of 2022, the abovementioned provision of the Group Guidelines was still in effect. However, it was not followed in the 2022 and 2023 budgets, i.e. it was not taken into account that, in accordance with the Group Guidelines, the City Council should have set targets in the budget.

Legal Services considers the City Council’s decision on the budget to be setting targets, as it includes which objectives and indicators set out in the subsidiaries’ ownership strategies will be presented as part of the budget. The Audit Committee considers that this does not constitute setting objectives. The 2022 budget explicitly states that the separate annual process of setting budget targets has been abandoned. It is the City Board that has set the operational objectives for the entities, rather than the Council.

According to the Group Guidelines, which were in force until 28 February 2023, “the City Council decides on the principles of ownership policy, strategy, Group steering, and the City Group’s main operational and financial objectives”. The new Group Guidelines no longer define the tasks of City Group management but state that they are provided for in the Local Government Act and the City’s Administrative Regulations. According to them, the City Council is the body that decides on objectives. However, the Administrative

Regulations include the phrase “unless otherwise provided for or prescribed”. A similar contingency is also included in the powers of the City Board: unless otherwise provided for or prescribed, the City Board is “responsible for organising group management and supervision, setting the objectives for City-controlled entities and foundations, and monitoring their achievement”. The City Board has fulfilled this duty by setting targets for the subsidiaries as part of ownership strategies.

Under both the old and new Group Guidelines, the City Board approves ownership strategies for each subsidiary. According to the new Group Guidelines, “the City Council may set annual targets for the most significant subsidiaries in the city budget”. So this possibility still exists, but it is quite theoretical. The Administrative Regulations require that the City Board’s City Group Division submit a proposal to the City Board on the operational and financial objectives to be set for the subsidiary companies and foundations. The City Board then submits a proposal for a decision by the City Council. In practice, the City Executive Office should therefore prepare a proposal for a decision by the Group Division, in which the Group Division would

propose to the City Board that the City Board propose to the City Council that the City Council set specific targets for certain subsidiaries. In addition, the Head of the Office, as rapporteur for the City Board and the Group Division, has the power to propose objectives for approval by the Council. The Mayor may also bring forward a matter within the jurisdiction of the City Board or its divisions or appoint an official to be the rapporteur.

No targets were set for the city’s most important company in the 2022 and 2023 budgets

Helen Ltd is the City of Helsinki’s most important subsidiary. Despite this fact, the city’s budget for 2022 and 2023 do not set any targets for it. This is because, starting with the 2022 budget, setting targets in the city budget was linked to ownership strategies, but the ownership strategy for Helen Ltd was not approved by the City Board until 27 February 2023. The company had already begun operations on 1 January 2015, but the ownership strategy was not specified until eight years later.



Subsidiaries quite frequently lack target values for their objectives.

From the 2022 budget onwards, setting objectives for subsidiaries has also changed, with the result that only some of the objectives or their indicators have target values. According to the Group Guidelines, “The key indicators defined in the ownership strategies are used to monitor how well the subsidiaries are progressing towards their longer-term objectives. As a general rule, the municipal owner does not set separate annual target values for key indicators; rather, this is the task and responsibility of the subsidiaries’ boards. However, the Group management and the City Executive Office will endeavour to support the subsidiaries in meeting the set targets and may set more specific annual target values or thresholds for the objectives and their key indicators defined in the ownership strategy.”

The targets set for the Group do not follow the same principles as those for the parent city. Target values must always be set for the parent city’s indicators. This difference may be justified from a legal perspective, as the Council’s guidance is not legally binding on the subsidiaries.

It is difficult to comment on whether targets have been met

The 2022 budget set out 113 targets based on the ownership strategies of 24 subsidiaries. In previous years, the Audit Committee has assessed the achievement of the binding targets set for the subsidiaries in the budget. As the 2022 budget no longer sets targets for the subsidiaries that are to be reported to the Council, and as the number of targets and their indicators based on ownership strategies is very high under the current model, it was inappropriate for the Audit Committee to assess the achievement of all the subsidiaries’ targets in 2022. The target assessment focused on the objectives of the subsidiaries that were part of the Vitality and Marketing community group.

A total of 26 targets based on ownership strategies was set for the six subsidiaries belonging to the Vitality and Marketing community group, of which 18 were achieved, according to corporate reporting. The Audit Committee could not comment on the majority of these objectives, as there are hardly any set target levels or development trends for these objectives and their indicators. It is therefore not meaningful to report on the achievement of subsidiaries’ objectives in more detail in the assessment report.

However, the City Executive Office has assessed the achievement of 113 targets in its financial reporting. According to the financial reporting, 84, or 74%, of the

targets were met, while 29, or 26%, of the objectives were not met. Corporate reporting from the subsidiaries and financial reporting have documented meeting the targets in various ways. Corporate reporting provides an option for “Partly achieved” in assessing the achievement of the objectives. In the financial statements, meeting the objectives is described as “Met” or “Unmet” per the parent city’s guidelines. In the financial statements, the achievement of the objectives is described as “Met” or “Unmet” per the parent city’s guidelines.

Conclusions

According to the Audit Committee’s interpretation, the City Council’s decision-making power for setting the Group’s objectives has been delegated in practice to the City Board by the Group Guidelines that the City Council adopted on 1 March 2023. According to the City of Helsinki’s Legal Services, the new procedure adopted in Helsinki is in line with the Local Government Act and the Administrative Regulations. However, the Audit Committee would like to draw attention to the fact that, as of the 2022 budget, the City Council has no longer set operational targets for the subsidiaries in practice. If the City Council wanted to set targets in future, there is a theoretical possibility of doing so. However, there is no procedure by which the City Council can communicate to the City Executive Office that it wants to set targets for the subsidiaries.

The Audit Committee considers it a significant deficiency that the city’s most important subsidiary, Helen Ltd, has not had an ownership strategy drawn up by the city during its first eight years of operation. Additionally, the city has not set targets for the company in the last two budgets.

The Audit Committee finds that

the City Executive Office should

- ▶ as part of the city’s budget, prepare targets for the most important subsidiaries, which are to be reported to the City Council. These targets may be selectively chosen based on ownership strategies, but in a way that sets target levels for the indicators, which allows their realisation to be assessed.
- ▶ ensure that an ownership strategy is defined for new subsidiaries without delay, and that the ownership strategies of existing subsidiaries are kept up to date.



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My Helsinki

Implementation of Sarastia, the human resources and payroll system

The City of Helsinki introduced Sarastia, the human resources and payroll system, in April 2022. The Audit Committee decided to update its 2022 assessment plan after serious problems arose with the city's salary payments. The Audit Committee heard the Mayor, the City Manager, the Director of Human Resources Policy, the Director of Digitalisation, Talpa's Administrative Director, the director of the stabilisation project, the city's employee organisations and the Chief Executive Officer of Sarastia Oy. The Audit Department's preparers also had access to documents such as a report prepared by Valor Partners Oy (Valor). Additionally, they interviewed the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Digitalisation.

The Sarastia system's procurement was prepared within a short timeframe

The City of Helsinki used the human resources and payroll system known as "Hijat" from 1984 until the introduction of Sarastia. The renewal of the HR information system had been in the works since 2010. In the interim period before the Sarastia procurement was settled, the city tried to move forward with implementing the Hijat2 system, which was based on the existing system. Negotiations with CGI broke down in the spring of 2020, leaving the city about two-and-a-half years until the end of Hijat's technical support at the end of 2022.

The city started preparing to procure the Sarastia system in the spring of 2020 when the failure of the Hijat2 project was becoming certain. The human resources department and the management of the digitalisation unit thought that there were very few options for a city the size of Helsinki, especially given the city's staff was responsible for payroll. Espoo's studies and experiences were used to assess the system's suitability and implementation. The city's intention was to procure Sarastia primarily as a payroll system. The city plans to proceed with the procurement of the complete HR system once the payroll system has been stabilised.

In the spring of 2020, Sarastia Oy prepared a preliminary report on the implementation of the system. Representatives from the Executive Office's Human

Resources Department, Digitalisation Unit, Talpa and Capgemini participated in workshops for preparing the report. The City Executive Group discussed the results of the preliminary report on 23 June 2020, when the city's experts concluded that "Sarastia365 HR is a suitable solution for the City of Helsinki's payroll and HRM functions". The proposal prepared for the Executive Group identified significantly more benefits from the system than challenges. Some of the highlighted challenges included changing the city's operating methods and ensuring the system's performance.

The City Manager decided to procure the human resources and payroll system service from Sarastia Oy on 3 November 2020. On 26 October 2020, prior to the procurement, the City Board approved the subscription of shares in Sarastia Oy. On the same day, the City Board's Group Division approved the City's commitment to Sarastia Oy's shareholder agreement to allow the HR system's procurement. According to the justifications for the decisions, the contract negotiations with Sarastia Oy had started on 20 August 2020, meaning that the procurement decision was taken approximately two-and-a-half months after the negotiations began. About five months had passed since the preliminary report was completed. The hearings and interviews on these topics also highlighted the urgency in procuring the new system: if the city had wanted to put the procurement out to tender, it should already have adopted a policy on it in the spring of 2019.

The procurement was made without competitive tendering as an in-house procurement, which meant that it could be carried out quickly. In August 2020, Sarastia Oy had a total of 268 shareholders, and at the time of the share subscription, Helsinki's ownership was estimated at 0.04%. The 2018 memorandum prepared by the city's Legal Services discusses compliance with the conditions for in-house entity status. According to legislation, an entity can be considered an in-house entity under the Public Procurement Act if in addition to certain other conditions, the city exercises control over the entity in the same way as over its own establishments. From this perspective, the legality of the in-house procurement has been publicly called into question.

In retrospect, there was a lot of room for improvement in preparing for the implementation

The procurement decision initiated the system implementation project, which was broadly divided into three parts: a technical change, human resources change and a change in financial management services. In hindsight, it seems that the project failed in all three areas. The people responsible for the project, the director of human resources and the director of digitalisation considered the large size of the city and its fragmented operating methods as a reason for the project's failure. However, it was known ahead of time that the City of Helsinki had close to 40,000 employees and about 3,000 supervisors, and that the divisions were independent. According to the root cause analysis compiled by the director of digitalisation, there were shortcomings in leadership, staff skills, operating models, technology and data. According to the human resources director's assessment, one of the biggest mistakes was allowing the divisions to choose how supervisors and Human Resources participated in data entry. There was no call for a uniform operating model at the city level.

Based on the Audit Committee's hearings and documentation, one of the main reasons for the project's failure was unclear management responsibility. This is also brought up in the report from Valor. From the beginning, the project lacked a clear owner with the responsibility and resources to ensure its successful implementation. The director of human resources and the City Executive Office's Human Resources Department were responsible for the content, and the Strategy Department's Digitalisation Unit for the budget and technical aspects of the project. Management responsibility was not centralised to a single director until 1 July 2022, when the City Manager appointed the Director of Human Resources to manage the crisis and stabilise the situation. This responsibility was transferred on 1 October 2022, when the Culture and Leisure Division's administrative director took over as head of the stabilisation project. They have endeavoured to manage the issues related to processes, leadership, and the system.

Talpa, the financial management service enterprise, is responsible for payroll processing. However, the payroll system is owned by Stadin HR, the human resources department of the City Executive Office. According to Talpa's head of administration, Sarastia's preliminary report focused more on the HR process than payroll processing. According to Valor's report, the implementation project did not involve payroll representatives, i.e. payroll secretaries, who are responsible for the practical implementation of payroll processing.

Inadequate change management was a recurring theme in the hearings. The extent of the change

was not fully understood and thus not sufficiently addressed by the City Executive Office, divisions, Talpa, and Sarastia Oy. In particular, the magnitude of the changes in HR processes and payroll could not be estimated. The Valor report found that the risks associated with the project had been identified, but that they focused on technical implementation and performance issues. In addition, there were differences of opinion on how much effort should have been invested in change management. In retrospect, it can be said that insufficient effort was invested in such a major change.

It was known beforehand that there could be many payroll errors, but the time and resources needed to correct them were not estimated correctly. When the project management team decided to begin operational use on 23 March 2022, it was known that 6–12% of salaries could be incorrect in the first salary run. At the time, it was thought that Talpa would be able to correct a large part of the errors before the salaries were paid. Talpa's service promise at a five per cent payroll error level was that missing wages would be paid within two days, and incorrect wages would be corrected within five days. The situation was thus assumed to be roughly the same as during the period when Hijat was in use. When there were more errors and correcting them was slower than in the old system familiar to payroll secretaries, Talpa was unable to fulfil its service promise. Talpa's service management system had already been planned for years, but it was still not in place. Talpa received support requests by email, and customer service became severely congested.

The stabilisation project's director estimated that when the system was introduced, the operating methods and division of labour related to the payroll process and the changes required by the Sarastia system were still incomplete in the city organisation. On the other hand, there were deficiencies in Sarastia Oy's capability, and problems were caused by the operating logic of the system itself, the system's incompleteness, and performance issues with the volumes generated by the City of Helsinki. According to the stabilisation project's director, the third factor was Talpa's payroll administration's lack of capability to operate as required by the new system during the implementation phase.

Numerous other reasons for the project's failure have been put forward in the Audit Committee's hearings. One explanation is that the project team was unevenly and insufficiently resourced, and there were staff changes in both the city and Sarastia Oy during the project. In addition, budgetary pressure and the fixed date for decommissioning the old system had too much influence on the schedule and decision making. The window of opportunity proved to be too short in terms of the capacity of the Sarastia system and Helsinki's organisation to operate and change. In addition to the Sarastia-related reasons mentioned already, the more technical reasons were that the extent of

the testing was too narrow, and the errors in the old system's conversion data could not be sufficiently corrected before implementation. From Sarastia Oy's perspective, the city had expectations of the system that the off-the-shelf software could not meet. According to the company, the Sarastia365 HR program is working as agreed. According to Valor's report, Sarastia Oy's supply capability was at its limits relative to Helsinki's needs.

In retrospect, the city's supervisors' and Talpa's payroll staff's training and commitment to the change were also inadequate. There were many training events, but the City Executive Office did not know whether all the supervisors attended them. According to the employee organisations, the problem with the training was that it did not allow the participants themselves to use the system. The instructions were still incomplete when the implementation took place.

The city failed in its communication after the implementation

The Sarastia system was made available to staff on 12 April 2022, and the first major pay run occurred on 14 April. The view of employer representatives throughout April, and even at the beginning of May, was that there were less than five per cent errors in wages, as expected. According to employee organisations, it was confusing when the employer seemed to live in an alternate reality from the staff. This conveyed the impression to the employee organisations that the employer was downplaying the problems, both in the preparation phase and after the system's introduction.

The city came under intense media scrutiny in the summer, and the problems have since continued to be monitored. Helsingin Sanomat began reporting more intensively on the City of Helsinki's payroll problems in June 2022. In retrospect, it seems clear that the city did not succeed in communicating about the crisis. This is puzzling because in March 2022, Sarastia's project management team was under the impression that communication and crisis communication plans were at an excellent level. According to Valor's report, external communication support for the Director of Human Resources was initially inadequate and was gradually increased. The division of responsibilities for communication was perceived as unclear. From mid-June onwards, the Mayor took the main responsibility for communication.

According to the employee organisations, the city's communication to personnel has been inadequate at various stages. The staff briefings on the Helsinki-kanava (Helsinki channel), which began in August, have somewhat improved the situation. The employee organisations repeatedly drew attention to the fact that not all employees regularly read the city's intranet and called for more varied communication.

According to employee organisations, the shortcomings in the payroll have caused employees stress and anxiety, in addition to tangible problems in subsistence. Pay slips have been difficult to read, and it has been difficult to contact payroll. Especially at the beginning, employees, supervisors and shop stewards did not know what to do when there were payroll errors.

The stabilisation project has achieved the hoped-for downward trend in errors

Figure 4 shows that the number of errors was reduced to below the 5% level in December 2022 and February 2023, which is the level they were at before the introduction of Sarastia. The city has not yet set a target level below which it will aim to reduce the number of errors in future. In February 2023, 2,399 errors were detected, which was 4.3% of the pay slips. The vast majority of the errors were partly missing salaries. The second highest number of errors were other types, such as errors related to holidays and absences. The third highest were overpaid salaries. There were 65 uncorrected completely missing salaries on 19 March. There was still a backlog of 6,753 errors to be corrected. In addition, there were still errors in the income register in the last week of March, which employers use to submit information about paid wages to the tax administration.

According to the stabilisation project's error source analysis, about half the pay errors were due to the operational practices and processes in the city organisation. About 40% were for reasons related to the Sarastia system, Sarastia Oy, and data transfer from one system to another. Only about 10% of the errors can be explained by deficiencies in Talpa's payroll management skills and operational practices.

The City Board has been informed, but the Council has received little information

On 24 August 2022, the City Council held an information and discussion session on the city's payroll problems as a non-agenda item. A second information session was held in the City Council on 18 January 2023 in connection with a councillor's motion. The City Council would have already been interested in receiving information about the payroll reform in June. Indeed, the City Council has received very little information, given the scale of the reform and the failure. The City Board has been better informed, but it has also only been more actively informed since the autumn of 2022.

Implementation costs were significantly exceeded

The procurement decision estimated the annual cost of Sarastia's ongoing services at 2.98 million euros and the cost of the implementation project at 638,000 euros. The introduction of the new system

Figure 4. Percentage of errors in pay slips between May 2022 and February 2023.
Source: Situation snapshot on 21 March 2023

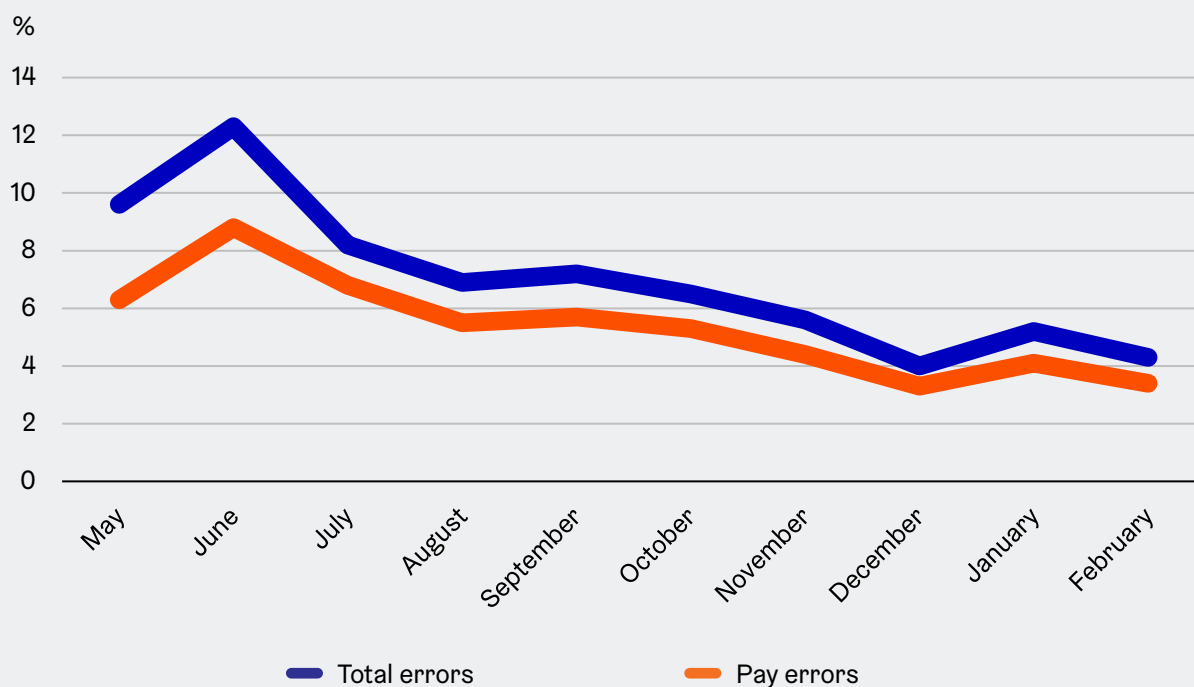


Figure 5. Sarastia-related procurements from 2020 to 2022. Some of the procurements are spread over several years.



Implementation support,
 Deloitte Consulting Oy:
3.2 million euros



Purchase of additional
 development work, Sarastia Oy:
0.9 million euros



Sarastia's annual price:
3.0 million euros



Implementation project:
0.6 million euros



Staff leasing,
 Seure Oy:
1.0 million euros



Third-party report,
 Valor Partners Oy:
45,000 euros

was expected to result in annual savings of around 200,000 euros. In addition, during the preparation, automation was expected to increase computational efficiency by 15 person-years at Talpa and 20 person-years at the city level as self-service functionalities increased. Thus far, the costs have increased, and there has been a significant temporary increase in human resources, particularly at Talpa. In addition, the introduction of Sarastia has led to an increase in the workload of supervisors, and their work is perceived to have become more demanding than before.

Figure 5 shows the Sarastia-related procurements for 2020–2022 and their projected costs. Based on these procurements, a considerable amount of money has been spent on implementing the system and stabilising the situation. Some of the procurements are spread over several years. The city's financial statements estimated that in 2022, the payroll problems resulted in 4.5 million euros in extra costs that were not part of the project. These costs consist of 1.4 million euros in late payment fees for salaries and accounts payable to staff; 1.8 million euros in additional resources to Talpa for payroll processing; 1.3 million euros in implementation support commissioned from Deloitte Consulting Oy; and 30,000 euros for the tax administration's penalty fee. Costs have also been incurred for the time spent by city employees in planning Sarastia's implementation, carrying out the implementation, resolving errors, and stabilising payroll. Precise information about the work input used was unavailable during the assessment. According to the financial statements, some four million euros will be recovered from staff as a result of overpayments.

In the 2023 budget, the City Board has allocated 6 million euros to carry out the corrective measures resulting from the payroll reform. In early 2023, Sarastia's implementation project had not yet been approved because all the implementation criteria had not been met. Consequently, the city has also not paid all the charges related to the implementation. The contract between Sarastia Oy and the city specifies the financial penalties for delayed implementation.

The city violated the terms of the collective agreement

As a result of the payroll errors, the City of Helsinki has been the subject of several criminal complaints to the Helsinki police and a complaint to the Labour Court. The Helsinki Police Department and the Labour Court issued their decisions in February 2023. Based on a preliminary inquiry, the police decided that there was no reason to suspect a crime, and an actual pre-trial investigation would therefore not be carried out. The Labour Court found that the city had violated the provisions of its collective agreements by failing to pay wages in the correct amount and on time, starting

from 1 May 2022. The Labour Court ordered the city to pay a total of 15,000 euros in compensation to the bargaining organisations that brought the legal action and to pay around 8,000 euros in legal fees.

The city auditor raised the issue of payroll errors by submitting an audit report to the City Board on 3 November 2022 that differed from the usual reporting. The auditor emphasised the need to take measures for correcting the errors, introduce payroll control procedures, and ensure cooperation between the various actors in the payroll process. The City Board discussed the audit report on 28 November 2022 and urged the city administration to continue their measures for correcting the payroll errors and to stabilise the system.

Conclusions

The procurement of the human resources and payroll management system was prepared on a fast schedule, which contributed to how the procurement and the project were carried out. The use of the old Hijat system was ending, and it had to be replaced by a new system. In retrospect, it can be said that the preparation time for Sarastia's implementation was too short. The city was forced to adopt Sarastia as an incomplete system, but on the other hand, the city itself was insufficiently prepared to start using the system. System testing and the training provided to users were insufficient. The conversion data transferred to the system contained many errors, which worsened the situation. What was critical for payroll and city employees was that there were more errors than Talpa could correct.

The creation of the stabilisation project in the summer of 2022 was a successful solution by the city's leadership. During the autumn, the sources of payroll errors was systematically identified, the number of errors decreased, and the backlog of errors was successfully cleared. In addition, the city staff have gradually learned to use the system. Although the number of errors has decreased, from an employee's perspective, correcting them can still take an unreasonably long time.

The implementation of Sarastia was insufficiently prepared for the fact that introducing the new system would have an extensive impact across the city's organisational operating models and would require learning new skills, especially by those working in HR and payroll. Insufficient effort was put into implementing and managing the change. There were deficiencies in the implementation process, including management, staff competence, Sarastia's availability and capabilities, and the lack of a requirement for a common operating model at the city level. Initially, the project was not assigned an owner who would have had the responsibility and resources to ensure the entire project's successful implementation. Rather,

the responsibility was shared between the City Executive Office's Human Resources Department and the Digitalisation Unit. It was not until early July 2022 that the City Manager designated a director for the project, after the system had already been introduced and the city's management had understood the seriousness of the problems. According to the employee organisations, the employer initially downplayed the problems.

The City Executive Office failed in both its external and internal communication, although the Sarastia project's management team still assessed the communication and crisis communication plans as being at an excellent level in March 2022. In practice, the division of responsibilities for communication was perceived to be unclear and communication to staff and the City Council to be insufficient, for example. According to the employee organisations, communicating via the intranet only reaches some staff. The city's reputation as an employer has been hit hard, which is especially harmful at a time when there are labour shortages in many sectors.

The Audit Committee finds that

the City Executive Office should

- ▶ ensure that management responsibility for city-level projects is clearly assigned to a single executive director.
- ▶ invest in change management throughout the organisation when carrying out city-level reforms.
- ▶ invest in internal communications that will reach all the city's employee groups.
- ▶ invest in external communication in situations where potential damage to the city's reputation is identified.

The City Executive Office and the Financial Management Services enterprise (Talpa) should

- ▶ develop human resources and financial management processes to minimise payroll errors as much as possible.



Responsible finances as the basis for sustainable growth



Achieving the strategy's financial targets and budget

The City Strategy's growth in expenditure was in line with the principle of accountability

The City Strategy 2021–2025 aims to achieve the “accountability principle” in the growth of operating expenses. According to this principle, annual budgets must not exceed the expenditure level specified under the accountability principle. The City Executive Office has also made this a binding target. The increase in operating expenditure is tied to changes in cost levels and population growth and to the productivity target set for the city, which is 0.3% in 2022 and 0.5 percentage points thereafter. The change in the cost level is reflected in the price index for basic services. Population growth is described by age-group-specific population growth in the Education Division and the Culture and Leisure Division's youth services, and otherwise by the total population change.

Table 1 shows that the indicator was achieved based on the data in the financial statements. Expenditure under the accountability principle increased by around 1.8% in 2022. It is expected that the expenditure growth target will be met even if HKL's incorporation and changes in coronavirus-related costs are taken into account. The change in the cost level (price index for basic services) was significantly larger than estimated when the budget was drawn up.

Helsinki City Transport (HKL) was incorporated in 2022, and Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd (Pääkaupunkiseudun Kaupunkiliikenne Oy) began its operations on 1 February 2022. The combined effect of this change on the result of the city's 2022 financial statements was almost neutral. On the other hand, when reviewing the cash flow statement, HKL's incorporation must be taken into account. The value of the contribution in kind transferred to the company was 808.6 million euros. The city's share subscription was 265 million euros, and a loan of 493 million euros to the company was recorded.

The City Strategy's objective guiding investments was also met

An objective set by the City Strategy 2021–2025 is that the total cash flow from operations and investments during a council period can be in deficit at most up to the deficit target set for the local administration in the Public Finance Plan and the Municipal Finance Programme. The City Executive Office's binding target for

2022 was that total investments would be scaled to a financially sustainable level in terms of cash flow from operations and investments, and loan growth. The indicator for this target is set out in the budget in tangible terms, stating that the cash flow from operating and investing activities must not exceed -0.5% of Helsinki's GDP. According to the financial statements, this objective was achieved. The comparable cash flow from investments was -8 million euros. The deficit allowed by the indicator was -147 million euros.

Tax revenue growth was higher than estimated

Tax revenues (4.1 billion euros) grew by around seven per cent from the previous year and exceeded the budget by 330 million euros. Municipal tax revenue (3 billion euros) grew by 7.4%, and corporate tax revenue (77 million euros) by 6.7% from the previous year.

City operating expenditures (5.1 billion euros) exceeded the budget by almost 119 million euros. On a comparable basis, i.e. after excluding the effects of HKL's incorporation and coronavirus costs, growth was 5.6% compared to the previous year. The city's operating margin was close to the budget due to coronavirus compensation paid out as state subsidies but decreased by 8% compared to the previous year. This decrease was due to increased expenditure and partly due to the effects of HKL's incorporation.

The Social Services and Health Care Division's expenses were over budget again due to the coronavirus pandemic

The 2022 budget's operating budget section had a total of 28 binding appropriations or operating margins. Nineteen, or 68 per cent, of these were met, either on budget or better than budgeted. Nine binding appropriations items either exceeded their operating expenses or fell short of their operating margin. The City Council has granted overspending rights for these. The largest deviation by far, 101 million euros, was in the expenditure of the “Social and health care services” budget item. The reason for the overrun was the costs caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa's (HUS) expenditure exceeded the budget by more than 25 million euros. HUS's actual service billing was below Helsinki's budget, but the health care group's deficit had to be covered during 2022 due to the health and social services reform.

Table 1. Growth in 2022 expenditure in accordance with the accountability principle

	BE 2022	RP 2022
Percentage change in population growth	0.4	0.3
Percentage change in the price index of basic services	2.5	4.0
Efficiency improvement target, percentage points	-0.3	-0.3
Expenditure growth rate allowed by the strategic target	2.6	4.0
Accountability principle	RP 2021	RP 2022
Expenditure level under the strategic objective, EUR million	4595.7	4676.1
Growth percentage		1.8 %

Figure 6. Realised investment appropriations from 2018 to 2022, excluding enterprises, EUR million (fixed prices)

million euros



* Effect from HKL's incorporation (265.1 million granted as a budget override and used to acquire shares in Kaupunkiliiikenne Oy) removed

Seventy-eight per cent of investment appropriations were used

Figure 6 shows that in 2022, 878 million euros was available for investments, excluding municipal enterprises. This includes overrides granted by the City Council, except for HKL's incorporation. The realised investment expenditures were 689 million euros. Seventy-eight per cent of the available investment appropriations were used. This is the second-lowest investment realisation rate for the reporting period starting in 2018. The appropriations for housing construction projects remained largely unused, as increased construction costs required many projects to be redesigned and put out to tender again. The level of investment and the rate of investment realisation were exceptionally high in 2020. Figure 6 shows the appropriations at the 2022 price level.

The investment section had a total of 15 binding appropriation items. For 13 of them, the budget appropriation was realised as planned or realised below the estimate (87 per cent). There were overruns for only two budget items. Among other things, these overruns were granted a budget override based on the purchase of shares in Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd.

Sarastia's problems resulted in a major loss for Talpa

The binding operational targets set for municipal enterprises have been considered as part of the achievement of binding objectives. They included two objectives related to financial results, one of which was achieved. The objective of Helsinki City Transport (HKL) was to achieve a result of at least zero for the financial year, and the result was 3.1 million euros. Since the beginning of 2022, when Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd was established, HKL has only been responsible for metro operations and infrastructure. The objective of Financial Management Services (Talpa) was to achieve a result of at least 10,000 euros for the financial year. The result was a loss of around one million euros. The result was affected by the Sarastia system's delayed implementation and the subsequent payroll crisis, which resulted in significant additional personnel costs.

The other municipal enterprises did not have set financial performance targets. The Service Centre municipal enterprise had a surplus, but Stara and Occupational Health made losses.



Development of key financial indicators for the Group and parent city

The annual margin was almost sufficient for net investments

The annual margin is the internal financing available for investments and loan repayments after paying the running costs from the tax funding. Especially in Helsinki, where the level of investment is high, examining the cash flow statement alongside the profit-and-loss statement is essential, as the cash flow statement shows how investments have been financed. The cash flow from operations and investments is, alongside the annual margin, an important key figure that describes the city's financial situation.

The peak year of investment expenditure was 2020. In 2021 and 2022, the level of comparable investments declined. In 2022, the annual margin was almost sufficient to cover net investments (Figure 7). Net investments refer to investment expenditures minus financial contributions to investments. Financial contributions refer to funding from the state, other municipalities or joint municipal authorities, the EU, and others for investment expenditure.

Table 2 shows that the parent city's annual margins in recent years has been twice the depreciation level. The annual margin declined in 2021 but improved again slightly in 2022. The internal financing rate for investments remained good, and it improved from the previous year. The corresponding key figures in the Group were lower than in the parent city, and these grew weaker than in the previous year.

The accumulated cash flow from operations and investments over five years shows how much of the cash flow is left for net lending, loan repayments and bolstering cash reserves. When the figure is negative, expenditure must be covered by reducing existing cash reserves or taking out additional loans. In 2022, the accumulated five-year cash flow from operations and investments was 504 million euros, but the comparable figure for previous years was only -10 million euros. The corresponding figure at the Group level was -1,129 million euros.

The debt service coverage ratio is a key indicator of how adequate the annual margin is for repaying loans. The figure remains high. Cash sufficiency improved.

The key figures are also at a fairly good level at the Group level.

The social, health care and rescue reform undermines investment capacity

The last year in which the Social Services and Health Care Division and the Rescue Department were part of the city's municipal tax-funded finances was 2022. As of 2023, the funding for social, health care and rescue services in the welfare regions and Helsinki will be based on general-purpose central government transfers, which are determined by needs, in accordance with the number of residents and certain other factors. The Helsinki City Council and the new committee will still have the authority to decide on funding allocation. The funding received by Helsinki is estimated to be lower than its actual funding needs. The city will not contribute to financing social services, health care and rescue services. The city has estimated that the reform will undermine its investment capacity, and that dependence on government funding will increase significantly.

At its meeting on 16 November 2022, the City Council set the 2023 income tax rate at 5.36% due to the tax changes resulting from the reform of social services, health care and rescue services. The City Council decided to keep property tax rates the same.

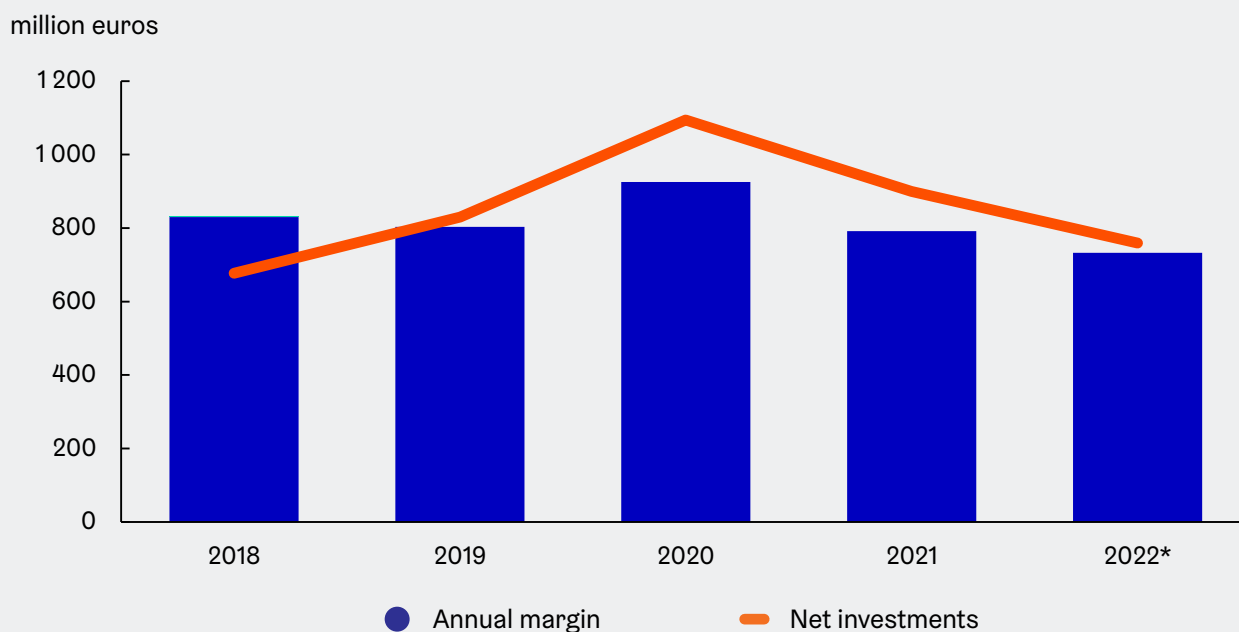
The loan portfolio increased slightly

Over a five-year review period, it can be observed that the parent city's loan portfolio decreased from 2018 to 2021, but increased slightly in 2022 (Table 3). The Group's loan portfolio has continued to grow.

The Group has a high loan stock and rental liabilities, which have increased throughout the strategy period. The Group's figure is affected by the fact that Helsingin kaupungin asunnot Oy has a lot of borrowed capital. However, in practice, the company's loan servicing expenses are paid for by the rental income from the residents of rental buildings.

Figure 8 shows that the outstanding loans per capita declined from 2018 until a slight increase in 2022.

Figure 7. Trends in the annual margin and net investments from 2018 to 2022, including municipal enterprises in EUR millions (at constant prices)



* investment expenditure comparable to previous years (after removing the effects of HKL's incorporation)

Table 2. The adequacy of the annual margin and some key figures from 2018–2022

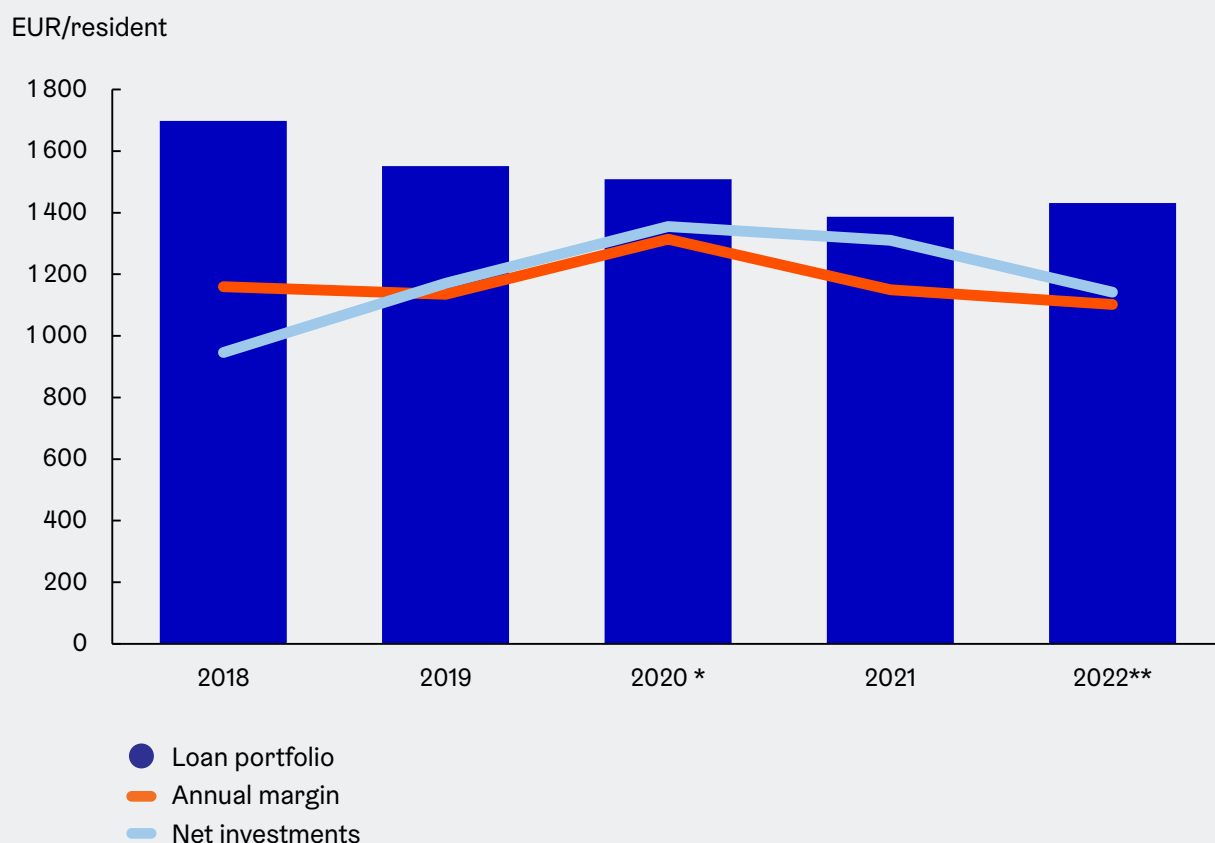
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Annual margin, per cent of depreciations (parent)	217	203	230	185	189
Annual margin, per cent of depreciations (Group)	175	167	170	142	150
Internal financing rate of investments (parent)	123	97	85	88	97*
Internal financing rate of investments (Group)	80	63	64	67	52
Accumulated cash flow from operations and investments over five years, EUR million (parent)*	790	355	513	264	-10**
Accumulated cash flow from operations and investments over five years, EUR million (Group)	98	-283	-563	-789	-1632
Debt service coverage ratio (parent)	6.3	7.4	9.1	8.2	8.1
Debt service coverage ratio (Group)	3.3	3.1	4.8	3.9	3.9
Adequacy of funds, days (parent)	91	77	85	70	77
Adequacy of funds, days (Group)	69	62	66	60	60

* Internal financing of investments, 72 per cent The table shows a comparable figure without the impact from HKL.

** The accumulation from 2018–2022 was EUR 503.9 million. The figures in the table exclude the accounting effects of the incorporations in 2014 and 2022.

Table 3. Loan portfolio and rental liabilities, 2018–2022

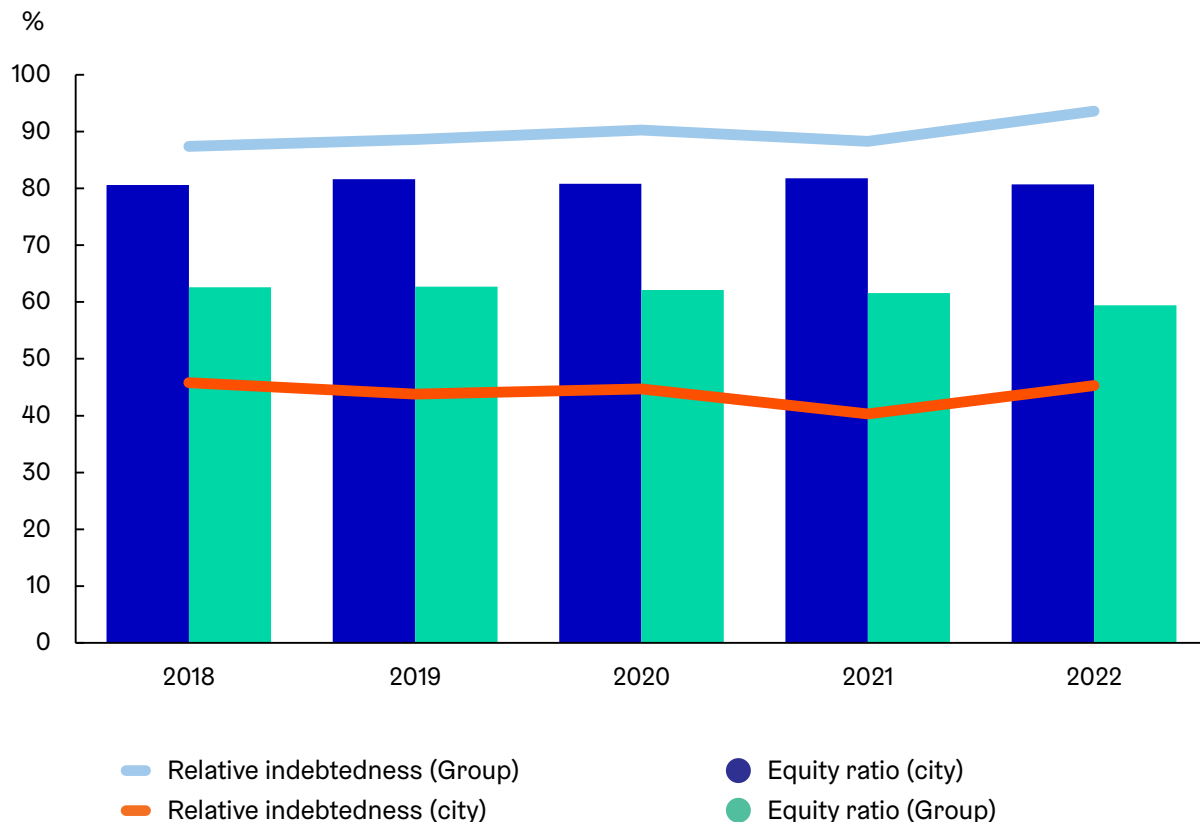
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Loan portfolio on 31 December, EUR million (parent)	1100	1014	992	913	951
Loan portfolio on 31 December, EUR million (Group)	4 984	5 171	5 552	5 891	6 516
Rental liabilities (parent), EUR million	294	236	491	608	610
Rental liabilities (group), EUR million	679	492	880	982	1040
Loans and rental liabilities EUR/resident (parent)	2 151	1912	2 258	2 279	2 348
Loans and rental liabilities EUR/resident (Group)	8 739	8 661	9 792	10 407	11 393

Figure 8. Development of Helsinki's loan stock, annual margin, and net investments in 2018–2022, EUR per resident (current prices)

* The 2020 figures exclude the one-off capitalisation of the Urban Environment House, which was reflected in the investments as an item worth approximately 130 million euros

** Net investment in 2022, when the effect from HKL's incorporation is excluded

Figure 9. Development of the equity ratio and relative indebtedness from 2018–2022, per cent



The relative indebtedness of the parent city and the Group increased in 2022 (Figure 9). The Group's relative indebtedness was already high. The equity ratio has remained fairly stable for a long time.

The coronavirus pandemic continued to affect finances

The coronavirus pandemic continued to affect finances and indicators. Its direct financial impact on the city's operating margin in 2022 was estimated at -24 million euros, a quarter of what it was estimated to be in 2021. The aim was to reduce the care and service backlog by redirecting 70 million euros of the City Board's reserved funds to the Social Services and Health Care Division, Education Division, and Culture and Leisure Division for 2022 and 2023. The start of Russia's war of aggression caused financial uncertainty, requiring preparations for rising costs, among other things.

Conclusions

The city's finances were on a solid footing in 2022. The coronavirus pandemic's direct impact on finances

decreased from the previous year. Growth in operating expenses remained within the limits set by the 2021–2025 City Strategy. The target for cash flow from operating and investing activities related to financing investments also remained on track with the strategy. The biggest reform affecting finances in 2022 was HKL's incorporation, which especially affected the items in the cash flow statement.

The parent city managed to reduce its long-term debt until 2021, even though the city's investment expenses were high. In 2022, there was a slight increase in loans and rental liabilities, but the reduction in investments and the increase in tax revenues resulted in sufficient internal financing for investments. However, at the Group level, both debts and investments are high, and the financial key figures are consistently weaker than those of the parent city.

In 2022, preparations were made for implementing the health care, social welfare and rescue services reform. The city's 2023 tax rate was set at 5.36%, and the city is preparing to finance an increasing part of its investments with loans in future.

Efficient use of building assets



Do the city's internal processes support the management, ownership and disposal of building assets?



For the most part, yes. But there is still room for improvement in the disposal of empty spaces.

The main focus of the assessment:

Do the city's building asset management and disposal processes support strategic objectives and service needs?

Related questions:

1. Has the city developed building asset management processes?
2. Has the disposal process for facilities been streamlined?

How city residents have been able to make use of empty spaces for civic and organisation activities was also investigated.

The City Strategy states that the city will continue its policy of disposing of facilities it is not using. According to the city's facilities strategy, the goal is to maintain the value of city-owned premises well into the future.

The assessment examined the progress in meeting the objectives and measures of the facilities strategy's sixth policy line. The policy aims to ensure that the city only has facilities that it needs for its own use, or that are owned for other strategic reasons or long-term service space needs. The goal is to ensure that historically valuable buildings that need to be preserved are always in use.

The assessment was based on documents such as city or division-level plans, status reports and monitoring data. Experts from the Urban Environment Division and one expert from the City Executive Office were interviewed during the assessment. Supplementary information was received by email from the individuals in charge of the city's facilities strategy and service network planning in the various divisions. The Audit Committee's first commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Urban Environment Division.

The value of the city's building assets is in the billions of euros

In 2022, the city owned 3,374 buildings and had 548 ongoing construction projects. The majority of the city-owned buildings were built in the 1960s. In 2022, the city directly owned about 2.3 million m² of facilities and about 0.2 million m² of shared premises. The city additionally leased a total of around 0.5 million square metres of space from third parties. In addition, the city leased around 0.5 million square metres of space from third parties. In 2021, the replacement value of the city's property inventory was around 10.1 billion euros, with a technical value of around 7.1 billion euros.

Statutory services and portfolio management guide decisions on facility solutions

Buildings owned by the city are classified through a process known as property portfolio management, which classifies buildings according to the need to own them and their condition. The process provides a comprehensive picture of owned buildings and aims for long-term and coordinated building asset management. In addition, portfolio management is an effective and systematic way to classify owned buildings when assessing the need for their ownership and maintenance requirements.

Portfolio management helps classify city-owned buildings into structures and lots that need to be maintained, developed, or disposed of. Portfolio management also makes it possible to direct investment towards the maintenance of buildings that need it most. After portfolio management, the building assets are classified more precisely according to their calculated condition class. For buildings to be disposed of, the condition class is one dimension in prioritising the preparation for disposal.

One of the measures included in the facilities strategy's action plan was that the City Executive Office would prepare ownership policy guidelines in cooperation with the Urban Environment Division. Ownership policy guidelines aim to clarify the basis of building ownership. They are intended as criteria for how the city will meet its needs for owning and renting space, and how maintenance, access control, locking and security will be arranged in these cases. The ownership policy guidelines also include principles for how

ownership is exercised. The guidelines are expected to be submitted for decision in the spring of 2023.

Facility solutions prioritise statutory services, which is also reflected in the prioritisation of investment projects. To safeguard the Education Division's statutory services, projects such as the Culture and Leisure Division's renovations and renovations of city centre blocks have had to be postponed. However, cooperation between the city's various organisations has generally been effective in facility solutions.

Building asset management aims for a change in operational culture

The building asset management process consists of designing owned facilities, implementing the facilities, the use of the facilities by internal and external customers, and maintaining the facilities. The process also includes the disposal of premises and buildings. For example, building asset management is guided by the City Strategy and other programmes and their policies in accordance with the facilities strategy.

The facilities strategy guides all the city's activities, actors and programmes related to facilities. The goal is to be consistent and to bring about a change in operational culture, which will take time and commitment across council terms. The facilities strategy has not yet had a widespread impact on the city's operational culture compared to previous strategies or programmes. However, it has been possible to identify broad areas for development in operations. There has been a shift to customer-centricity and the disposal of unnecessary facilities. Future areas of development include improving customer focus, developing long-term plans, and developing property management contracts and the roles of property managers.

Unforeseen changes in the operating environment, such as the coronavirus pandemic and general price increases, have slowed the strategy's development. This has required the organisation to prioritise its resources in accordance with the prevailing situation.

Some of the measures aimed at improving building asset management, such as introducing operational information systems, were already an objective in the previous strategy period. The slow progress of these measures is explained not only by changes in the operating environment but also by the fact that there have been several strategy and programme reforms in recent years, thus delaying their implementation until new policies are adopted. Some of the measures are also very time-consuming. An additional goal has been to integrate previously created strategies and programmes into a unified whole. However, the overall picture is that the development measures have not been carried out very efficiently or effectively.

At the time of the assessment, the Urban Environment Division was in the midst of an information system renewal for building asset management. Critical system components were deployed in February 2023. The entire deployment project should be complete in August 2023. The city aims to move towards active and knowledge-based property management in building asset management and resolving space needs. The information system renewal will also allow the city's other divisions to utilise the new system in future.

There is still room for improvement in the process of disposing of unused spaces

A main process has been developed for disposing of facilities and buildings to improve efficiency in the disposal of vacant spaces. This process consists of three sub-processes: selling apartments, planning the disposal of facilities and buildings, and the disposal of buildings by demolition. The disposal processes have been reviewed, and a consulting firm has assessed and reported on their development results. The report aimed to improve divisional productivity by disposing of unnecessary space in the most efficient way possible. The report resulted in four sets of measures, some of which have already been implemented, and some of which are still underway.

Following the City Strategy, the city has sought to reduce the number of vacant premises. Figure 10 shows that the number of vacant premises has decreased slightly each year. The reduction of 17,000 m² from 2019 to 2022 equates to a 16% reduction. However, over the same period, the cost of empty premises has doubled, increasing by 4.8 million euros (Figure 11). In 2021 and 2022, the cost of empty premises has increased dramatically. The increase has been robust in the rental category, i.e. in the city's commercial spaces that are available for rent without renovations or alterations. The rental category also includes Heka's commercial spaces. Heka's rented retail spaces are subleased through the Urban Environment Division's facilities service.

In accordance with the City Board's 1994 decision, Heka's commercial premises have been rented by the Real Estate Department, and later by the Urban Environment Division, at a rent that corresponds to their actual cost. The rationale for the 1994 decision was that renting commercial spaces to the city at a rate corresponding to their actual cost and subletting them at market rates would equalise rents for residential properties, and that by doing so, residents would not make a profit or a loss on commercial spaces. At the time, it was estimated that the procedure would be cost-neutral for the city. The procedure, which was agreed almost 30 years ago, no longer seems to be working very well, as Heka's share of the cost of vacant premises had already risen to 31% in 2022. In 2019, it was still 16%.

Figure 10. Vacant premises from 2019–2021, square metres

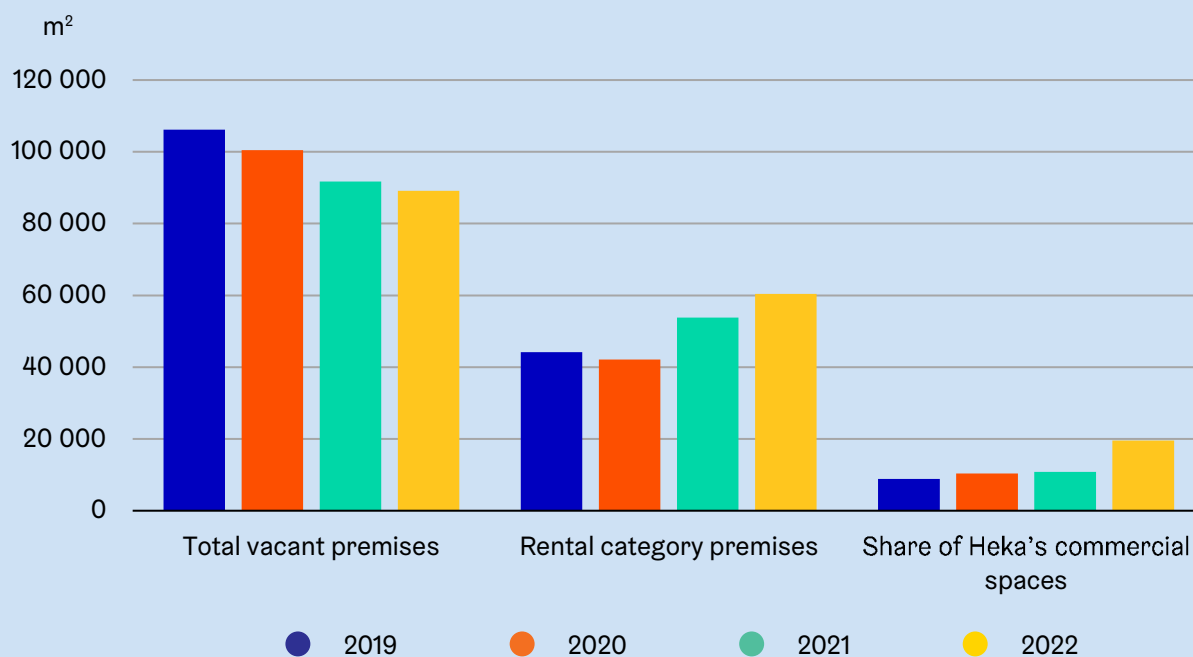
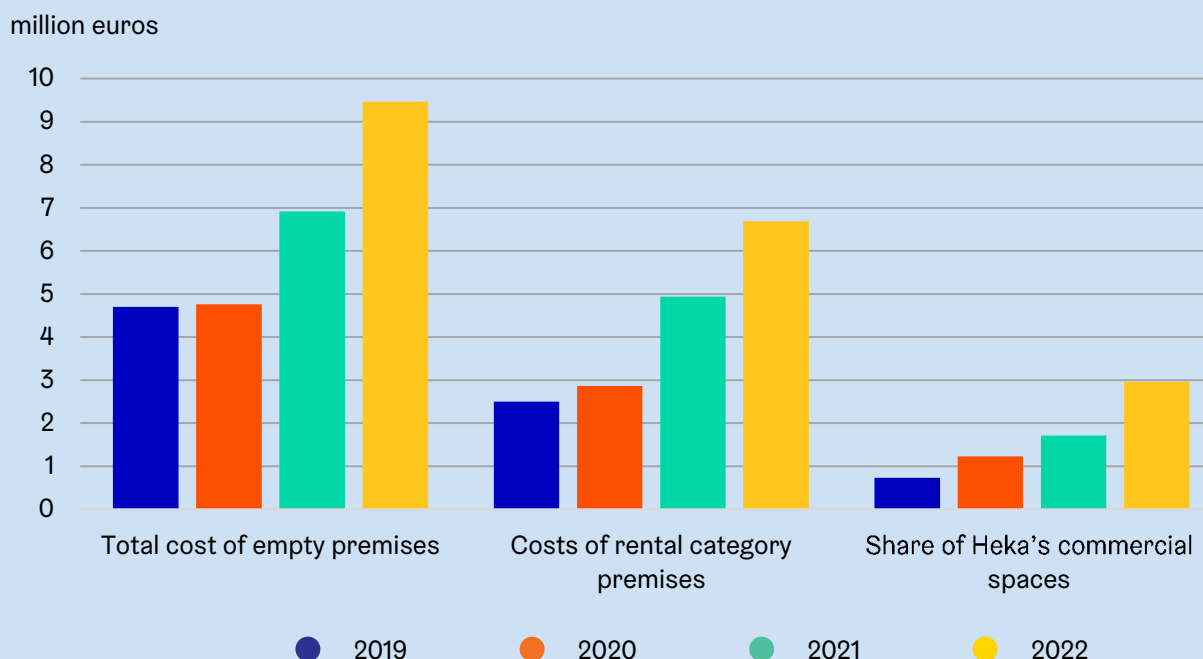


Figure 11. Cost of empty premises 2019–2021, EUR million



The city has not yet had a common citywide service network plan, but it was being prepared in the spring of 2023 in accordance with the facilities strategy. It is still currently impossible to fully synchronise a building's date of disposal with the expiry of a lease. Sometimes a building can be left waiting for a long time to be sold, zoned, developed or demolished. According to the Urban Environment Division, the divergent cycles

of service network planning, building ownership and the City Strategy have meant that the city may be left holding buildings that are difficult to dispose of.

The process for selling vacant premises was separated from leasing in 2021. The city has considered resourcing sales but has decided to prioritise the cooperation between the Land Development and Plots Unit's land

development process, which is related to zoning, and the Facilities Service. The real estate development process is a pre-sale step in cases where a zoning change is necessary. However, the buildings being disposed of will be sold based on the existing zoning plan as a rule. According to the division, the resources available for disposal have been sufficient, at least so far.

City residents and cultural operators have been able to make use of empty spaces

City residents and various cultural operators have been able to use the vacant spaces for civic and organisational activities, but the temporary rental of empty spaces needs further development. In future, it is planned to outsource the city's rentals to cultural operators to a third party, who will then sub-let the premises at the discretion of the city's experts. The Urban Environment Division's Facilities Service is a significant single lessor of cultural and organisational space and a partner in the real estate market.

The city has further developed its resident-focused Varaamo service (reservations service), making the city's individual spaces available to residents. The service has been developed independently from the previous Varaamo service, as the current system has not met the city's expectations. The launch of the Varaamo service is planned for the spring of 2023. However, according to the Urban Environment Division, Varaamo's operations are of a smaller scale than the cooperation with cultural operators.

For the city, effective cooperation with cultural and organisational operators is particularly important if the city wants to maintain a high level of occupancy in the spaces it plans to dispose of in future.

Conclusions

The Urban Environment Division has developed building asset management and disposal processes and ownership policies, which now mainly support strategic objectives and service needs. The city aims to change the operating culture, but this will take time and commitment across council terms.

As part of the portfolio management process, the city assesses which facilities it needs to deliver services, and in turn, which can be disposed of. The process aims for long-term and coordinated building asset management. The city has not yet had common city-wide service network planning, but it was under preparation at the time of the assessment, in line with the facilities strategy. The information system, which will be introduced in 2023, will improve the future management of all building assets and allow better knowledge management and long-term planning.

The city has been developing its building asset management processes, but overall development has been slowed down by unforeseen changes in the operating environment, among other things. In addition, some measures have been underway since the last strategy period due to several strategy and programme reforms in previous years.

The process for the disposal of vacant facilities has not always been adapted to things such as divisional rental agreements, so there is still room for improvement in speeding up this process. The challenges of adaptation have been reflected in the Urban Environment Division, where properties may have remained under the control of Facilities Services for a long time in the event of termination. The time required to develop vacant properties can also slow down sales, which often means that they remain vacant for a long time before being sold.

A downward trend has been achieved in the number of empty premises, but this has not helped with the rising cost of vacant premises, which has risen sharply in the last two years. In particular, the costs of Heka's vacant retail spaces have increased. The Urban Environment Division is responsible for temporarily leasing Heka's commercial spaces in accordance with the City Board's 1994 decision.

A project has been launched to develop cooperation between land-use planning and the Facilities Service. A separate process has been created for the disposal of buildings by demolition. The disposal process for premises has recently been developed, so it remains to be seen what its effects will be. At this point, it cannot be said that the process has been accelerated.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Urban Environment Division, in cooperation with other divisions, should

- ▶ improve the implementation of the City Strategy's policy by disposing of unnecessary city-owned premises and developing long-term systematic planning for ownership.

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ ensure the implementation of the Facilities Strategy and the measures of its supporting programmes before the next strategy or programme reforms for built assets.
- ▶ determine the most appropriate way to arrange the rental of Heka's commercial spaces.

Helsinki is
an attractive
employer



Employee well-being, retention and attraction in senior centres



Have the measures taken by senior centres been sufficient to improve employee well-being, retention and attraction?



Measures have been taken, but labour shortages have worsened, and well-being at work has deteriorated. There is a nationwide shortage of nurses.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the city improved employee well-being, retention and attraction in senior centres?

Related questions:

1. Has the city initiated and continued measures for reversing the lack of employees?
2. Has well-being at work been developed taking employee perspectives into account?
3. Do the indicators show an improvement in employee well-being, retention and attraction?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, labour shortages will be the key challenge for Helsinki's decision makers in the current decade. The strategy aims to ensure adequate staffing levels in social and health care services. In addition, the City Strategy states that Helsinki wants to be an attractive employer with good human resources policies. The aim is to initiate and continue measures for reversing the staff shortage. The city intends to improve its employee attraction and retention and improve working conditions by involving all the staff in its operations.

The primary materials for the assessment were a staff survey at the senior centres, statistics and written materials. Supplementary information and statistics were obtained through email enquiries. The Audit Committee's second commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Social Services and Health Care Division. The response rate to the assessment questionnaire was 21%, so the results may

not be generalisable to all staff. The survey received responses from 440 senior centre employees.

The shortage of nurses has become a national problem

The Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Older Population and on Social and Health Services for Older Persons requires the city's senior centres to have sufficient and qualified staff. The number of staff, their training and job structure must correspond to the number of elderly people receiving the unit's services and their need for services based on their functional capacity, thus guaranteeing them high-quality services. According to an estimate published by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in the autumn of 2022, increasing the staffing ratio to 0.7 persons per client will require at least an additional year to improve the availability of nurses by increasing the number of training positions, for example. According to THL's estimate, to meet the above staffing ratio, an additional 2,885 full-time employees would have to be recruited for care units throughout the country. The calculation does not take into account the need for substitutes. According to the city's senior centre director, reaching the target of 0.7 employees per client by the end of 2023 seems unlikely because the necessary staff is simply not available.

The significant increase in the number of people entering retirement over the next decade will not help the future labour shortage of health care workers. Four hundred and twenty-one employees will leave the city's senior centres and their associated service facilities due to retirement over the next decade.

The nurse staffing ratio has been achieved in accordance with the law at almost every facility

The assessment examined the achievement of staffing ratios in senior centres based on the three most recent THL review periods. According to the November 2022 review, the city's staffing ratio averaged 0.69, ranging from 0.47–1.29 employees per client across various units and departments. Based on the November data, two city units and departments did not reach

the statutory staffing ratio of 0.6 employees per client at the time of the assessment. In May 2022, the situation was slightly worse: according to THL monitoring, ten units were below the current staffing ratio requirement of 0.6. In reality, it was seven units. According to the director of senior centres, the figures reported to THL contained clerical errors for three care units, which, in reality, met the statutory ratios.

Two care units were below the 0.55 staffing ratio in force in 2021. According to senior centre management, the shortfalls in the legally required staffing ratios between 2021–2022 were due to a lack of substitutes to cover sudden absences. In future, substitute arrangements will therefore need to be developed in senior centres to meet the legally mandated nurse staffing ratios.

According to the monitoring data from the city's senior centres, vacancies were resourced across the services to where there were 0.6 employees per client in all city units at the time of the assessment. However, according to the director of the senior centres, staffing ratio monitoring must also account for the impact of indirect and direct work, as the vacancy data do not give an entirely realistic view of the situation. The staff working directly with clients are taken into account when calculating the nurse staffing ratio. Direct client work refers to the care and care-giving tasks themselves, as well as those supporting functional capacity and rehabilitation. When calculating the minimum staffing ratio, indirect work is not taken into account but must instead be covered by dedicated human resources.

According to the Social Services and Health Care Division, there have been few closures of client facilities in Helsinki compared to the rest of the country. In February 2023, five long-term care facilities and nine short-term care facilities had to be closed due to staff shortages. In terms of all facilities, this means closures of less than one per cent in long-term facilities and around 2.5 per cent in short-term facilities.

The impact of retention and attraction measures will be seen in future

In 2021, the Hospital, Rehabilitation and Care Services of the city's Social Services and Health Care Division launched a retention and attraction project to mitigate the labour shortage. Workshops on staff availability produced 49 different proposals for action, some of which focused on both retention and attraction. The city's senior centres used the themes from the workshops for home care staff in their own retention and attraction measures in 2022. Figure 12 illustrates past and future measures by the senior centres to improve retention and attraction.

Future measures include good management, improving the sector's image, apprenticeships and recruitment.

Lists also highlighted measures for addressing recruitment and entry-level training positions, but these are not challenges that can be addressed by the city alone. Measures have therefore been taken to strengthen retention and attraction, but their actual impact will only become clear later. Figure 13 shows the main drivers of retention and attraction from the personnel perspective, with pay clearly being the most important.

The senior centres have addressed many of the retention and attraction factors mentioned by staff, but they all require action in future. The factors that the city can influence through its own actions are of particular importance. Some measures also require action at the city level. For example, employee benefits should reflect the fact that other care service providers also offer employee benefits. Thus, vouchers for commuting, exercise and cultural activities, for example, do not really function as factors that boost competitiveness compared to other operators in the sector. In Helsinki, employee benefits are determined at the city level.

In the spring of 2023, the senior centres are expected to hold their own workshops to develop staff retention and attraction. These workshops will also address the development of employee well-being and the senior centres' common values. The senior centres will hold somewhere between seven and eight separate events and invite all their staff to participate.

There have been efforts to improve well-being and working conditions in workplace communities

In the senior centres, efforts have been made to improve staff well-being and working conditions. These include upgrades to work equipment and providing training for staff. The senior centres have also offered training on coaching-style management. In addition, senior centres have options that aim to provide a better work-life balance, such as collaborative shift scheduling. However, in some units, planning is still a purely managerial activity, as this approach has been found to be a better solution within the workplace communities.

During 2021–2022, the development and support of employee well-being in senior centres have included many targeted measures at different locations. Various support measures have been implemented in workplace communities with centralised funding from the Social Services and Health Care Division. For example, six different support processes were implemented in three separate senior centres in 2021. These included a project for designing employee well-being, a mediation process, and joint development for managing threatening and violent situations.

The survey for this assessment had 440 respondents, of whom 175 felt that the staff had been involved in improving the working conditions in their workplace community. However, 168 of the respondents felt that

Figure 12. Past and future measures at the city's senior centres to improve retention and attraction

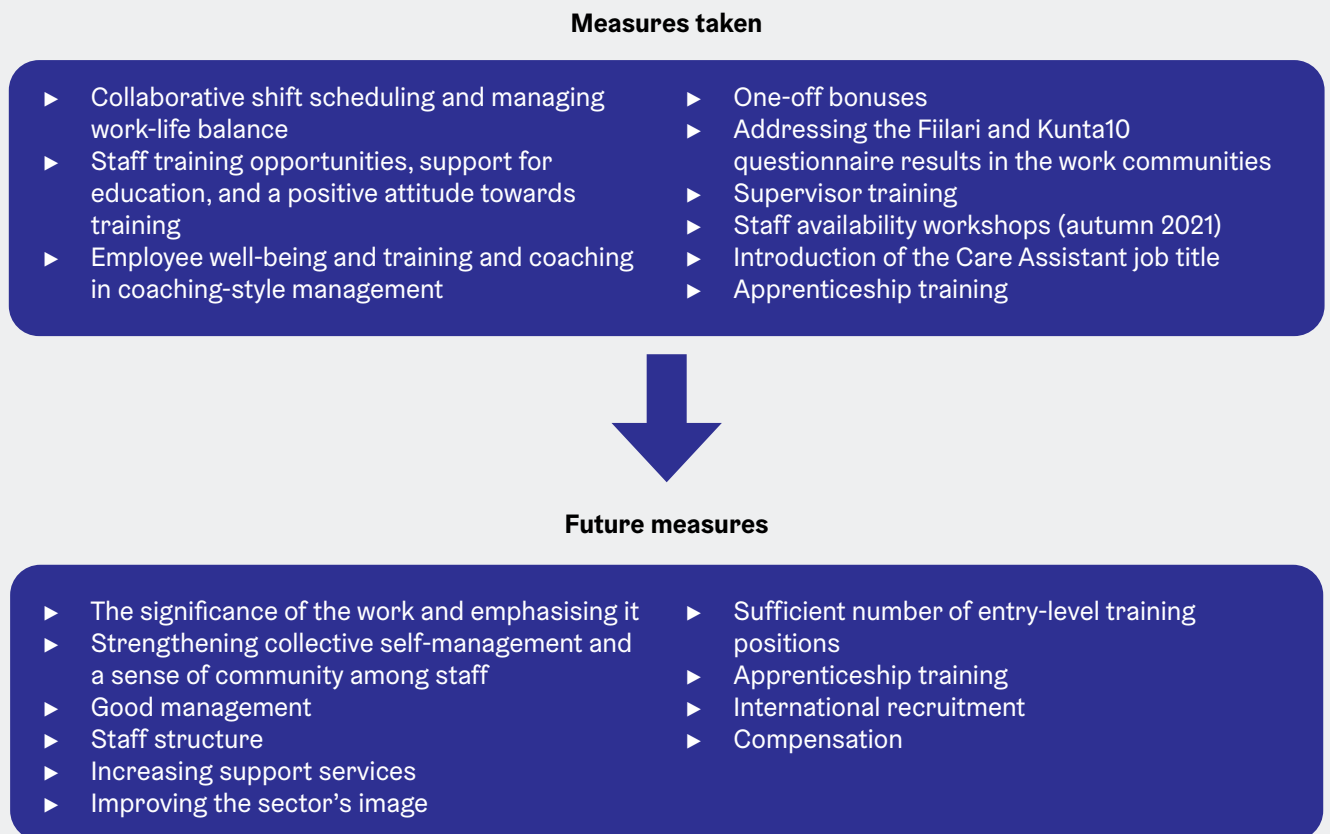
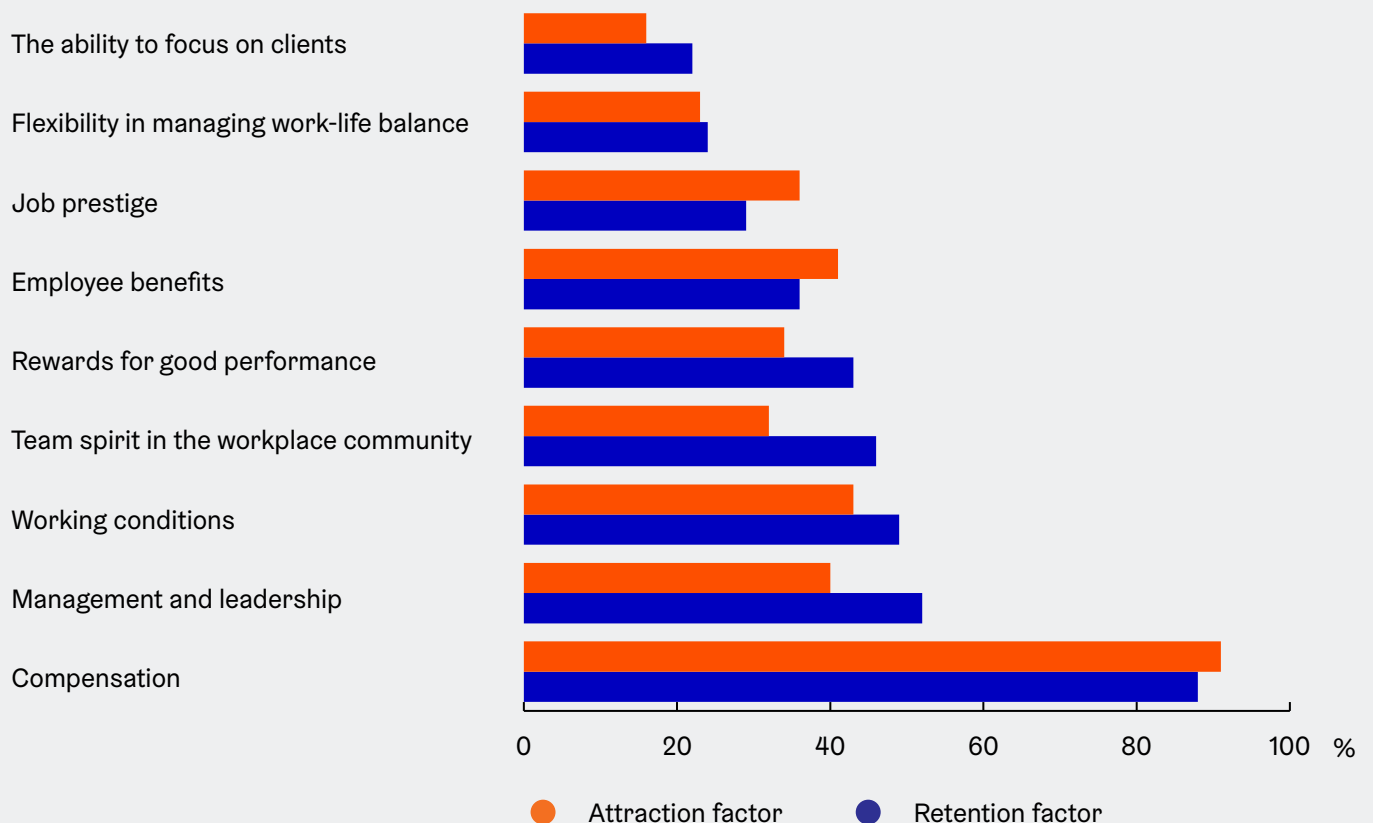


Figure 13. Most important factors for retention and attraction; percentage of respondents who ranked the particular factor in the top five (N=441/retention and N=439/attraction)



no measures had been taken to reduce the workload of their job in the last year. The results are not generalisable, but indicate that a significant number of employees feels there has been insufficient action.

Further action is needed for employee well-being, retention and attraction

Employee well-being has been measured annually using either the Kunta10, Fiilari or Occupational Health surveys. Based on many of the indicators selected for analysis, employee well-being deteriorated between 2018 and 2022 (Table 4). Only experiences of violent or threatening situations with clients decreased, and the workplace atmosphere remained good. In addition to staff shortages, the coronavirus pandemic has also contributed to the deterioration in the results.

Table 4 also shows the situation at the City of Helsinki's senior centres in 2022 compared to the situation

in the city as a whole. The results for many of the items in the staff survey worsened in senior centres between 2018 and 2022. However, the indicators for leadership, willingness to change jobs, and willingness to recommend the employer were still better than the city average in 2022. The differences between individual senior centres were quite significant based on the indicators for both employee well-being and retention and attractiveness. One senior centre had the best scores for seven out of eight indicators. However, even the best-performing senior centre's results had partly worsened by 2022.

The items about retention, which were "considered changing employers" and "would recommend the employer to friends", showed an undesirable trend: willingness to change employers increased, while willingness to recommend the employer decreased in 2022. In addition, employee turnover also increased. The increase in turnover and willingness to leave may

Table 4. Trends in indicators for employee well-being and retention and attraction in senior centres 2018–2020 and 2020–2022

Kunta10 survey statement	Trends from 2018 to 2020	Trends from 2020 to 2022	The situation in senior centres in 2022 compared to the city of Helsinki as a whole
Experienced violence or threats from a client	■	▲	▼
Workload has become intolerable	■	▼	■
Ethical strain: acting against personal values	▼	▼	▼
Leadership indicators	▼	▼	▲
Workplace atmosphere	■	■	▼
Social capital	▼	▼	▼
Has considered changing employers	▼	▼	▲
Would recommend employer to friends	■	▼	▲

- ▲ The indicator has improved/the indicator is at a better level in senior centres than the Helsinki average
- The indicator is unchanged/the indicator is at the same level at senior centres as the Helsinki average
- ▼ The indicator has deteriorated/the indicator is at a lower level in senior centres than the Helsinki average

also reflect general workplace trends in the municipal sector. The willingness to recommend the employer plummeted in 2022. One reason may be the introduction of Sarastia, the citywide human resources and payroll management system, in April 2022. In the employee survey, around a third of respondents working in round-the-clock care said that the introduction of Sarastia had influenced their attitude towards their employer.

The indicators for attractiveness, which measured applicants per job, i.e. “the labour shortage and applicants per job” metrics, have also begun an undesirable trend. The labour shortage increased steadily from 4.9% in 2020 to 11.2% the following year. The number of applicants per job opening has also fallen by about a third in recent years for both practical nurses and registered nurses. Both of these differ between senior centres. For example, the location of a senior centre affects the number of applications received and the labour shortage. All senior centres are likely to be affected by the nationwide nursing shortage, but those in areas with poor transport links will be most affected.

Conclusions

Senior centres have made efforts to improve employee well-being, retention and attraction, but the indicators show that there is still room for improvement in future. Despite their measures, the retention, attractiveness and employee well-being indicators in senior centres deteriorated from 2018 to 2022. In addition, the statutory staffing ratio per client for senior centres has not been met in all units.

The national and local labour shortage in senior centres has worsened in recent years, which has been reflected in staff recruitment challenges. Most of the city’s senior centres meet the legally required staffing ratios, but a few units and departments in the senior centres have fallen short of these ratios. Based on the latest THL monitoring data for 2022, two senior centre units and departments fell below the staffing ratio of 0.6 per client. Understaffing has mainly been due to sudden absences, so there is still room for improvement in the functionality of substitution arrangements. According to the city’s senior centre management, the target of 0.65 employees per client, which will come into force in April 2023, is achievable. However, the 0.7 target for the employee ratio by December 2023 poses challenges.

The senior centres have partly taken the views of their staff into account in developing employee well-being. Targeted measures have been taken to improve employee well-being at senior centres, and working conditions have been improved by modernising work equipment, for example. According to the survey conducted during the assessment, some employees feel that no measures have been taken to reduce their workload over the last year. However, the assessment

survey results are not generalisable, but they indicate that a significant number of employees have had similar experiences.

Despite the measures taken, the indicators for retention, attraction, and employee well-being at senior centres deteriorated between 2018 and 2022. The indicators for employee well-being in senior centres remained at the same level between 2018 and 2020, but worsened towards 2022. The national shortage of nurses is likely to have contributed to the decline in the indicators for attractiveness. For example, in employee retention, the drop in the willingness to recommend the employer in 2022 may have been influenced by many factors, including the city-level payroll system reform. However, the indicators for management performance, willingness to change employers, and willingness to recommend the employer were better for senior centres in 2022 than for the city as a whole. When analysing the indicators, it should be noted that associated measures have been implemented very recently. Their real impact will therefore only be clear later. The results of the employee well-being, retention and attraction indicators also included differences between senior centres.

Although development work has been done, all the factors for retention and attraction in Figure 13 must continue to be addressed to ensure the city’s competitiveness in the labour market. For example, the vouchers for commuting, exercise and cultural activities mentioned in the employee benefits do not actually function as factors that boost competitiveness compared to other operators in the sector.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division should

- ▶ ensure that all the units and departments in the city’s senior centres meet the statutory staffing ratios.
- ▶ develop substitute arrangements in senior centres.
- ▶ continue measures for improving employee well-being, retention and attraction in senior centres.

the City Executive Office should

- ▶ determine whether the employee benefits offered by the City of Helsinki are competitive with those offered by the welfare areas and other employers competing for labour with senior centres.



Employee well-being, retention and attraction in early childhood education and care



Have the Education Division's measures been sufficient to improve employee well-being, retention and attraction in day-care centres?



Many measures have been taken, but finding staff has become increasingly difficult, and well-being at work has declined. There is a national shortage of qualified workers.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the city improved employee well-being, retention and attraction in early childhood education and care?

Related questions:

1. Has the city initiated and continued measures to reverse the lack of employees?
2. Has well-being at work been developed taking into account employee perspectives?
3. Do the indicators show an improvement in employee well-being, retention and attraction?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, labour shortages are the key challenge for Helsinki's decision-makers in the current decade. The City Strategy aims to develop measures for improving staff availability in early childhood education and care, initiate these measures during the council period, and ensure that the proportion of qualified staff increases. Another objective is to improve working conditions and substitute arrangements. Initiating and continuing measures for reversing the staff shortage is a citywide objective. The city intends to improve its employee attraction and retention and improve working conditions by involving all staff in its operations.

The assessment material consisted of statistics, interviews, written enquiries and a sample survey of staff. The Audit Committee's second commission also obtained information from its assessment visit to the

Education Division. The survey of day-care centre staff was a sample survey, sent to about a third of the staff. There were 265 responses, representing 16% of the sample group. The response rate was so low that it cannot be used to generalise early childhood education staff as a whole. Early childhood education and care employs more than 6,000 people.

The labour shortage has worsened in recent years

The staff shortage in early childhood education is not just a problem in Helsinki or the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. According to the Occupational Barometer, there was a severe shortage of applicants for early childhood education teaching positions in much of the country in September 2022. In September 2022, the total shortage of early childhood teachers in Helsinki was 1,042 vacancies, while for early childhood special education teachers, it was 74, and for childcare workers, it was 855. The shortage shown in Table 7 does not mean the positions are completely unfilled. "Filled by a non-qualified person" usually means that the position of an early childhood education teacher has been filled by a childcare worker who lacks the statutory teaching qualification. The term "unstaffed", on the other hand, usually means that the position does not have a designated staff member, but that job is still being performed by a temporary staff member such as a Seure (staffing service) employee.

Figure 14 shows that staff availability declined in the autumn of 2021. The statistics for September 2022 are not fully comparable with the earlier statistics, as data on the shortage have not been available in the system since the introduction of Sarastia. Based on approximate data from manual calculations, the shortage was already more than a third of the staff. Ensuring the staffing ratio has required large-scale closures of playgrounds and the transfer of staff to day-care centres.

Figure 15 shows that the number of children attending day-care in Helsinki has increased in the age group of toddlers under three years old. Similarly, the number of children receiving home care support has significantly decreased. The city eliminated the Helsinki benefit for two-year-olds cared for at home as of 1 May 2019 and further limited the Helsinki benefit to children

Figure 14. The percentage of vacancies in Finnish and Swedish-language early childhood education that were unfilled or filled by non-qualified persons from 2020 to 2022

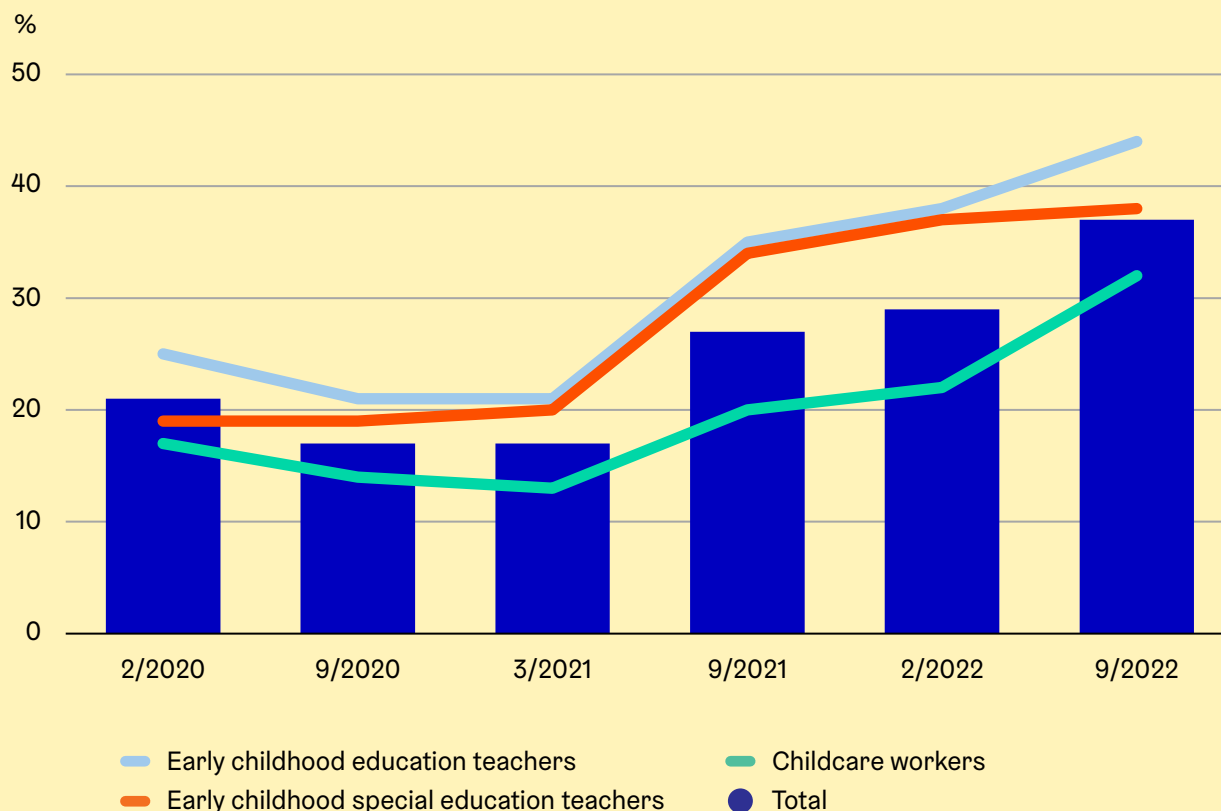
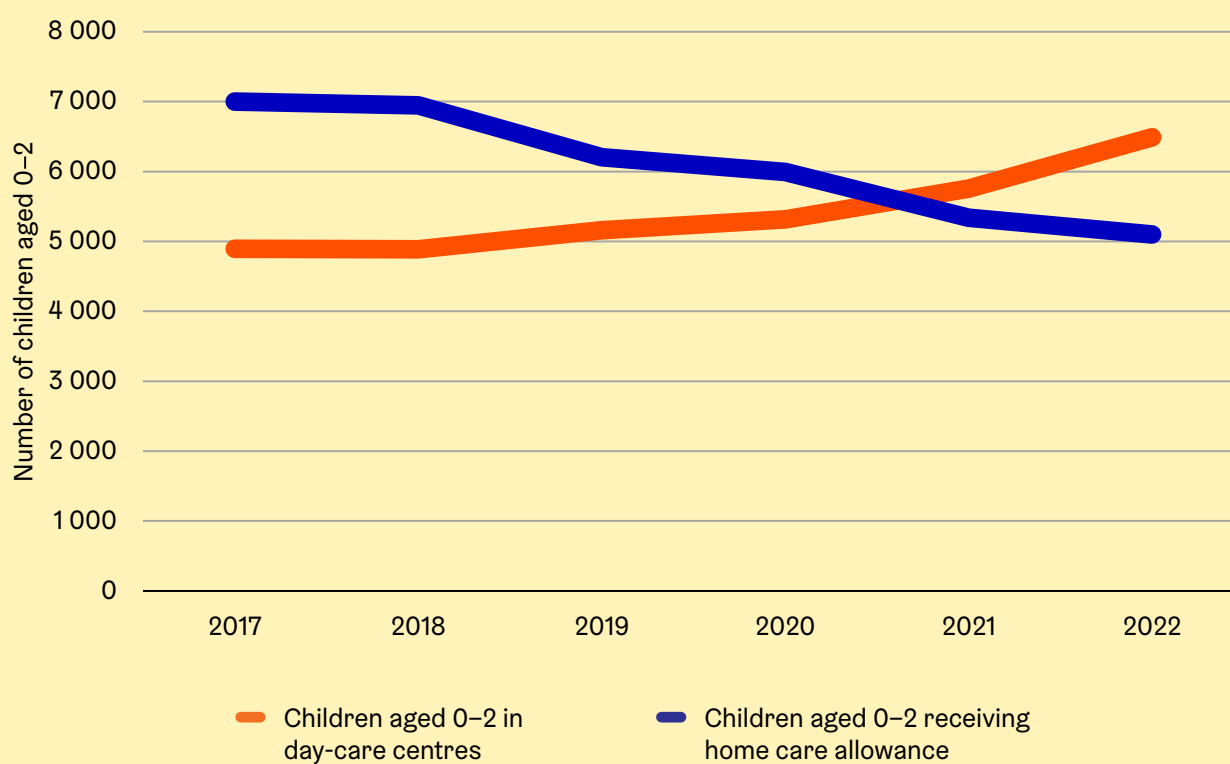


Figure 15. Number of children aged 0–2 enrolled in municipal day-care centres and receiving home care allowance



under one year of age as of 1 June 2021. In the six largest cities, the percentage of children under three in early childhood education has increased, and the use of home care allowance has decreased. It is therefore difficult to know what proportion of that increase in the number of young children results from Helsinki's own decisions, and what is a trend that would have occurred anyway. If the number of children under three attending day-care had followed the trend in population growth in the same age group, there would have been a decrease of 5.5% between 2017 and 2022. The actual increase was 33%. Helsinki will make efforts to further increase the participation rate in early childhood education and care in accordance with its own targets and national ones.

The state has not increased the number of training positions in early childhood education and care to meet demand

There appears to be some inconsistency between the legislation and the practical measures taken by the state. According to the 2018 Act on Early Childhood Education and Care, by 2030, at least two thirds of the staff working in education and care at day-care centres must be qualified as early childhood education teachers or social workers. At least half must be qualified as early childhood education teachers. However, there has been no corresponding increase in training positions for early childhood education teachers, especially in the Helsinki metropolitan area. According to an estimate by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in February 2022, current training levels will be insufficient to meet the required staffing structure by 2030.

Helsinki, with other cities in the Helsinki metropolitan area, has lobbied to influence the number of these training positions, but the effects have not yet been satisfactory for the cities. For example, a joint funding application by the City of Helsinki and the University of Helsinki for continuing blended learning and master's degree programmes was rejected by the Ministry of Education and Culture at the end of 2022 due to a lack of funds.

The city has taken many measures for improving staff availability

In the previous strategy period, the Task Force appointed by the Mayor drew up a 17-point action plan, most of which has been implemented. This work has been stepped up in the current strategy period with the creation of a dedicated staff availability team within the Education Division. In addition, the coordination group addressing staff availability in early education (Varhaiskasvatuksen saatavuuden koordinaatioryhmä) set up by the Mayor in February 2022 has improved coordination at the city level.

In another measure, the city has invested in staff training. Childcare workers have been encouraged to enrol in the university's blended learning programme to become early childhood teachers, or if they lack formal qualifications, they have been encouraged to take up apprenticeship studies. There has also been support for becoming qualified as a social worker or special education teacher in early childhood education. The Education Division has improved its recruitment practices and the induction of new employees.

According to the employee survey for this assessment, compensation, working conditions, the ability to focus on working with the children, and functional substitute arrangements are the most important retention factors. The most important attraction factors were assessed to be compensation, working conditions, employee benefits, and job prestige. Some respondents pointed out that the employee benefits offered by the City of Helsinki were not very competitive. The division has made efforts to increase positive communication about the work done in the day-care centres.

In recent years, Helsinki has increased the salaries of early childhood educators, resulting in earnings for Helsinki's early childhood teachers that are nine per cent higher than the base salary in the collective agreement. For special education teachers, they are 10% higher; for social workers, 3% higher; and for childcare workers, 6% higher than the base salary in the collective agreement. These pay increases are based on what is known as the "salary development programme" and partly on specific provisions for pay increases.

What employees consider most important – the ability to focus on working with the children – is achieved to varying degrees. The conditions for this in early childhood education and care centres with relatively permanent and qualified staff and few absences are better than in those with large staff shortages. However, the Education Division's measures can affect how the work atmosphere is perceived in all the day-care centres. The survey shows many employees are frustrated by the contradiction between being expected to deliver increasingly higher-quality pedagogy and more reporting, despite the staff shortage in day-care centres. What makes this frustrating is, first, that the early childhood teachers cannot fully use their working time intended for planning, and second, that the high-quality pedagogical activities they plan may not be carried out due to the staff shortage and turnover in substitute teachers.

The Education Division has invested heavily in developing substitute arrangements. The divisions have increased the number of their in-house substitutes in recent years, and Seure has been able to provide more substitutes than agreed in the contract, although fewer than the day-care centres would have needed. In 2022,

the division established a new rapid-response child-care unit, which had 22 childcare workers in March 2023. If recruitment is successful, they aim to increase this number to 40.

Staff perspectives have been taken into account in developing employee well-being, but there is still room for improvement

During the previous strategy period, the Task Force consulted the division's staff and prepared an action plan based on this consultation. The coordinating group for staff availability in early childhood education also started its work in this strategy period by holding a staff meeting. Staff ideas contributed to forming the group's agenda. Consequently, feedback from staff has been taken into account in the work towards improving workforce availability in both strategic periods.

The division has striven to improve working conditions and well-being at work. However, only 53 of the 247 employees who responded to the survey agreed that measures for reducing workloads had been taken in the last year. Employees also felt that there was room for improvement in how staff were involved in improving working conditions and how staff ideas for reducing workloads were taken into account in their workplace community. The response rate to the employee survey was low, so the results do not give a broad picture of the views of early childhood education and care workers.

The staff survey also revealed that many employees considered well-functioning facilities an important prerequisite for employee well-being. The city has been working for a long time to improve its use of available facilities, which is also reflected in the early childhood

Table 5. Trends in the indicators for employee well-being, retention and attraction in early childhood education and care in 2018–2020 and 2020–2022

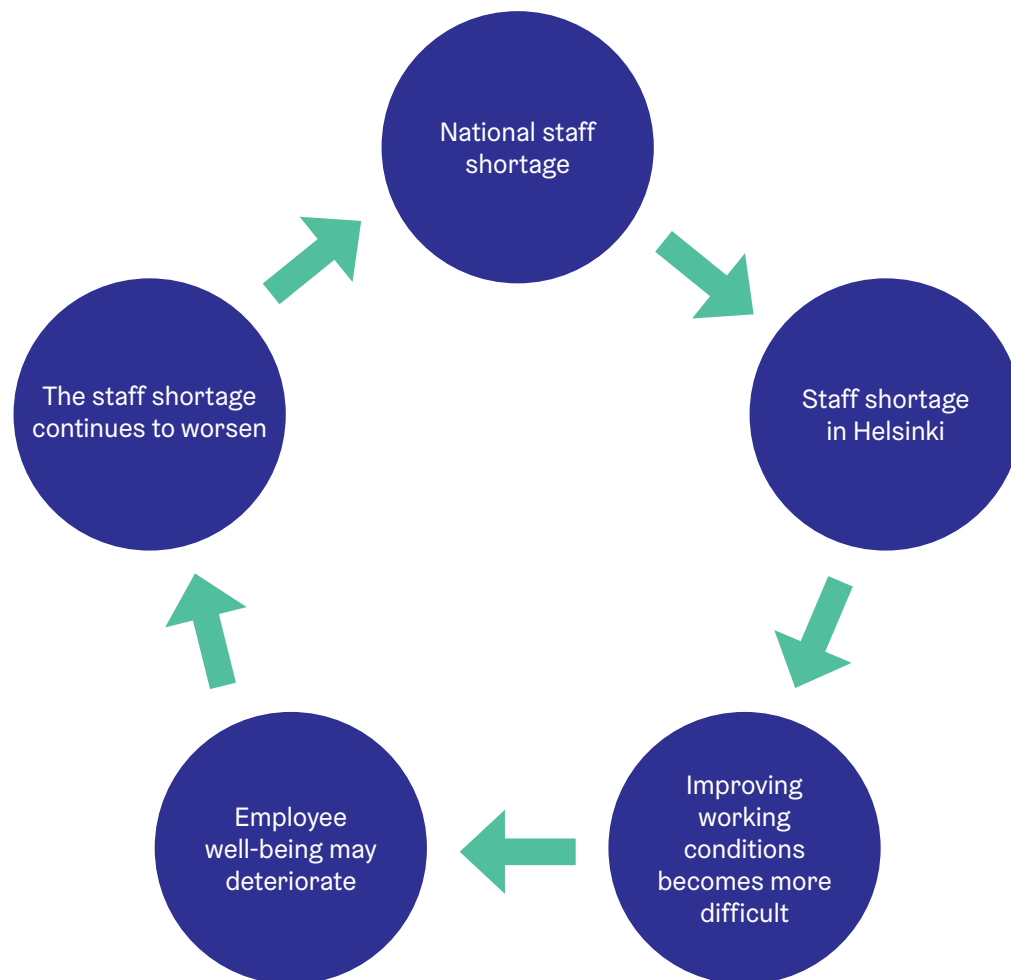
Kunta10 survey statement	Trends from 2018 to 2020	Trends from 2020 to 2022	The situation in early childhood education in 2022 compared to the City of Helsinki as a whole
Experienced violence or threats from a client	▲	▼	▼
Workload increased beyond tolerance	▲	▼	▼
Ethical strain: acting against personal values	▲	▼	▼
Leadership indicators	▲	▼	▲
Workplace atmosphere	▲	■	▲
Social capital	▲	▼	▲
Has considered changing employers	▲	▼	■
Would recommend employer to friends	▲	▼	▼

▲ The indicator has improved/the indicator in early childhood education is better than the Helsinki average

■ The indicator remains unchanged/the indicator in early childhood education is at the same level as the Helsinki average

▼ The indicator has worsened/the indicator in early childhood education is lower than the Helsinki average

Figure 16. The cycle caused by the staff shortage



education sector. With the constant increase in the number of children in day-care centres, some employees feel they have had to accommodate more groups than originally planned.

The indicators show a decline in employee well-being, retention and attraction

Employee well-being has been measured annually using either the Kunta10, Fiilari or Occupational Health surveys. Based on the indicators selected for analysis, well-being at work slightly improved from 2018 to 2020 but decreased from 2020 to 2022 (Table 5). In addition to the staff shortage, the worsening results may also have partly been due to the coronavirus pandemic and changes to the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care. According to the “How is Finland doing” (Miten Suomi voi?) research project, employee well-being worsened throughout Finland from the summer of 2021 to the end of 2022.

Table 5 also shows the situation in early childhood education and care in the City of Helsinki in 2022 compared to the city as a whole. The results for many of the items in the staff survey have worsened in early

childhood education and care between 2020 and 2022. However, the indicators for leadership, workplace atmosphere and social capital were still better than the city average in 2022.

The indicators for well-being at work showed relatively significant differences between different early childhood education districts. In addition, the differences between many indicators increased between 2018 and 2022. In the survey carried out for this assessment, regional differences were also significant, for example, when employees were asked whether they perceived the management of their unit as a positive asset. The written responses suggest that day-care centre managers may not always have the time to lead or the necessary competence. However, management performance indicators in early childhood education and care are above the city average, and management has been developed in recent years. For example, the division has strengthened its management resources by developing a deputy manager model and centralised client management. There are plans to introduce a targeted support model for supervisors in 2023. A targeted community-support model was already introduced in 2022, and by March 2023, it involved

22 workplace communities, which received different forms of targeted support in accordance with their needs.

The statements about retention, “have considered changing employers” and “would recommend the employer to friends”, showed an undesirable trend, with an increase in the willingness to leave and a decrease in the willingness to recommend the employer. In addition to these, employee turnover also increased. The increase in turnover and willingness to leave may also reflect general workplace trends in the municipal sector. The willingness to recommend the employer plummeted in 2022. One reason may be the introduction of Sarastia, the city-wide human resources and payroll management system, in April 2022. In the employee survey, more than half considered the introduction of Sarastia to have influenced their attitudes towards their employer.

One measure of attractiveness is the number of applications per job vacancy. However, recruitment procedures in early childhood education have been developed to such an extent that the trends in application rates do not necessarily reflect changes in attractiveness. In any case, the labour shortage indicates that

there are insufficient applicants, which in turn is likely to be mainly due to a lack of training in the sector.

Figure 16 summarises how the shortage of early childhood teachers throughout Finland is reflected in Helsinki. When there is a staff shortage in day-care centres, it becomes more difficult to improve working conditions. As a result of both the staff shortage and difficulties in improving working conditions, well-being at work may decline and thus further worsen the staff shortage.

Conclusions

The Education Division has taken a large number of measures for improving staff availability, but employee well-being, retention and attraction have deteriorated despite this. Part of this has to do with national trends, which the coronavirus pandemic may have amplified. However, part of the reason is that the staff shortage itself is a factor that exacerbates itself further by undermining well-being at work. But the staff shortage is not only a problem in Helsinki; rather, there is a shortage of early childhood education teachers across the country. This does not mean that Helsinki cannot influence this situation through its actions. Indeed,



Helsinki has taken many measures that are within the city's control, but the situation has become more rather than less complicated. On the other hand, the situation would certainly be even more challenging without the measures taken by the division during the current and previous council periods.

The staff shortage is already so severe that enhanced measures are still needed to improve staff availability. Moving forward, it is important to ensure that addressing staff shortages is high on the citywide agenda. The city's lobbying activities will continue to play an important role in providing more permanent solutions to the staff shortage in the sector by offering sufficient training positions.

Based on the staff survey, the Education Division still needs to improve how staff suggestions for improving working conditions are incorporated into the workplace. Leadership development is one area that has already received attention, but it still needs further investment. In addition, Sarastia's introduction has made knowledge management more difficult.

Investing in employee well-being requires not only divisional measures, but also city-level solutions such as ensuring that employee benefits are competitive. The staff survey also highlighted that day-care centre staff would like to have a more peaceful work environment and less administrative reporting to enable them to concentrate on their core tasks better than is currently possible.

Compensation is an important factor in the sector's attractiveness and retention. The City of Helsinki has already raised salaries to some extent with its own salary solutions. On the one hand, municipal wage programmes tend to increase competition for labour between cities. On the other, municipal solutions are necessary in the metropolitan area, where the cost of living is higher than in the rest of the country.

There has been a trend towards an increasing number of children under the age of three enrolling in day-care centres. At the same time as the use of home care allowance has decreased, the demand for municipal day-care has increased. It would be sensible for the Education Division and Helsinki's decision makers to assess whether extending the Helsinki benefit to a wider age group than children under one would be beneficial. If the demand for day-care for the youngest children were reduced, this would at least help alleviate the difficult staffing situation in day-care centres to some degree.

The Audit Committee finds that

the City Executive Office and the Education Division should

- ▶ continue implementing the salary development programme for the occupational groups facing labour shortages.
- ▶ strengthen lobbying efforts towards the central government to ensure sufficient training positions in the early childhood education and care sector.

the Education Division should

- ▶ account for staff input better in early childhood education and care when deciding on measures for improving working conditions at the workplace level.
- ▶ continue to develop leadership in early childhood education and care.
- ▶ ensure that early childhood education and care staff can focus on their primary work.
- ▶ ensure the adequacy and accuracy of staff reporting.
- ▶ examine whether reinstating the Helsinki benefit could ease the difficult staffing situation in some ways.

the City Executive Office should

- ▶ determine whether the City of Helsinki's staff benefits are competitive with neighbouring cities.

The most equitable and effective place to learn



Promoting the well-being of upper secondary school students



Has the well-being of upper secondary school students been promoted in student welfare?



Many measures have been taken, but there are deficiencies in access to mental health services.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the Education Division progressed towards achieving the City Strategy and 2022 budget goal of strengthening student well-being in upper secondary schools and vocational education and training?

Related questions:

1. Has individual support for students in upper secondary education and vocational training been developed in accordance with the City Strategy's goal?
2. Has access to early-stage mental health services for students been increased in line with the City Strategy's goal?
3. Has the Education Division initiated, or is it in the process of initiating, measures for promoting student well-being as set out in the 2022 budget?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, individual student support will be developed for upper secondary and vocational education and training. According to the 2022 budget, the Education Division will strengthen community and inclusion to ensure students feel they belong to their grade cohort/learning community. The aim was to promote recovery from the coronavirus pandemic through community-based student welfare, individual work by student welfare staff, multidisciplinary guidance, and cooperation between the school's various professionals during the school day. In addition, the aim was to improve access to student welfare services and increase cooperation between homes and schools. The division was to increase its cooperation with the Social Services and Health Care Division and Culture and Leisure Division to strengthen youth well-being. The strategy also aims to increase

the availability and accessibility of early-stage mental health services and short-term psychotherapy for young people and to expand low-threshold mental health services.

Helsinki has 15 upper secondary schools run by the city, three of which are Swedish-language schools. There are 24 private or state-run upper secondary schools, and the city provides student welfare services to them under varying contracts. The city arranges vocational education and training at the Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute (Stadin AO), the largest such institution in Finland, which has 14 locations. The city's student welfare services also serve private vocational schools in Helsinki. More than 33,600 students were covered by the city's student welfare services in 2022.

The assessment was part of a joint assessment by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area cities and HUS, which focused on the well-being of children and young people. Helsinki's assessment focused on student welfare in secondary education. The central assessment materials included interviews with student welfare and student health services, requests for further information, and statistical data on student well-being.

Individual support has been increased in student welfare

Individual support for students has been strengthened in upper secondary and vocational education by utilising multidisciplinary work more extensively. A multidisciplinary team of experts is convened in schools on a case-by-case or individual basis. The group includes a pedagogical and student welfare representative and other experts if necessary, such as social services representatives, in accordance with student needs and preferences.

There has been an increase in systematic community-based student welfare services and training of student welfare workers to support student well-being at the upper secondary level. Student welfare services in educational institutions are staffed by well-being experts whose professional skills have been strengthened through various training programmes. All counsellors and psychologists are trained in acceptance

and commitment therapy (ACT training), and more than half the public health nurses have received brief training in the method. Some nurses have undergone training in interpersonal counselling (IPC) for depressive disorders, and psychiatric nurses treating substance abuse and mental health problems specialise in providing interpersonal therapy (IPT-N). In addition, evidence-based methods include general restorative methods for groups and the Cool Kids Chilled method to some degree. A guided self-care method and an intervention navigator will be piloted in a few institutions in the spring of 2023.

A sense of community is promoted through wellness cafés

Measures for promoting student well-being have mainly been implemented with the city's coronavirus recovery funds. There has also been other special funding, mainly from the state. To support students, institutions have hired community counsellors, guidance counsellors, work coaches, practical counsellors, multilingual counsellors and physical activity coaches. Cooperation with the Culture and Leisure Division includes piloting youth counsellors at educational institutions. Some of the new approaches are experimental, and the employees are temporary.

Wellness cafés have been launched in all upper secondary schools and AO Stadi's campuses to promote the students' sense of community and inclusion in the institution's daily routines. The wellness café is an accessible meeting place and space for young people, where an adult from the school staff is present, and

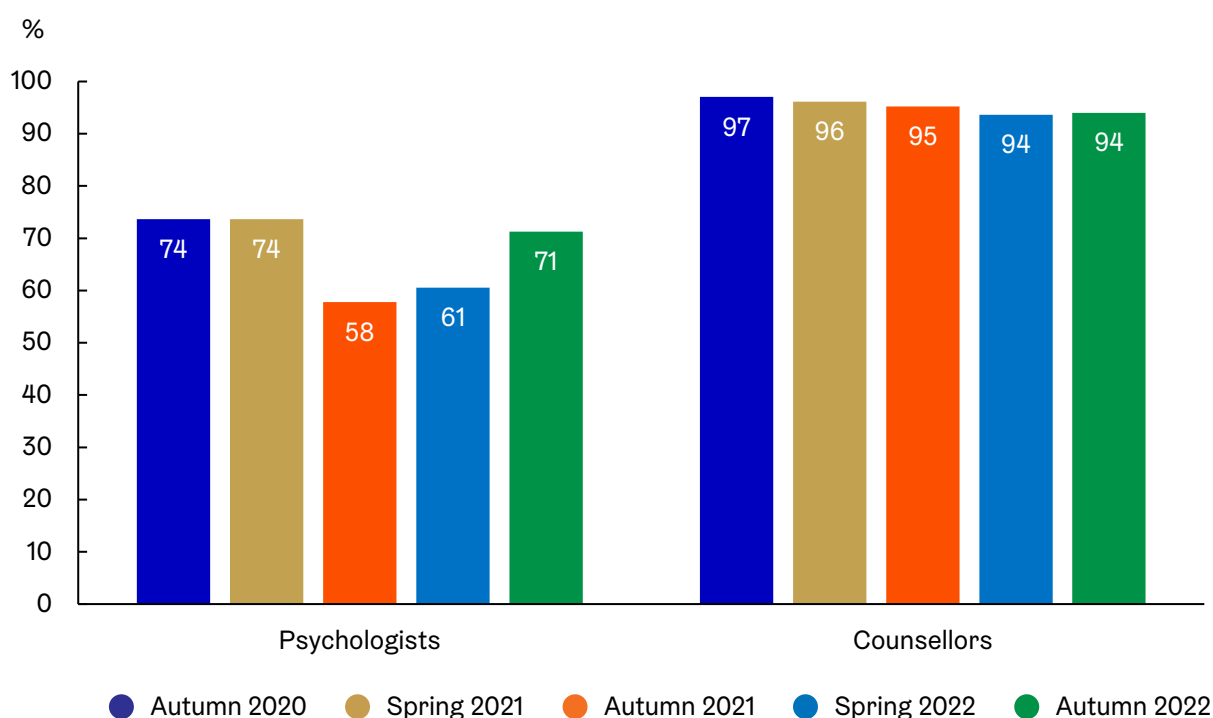
events and discussions take place. The idea behind wellness cafés is regularity, and some institutions hold them weekly, others less frequently, depending on the recommendation of student welfare services. Students and staff have found the wellness café activities to be positive. However, in some places, there is confusion about which professional group or body should be responsible for organising the activities: should this task be carried out by student services staff or e.g. a well-being team?

There is a shortage of psychologists, but other student welfare staff have been added

The number of counsellors, public health nurses and psychiatric nurses increased between 2021 and 2022, which is expected to improve access to their services in future. In the autumn of 2022, there were 50 counsellors and 32 psychologists in student welfare services. The labour input of about 63 full-time equivalent nurses was allocated to student welfare. This increase was because the counsellor staffing ratio (a maximum of 670 students/counsellor) became statutory in 2022, and the health care staffing ratio (a maximum of 570 students/public health nurse) became a guideline.

Based on the assessment, access to counsellors and nurses was good, but only 71% of students had access to psychological services within the statutory time limit (Figure 17). Individual work has increased, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, and the current number of psychologists does not match the increased need. In the 2022–2023 academic year, there will be more than 1,000 students per psychologist. The

Figure 17. Percentage of students with access to student welfare psychologist and counsellor services within the statutory time limit (7 days)



psychologist staffing ratio (a maximum of 780 students/psychologist) will become statutory in the autumn of 2023, but there are many challenges in ensuring the availability of psychologists. For example, temporary positions have not been filled, and there is a shortage of Swedish-speaking psychologists.

The student welfare service is anticipating that it will not achieve this ratio. In addition to private health stations, other cities and even the city's own occupational health care enterprise compete for the workforce, so it can also be difficult to retain psychologists who work for the city. There has been a severe shortage of doctors in student welfare services for quite some time. No statistics were available on access to nursing services, but according to the student health care officers interviewed, it is currently very good.

Upper secondary students should have access to low-threshold help for their well-being and emerging mental health challenges, with referrals for further support if necessary. However, those with more severe symptoms are not being referred for further treatment because the Youth Station, which treats people with moderate mental health problems, has been congested. Before the coronavirus pandemic, the waiting time was 2–3 months, but during the pandemic, it was up to six months. The waiting time had reduced by the end of 2022, but it can often still be too long for young people. According to the assessment, student welfare services must support students who may already need specialist care while waiting too long for treatment.

Cooperation has been increased between the Social Services and Health Care Division and Culture and Leisure Division

Recovery from the coronavirus pandemic has been promoted through increased cooperation between the Social Services and Health Care Division's social work and child welfare and youth services in the Culture and Leisure Division. Educational institutions have intensified their cooperation on student issues with several social service providers, for example. There is also a perceived need to increase this cooperation, partly influenced by the obligations of the Act on Compulsory Education. At the same time, staff from different sectors have started to work in educational institutions, such as practical counsellors and youth workers.

According to the city's recent welfare plan, youth welfare is part of the city-level welfare plan and is the responsibility of several divisions. Unified management structures have been agreed between the Education Division and the Social Services and Health Care Division. In the autumn of 2022, the Education Division and Culture and Leisure Division began to develop joint objectives to strengthen youth well-being.

The Future Health and Social Services Centre project that was launched in 2021 began to develop the service

chain and staging of care in youth mental health services. The creation of a mental health service chain for children and young people aims to strengthen cooperation between different actors. The aim was also to produce a visual model of the service tiers that employees could use. This work is ongoing. The project's self-evaluation report from the autumn of 2022 states that Helsinki lacks early support services in mental health services for children and youth.

Cooperation between schools and homes has room for improvement

With the amendment to the Act on Compulsory Education, as of 1 August 2022, guardians are responsible for a minor's completion of their compulsory education, and the educational institution is responsible for contacting the guardian if studies are not progressing. This has led to increased cooperation between schools and homes to support youth development. Guardians have been provided video materials and involved in projects to improve student well-being, such as the self-care pilot and the School to Belong programme. However, guardian participation in the activities of educational institutions is rather limited, especially at the Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute (Stadin AO). Forty-three per cent of the students at Stadin AO are not Finnish or Swedish-speaking. Cooperation between educational institutions and guardians is seen as one of the Education Division's most important issues for development. Among other things, this requires that guardians receive information about the Finnish school system, the rights and obligations of students, and support for the student. To address this, psychoeducational training has been offered to parents, but so far, it has only been available as distance learning.

Student well-being does not seem to have improved yet

The anxiety and loneliness experienced by young people increased significantly during the coronavirus pandemic. However, the rise in anxiety is not just a phenomenon linked to the coronavirus pandemic; the situation has been deteriorating for a long time. The return to in-person learning after the distance learning phases increased the potential for educational institutions to improve their sense of community. While 15% of students still experience severe loneliness, according to the HelsinkiMissio loneliness survey, almost 40% of students think their learning institution has taken steps to reduce loneliness.

The results of a school health survey of young people in Helsinki show that loneliness has become much more common, while moderate to severe anxiety, mood swings, and depressive symptoms have become even more prevalent. In Helsinki, the self-esteem of upper secondary school students is at lower levels than the

national average or elsewhere in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

The number of students discontinuing their studies in upper secondary education has increased since the 2019–2020 academic year. In contrast, young people discontinuing their vocational education and training decreased slightly between 2019 and 2021. However, the coronavirus pandemic has caused delays in studies. According to the VET Student Survey (Amisbarometri), 30% of respondents felt that mental health problems had slowed their studies, while 23% felt this was due to exhaustion. According to the division's survey, almost half the upper secondary school students estimated that the coronavirus pandemic still had a negative impact on their studies in the autumn of 2021.

Conclusions

The Education Division has advanced the City Strategy and 2022 budget's goal to strengthen student well-being in upper secondary schools and vocational education. However, it can be said that there are shortcomings in the resources available to support student well-being and therefore in the availability of early intervention services for well-being.

Individual support at the upper secondary level has been increased. Efforts have been made to improve access to student welfare services by increasing the number of staff and providing additional training to support them in welfare issues. In addition, students' sense of community and inclusion has been promoted by hiring staff in learning institutions to provide low-threshold guidance, activities and support for community integration. Measures in line with the objectives of the 2022 budget to strengthen student well-being in upper secondary education have been increased. A large part of these measures are related to recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, but some have also been implemented in response to the Act on Compulsory Education, which entered into force in 2021.

There are significant pressures on student welfare services and the promotion of student well-being, and there have been many efforts to respond to them. Individual work has increased, especially since the coronavirus pandemic, but the number of psychologists has not kept pace with the increased demand. The Education Division anticipates that there will also be challenges in meeting the statutory staffing levels in the autumn of 2023, as there is competition for psychologists in the workforce.

In addition to the coronavirus recovery fund, other special funding has also been available to improve student well-being. Some of the staff hired with these additional funds are temporary, and some of the activities are experimental.

The students' sense of community and inclusion has been promoted by launching wellness cafés in educational institutions. Students and staff in educational institutions have found the wellness café activities to be good. However, in some places, they are less frequent, and in some cases, it is unclear who or what body is responsible for organising them.

Students' psychological well-being has deteriorated, especially in recent years, so the need for mental health services is growing. The student welfare service also supports students with more severe symptoms, whose problems may worsen because it has been difficult to access further treatment, e.g. at the Youth Station. The service chain and staging of care in mental health services for young people have been developed as part of the development work on mental health and substance abuse services for children and young people. There has been work on the staging of care, but the discussion is still ongoing. It would be important to make a model of the stages available to employees and clients.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division, in cooperation with the Education Division's student welfare services, should

- ▶ finalise the service chain and staging of care in mental health services for young people as soon as possible in cooperation with all those responsible for the mental well-being of young people. The staging should clearly define how mental health clients move through the care chain, and who is responsible for the services.
- ▶ ensure that the service chain, staging of care, and guidelines for youth mental health services are made known to staff and clients alike.
- ▶ ensure that young people suffering from moderate mental health issues can access services at the Youth Station before their problems worsen.

The Education Division and the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division should cooperate

- ▶ to improve the availability and retention of psychologists in student welfare services.

the Education Division's upper secondary schools and vocational education and training should

- ▶ support the organisation of wellness cafés so they become established in all upper secondary schools and on the campuses of the Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute (Stadin AO).



Improving the health and wellbeing of Helsinki residents



Access to early-stage mental health services for adults



Has the city taken development measures for facilitating adults' access to early-stage mental health services?



Yes, but the care chain is unclear, and clients lack access to treatment within the expected timeframe.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the city facilitated adults' access to early-stage mental health services?

Related questions:

1. Have the availability and accessibility of early-stage mental health services been increased?
2. Has the availability of short-term psychotherapy been increased?
3. Have low-barrier services been increased, or has the threshold for services been lowered?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, the city will increase the availability and accessibility of early-stage mental health services and short-term psychotherapy and expand low-threshold mental health services. The city's 2022 budget aimed to increase the number of low-threshold Mieppi mental health service units. The Social Services and Health Care Division's 2022 action plan emphasised strengthening low-threshold services, mental health services, and outreach services near the city's residents. The provision of mental health services is regulated by the Health Care Act.

The assessment was limited to the city's adult early intervention and low-threshold primary care mental health services for outpatients. The assessed services included mental health and substance abuse nurses at health stations, counselling and referral services, the low-threshold mental health service Mieppi, and short-term psychotherapy. The assessment data consisted of interviews with people responsible for frontline services and representatives of mental health organisations. The assessment also included a survey of 42 mental health and substance abuse nurses working in the city's health stations, of whom 35 responded. The assessment also used documents, customer feedback material, and statistical data.

More low-threshold Mieppi service units are on the way

Mieppi is a low-threshold mental health service unit where clients can receive counselling on issues related to mental well-being. In practice, this means between one and five meetings with a nurse or psychologist. A person can make an appointment without a referral, book an appointment online, or visit the service in person. The service is open to everyone and can even be used by minors over the age of 13. The goal is also to ensure that Mieppi's services can be accessed reasonably quickly, and that clients arriving without an appointment can be seen during office hours. Mieppi provides counselling and guidance for further treatment but does not have an in-house doctor. In addition, Mieppi does not write prescriptions or issue sick leave; these must be obtained from one's own health station. Clients cannot use the Mieppi service if they are already receiving treatment from another mental health service. In this case, the client will be instructed to contact the relevant treatment provider.

Mieppi's operations have been expanded in Helsinki since 2019, and at the beginning of 2023, Mieppi had three locations: in Myllypuro, Kalasatama and Haaga. In future, the goal is to have Mieppi units in every Health and Well-being Centre in the City of Helsinki. Mieppi follows the low-threshold principle by accepting walk-ins without an appointment. However, the available walk-in hours without an appointment were reduced from August 2022 to January 2023, which may raise the threshold for services. On the other hand, clients prefer to make appointments for services. The change may speed up access for clients with appointments, as resources can be redirected towards them.

One goal of low-threshold services is to increase social inclusion by reaching out to clients who have been excluded from the service system, such as the unemployed, low-income people, and immigrants. Mieppi's service is free of charge and offers interpretation services, so it should also be accessible to people on low incomes and immigrants. There are regional differences in the language options and waiting times at Mieppi service units. However, clients are free to go to whichever Mieppi unit they prefer, regardless of where they live.

The Social Services and Health Care Division has surveyed the client experience at Mieppi units, with 43–47 responses, depending on the question. The survey

response rate is unknown. The survey questions were related to e.g. the functionality of the appointment system, being heard and understood, and getting the necessary information, new resources and new perspectives. Client satisfaction ranged from 84% to 94%, meaning they were very satisfied with Mieppi.

There can be long waits for appointments with mental health and substance abuse nurses

A client with mental health problems can be referred to a mental health and substance abuse nurse at any of the City of Helsinki's health stations or other health care facilities based on a treatment assessment by a doctor or nurse. Mental health and substance abuse nurses can help with mild to moderate mental health issues.

If a client has serious mental health problems, the mental health and substance abuse nurse will refer the client for treatment assessment by a health station physician or the client's treating physician. The doctor will assess whether the client meets the criteria for specialist care for admission to the city's psychiatric outpatient clinic. Alternatively, mental health and substance abuse nurses can consult the urgent care, assessment, and consultation working group, which is part of Frontline Services.

The goal has been for clients to be seen by a mental health and substance abuse nurse within two weeks. However, according to data from 2021 and 2022, the average waiting time has been around three weeks (Figure 18). The waiting time remained roughly the same in 2021 and 2022. The worst backlog was in June 2022, when the wait may have exceeded a month. The data are based on reports from the Apotti client and patient information system, which did not provide information for every month. In the assessment survey, most mental health and substance abuse nurses disagreed with the statement that clients with mental health problems got to an appointment with them quickly enough to meet their treatment needs. There are regional differences in access times for treatment, and staff absences can affect service congestion. If clients have to wait a long time for an appointment, staff are usually in touch with them. The service utilisation rate is monitored at the various health stations, and when backlogs occur, efforts are made to seek assistance or ways of reducing them.

The Frontline Therapies initiative develops early-stage mental health services

The key development measures in the city's early-stage mental health services in 2022 were related to the national Frontline Therapies initiative. The initiative aims to expand the range of psychosocial treatments

available directly at the primary level, including digital services, and to develop the necessary services and competence. Meeting the high demand for mental health services is identified as the primary challenge for the initiative. The initiative's development measures include describing the staged care system for mental health services; introducing the Finnish Therapy Navigator, a digital treatment assessment tool to facilitate client management; short-term therapy training for staff; and guided self-care. In addition, the initiative includes diversifying psychosocial care services to ensure that people with mild to moderate mental disorders have rapid access to treatment.

During 2022 and 2023, the city's mental health services outlined and described the staging of care for adult mental health services per the Frontline Therapies initiative (Figure 19). In this model, the range of treatments is tiered in accordance with the intensity of the treatment method, with lower stages suitable for mild to moderate mental disorders, and higher stages for severe or complex situations. The staging of care aims to provide the appropriate level of service for the person who needs help. In the city's mental health services, the staging of care is one development project that aims to address the high demand for mental health services and access to care. In terms of access and effectiveness, it is important to identify the appropriate service for each client and to be able to direct each of them to the service that best meets their needs.

According to the draft description of the treatment stages, a client with mental health issues is first assessed for the severity of their symptoms and the treatment needed using the Therapy Navigator. They are then referred to the appropriate treatment stage in accordance with a professional assessment. Trials in other cities have shown that using the Therapy Navigator has reduced the time required to access low-threshold services from two months to less than two weeks. In the Therapy Navigator, the client answers questions, and the navigator generates a summary, which a professional reviews. The goal is to speed up the assessment of the need for treatment and make it easier for clients to access treatment. By the beginning of 2023, more than 100 professionals in the city's early-stage mental health services had been trained to use the Therapy Navigator, and the tool was in active use by mental health and substance abuse nurses and Mieppi professionals. As the Therapy Navigator was just being introduced at the time of the assessment, no information about its impact on admission times to mental health services in Helsinki was yet available.

One of the goals of Helsinki's Frontline Therapies project is to train short-term Frontline therapists. Patients with mild to moderate mental health disorders can be referred for short-term frontline therapy

Figure 18. Time in days from making an appointment to seeing a mental health and substance abuse nurse in health stations from May 2021 to November 2022. Due to the introduction of Apotti, no data are available from October 2021 to February 2022.

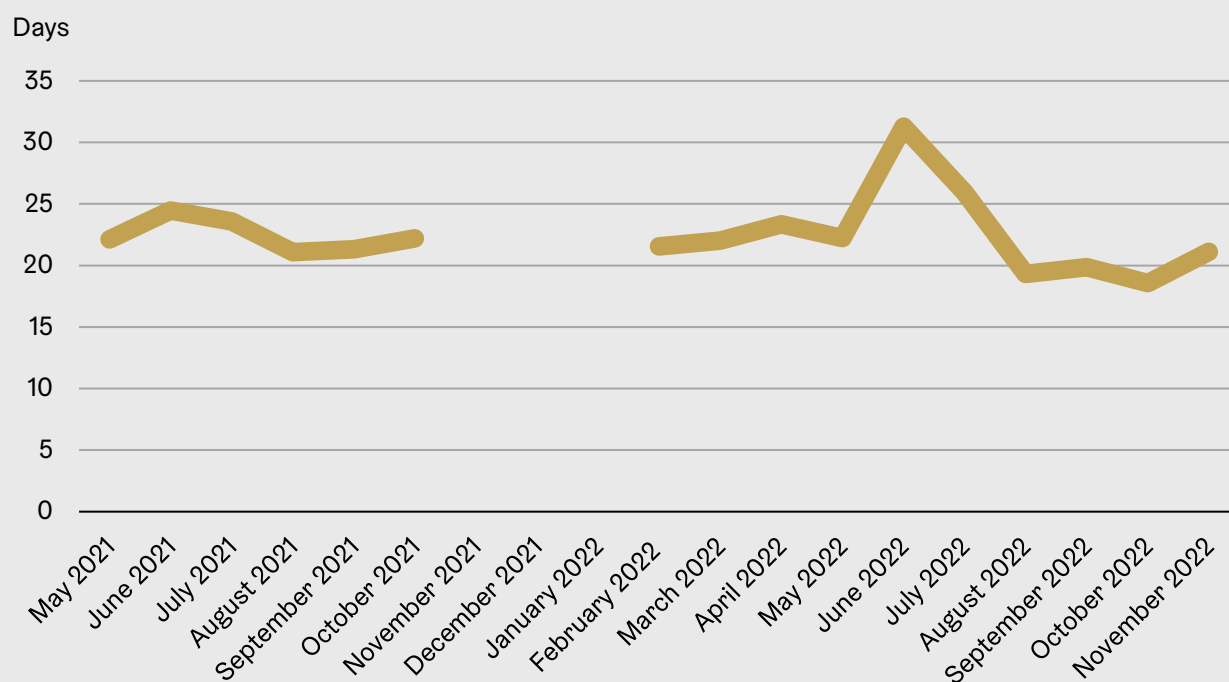
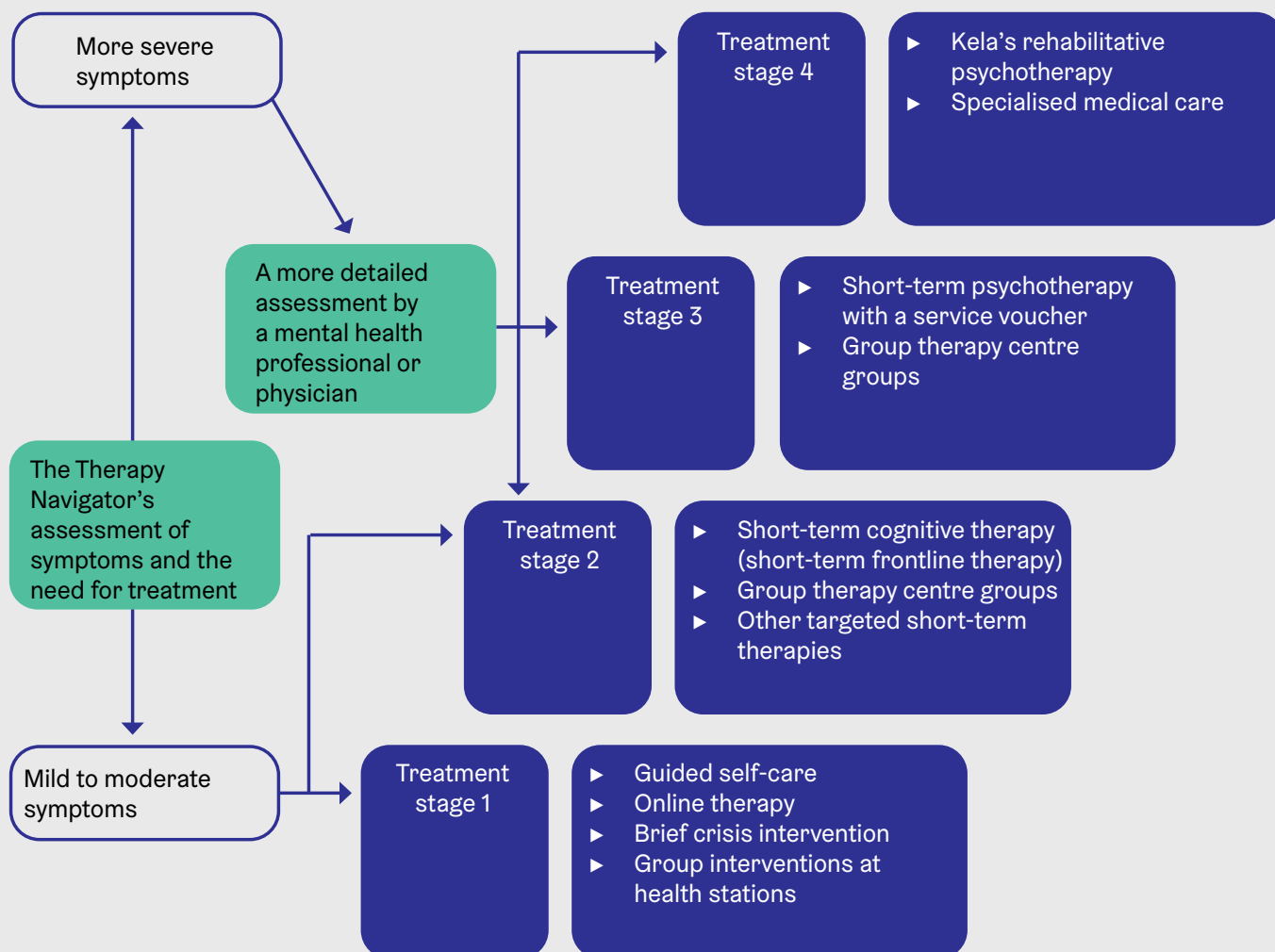


Figure 19. Draft of the stages of mental health services for adults in Helsinki



(short-term cognitive therapy starting from 2023). Short-term frontline therapy is goal-oriented and evidence-based treatment with a duration of five to ten visits. Frontline mental health professionals in social services and health care are widely trained in short-term frontline therapy. Training for short-term therapy takes a year. At the same time, Social Services and Health Care Division staff have also been trained in guided self-care, which provides tools for people struggling with mild mental health issues. The treatment is based on patients working on self-care using the Mentalhub (Mielenterveystalo) online service's self-care programme, chosen in accordance with the patient's needs. For example, it will also be possible to use the Digimieli website's self-care tools, launched in early 2023, either independently or with a professional. Self-care programmes can be used anonymously and without a diagnosis.

The Audit Committee's survey investigated the views of mental health and substance abuse nurses on various development activities such as the Mieppi service's expansion and the provision of mental health e-services. The nurses who responded to the survey were critical of the development measures, saying that none of them had resulted in significantly improved access to early-stage mental health services. In addition, the respondents felt that the extensive training involved in the development work took too much time away from patient care. On the other hand, many respondents considered the short-term frontline therapy training to have been successful.

According to mental health and substance abuse nurses, there is a lack of clarity in referring mental health clients to the city service that meets their needs. In particular, cooperation is difficult with the city's specialised psychiatric outpatient services such as the psychiatric outpatient clinic. It is difficult to find a suitable treatment facility for patients with more severe symptoms who do not meet the criteria for specialist care. In their written responses to the assessment survey, many mental health and substance abuse nurses pointed out that consultations with the assessment, emergency care and consultation teams of psychiatric and substance abuse centres were inadequate and that the city's criteria for access to specialist care were unclear.

The Helsinki City Strategy's guidelines for developing early-stage mental health services received positive feedback from mental health organisations. However, from the client's perspective, the practical implementation of these policies is another matter, as clients are not always aware of the available services and do not always understand the different stages of care. Clients of mental health services have reported difficulties in getting appointments at health stations. They have often had to wait in line for further treatment without being informed of their place in line. As a result,

some of the waiting clients have been channelled to MIELI Mental Health services, where they are offered supportive discussion sessions while waiting in line. According to information from mental health organisations, the treatment has not always met client needs. Regular cooperation between mental health organisations and the city on streamlining client guidance was interrupted during the coronavirus pandemic but resumed in 2022.

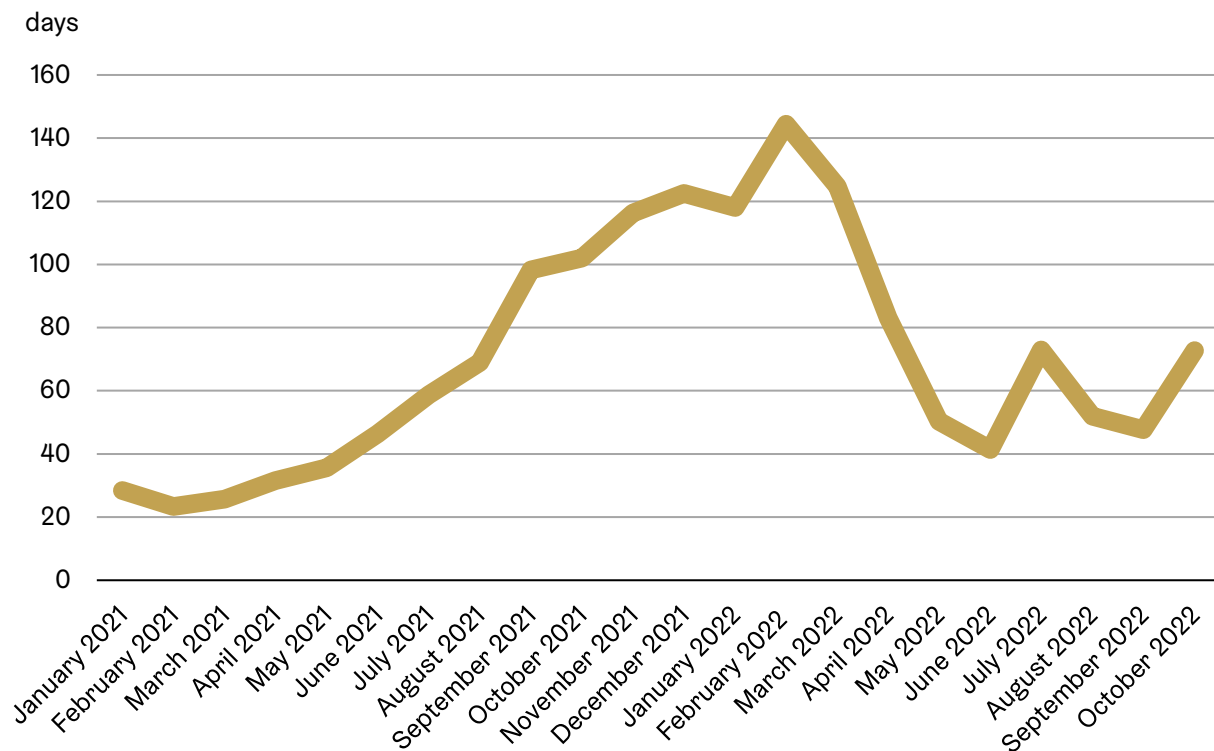
Access to short-term psychotherapy has been increased

Short-term psychotherapy is paid for by the City of Helsinki and intended for the Social Services and Health Care Division's clients. In January 2021, the City of Helsinki introduced service vouchers for short-term psychotherapy, complementing other basic mental health services. The length of short-term psychotherapy ranges between 10 and 20 sessions, and vouchers are available for adults and adolescents over 13 years of age for early-stage treatment of mild to moderate mental disorders. Applying for a service voucher requires a psychiatric diagnosis and laboratory tests, assessing the client's overall condition, and completing self-assessment forms. Short-term psychotherapy cannot be extended, additional visits are impossible, and the service voucher is normally valid for ten months.

The number of short-term psychotherapy service vouchers granted in 2022 increased compared to 2021. By the end of October 2022, 559 short-term psychotherapy vouchers had been issued, whereas 459 vouchers were issued for all of 2021. However, the share of issued vouchers as a percentage of requested vouchers has fallen from 92% to 85%. The statistics show that processing times for short-term psychotherapy referrals increased in 2022. The average processing time between January and October was 83 days, compared to an average of 58 days in 2021 (Figure 20). Among other things, variability in processing time is affected by variability in the number of applications and processors. The long delays in processing times were due to resource problems at the beginning, when it was difficult to predict the number of applications, the time needed to process them, system challenges, and the time required for other extra work. The longer processing times in 2022 are due to staff shortages and a large number of incomplete applications. Employees carrying out short-term psychotherapy assessments may have little experience of such assessments. The applications may therefore have deficiencies. As a result, the careful processing of short-term psychotherapy applications can take a long time.

The demand for psychotherapy is greater than the supply. There are few psychotherapists, which can make finding one challenging. However, new

Figure 20. Processing times (in days) for short-term psychotherapy applications from January 2021 to October 2022



psychotherapists are constantly being approved as service providers. In November 2022, there were 100 providers of short-term psychotherapy for adults, seven of whom reported being able to take on new clients immediately, and 12 of whom could do so after a month at the latest. In January 2023, the number of service providers had increased to 110, but most lacked the time for new appointments. In practice, although the number of service providers has increased, it is not easier for clients to find a psychotherapist.

Conclusions

The city has taken many development measures under the City Strategy to facilitate access to early-stage mental health services for adults. These development measures include expanding Mieppi's operations and introducing short-term frontline therapy, guided self-care and the Therapy Navigator. In addition, the city is working to increase the availability of psychosocial treatments in primary care, including digital services. However, the assessment shows that the measures have yet to improve client access to mental health services, and they are not receiving the treatment they need quickly enough.

The city has made efforts to increase access to services by opening a new short-term therapy unit in Pasila in March 2023. A fourth Mieppi location has also been opened in the short-term therapy unit. In addition, increasing the number of issued service vouchers has increased access to short-term psychotherapy. However, clients have to wait longer for vouchers because application processing times have increased.

In future, the city will seek to provide the appropriate level of service to individual mental health clients through a stepped mental health care model. A draft description of the stepped care model has been prepared but is still in progress. According to the assessment, the city's mental health services staff lack clarity about which city service they should refer mental health clients to. Finding a suitable treatment facility for the most severely symptomatic clients is especially challenging because of the strict criteria for specialised care. According to primary care staff, cooperation between primary and specialised care services is difficult. Specialist consultations provided to primary care mental health services by the city's mental health services are not considered adequate, and the criteria for specialised care in the city's psychiatric outpatient clinics are not regarded as clear.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division should

- ▶ finalise, as soon as possible, the staging of care in mental health services for adults, in cooperation with all those responsible for the mental well-being of adults. The staging should clearly define how mental health clients move through the care chain and who is responsible for the services.
- ▶ introduce the description of treatment stages both in the city's internal client guidance and when informing clients about services.
- ▶ provide adequate guidance and training to those preparing applications for short-term psychotherapy vouchers to ensure that deficiencies in the applications do not slow down service voucher processing.
- ▶ ensure that mental health services in primary health care receive adequate consultation assistance from the city's psychiatric consultation teams.
- ▶ ensure that severely symptomatic mental health patients receive the care they need, either by increasing the expertise and resources for primary care or relaxing the referral criteria for specialised care.



Support for families with children from maternity and child health services



Have families with children received adequate support from maternity and child health services?



Maternity and child health services primarily meet the needs of families. However, families do not always receive specialised support quickly enough, and there is room for improvement in the continuity of care.

The main focus of the assessment:

Have families with children received adequate support from maternity and child health services?

Related questions:

1. Is the provision of maternity and child health services compliant with the legislation?
2. Have maternity and child health services met the needs of a wide range of families?
3. Have maternity and child health services developed methods to identify families in need of special and/or comprehensive support?
4. Have maternity and child health services been developed in cooperation with families?

Maternity and child health services are statutory health services for pregnant women and children under school age and their families. Maternity and child health services are part of the preventive and health-promoting activities in primary health care. The use of maternity and child health services is voluntary and free of charge.

The 2021–2025 City Strategy aims to provide multidisciplinary support to families and invest in early and comprehensive support. Pregnancy and childbirth services are developed in dialogue with families, and the well-being of single-parent families is supported. The goal is to prevent a build-up of problems and the need for child protection. The development of the service network will account for the different starting points

and needs of Helsinki residents and the city's different neighbourhoods. The continuity of care and permanent care relationships will also be strengthened. In the 2022 budget, one of the key priorities for Social Services and Health Care Division was to recover from the coronavirus period and return its operations to pre-pandemic levels. Support for families and parenthood is a particular focus.

The assessment material consisted of an interview, survey, written requests for information, client feedback from maternity and child health clinics, statistics and other relevant documents. The interview was conducted with the Social Services and Health Care Division's unit for maternity and child health services and home services for families with children. An electronic survey was carried out among public health nurses, to which 87 responded. The response rate was 34%. Audit Committee's second commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Itäkatu Family Centre.

Families are provided maternity and child health services in accordance with the law

The majority of Helsinki families use public maternity and child health services. In Helsinki, family services are concentrated in four physical family centres and three family centre networks. The Helsinki Social Services and Health Care Division's maternity and child health services have an average of 340,000 visits annually. The clinics serve around 50,000 clients every year.

Periodic health examinations are the foundation of the preventive health services provided by maternity and child health clinics. Regular health check-ups make it possible to ensure the well-being of pregnant women and children aged 0–6. In Helsinki, families are offered health examinations per the Decree on Maternity and Child Health Clinic Services. Pregnant women can visit the maternity clinic 13 times, and children can visit the child health clinic 20 times. Families are invited to extensive health examinations, which are typically arranged as joint appointments with the nurse and the doctor. In accordance with the law, extensive health examinations are provided between 13 and 16 weeks of pregnancy at the maternity clinic, and at four months,

18 months and four years of age at the child health clinic. Additional visits are offered as required if the family needs special support.

The coverage of health examinations in Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics can be considered quite good. The statutory coverage of the extensive health examinations for children aged 0–6 years was generally met at around 90% between 2017 and 2020. The majority of pregnant women also undergo an extensive health examination. The Apotti patient information system was introduced in April 2021 to Helsinki's social and health services, and no reliable statistics are available after that date. The management of maternity and child health services estimates that the coverage of services remained at the previous level in 2021 and 2022.

Multidisciplinary family coaching is provided for families expecting their first child, and they receive a home visit. Other home visits are arranged as necessary. Health counselling is provided during health clinic visits, taking the client's needs into account.

In the survey of public health nurses, half the respondents felt that insufficient maternity and child health services were available, but on average, the services were still considered effective. According to the nurses, there were not enough staff, and there had been a moderately high turnover in staff. The responses from nurses working in physical family centres were slightly more negative than those from nurses working in independent maternity and child health clinics. The open-ended responses in the survey also called for longer appointment times to allow enough time to address family issues.

Client needs for support grew during the coronavirus pandemic

Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics were open during the coronavirus pandemic from 2020 to 2022. None of the nurses or midwives at the maternity and child health clinics was reassigned to other tasks because of the pandemic, such as coronavirus vaccinations. However, maternity and child health clinic doctors had to be reassigned to pandemic management duties to ensure emergency medical services at health stations. Staff and client illnesses and quarantines limited activities, and some clinic visits had to be cancelled or postponed. During the pandemic's most acute phases, services were prioritised for pregnant women and families with children under one year old. The resulting care backlog was reduced by establishing care backlog units in Malmi and Laakso, which offered centrally scheduled appointments. According to the people interviewed in the assessment, the coronavirus pandemic no longer caused any clearly identifiable care backlog in Helsinki. However, there were children who had missed their periodic examinations due

to rescheduling or the cancellation of appointments. According to the public health nurses, the coronavirus pandemic had increased the workload in maternity and child health services, and client needs for support had increased. In 2022, additional resources will be made available for maternity and child health services to meet the challenges arising from the pandemic era.

Maternity and child health services generally meet the needs of a wide range of families

The starting point for maternity and child health services is to provide equal services for all city residents while considering the individual needs of families. Maternity and child health services aim to consider the differences between city areas and client groups. For example, in the eastern part, maternity and child health clinics have emphasised services linked to immigration and the use of interpreters. Clinic resources have also been allocated to city areas based on needs.

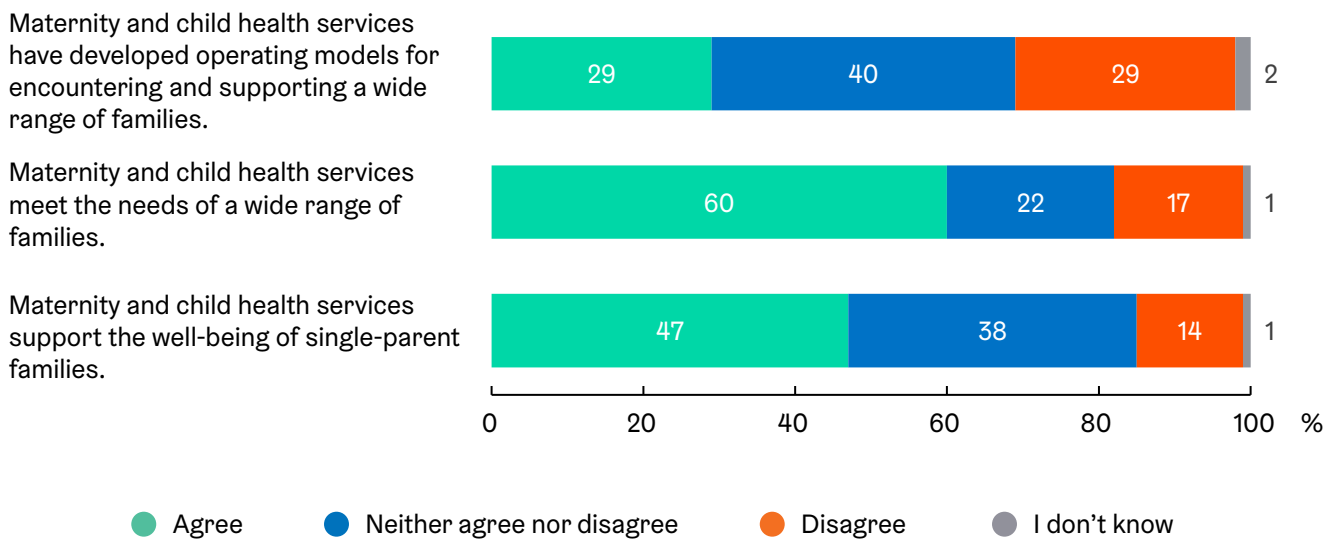
The particular characteristics of families and their family model are taken into account in maternity and child health services. For example, single-parent families have been more readily offered help with home services for families with children. The clinics frequently use interpreters, and health counselling materials are available in several languages. The goal is to provide maternity and child health services in the families' mother tongue. The clinics also guide families to playground activities and third-sector organisations.

In a survey of nurses, the majority of respondents agreed that Helsinki's maternity and child health services met the needs of a wide range of families (Figure 21). According to the survey results, the well-being of single-parent families was also supported. Opinions were most divided on the following statement: "Maternity and child health services have developed operating models for encountering and supporting a wide range of families".

According to a study carried out in cooperation with universities, the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, and the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS), there is still room for improvement in how the city's maternity and child health clinics consider the diversity of families, as well as in their work and the materials used in the clinics. The clinics' consideration and involvement of the whole family and their support for multiculturalism and language development were also identified as areas for improvement.

According to the people interviewed in the assessment, maternity and child health care have changed significantly in recent years. The need for parental support has increased, and the problems of client families have become more complex. Maternity and child health care are no longer just about examining the child or pregnant mother; the whole family is a clinic

Figure 21. Nurses' views on support for a wide range of families, percentage of respondents, N=87



client, meaning longer appointments are needed. The clinics at the physical family centres provide evening appointments.

Continuity of care is not achieved

More than half the nurses who responded to the survey felt that continuity of care was not realised at maternity and child health clinics. Especially at large maternity and child health clinics and family centres, the chances of having an appointment with an unfamiliar nurse are higher. Support needs may go unidentified if the nurse and client do not know each other, and a relationship of trust does not develop. In their open responses to the survey, the nurses hoped that there would be more focus on self-care and that the family could visit a familiar nurse. Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics have issued guidelines aiming to ensure continuity of care. Pregnant persons, infants aged 0–1, at-risk families, or families with special needs will be referred to their own nurse, team member, or another nurse agreed by the team.

Support needs are identified at the maternity and child health clinic, but families do not receive support quickly enough

The central mission of nurses is to survey and identify the well-being needs of the pregnant person and the whole family during periodic examinations. The child's growth and development are monitored, and parents are interviewed to establish the family's well-being. Creating an atmosphere of trust and encountering the family as individuals are key elements of identifying support needs. Support needs are identified with the aid of screenings, forms, methods for initiating conversations, and care plans for clients. Identifying

support needs becomes more difficult if there is a turnover in maternity and child health care workers, no information flow between social and health services, or parents do not openly disclose family problems. In situations where the clinic's preventive approach is insufficient, the client is referred to the social and health services they need.

During pregnancy and the first year of an infant's life, there are frequent clinic visits to closely monitor the family's well-being. According to the results of the survey of nurses, special needs are identified early in the maternity and child health clinic, but families do not receive support quickly enough. In particular, getting support from other social and health services was considered challenging. From the clinic's perspective, there is a serious shortage of mental health and rehabilitation services for children under school age, and a dedicated psychiatric nurse would be welcome. There has been a shortage of substance abuse, mental health and family counselling services and social guidance. If clients are unable to obtain the support they need or have to wait a long time for a service, this puts strain on the entire client family and at the same time, on the workers at the clinic, who are left with the task of supporting families and parents. Home services for families with children have been able to provide extra help to families, but families do not always receive this help early enough.

There is still room for improvement in multidisciplinary cooperation and information flows

The family centres are designed to make it as easy as possible for different professional groups to work together. Maternity and child health services have

consultation models with health centres and other family centre operators. Considerable work has been done to develop appropriate contact and consultation channels. Multidisciplinary counselling teams operate in the family centres, and there is cooperation with early childhood education and primary education. Supervisors have their own established cooperative networks to address issues related to operating models, client experience, and staff and their well-being.

Although there are many different consultation and cooperation models, client information does not always flow between various services as desired. The legislation on social and health care services can complicate smooth case management if the client has not given permission for their data to be transmitted. There have also been some challenges in coordinating the work between different actors, as their work may overlap.

There have also been some challenges in coordinating the work between different actors, as they may perform overlapping work. Nurses working in independent maternity and child health clinics had a more positive attitude towards the effectiveness of cooperation and information flows than those working in the physical family centres, even though the main objective of family centres is to improve multidisciplinary cooperation. Cooperation between nurses and maternity and child health clinic physicians received the most favourable evaluation, although there was still room for improvement there as well. It was hoped that physicians at maternity and child health clinics would be more permanent and accessible.

Family centre facilities are not entirely conducive to maternity and child health care

The assessment found that the facilities of the physically centralised family centres did not entirely serve the purposes of maternity and child health services. In the family centres, the nurses did not have their own offices, but the offices were reserved in accordance with client appointments. A shortage of offices has emerged as more positions have been added to the clinics. The lack of office space and the need to move from one room to another is perceived as a factor that reduces the attractiveness of working in maternity and child health services.

According to the nurses, client feedback is not necessarily utilised, and development work is not evident in daily life.

Client feedback for maternity and child health clinics is obtained through national surveys and studies, family coaching sessions, feedback machines at family centres, the city's feedback system, and communications received by social welfare and patient advocates. The clients of maternity and child health clinics have been satisfied with the confidentiality of the service,

fair treatment, cooperation from the staff, and service in their mother tongue. Clients have been involved in developing the child health care in the day-care centre (Neuvola päiväkodissa) model and family coaching. However, according to the assessment survey results, nurses felt that maternity and child health services were not being developed in cooperation with families, and that the results of client feedback were not being used enough in planning services.

Conclusions

Maternity and child health services are provided per the legislation and generally meet the needs of a wide range of families. In Helsinki, families are offered periodic health examinations in accordance with the Decree on Maternity and Child Health Clinic Services. The coverage of health examinations in Helsinki's maternity and child health clinics can be considered good. The majority of pregnant individuals have extensive health examinations, and for children, the coverage of comprehensive health examinations has generally been more than 90% annually. Families with special needs are offered additional appointments and home visits when necessary.

The needs of families are taken into account at the clinic at individual and family levels. The needs of specific areas and client groups are considered when designing services. According to the public health nurses, maternity and child health services meet the needs of a wide range of families, and the well-being of single-parent families is supported. There is still room for improvement in considering the diversity of families, involving the whole family, and supporting multiculturalism and language development.

Special needs are identified early at the maternity and child health clinic, especially during pregnancy and the first year of the infant's life, when there is frequent monitoring. However, this support is not always available sufficiently fast. Obtaining support from other social and health services is perceived as particularly challenging. There has been a shortage of substance abuse, mental health and family counselling services and social guidance. If a family does not get the support it needs, it places a strain on both client families and the employees of the maternity and child health clinic. Support needs are identified with the help of screenings, forms, methods for initiating conversations, and care plans for clients. The support needs of clients may go unidentified if a trust-based and ongoing care relationship does not develop between the nurse and the client. In the public health nurse survey, more than half thought continuity of care was not achieved for families in maternity and child health clinics.

In Helsinki, family services are concentrated in family centres. These family centres have aimed to improve

cooperation between different professional groups. However, multidisciplinary cooperation and information flow between different social and health services do not yet function as intended in the physical family centres. The facilities of the family centres do not fully serve maternity and child health work, as the nurses do not have their own offices, and there is a shortage of rooms. Reserving rooms and moving from one room to another has been perceived as a factor that reduces the attractiveness of working in maternity and child health services.

Client feedback is collected in various ways, and families have been involved in developing maternity and child health services. However, the nurses do not think the development work is always evident in practice.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division should

- ▶ strengthen practices that support the continuity of care in maternity and child health clinics.
- ▶ improve families' access to other services they need, such as substance abuse and mental health services, family counselling services and social guidance.
- ▶ strengthen multidisciplinary cooperation and the flow of information between different social and health services in family centres to support families.
- ▶ develop the facilities of family centres to serve maternity and child health work better.



Services in Family and Social Services to support the well-being of informal carers



Has the city ensured support for informal carers of people under 65 and their well-being?



Temporary care for dependants during informal carers' leave is not always adequate, resulting in unused leave and a potential strain on the caregiver.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the Family and Social Services of the Social Services and Health Care Division supported informal carers and their well-being in line with the City Strategy and the division's policies?

Related questions:

1. Have the statutory leaves for informal carers been available as required by law?
2. During the current strategy period, has informal care been developed in Family and Social Services in accordance with the development areas identified by the division and feedback from organisations?
3. Has the client experience improved in the support for informal care?

The 2021–2025 City Strategy states that the city will ensure the well-being and support of informal carers. According to the Social Services and Health Care Division's 2022 Action Plan, the division will develop its services with the staff and customers and improve the client experience and accessibility of services. According to the Action Plan, service vouchers will be offered as a convenient option.

According to the Act on Support for Informal Care, informal care refers to arranging care and assistance in the home for an elderly, disabled or sick person with the help of a relative or someone close to the person being cared for. The assessment focused on support for the informal care of persons under 65.

In 2022, there were 2,012 Disability Services clients receiving informal care support, of whom 1,160 were caregivers for people with disabilities, and 852 were caregivers for people with developmental disabilities. The number of clients increased by 17% from the previous year. The vast majority of the informal carers supported by Disability Services provide care for clients under 18. However, clients under 65 who receive informal care support are a heterogeneous group. The clients are people of varying ages with reduced functional capabilities due to disability or illness.

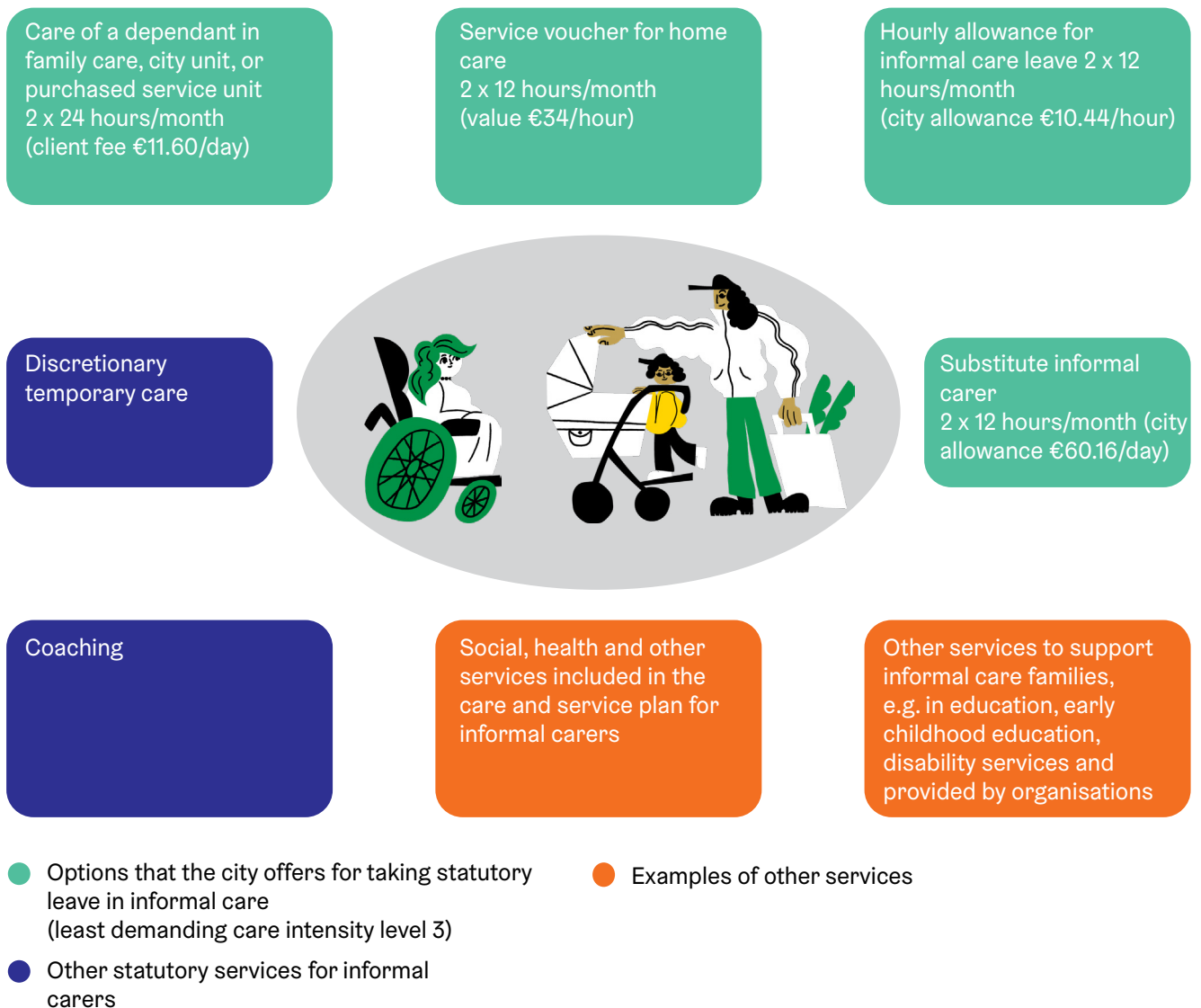
The assessment material was based on interviews with experts from informal care support in the Social Services and Health Care Division's Disability Services and representatives of an informal care organisation and a disability organisation. The material also included statements and initiatives that organisations submitted to the city in previous years on developing informal care and the city's responses to them. Eight organisations were requested to provide information about what could be improved in supporting informal care. Six organisations responded to the request for information.

Statutory leave is one of the most important services for supporting informal carers' well-being

According to the Act on Support for Informal Care, a person who has entered into a contract with a municipality for informal care support is entitled to at least two days' leave per calendar month. If the care is more demanding, the right to leave is three days. As shown in Figure 22, the city's available options for taking the leave include the following:

- ▶ care in a temporary care unit run by the city or a private provider, either as a purchased service or with a service voucher;
- ▶ a service voucher for a paid service at home;
- ▶ the option to use a substitute informal carer; or
- ▶ an hourly allowance for informal carer leave.

Figure 22. Services in Helsinki for informal care families providing care for persons under 65 years old



In 2022, substitute informal care was the most used option for taking statutory leave in Family and Social Services. A substitute informal carer is often a family member, another relative or a familiar person. There were 534 clients in substitute informal care, and 13,269 days of leave were taken. The temporary care unit was the second most used option by families for providing care to the dependant. The city can provide temporary care in its own temporary care unit, a private provider's temporary care unit, or family care. There were 127 clients using temporary care, and 2,808 days of leave were taken. If a family opts for a service voucher, they can use it to purchase 24 hours of home care per month. Taking the full two or three days of leave is only possible if the selected place of care is the city's own or an independent temporary care facility.

More temporary care placements are needed for different client groups

For example, insufficient temporary care placements are available for Swedish-speaking dependants, people

over 18 with severe disabilities, people with challenging behaviour, or people needing lengthier short-term care in crises in informal caregiving. For example, because insufficient suitable temporary care placements are available, the organisations say that adult dependants with a disability may be offered a placement in a unit for elderly people with memory disorders. According to the interviews with the organisations, there are also few care facilities with sufficient expertise to care for children and young people with neuropsychiatric symptoms such as ADHD, ADD, autism spectrum disorder, Tourette's or a developmental language disorder.

On the other hand, an informal care family may feel that they do not want to take their loved one to a care facility outside the home if they believe that it lacks the necessary expertise. Staff turnover is also perceived to negatively affect the quality of care.

Some informal care clients are satisfied with the temporary care facilities and the care they provide. Disability Services monitors client feedback in its normal

operations and the provision of services. In particular, client feedback from temporary care facilities is monitored. There is a wait for the temporary care facilities that people are satisfied with.

Statutory leave was taken less during the coronavirus period but increased in 2022

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic was reflected in the reduced use of statutory leave by informal carers. The use of statutory leave decreased from 2019 to 2020. Both the availability of temporary care placements and health and safety issues contributed to this decrease in the use of statutory leave. In a client survey of informal carers in Helsinki in 2018 conducted before the coronavirus pandemic, just over 50% of informal caregivers of persons under 65 said they used all their statutory days off. Not all informal carers want to use their statutory leave or leave their dependants in someone else's care. It may also be that care is arranged within the family without the need to apply for leave.

In 2019, 14,899 statutory days off were used; in 2020, the figure was 13,113. For 2021, due to the transition to the Apotti information system, reliable statistics for days off were unavailable. In 2022, 16,294 statutory leave days were taken, i.e. more than in 2019 and 2020. From 2020 to 2022, the number of clients increased by 7.6%. Over the same period, the number of leave days taken increased by around 24%, which is more than the number of clients.

There is a need to diversify discretionary services

According to the Act on Support for Informal Care, the municipality can arrange other days off and recreational leave for informal caregivers in addition to the two or three days' leave per month. According to the law, the municipality must ensure that appropriate care is arranged during the caregiver's leave.

In the organisations' view, informal care families need discretionary leave, support services, home help services, emotional support, peer support and steering to adaptation coaching. There is a perceived need for a wider range of services in supporting the informal care of people under 65, which is already the case in the care of those over 65.

People are satisfied with service vouchers, but they need to be more flexible

In general, clients have been satisfied with the service voucher system as a way to arrange statutory leave. The service voucher's value has been €34/hour for a long time, but the organisations consider this inadequate. Families with children can make the most of their time off at weekends and in the evenings, as children are often in early childhood care, young people

are at school, and carers are at work during weekdays. The value of the voucher is not always enough for weekends and evenings, which is when services are more expensive. In the organisations' view, the value of a service voucher should be higher so that those client groups who mainly take their time off in the evenings and at weekends can also use their statutory leave with service vouchers. There has been a shortage of services on weekday evenings, nights and weekends. In addition, the organisations have requested that when a family opts for home care with a service voucher, they will receive the same amount of statutory leave as when using the temporary care arranged by the city.

Families are not always able or willing to take their children to temporary care facilities, and suitable home service providers who accept service vouchers are not always available. In these situations, the organisations think the voucher should be sufficiently flexible to purchase other alternative services such as cleaning. Individualised services are the best way to support informal carers' well-being.

Coaching for informal carers is starting again

According to the Act on Support for Informal Care, the municipality must provide coaching and training to informal caregivers for their caring role if necessary. In Helsinki, there have been a few coaching sessions each year, and the number of informal carers has usually varied between 8 and 15. Only one remote event was arranged during the coronavirus pandemic. Coaching is set to resume in the spring of 2023. In future, the city intends to hold the coaching sessions as hybrid events so that informal carers who do not have the option to leave their homes can also participate. The coaching sessions have been organised in cooperation with organisations. The feedback on the coaching has been good, but in the Disability Services of Family and Social Services, the simultaneous interpreting in the coaching sessions and systematic collection of feedback on the session's success have been identified as areas for development.

There is a need to increase communication about services for informal carers

The Social Services and Health Care Division communicates about services for informal carers in many ways. However, this information does not always reach informal care clients, organisations, and other parties who need it. According to the organisations, the division's website is seen as confusing, and information is difficult to find. Informal carers and other clients often contact the organisations when they cannot find information about informal care on the city's website. According to the Family and Social Services Department, it is expected that the division's website will be renewed soon. The organisations also consider there to be a need for a brochure in plain language on

services for each client group, for example, a separate brochure for people with an immigrant background. Currently, information is communicated in Finnish and Swedish.

The organisations have called for a comprehensive account of the situation for informal care families when planning services. The organisations consider it important to determine service needs on an individual basis and to coordinate the range of services for informal care. Families may currently have to deal separately with several social and health services. According to a client survey conducted in 2018, families providing informal care to children under 18 were less likely than other informal caregiver groups to consider their service package appropriate for their families.

Organisations would like to see the use of lived experience experts

According to informal care and disability organisations, there has been good cooperation with Family and Social Services in supporting informal carers, but it has been very limited in recent years. According to the assessment interview, the organisations would like to be more involved in developing the provision of informal care leave and preparing and updating the guidelines and rulebooks for informal care.

Polli ry, an informal care organisation in the Helsinki metropolitan area, trains lived experience experts. These lived experience experts are informal caregivers themselves and therefore have first-hand experience. Lived experience experts have in-depth valuable knowledge, gained from their networks and experience, about how services work, and what informal caregivers want and need. The organisations have called for lived experience experts to be regularly used in developing the city's informal care support services and at an early stage in planning services.

Conclusions

Family and Social Services has largely ensured the support and well-being of informal carers in line with the City Strategy. However, suitable temporary care placements are not always available for different client groups. These client groups include Swedish-speaking clients and clients with neuropsychiatric conditions. The clients under 65 years of age who receive informal caregiver support are a heterogeneous group. The clients are of varying ages and have very different health backgrounds, disabilities and characteristics. Expertise and professionalism are required in the temporary care of children and young people with neuropsychiatric conditions, for example.

Clients are mostly satisfied with the service voucher system. The value of the voucher has been a source of dissatisfaction, as it is not always sufficient for

purchasing services at weekends and in the evenings. In particular, informal care families with children need time off in the evenings or at weekends, when services are more expensive. Clients cannot always find suitable care facilities or home service providers that are available through service vouchers. The organisations have therefore proposed new alternatives to replace informal carers' leave with service vouchers for cleaning services, for example.

The lived experience experts trained by the organisations have valuable knowledge about the functioning of services and expectations in the informal caregiving field based on their own experience and that of their networks. Developing services with clients and their representatives is important. Utilising lived experience experts will allow client perspectives to be integrated better into informal care services.

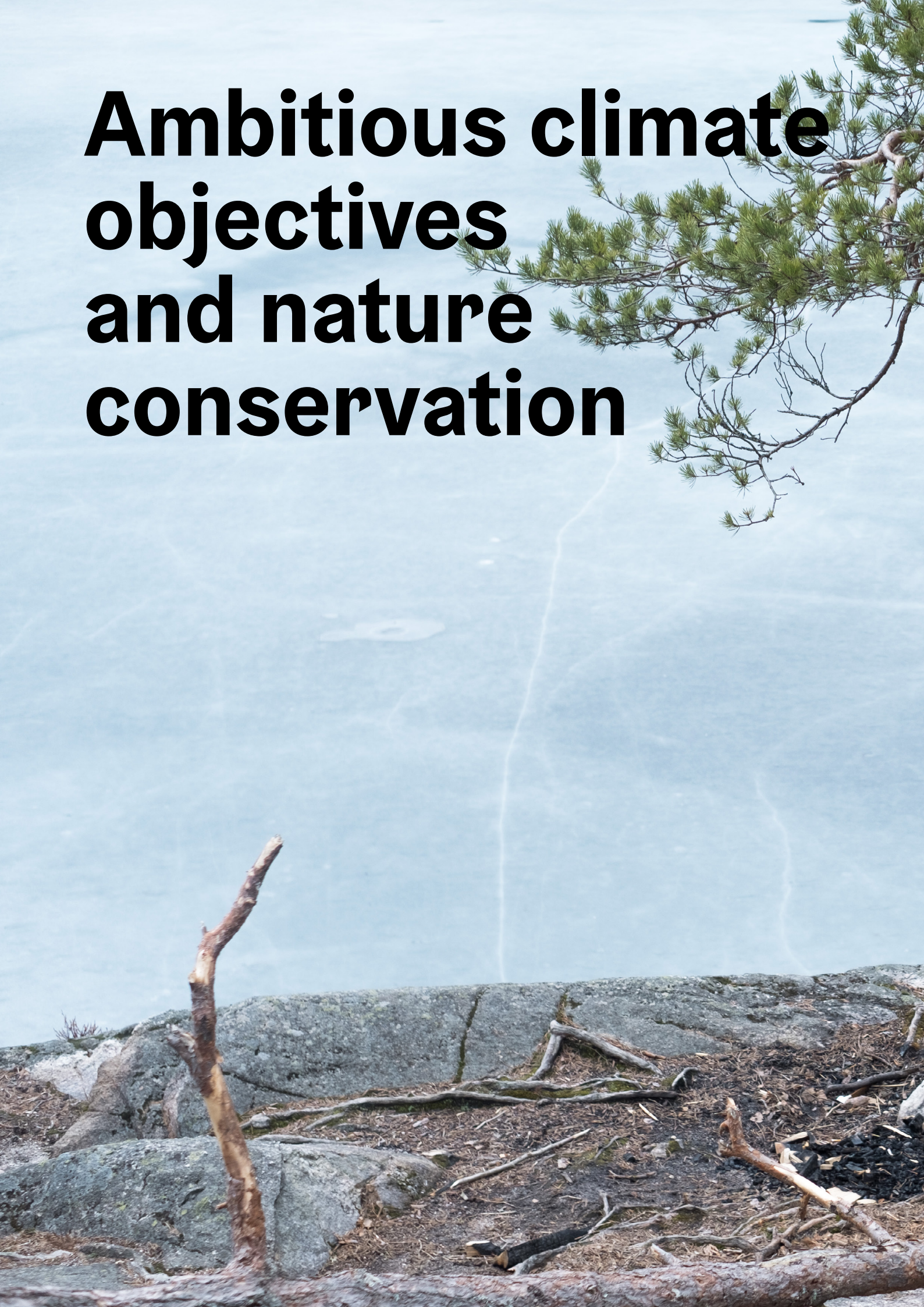
It is important to communicate to people about the informal care support services that are available so that clients know about the support and services that are available to them. Organisations and clients have found the division's website confusing, and information about services is therefore not always easy to find. In addition, clients with immigrant backgrounds in particular need a separate plain-language brochure on informal care support services.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's Family and Social Services Department should

- ▶ increase the number of temporary care placements in informal care and improve the quality of temporary care to meet client group needs.
- ▶ review the value of service vouchers used for informal carers' statutory leave to make it more adequate for temporary care in the evenings and at weekends.
- ▶ develop the informal care service voucher so that it can be used for a wider range of services than is currently possible to meet caregiver needs.
- ▶ use lived experience experts to develop services for informal carers.
- ▶ ensure that information about informal care support is easy to find and in plain language on the Family and Social Services website.

Ambitious climate objectives and nature conservation



Impact of residential planning on green spaces



Has residential planning ensured the preservation of green spaces and the most valuable natural sites?



For the most part, yes, but in some cases, green spaces and sites of local importance have been designated for housing.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the Urban Environment Division ensured that green spaces are preserved or increased when planning residential areas?

Related questions:

1. Has residential planning given sufficient consideration to developing ecological networks (forested and wooded networks, meadow networks)?
2. Has residential planning ensured that Helsinki's most valuable natural areas are not allocated for construction?
3. Has the accessibility of green spaces been promoted?

Green spaces refer to areas covered in vegetation, such as parks, forests, beaches or fields. The assessment was limited to residential planning in general and local detailed planning. Street and park plans are excluded from the assessment.

Planning residential areas and considering green spaces or natural sites are generally governed by the Land Use and Building Act, the national land-use guidelines, and the land-use, housing and transport agreements (MAL agreements). The land-use planning system also includes different plan levels: the regional, general, and local detailed plans. In addition, urban planning and accounting for nature and green spaces are guided by Helsinki's city strategies and the City of Helsinki's biodiversity action plans (LUMO).

The 2021–2025 City Strategy hopes to increase Helsinki's population. To this end, land-use planning should allow new housing to be built. The goal for the housing and related land-use implementation programme (AM Programme 2020) is to zone 700,000 square metres

of residential floorspace per year. Renewing and supplementing the existing built environment should be a priority, especially along rail lines and around stations.

The 2021–2025 City Strategy sets out a policy to increase the number of trees and greenery in the city, strengthen the forest and meadow networks, and avoid designating development in Helsinki's most valuable natural areas. According to the strategy, all Helsinki residents will continue to have easy access to local natural areas. Infill development must be balanced with the surrounding nature. Thus, urban growth requires balancing urban densification and the importance of the local natural environment. Construction and transport projects should always explore the possibility of preserving as much woodland and vegetation as possible.

The assessment is based on land-use planning data and other documentation. In addition, the assessment included inquiries and interviews with experts in general planning, detailed local planning, urban space and landscape planning, and environmental services. The assessment also used monitoring data from the LUMO programme, data on the accessibility of green spaces, and the results of resident surveys and communication studies on the city's growth and green spaces. The Audit Committee's first commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Urban Environment Division.

As case studies, the assessment examined the local detailed plans of two neighbourhoods in different parts of Helsinki. The case studies include an amendment to the detailed plan for Koirasaarentie and Ilomäentie in Laajasalo and the detailed plan and its amendment for Honkasuontie in the Honkasuo area. These examples were selected for the case study because they were legally valid plans, and based on visual inspection of the land-use plan data, negatively impacted the area's natural values.

There is a conflict between the goals for housing production and the preservation of natural values

According to a resident survey and a communication study commissioned by the Urban Environment Division, the majority of city residents welcomed growth in residential construction, but most did not want it in their own neighbourhoods. The main reason for

opposition to construction was concern about losing green spaces. The methods for planning new housing that residents prefer would be making existing residential areas more compact, building taller buildings, or designating residential development in commercial areas.

According to the interviewees, there is a fundamental conflict between the goals of housing development and those of preserving natural values. The land-use planning process weighs these different objectives and seeks to find a compromise. Integrating infill development into the existing urban structure is particularly challenging and resource-intensive because Helsinki no longer has empty project areas such as old port areas. In addition, the constantly increasing information about nature poses more and more challenges for land-use planning. The more that is known, the more natural values will be taken into account in land-use planning.

There are delays in updates to data in the Nature Information System

Among other things, the Urban Environment Division's Environmental Services are responsible for maintaining the Nature Information System, the main source of environmental data for land-use planners. Environmental Services also evaluates the impact of land use on the natural environment, monitors the state of nature and ensures the sustainable recreational use of natural areas. The land-use planners can use the official geographic information service to access information about urban nature networks and valuable natural sites registered in the Nature Information System. Environmental Services can help land-use planners interpret and assess ecological data when necessary. Environmental Services aims to stay current with future land-use plans by following the master plan implementation programme and future land-use planning projects.

Urban space and landscape planning has the main responsibility for planning urban nature networks. Urban space and landscape planning is also involved in detailed planning projects, where it is responsible for landscape planning in land use, including green infrastructure in green spaces, blocks and streets. The geographic information service has been updated to include the forest network, the flying squirrel network and most recently, the meadow network in 2021. The watercourse network, known as the "blue network", is still being established. According to Environmental Services, ecological networks are generally taken into account well in land-use planning. However, some of the thinner connections in the local forest and woodland networks may still be broken because they do not appear on the network maps.

Environmental Services considers the data in the Nature Information System to be generally adequate

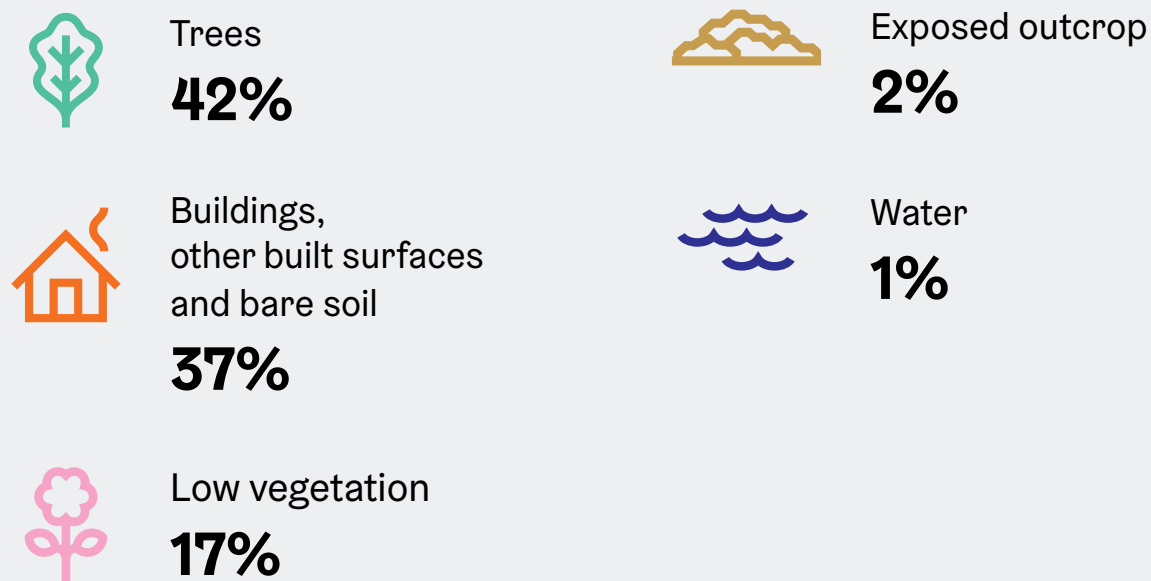
for preparing land-use plans. The data are continuously updated, and separate nature surveys are also carried out for land-use plans. There is insufficient time to enter all the data from all the nature surveys into the Nature Information System because there is a very large number of surveys, and the Nature Information System is only maintained by a single Environmental Services employee for part of their working time. The average delay in importing survey data into the system is several months. However, the system aims to provide the details and boundaries of surveys so site planners know they exist. Given that land-use planning is a long process, it is impossible to completely avoid situations where the results from a nature survey of a larger area are only available after the draft land-use plan is complete.

In 2023, Environmental Services was working on designating the city's most valuable natural areas. They aim to make this designation available to land-use planners so they can better ensure that plans do not jeopardise these areas. According to Environmental Services, land-use planners are usually very careful when planning construction in green spaces. Land-use planners rely on the data in the Nature Information System and the opinions of Environmental Services' ecological experts and thoroughly consider them when preparing the plans. According to Environmental Services, land-use planning will not endanger nature conservation areas or the most valuable nature sites. However, it is difficult to measure the impact of land-use planning on natural areas and their natural values, and the human resources available to Environmental Services for assessing its impact on nature are limited.

Master plans indicate green and recreational areas generally

The 2016 Master Plan shows recreational areas and green spaces and their connections. Green space designations identify the Green Fingers (green corridors); large recreational, natural and cultural areas; and other areas used for recreation. A challenge in interpreting master plans when drawing up detailed plans is that the master plan does not show zones precisely. This also applies to green spaces and recreational areas. The master plan identifies key natural areas. The urban nature theme map, which refines the master plan, shows legally effective nature conservation areas, habitats protected by the Nature Conservation Act, areas in the Natura 2000 network, and other areas designated for protection. Other designations and conservation guidelines in the theme map are intended to guide land-use planning. The urban nature theme map also shows the forest, meadow and blue networks; the Green Fingers; and the core areas and ecological connections in urban natural areas. Local detailed planning aims to improve access to recreational areas by developing the connections across these areas, which are shown generally in the master plan.

Figure 23. Different types of land cover as a percentage of Helsinki's land area in 2020. Source: Helsinki Region Environmental Services' land cover data



Helsinki's recreation plan for natural areas will be completed in the spring of 2023. It has been prepared jointly by Environmental Services and the urban space and landscape planning service and aims to improve the recreational use and accessibility of natural areas. The Urban Environment Division's Environmental Services has promoted access to nature reserves by building new trails and improving signage. The Urban Environment Division has been working on an indicator to monitor the accessibility of local natural areas. Monitoring data were unavailable for this indicator at the time of the assessment, but the data for 2019 show that 98% of Helsinki residents could walk to a nearby green space within 300 metres of their homes.

According to a review by the General Planning Unit and the Environmental Services Unit, as a rule, development is not designated in areas of high natural value at the master plan level. The 2022 review compared the master plan implementation programme and the local plans being prepared with the Nature Information System's data on ecological networks and valuable natural sites. Because general land-use planning is broad, the local nature sites will be considered more thoroughly in the detailed planning of those areas.

Ecological networks are taken into account fairly well in local detailed planning

The guidelines and document templates for the local detailed land-use planning process seek to ensure

that planners review an area's environmental data when preparing plans and take those data into account when drawing up plans. In detailed land-use planning, there is no general guideline as to when the goal of zoning residential areas should take precedence over the preservation of natural sites, or which ecological connections or natural sites must be preserved at all costs; instead, planners weigh up meeting the housing production goals and the preservation of natural sites and ecological networks on a case-by-case basis. However, detailed land-use planning is guided by the legally effective designations and provisions of the master plan and the urban nature theme map.

The monitoring of Helsinki's 2021–2028 LUMO programme has shown that five of the 51 revised local detailed plan proposals approved by the Urban Environment Committee in 2022 had minor conflicts with ecological networks. However, the effects of these plans on natural habitats were considered to be local. When interpreting the results, it should be noted that about a third of land-use plans do not usually include any specific nature-related issues. According to LUMO programme monitoring, the percentage of wooded areas in Helsinki's land cover was 42% in 2020 (Figure 23), while the LUMO programme's lower limit was around 33%. That percentage remained roughly the same in 2014–2020. The method for measuring the percentage of wooded areas is being developed to make it more suitable for biodiversity monitoring and developing ecological networks.

More green space was preserved in the Koirasaarentie and Ilomäentie local detailed planning than in the original plan

The land-use plan amendment for Koirasaarentie and Ilomäentie became legally valid in 2022. The planning area is located along the railway line, so infill development in the area was in line with the City Strategy. In this case, the goals of infill development were more important than preserving natural values. Areas that were identified as endangered in Helsinki's inventory of endangered habitats and a valuable forest site were designated for construction. Among other things, the development was justified by the fact that the identified valuable areas were not protected by law, and the inventories carried out found them to have poor or moderate biodiversity representation and an impaired natural condition.

Forested parts of the Koirasaarentie and Ilomäentie planning area were designated as residential blocks, and recreational and green areas will be reduced once construction is complete. However, it was possible to preserve more green space and trees than was indicated in the original plan. Parking solutions and building layouts were changed, saving larger areas of contiguous green space. At the same time, it was possible to strengthen the regional green connection compared to the original plan. The aim is also to improve the area's recreational routes and their durability.

The planners of the Koirasaarentie and Ilomäentie area would have welcomed more expertise in urban ecology to support their planning, especially as the 2021–2025 City Strategy strongly emphasises ecological aspects. However, the urban space and landscape planning service's resources are currently insufficient to fully participate in all the planning processes where the service's expertise is needed. The early stage of the planning process especially requires expertise in urban ecology. In the spring of 2023, the Urban Environment Division held training sessions on accounting for nature values in urban planning.

The Honkasuo residential area was zoned in a flying squirrel area, as the previous plan was unfeasible

The Honkasuo residential area is mainly planned within an undeveloped green area in a land-use plan that came into force in 2015. Based on the City Strategy, the efficient development of the Honkasuo area is justified, as it is located near good public transport links and services in Vantaa's Myyrmäki district. The zoning of Honkasuo as a residential area saved green space and corridors compared to the 2002 Master Plan, which included a motorway through the area, and the city's plan to use the area for dumping fill material. The goal of the Honkasuontie plan, which came into force in 2022, was to allow its construction on soil that was more suitable than the previous plan, which planned to

build on peat soil. The Honkasuo road plan area, which consisted of undeveloped forest, was outside the area for the plan that came into force in 2015. The master plan designated it as a predominantly residential area.

The planning solutions for Honkasuo (2015) and Honkasuontie (2022) allow green connections and ecological corridors that are regional and local. However, both the Honkasuo plan (2015) and the Honkasuontie plan (2022) reduced natural areas, as those areas were previously natural green spaces. However, it was unknown that there were any valuable nature sites in the area when the first plan for the Honkasuo neighbourhood was being prepared. Valuable nature sites were identified in the area in the final preparation stage for the Honkasuontie plan. These sites contained endangered species such as localised occurrences of green shield-moss and a core area of flying squirrels, but they could not be preserved. Alternatives were considered for conserving the green shield-moss population, but these were found to be unrealistic. The survival of that particular population was not essential for the conservation of the species. In addition, there is a large concentration of green shield-moss to the south of the Honkasuo area, which will be conserved. Preserving the flying squirrels' core area would have required abandoning the construction of the Honkasuontie area altogether, which was not considered possible. The planning process used up-to-date ecological data, and there have been efforts to account for recent nature surveys as soon as their results are available. The planning process also utilised the ecological expertise of an environmental inspector from Environmental Services. The Honkasuo plan includes many parks that reflect the area's natural characteristics, and that are suitable for residents of various ages.

Conclusions

The Urban Environment Division has largely ensured the preservation of green areas and the increase of greenery in planning residential areas following the 2017–2021 and 2021–2025 City Strategies. However, the construction of planned residential areas will probably reduce the city's total area of green space. This is because land-use planning must reconcile the objectives related to nature and recreational areas with other goals such as housing production. Planning infill development is challenging because there are no longer many large areas in the city without housing and green spaces.

According to the assessment findings, the development of ecological networks has been sufficiently addressed in planning residential areas. The core areas of urban nature, ecological connections, green corridors, green spaces and ecological networks are indicated in general terms in the master plan and its theme map and are also subject to planning regulations. The case studies and the LUMO programme's monitoring data for 2022 show that land-use planners

seek – and except for some isolated cases – can maintain the integrity and high quality of ecological networks. Land-use planners can access up-to-date information about nature networks from their geographic information database.

The residential planning process ensures that Helsinki's most valuable natural areas are not designated for construction. However, case studies have shown that local detailed plans designate natural areas with endangered habitats or species for housing development. Nonetheless, development has been well justified in the cases examined in the assessment, and efforts have been made in preparing the plans to investigate and as far as possible, consider the relevant current studies and ecological data for the planned area. The ecological expertise of Environmental Services has also been utilised.

The challenge of using ecological data in land-use planning is that more data are constantly coming in. There may be a delay in updating the Nature Information System used by planners with information from nature surveys due to the limited resources available for updating the system and the high number of surveys being completed. However, the land-use planners are provided information that tells them these surveys exist.

In 2023, Environmental Services will determine Helsinki's most valuable natural areas. Such a specification would help land-use planners carefully consider which green spaces were particularly worth preserving. Currently, there is no consistent citywide policy for how to address the preservation of green networks

and green spaces in land-use planning. Rather, solutions have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. More expertise in urban ecology would be welcome to support land-use planning, as the current City Strategy strongly emphasises ecological aspects.

Land-use planning has promoted access to green spaces. Green areas and the green connections that facilitate access to them are indicated in the master plan. The land-use planners have been instructed to account for green spaces and green connections near the planning area. The case studies of detailed planning examined in the assessment have aimed to preserve and enhance green connections. In the Honkasuontie example, it is planned that the area will have parks accessible to residents of all ages.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ continue prioritising general and detailed land-use planning solutions that preserve or increase urban nature or parks as much as possible within the planning area.
- ▶ continue the work on determining Helsinki's most valuable natural areas and make the results available to land-use planners as soon as possible.
- ▶ ensure that sufficient and up-to-date ecological data are available for land-use planning.



Data and digitalisation help run a smart city



Resident participation in land-use planning



Is resident participation in local detailed planning taking place in accordance with legislation and city policies?



This interaction is broader and more diverse than required by the legislation.

The main focus of the assessment:

Is resident participation in urban planning and land-use planning taking place in accordance with legislation and city policies?

Related questions:

1. Has the city carried out public dialogue in land-use planning in accordance with the legislation and city policies?
2. Have residents been involved in influencing the planning process?
3. Have measures been taken to involve less active groups and the residents of all areas in the planning process in their own neighbourhoods?
4. Has the city provided opportunities for residents to participate in the various stages of the collaborative land-use planning process?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, “An Open Helsinki communicates and operates interactively. Helsinki strengthens inclusiveness and interactivity in all city activities by promoting an open operational culture and interactive practices and using feedback from residents and businesses.” The previous 2017–2021 City Strategy stated that Helsinki’s operating model was based on maximum openness and transparency. Helsinki was to strengthen its position as an international pioneer of inclusion and openness. The goals were to increase the confidence of residents and businesses in the city’s activities, strengthen their actual influence, and that modern participatory practices would improve mutual understanding between population groups, equality and the quality of services. The aim was also to promote dialogue and encourage participation by disadvantaged people. Open Helsinki and inclusive Helsinki were also objectives in the 2013–2016

Strategic Programme, and several measures were associated with each of these goals. These measures focused on developing digital communication and interaction channels, open data, and participation by the business community.

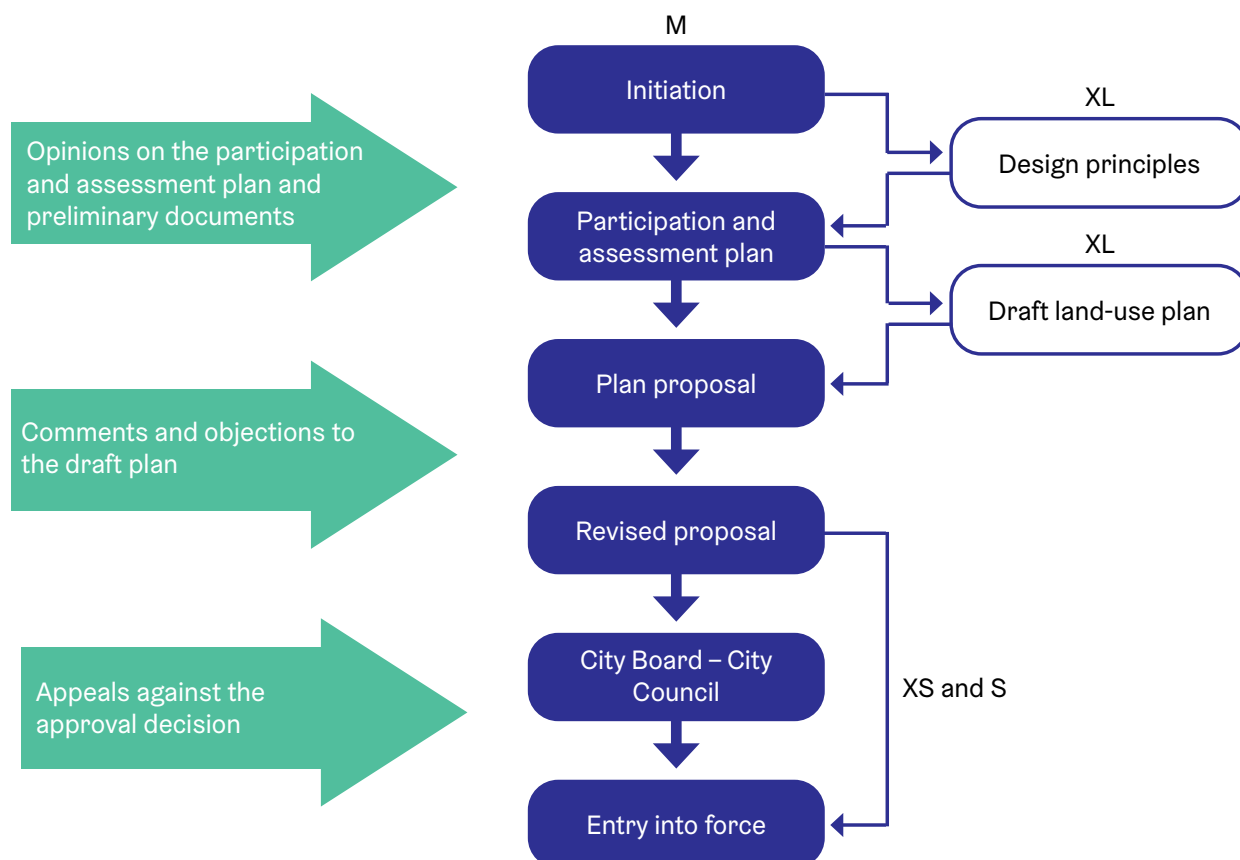
Since 2017, Helsinki has been using a participation and interaction model based on the principles of inclusion, which includes city-level policies and objectives for resident participation. The Urban Environment Division also had a guiding participation plan to follow for 2019–2021.

The assessment material is based on four case studies selected from legally valid detailed plans approved by the City Council for different parts of the city. The selected case studies were the local detailed plans for Pelimannintie (Kaarela, Kannelmäki), Käsälyhaltijantie (Oulunkylä), Hakaniemenranta (Kruunuhaka, Sörnäinen, Vilhonvuori, Kallio, Siltasaari) and the Kottarainen city block (Kamppi). In the example cases, most of the interaction with the land-use plans took place between 2014 and 2022. The material used includes interviews with people responsible for preparing the plans and planning documentation. In addition, individuals responsible for public interaction related to the planning process were interviewed in the Urban Environment Division. Additional information was obtained from documents and via email. The Audit Committee’s first commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Urban Environment Division.

Legislation sets the minimum requirements for participation

The most important legislation on municipal residents’ participation in land-use planning is found in the Local Government Act, the Land Use and Building Act and the Land Use and Building Decree. The Land Use and Building Act sets out in greater detail the possibility for everyone to participate in preparing the matters, the quality and interactivity of planning, the diversity of expertise and open communication on the issues at stake. The authorities preparing a land-use plan must interact with those persons and communities whose circumstances or interests the plan may significantly affect. There must be communication about the land-use plan that makes it possible for those affected to follow its progress and influence it. The planning procedure must be arranged to allow the stakeholders

Figure 24. How the land-use plan proceeds, and opportunities for participation. XS, S, M and XL refer to different sizes in detailed planning processes.



to participate in preparing the plan, and the plan's starting points, objectives and possible alternatives must be communicated during the preparation. The stakeholders must be able to evaluate the land-use plan's effects and express their written or oral opinions on the matter.

A plan for participation and interaction procedures and for assessing the land-use plan's impacts must be drawn up at a sufficiently early stage of the planning process. This plan should also be appropriate to the purpose and significance of the land-use plan. According to the Land Use and Building Decree, stakeholders may be given the opportunity to express their opinions by making the preparatory plan material available to the public and by providing an opportunity to express their opinion within a specified period, in writing or orally, at a special meeting about the plan, or by any other appropriate means. The minimum requirement is a notice in a newspaper unless the land-use plan is of minor importance.

Detailed guidelines are available to planners

A local detailed plan is a detailed plan about what a particular area or lot can be used for, and how much can be built there. Figure 24 shows an outline of how

land-use planning proceeds in Helsinki and the main ways in which people can participate during the various stages of the planning process.

A participation and assessment plan is drawn up at the beginning of the land-use planning project. The participation and assessment plan explains the land-use plan's goals and the stages at which the public can participate in its preparation. Opinions may be expressed orally or in writing. Major planning projects may include resident events or surveys. Based on the preparation material, the Urban Environment Division prepares a finalised draft land-use plan for a decision by the Urban Environment Committee. As far as possible, the draft plan considers the public opinions from the initial phase. Comments may be submitted on the draft plan, which at this stage are called objections. The planner will respond to these objections and amend the proposal if necessary. For the most significant land-use plans, a set of design principles for the area and a draft plan may also be prepared before its proposal. Residents can also express their opinions on them before they are submitted to the Urban Environment Committee.

Process guidelines and ready-made planning document templates have been used in detailed planning

to ensure that the interaction in the planning process takes place following the legislation and the city's policies. Among other things, document templates and process guidelines provide detailed guidance on how to conduct the interaction.

The city's principle is that the most significant planning projects should offer more and broader opportunities for participation than less significant projects. The significance of a land-use plan is determined not only by the size of the planning area and the amount of development, but also by other issues that may give rise to debate or controversy.

The Urban Environment Division has identified groups of residents whose participation is generally less active in the planning process. For example, these include young people, people with immigrant backgrounds, people living in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, and people living in rental units. As a rule, particular measures will be taken to involve these less active groups in planning in cases of more significant projects that affect the living environment of these groups. Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the increased use of online meetings, which have become a permanent practice, has provided better opportunities for some previously less active groups such as parents with children or people with reduced mobility to participate in the planning process. Otherwise, interaction methods promoting the involvement of less active groups have mainly been carried out experimentally in individual planning projects.

Residents have been adequately involved in the example cases

The interaction, communication and opportunities for public participation in the Pelimannintie detailed plan far exceeded the legal requirements. In addition to the standard opportunities for hearing resident views, an advertisement for a resident event was exceptionally distributed to homes in an area predominantly occupied by tenants. This constitutes activating less active groups and can also be considered as actively seeking participation. The participation practices thus also fulfilled the current City Strategy's guidelines and the Urban Environment Division's participation plan, which came into force shortly after the resident event. On the other hand, this home delivery was something of a lucky accident, as the local plan was included in the Kaarela Regional Plan's interaction event, which was being prepared at the same time.

The level of interaction in the Käskeynhaltijantie plan significantly exceeded the legal requirements, and the opportunities for interaction have probably been substantially greater than in many other projects of similar importance. The exceptionally broad interaction in this project is demonstrated by the efforts to involve residents, especially regarding the Raide-Jokeri light

rail line, e.g. by extensively promoting the newsletter and holding events on the subject. An active residents' association also organises annual events on current projects. These have also given the Käskeynhaltijantie plan a lot of visibility. This land-use plan was prepared when the guidelines in the 2017–2021 City Strategy and the Urban Environment Division's 2019–2021 participation plan for less active groups were not in force, and no specific measures were required for involving less active groups. No particular efforts were made to involve less active groups or areas in the planning process. On the other hand, because of its socioeconomic status, the Oulunkylä district does not necessarily need special activation, and the project received a lot of visibility in the area anyway.

The interaction in the Hakaniemenranta land-use plan clearly exceeded the legal requirements. The project was prepared under two different city strategies and based on the findings, paid particular attention to the goals of the 2013–2016 strategic programme on new electronic participation channels and interactive methods. In line with the strategy, maritime transport operators in the region were also involved in the preparations. Residents have not only been engaged through the traditional resident evenings and workshops but also through pilot projects aimed at young people. Online comments have also been used several times during the preparations.

The Kottarainen city block was selected for the assessment as an example of a collaborative land-use planning project. Collaborative land-use planning is a process in which the likely builder or developer of a site is known at the beginning of the planning project, and the detailed plan is drawn up in cooperation with that builder or developer. The planning process provided the usual opportunities for interaction that the city's practices call for in a project of its size, such as the opportunity to express opinions on the participation and assessment plan and the proposed plan, as well as a resident event. There is no obligation in the Land Use and Building Act to hold a resident event, so the interaction exceeded the legal requirements. Although the planned area was small, the cultural and architectural heritage issues involved, typical for the city centre, added to its significance. There were few comments, and these were in line with the city's objectives for the project. According to the architect in charge of the land-use plan, the project was not perceived to require non-standard methods of participation to activate hard-to-reach groups when designing its level of interaction.

According to the architect who prepared the plan, the fact that the Kottarainen city block plan was a collaborative land-use planning project did not affect the number, timing or types of interaction opportunities. Instead, the same things were done as in other land-use planning processes. According to the interviewed

communication expert, involving the residents before the actual planning would be good, at least in the most significant collaborative land-use projects. This has already been the case in projects that are important for economic policy in the Hietalahdenranta area and Oulunkylä district, for example. In 2021, the city prepared a model for the development reservation process. The model stipulates that systematic consideration will always be given to whether to offer residents the opportunity to participate in the most significant projects during the development reservation process before the planning process begins.

There are relatively few appeals of land-use plans

The assessment examined the number of appeals against local detailed plans, trends in those numbers, and how successful they were. The assessment also reviewed the reasons for repealing plans. The number of appeals against land-use plans has been on the rise in Helsinki since 2016, but their numbers are low in proportion to the square metres of planned floor space. Fewer than ten land-use plans have been repealed in this millennium. The most typical grounds for repeal have been historical building preservation, cultural values, and more recently, nature values.

Conclusions

Resident participation in local detailed planning is achieved in accordance with legislation and city policies. In all the examples selected for the assessment, the city has carried out broader and more varied interactions than the minimum required by the legislation. In all the assessed land-use planning cases, the city's policies in force during the plan's preparation have also been followed.

There are very few appeals of plans compared to the amount of land-use planning in Helsinki. Very few plans have also been repealed, which supports the conclusion that Helsinki's planning processes are carried out in accordance with the law.

In all the examined cases, residents have been involved to have a say in the planning process. In line with the city's principles, the most important planning projects have offered more and broader opportunities for participation than less important projects. The resources available for public dialogue in land-use planning are

limited, so it is wise to allocate these scarce resources based on the importance of projects.

Detailed land-use planning has taken measures for involving less active residents and residents of all areas in the planning processes in their own neighbourhoods. However, the measures aimed at reaching less active groups have been experimental, except for organising online events. In particular, interaction events or opportunities tailored for less active groups have been arranged in cases where the changes that the plan would allow are likely to affect a group that is generally less involved. This is a sensible use of resources.

In the example selected for the assessment, the local detailed plan for the Kottarainen city block, no special measures were considered to ensure resident participation in the collaborative planning process at the earliest possible stage. In this example, the same type of resident interaction events was organised as in other planning projects of similar importance. In hindsight, this was the right decision, as the city's objectives for the project were the same as the commentators' preferences.

A single case cannot be used to determine how systematically the city adheres to its principle of offering residents the opportunity to participate in planning at the earliest possible stage of collaborative land-use planning projects. However, in some cases where projects were important for economic policy, the assessment found examples of the city having arranged interaction and participation opportunities for residents even before the actual planning process began. In addition, the city has created a development reservation model, in accordance with which, if certain conditions are met, the interaction with residents already begins during the reservation process, i.e. before the actual land-use planning process.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ ensure that appropriate methods of participation for less active residents and resident groups are provided systematically whenever a plan significantly impacts their living environment.



Cultivating safe neighbourhoods with distinctive identities



Safety in the city's different areas



Has the city taken sufficient measures for promoting safety in accordance with the local safety planning objectives?



For the most part, there have been adequate measures. However, safety has decreased slightly in the city.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the city taken sufficient measures to promote safety in accordance with the local safety planning objectives?

Related questions:

1. Has the city taken sufficient measures for improving people's perception of safety?
2. Has the city succeeded in its goal of preventing and reducing accidents and injuries?
3. Has the city succeeded in its objective of preventing and combating crime and disturbances?

2021–2025 City Strategy states that Helsinki's goal is to be a city where residential areas are not segregated, and where it is possible to live a safe and enjoyable life in every positively unique district. According to the strategy, the city provides people opportunities to plan their lives for the long term and attach themselves to the environments and communities in which they want to live. Ultimately, local safety planning aims to prevent and reduce accidents, injuries, crime, and disorder, and to improve people's perception of safety. The assessment focused on the local safety plan's objectives, emphasising the following areas: improving the perception of safety, especially in the most insecure areas; the safety of children's commute to primary schools; and gang prevention.

The assessment material was based on studies, surveys and statistics related to the topic. The statistics used included statistics from the traffic accident register maintained by the Urban Environment Division, which is based on road traffic accidents reported to the police. The assessment involved interviews with experts from the City Executive Office's Safety and Preparedness Team and the Urban Environment Division's traffic and street planning service. In addition,

email enquiries were made to the divisions mentioned above. The Audit Committee's first commission also obtained assessment material during its visit to the City Executive Office. The police also provided statistics on crime and disturbances in the Helsinki area.

Helsinki's safety planning is directed by the City Executive Office

Helsinki's safety planning principles for 2019–2021 guide the safety planning in Helsinki and set out three policies. The first policy is that safety planning is directed by the City Executive Office's Safety and Preparedness Team and expert group. The City Executive Office directs the safety work, but the entire city's safety organisation, including representatives from different divisions and municipal enterprises, is involved in the planning. The second policy is that monitoring safety and reviewing the operating environment should be based on a wide range of data and the needs of different population groups. The triennial safety survey in Helsinki is one of the most important tools for monitoring safety trends. The third policy for the principles of safety planning is to involve residents in the safety work. The aim is to enable city residents to have more say in the safety matters that affect their daily environment. To promote safety, the city uses existing and emerging methods of participation such as participatory budgeting, local safety assessments, the city's common feedback system, and borough liaisons.

Residents' perception of safety has declined slightly

Helsinki is generally perceived as a very safe place. Residents perceived Helsinki as slightly safer in the 2018 safety survey than in the latest survey in 2021. For example, the number of people who felt safe in the city centre fell by around ten percentage points. People perceive their own neighbourhood as safer than the city centre. Women experience more insecurity than men, and foreign-language speakers perceive the neighbourhood as slightly less safe than native speakers. However, there has been little change in perceptions of insecurity. There are significant differences between Helsinki's neighbourhoods in how safe their residents perceive their area to be (Figure 25). However, the differences between neighbourhoods have remained relatively constant compared to previous safety surveys, with only a few areas showing either a significant increase or decrease in safety. The areas

perceived as the safest and least safe are largely the same as in previous safety surveys. The trend has been positive in five areas, while in four areas, experiences of insecurity have increased.

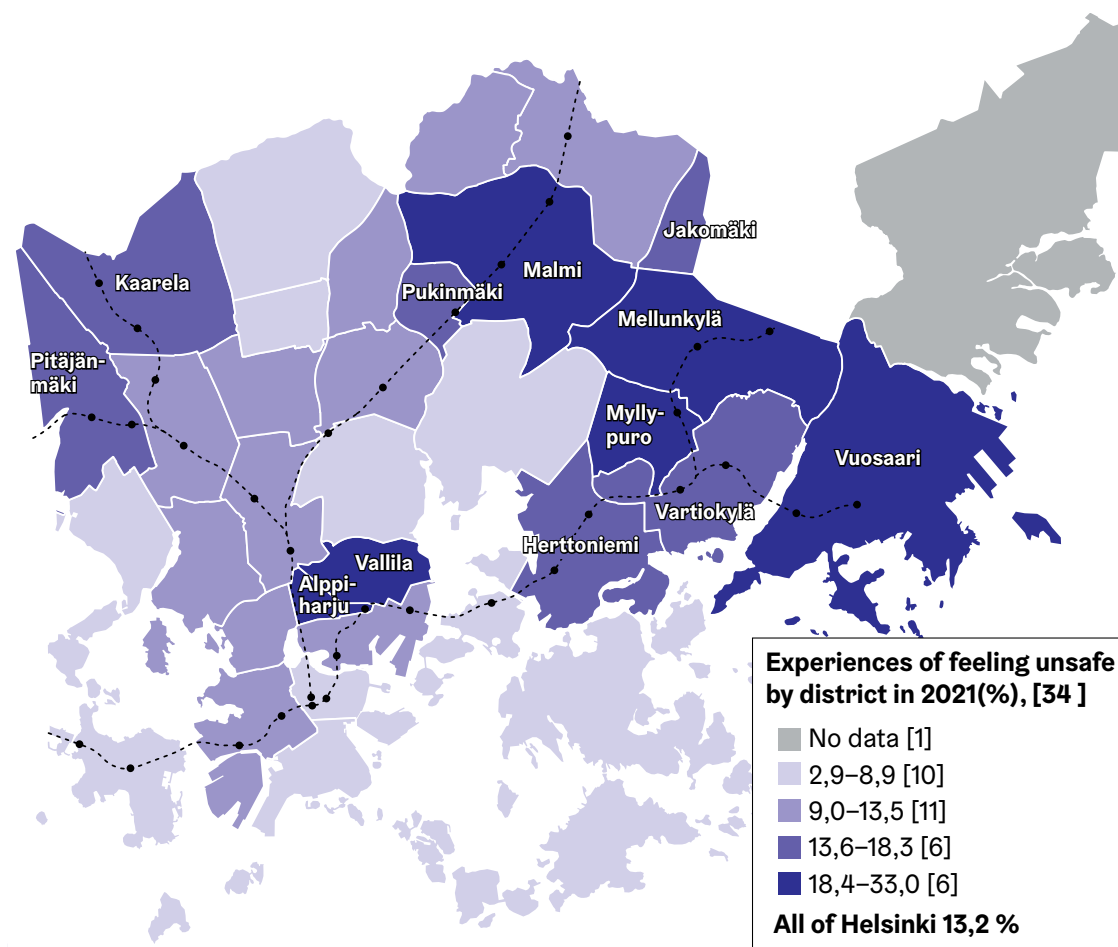
The average value of the social disorder indicator had increased in most of Helsinki's districts compared to the 2015 survey (3.32 → 3.56) when it was last examined in a safety survey. The social disorder indicator consists of six areas of concern for residents: drug use and trafficking; disorderly behaviour; public drunkenness; an unclean environment; vandalism; and street violence. Perceived social disorder is strongly associated with socioeconomic deprivation and the perception of insecurity in the area. The average score for the social disorder indicator in the 2021 safety survey increased in a large part of the districts compared to the 2015 survey. On a positive note, social disorder was moderately low in most areas of Helsinki. The

city will carry out a more detailed examination of the areas where the perception of insecurity is greatest and will then target these areas for action. Promoting safety has been a longstanding goal for the city, and the effects of the various measures will become more evident over the long term. However, it is difficult to verify the impact of the city's activities on the change in the perception of safety.

The planning principles for pick-up and drop-off arrangements at schools and day-care centres have not been reviewed

According to experts from the city's traffic and street planning service, traffic safety is constantly present in the city's traffic planning. The use of the available safety methods varies, depending on the environment in which the traffic plan is carried out. For example, the road network around schools, the results of regional

Figure 25. Experiences of feeling unsafe in one's neighbourhood late on Friday and Saturday evenings by district in 2021 (percentage of respondents who felt unsafe or somewhat unsafe).*



Kaupunkitieto / Helsingin kaupunki.
Helsingin turvallisuustutkimus 2021.

* Image source: <https://www.kvartti.fi/fi/artikkelit/helsinkilaisten-turvattomuuskokemuksissa-suurta-aluevaihtelua-erot-asuinalueiden-valilla>.

road safety surveys, feedback from various stakeholders and accident statistics all influence the means to promote safe commutes to primary schools. Promoting traffic safety in Helsinki is holistic and systematic work to promote safety, and the promotion of safety on school commutes is not a separate activity. The city views this systematic approach to promoting traffic safety as more important than simply promoting safety at individual locations. According to the assessment, the most significant measure to improve the safety of primary school commutes in recent years has been the speed limit system update, which has reduced the speed limits for traffic on all city streets. Other key measures that have improved the safety of school commutes include increasing the use of automatic camera surveillance and promoting safer street crossings.

One sub-measure of Helsinki's 2015–2017 traffic safety development programme aimed to review the planning principles for pick-up and drop-off arrangements in schools and day-care centres. Pick-up and drop-off arrangements are an integral part of the local environment and safety around schools and day-care centres, and its designated areas and practices vary from place to place. However, reviewing the planning principles for pick-up and drop-off arrangements could not be carried out as planned. The planning principles could not be reviewed due to limited resources, and the city decided to prioritise other measures in the development programme. Traffic safety measures have often had to be reprioritised due to budgetary constraints. On the other hand, efforts are now being made to encourage children to primarily use sustainable transport modes for their school commutes, as picking up and dropping off children can contribute to traffic safety problems in the areas surrounding schools. Only around 6% of schoolchildren are driven to school.

The number of people aged 7–17 injured and killed in traffic in Helsinki has fallen significantly over the longer term.

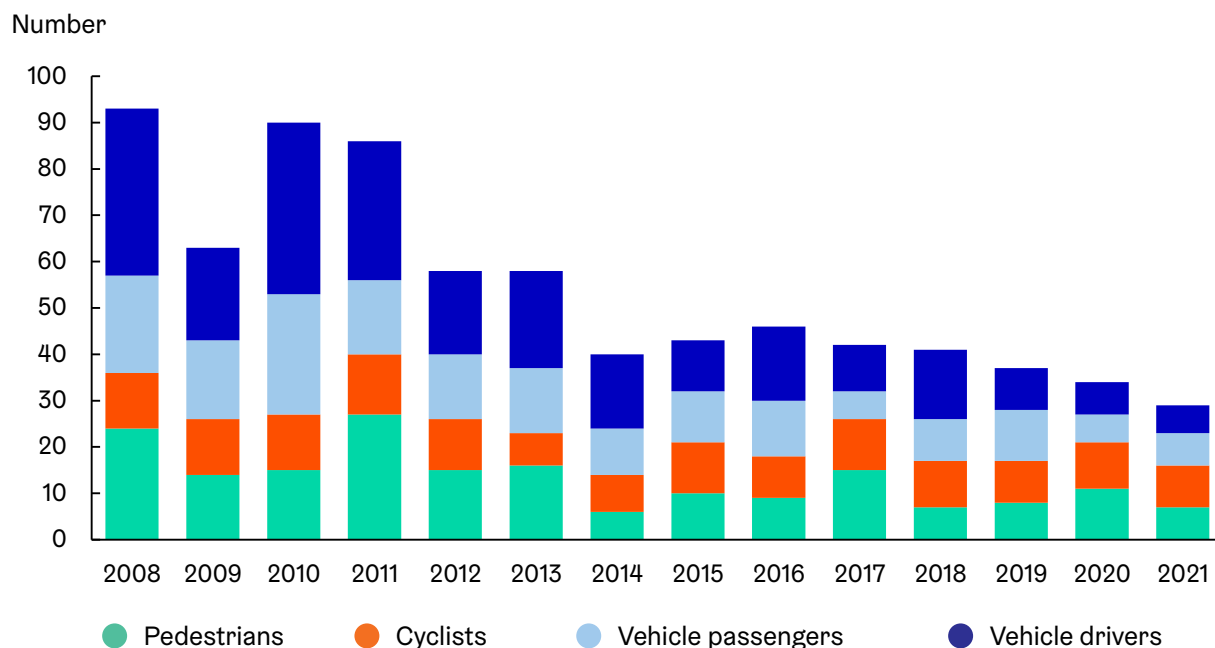
The number of people aged 7–17 injured and killed in traffic in Helsinki decreased significantly between 2008 and 2021, based on road traffic accident statistics (Figure 26). When comparing the number of traffic injuries and fatalities among people aged 7–17 in Helsinki in accordance with different road user groups between 2014–2017 and 2018–2021, it could be observed that the number of accidents decreased, especially for vehicle drivers, pedestrians and vehicle passengers. There was also a significant improvement in accidents involving drivers in the 15–17 age group, both in the short and longer term. According to the city's traffic and street planning service experts, the long-term and systematic changes to speed limits are correlated with the reduction in traffic accident rates. This shows that the city's measures have improved the safety of children's commutes to school.

Several divisions are involved in preventing unwanted group behaviour through various projects

The police are the responsible authority in matters concerning street gangs and organised crime. The police are tasked with investigating and combating crime, while the City of Helsinki is largely responsible for the well-being and safety of its residents and preventing undesirable trends by providing basic services for all. In the context of gang phenomena, the city's efforts focus on preventing and combating undesirable group behaviours. According to experts at the City Executive Office, it is of the utmost importance to intervene at an early stage and seek to identify effective measures for preventing the spread of this phenomenon. It was seen as a good idea to focus special support on children and young people in out-of-home placements, who are particularly vulnerable to being both victims and perpetrators of crime. Day-care centres, schools, youth work, and social and health services reach children and young people, so these city services play a particularly important role in ensuring their well-being and inclusion.

Social services aim to holistically assess young people's situations and steer them in the right direction, away from unwanted group behaviour. In addition, the city's youth services are actively working with emerging gang groups, seeking to mentor young people and create other activities for them. According to the assessment, various projects are the most important measures for combating and preventing undesirable group behaviour. For example, the project for preventing polarisation and strengthening safety aims to strengthen the capabilities of professionals working with children and young people to identify group phenomena that lead to extremism and radicalisation and to develop various operating models to prevent them. The Youth Violence Prevention project seeks to promote cooperation and information sharing between the bodies working with young people. It also aims to pilot models for regional youth work to improve young people's well-being and inclusion and prevent or address potentially violent behaviour. Meanwhile, the Many Voices of Helsinki (Moniääninen Helsinki) project focuses on Somali and Arabic-speaking young people and their parents in Helsinki's urban renewal areas. This project aims to break down the antagonism and mistrust that residents have towards both the city's services and each other. Preventive measures are also carried out by the multidisciplinary Toivo (Hope) team in child welfare, which aims to help children and young people with serious criminal, behavioural and substance abuse problems. In addition, the safety meetings held in the urban renewal areas and the multi-actor Safe Helsinki network carry out preventive measures.

Figure 26. The number of persons aged 7–17 injured and killed in traffic in Helsinki by transport category during 2008–2021. *



* Figure source: Traffic accident register maintained by the Urban Environment Division.

Developing resident participation and guiding the divisions towards adequate resourcing

Based on the assessment, defining new phenomena has been perceived as a challenge in preventing unwanted group behaviours. The challenge in defining these phenomena has contributed to using an appropriate range of prevention and intervention tools. However, according to the City Executive Office's Safety and Preparedness team, the city has improved its understanding of the various phenomena in cooperation with the authorities. Based on the assessment, there is still room for improvement in the dialogue between city service representatives and residents and the inclusion of marginalised residents in particular. Regarding children and young people, another identified area of improvement is the communication between families and city services such as schools and educational institutions. Children and young people also increasingly need safe public spaces and safe adults within these spaces, as well as effective mental health services.

According to experts at the City Executive Office, coordination and general cooperation between the divisions and the City Executive Office is working well. This is facilitated by people working on safety at the City Executive Office and in the various divisions. An organisational reform involved the appointment of Safety and Preparedness Managers and other safety experts in the divisions to direct the work on promoting safety. According to the City Executive Office's Safety and

Preparedness Team, a perceived challenge is the limited influence that they have on the steering process for the divisions, especially in preventing broader safety issues in the city. A reason for this is that no separate budget is allocated to promoting safety. Rather, this work involves guiding and instructing people to consider safety in the city's core activities. In promoting solutions to broader safety issues such as substance abuse problems, the Safety and Preparedness Team considered it important to focus on cooperation and budgetary considerations on a larger scale. In addition, the city's ability to focus resources on new service needs to a quick schedule was viewed as an area for development.

Crimes committed by young people against life and health have increased.

The percentage of suspected crimes and criminal offences committed by young people aged 13–24 increased by one percentage point between 2019 and 2022. While the number of crimes committed or suspected to have been committed by young people has remained relatively unchanged, crimes against life and health increased proportionally each year during the review period from 2019 to 2022. Overall, crimes against life and health have increased by up to 40%. Serious criminal offences against persons committed by young people are thus clearly on the rise.

In 2022, at the regional level, the recorded number of suspected crimes committed by young people aged 13–24 in Helsinki was exactly the same as in 2019:

7,099. The largest percentage increases in the number of recorded suspected crimes committed by young people at the regional level were in the Central (33%) and Western (16%) major districts. At the regional level, the largest decreases in youth crime were recorded in the Northeastern (15%) and Southeastern (7%) major districts. The total number of crimes committed by people of all ages decreased every year during the review period in 2019–2022. However, the relative share of crimes committed by young people is still slightly increasing. The overall share of suspected crimes involving young people increased by around two percentage points between 2019 and 2022, and at the major district level, there has been an increase in six major districts. However, there is a significant decrease in all the recorded police alerts for disorderly behaviour and vandalism at the regional level. There was a significant decline in all major districts, especially in 2022.

Conclusions

For the most part, Helsinki has taken sufficient measures for promoting safety following the objectives of local safety planning. The assessment shows that Helsinki is perceived as slightly less safe, and that the trend in youth crime rates is not positive.

Helsinki is generally perceived as a very safe place. There are significant differences between areas, but they have already remained consistent for several years. The social disorder indicator's average score has increased, which may be considered cause for concern. Targeted measures have been taken in areas where the perception of insecurity has been highest, but their impact is not yet evident. It is also difficult to verify the impact of the city's measures on changing perceptions of safety. Based on the assessment, it can be concluded that positive results have not been achieved, despite carrying out targeted actions.

The number of people aged 7–17 injured and killed in traffic in Helsinki decreased significantly between 2008 and 2021, based on traffic accident statistics. The city's long-term and systematic efforts to change speed limits have improved the safety of children commuting to school. One sub-measure of Helsinki's 2015–2017 traffic safety development programme aimed to review the planning principles for pick-up and drop-off arrangements in schools and day-care centres. However, this has not been achieved. Pick-up and drop-off arrangements are an integral part of the local environment and safety at schools and day-care centres.

There is still room for improvement in the dialogue between city service representatives and residents and in involving residents. A perceived challenge is the limited influence that the City Executive Office's steering process has on the divisions, especially in preventing broader safety issues in the city. One reason for this is that no separate budget is allocated to promoting safety. Rather, this work involves guiding and instructing people to consider safety in the city's core activities. In promoting solutions to broader safety issues such as substance abuse problems, it is deemed important to focus on elements such as cooperation and budgetary considerations on a larger scale. In addition, based on the assessment, the city's ability to focus resources on new service needs to a quick schedule was viewed as an area for development.

No positive developments were observed in preventing and combating youth crime, with statistics showing that the number of crimes committed by young people has remained fairly stable in recent years. Although the number of suspected crimes involving young people aged 13–24 has also remained fairly stable in recent years, crimes against life and health are clearly increasing. On the other hand, there has been a marked decline in police alerts for disorderly behaviour and vandalism. While it is impossible to draw direct conclusions from these facts, the statistics suggest that the city has been successful in preventing disturbances. In its measures for promoting safety, the city should also consider that its efforts in this area will only be partly visible in the longer term.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ review the planning principles for pick-up and drop-off arrangements for schools and day-care centres in accordance with the set objectives

the City Executive Office should

- ▶ further strengthen the dialogue between representatives of city services and residents and the participation of residents to improve safety.
- ▶ strengthen the divisions' understanding of the need to provide adequate resources to services to improve safety.

**Intelligent traffic
solutions underpin
smooth transport
& A smoothly
functioning and
beautiful city**



Promoting sustainable modes of transport



Has the city succeeded in promoting sustainable modes of transport?



The percentage of sustainable forms of transport did not increase in the previous strategy period. However, development measures have been taken and are ongoing.

The main focus of the assessment:

Have sustainable transport modes been promoted in line with the City Strategy?

Related questions:

1. Has the share of sustainable transport modes increased?
2. Have the programme and plan measures for promoting public transport, cycling, and walking been implemented?
3. Have investments been made to influence the share of transport modes, and how have they progressed and been distributed between the different modes?

According to the 2021–2025 City Strategy, transport plans for a growing Helsinki will always be made in cooperation with land-use planning. Land use will be developed to ensure that transport can be arranged in an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable way. The modal share of public transport, walking and cycling will be increased, and the creation of a city with a rail network will be further pursued by promoting the planning and implementation of rapid tram projects. The City Strategy also calls for the conditions for walking and cycling to be improved, and a cycling development programme is being carried out systematically. In addition, the city will accelerate the construction of the Baanaverkko and city-centre's planned cycling network. The 2017–2021 City Strategy also aimed to increase the share of sustainable transport modes. Similarly, the goals of the Carbon Neutral Helsinki 2030 emissions reduction programme call for the share of sustainable transport modes to be increased. This assessment considered public transport, walking and cycling sustainable modes of transport.

The assessment materials included interviews with the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office and various related reports, studies and documents. The Audit Committee's first commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the Urban Environment Division.

The share of sustainable transport modes has grown slowly

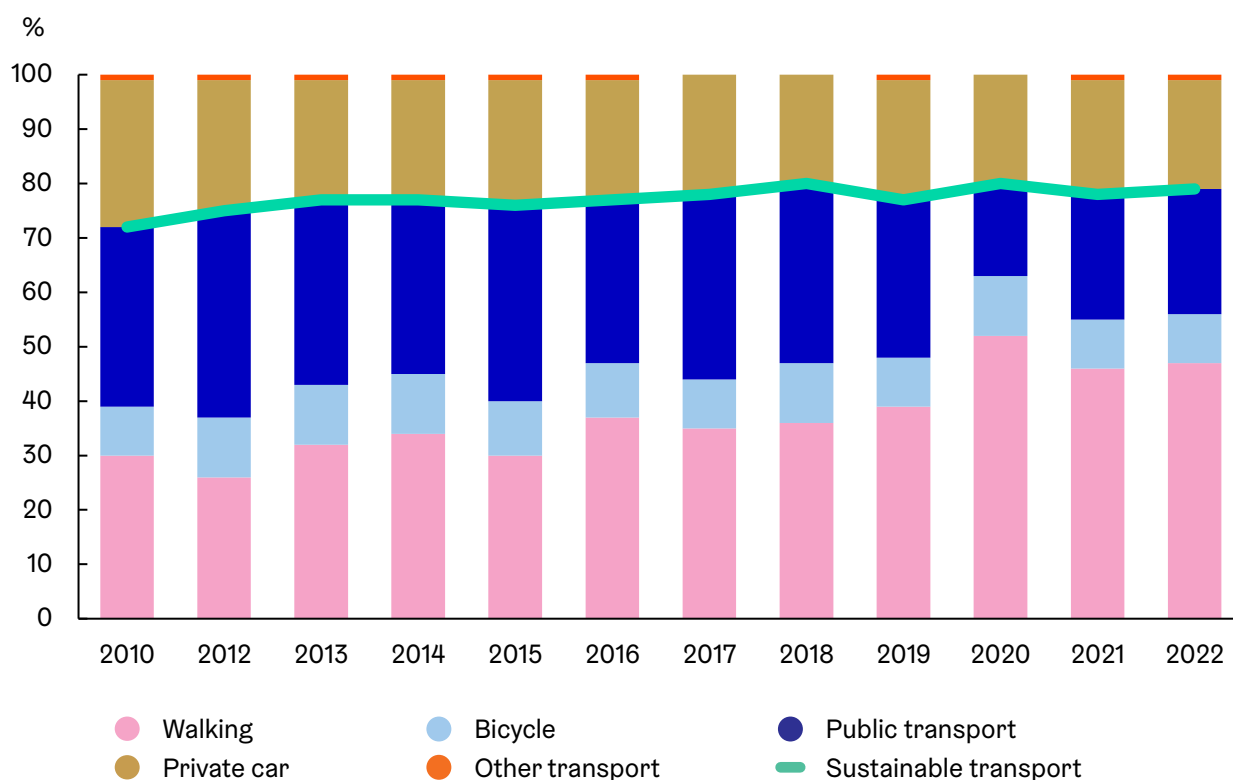
The City Strategy sets a target for increasing the share of sustainable transport modes but has only set a target level for cycling. The goal is to achieve a modal share of at least 20% for cycling by 2030. The previous city strategy also aimed to increase the share of sustainable transport.

Figure 27 shows the percentage of transport modes Helsinki residents used on daily trips from 2010 to 2022. Since 2010, that share has increased, but the strongest growth was in the first years of the decade: it has not changed significantly since 2013. In the 2017–2021 strategy period, the share of sustainable transport ultimately did not increase. In recent years, the trend has been a reduction in the share of public transport and an increase in walking. The coronavirus pandemic was a major change for public transport in particular, as remote work resulted in less commuting. Indeed, passenger numbers in public transport are not expected to reach pre-pandemic levels in the next few years. The increase in walking indicates that the residential environments in Helsinki are primarily good for walking, and services are close by. Since the coronavirus pandemic, the share of commuting has also decreased, and leisure travel has increased. The modal share of cycling in transport has remained more or less the same since 2010.

The share of sustainable transport will grow if it is more attractive than driving

According to the interviewed Urban Environment Division experts, the selection of sustainable transport is based on competitive factors between the different modes. In transport, people value the time and effort they spend travelling, as well as the cost of doing so. The share of sustainable transport modes will increase if they become easier, faster and cheaper to use than private cars. For example, infrastructure projects can increase transport speed, but this is a slow process. On the other hand, ease of mobility may be a clear and integrated cycling network that can be used by

Figure 27. Percentage of daily travel by main transport mode between 2010 and 2022.



people of all ages, for example. In addition to transport planning, land use must generally provide good conditions for providing sustainable transport modes, e.g. through a sufficiently dense urban structure.

Promoting sustainable transport aims to contribute to societal goals such as reducing climate emissions, local emissions, noise and congestion, and sharing limited space. Walking and cycling additionally bring positive health benefits.

Progress is slow in measures promoting sustainable transport

To promote walking, Helsinki created a walking promotion programme in 2022. The programme includes five measures, the most important of which are developing a pedestrian planning guide and defining a hierarchy for the pedestrian network, as the other measures are strongly linked to these. Of these measures, only the walking environment trials were in progress during the assessment. The other measures are still in the planning phase. According to walking experts, traffic and street planning does not have many resources for planning walking. There is a need for a dedicated planner for walking who would focus on traffic in general, including walking. Many programmes state that walking is the preferred mode of transport, which is prioritised in planning, implementation and maintenance. However, according to the interviewed walking experts, this does not happen in practice.

The main objective of the 2020–2025 cycling development programme is to make Helsinki a year-round cycling city that is suitable for all ages. The programme's 20% transport share target has not yet been met. According to the interviewed expert, this is due to the slow construction of the planned networks for cycling, which is caused by a lack of commitment to the objective and as a result, years of underfunding and understaffing. Just under half of the city centre's target cycling network has been built or is under construction, as is about a fifth of the Baana cycling network. Less demanding solutions are planned alongside street renovations to speed up the construction of the target network, such as separating bicycle lanes from the roadway with barriers. Reducing traffic on local streets can also improve conditions for both cycling and walking. The programme's measures are progressing quite well, but some measures such as the improvements to traffic lights are still at an early stage. The development programme's impact indicators have yet to reach their target levels, and satisfaction with winter maintenance is very low, for example. On the other hand, the proportion of people in favour of promoting cycling is very high.

A tram development programme was adopted in 2018 to increase the transport share of public transport, which aims to improve tram transport. The programme objectives aim to improve the speed, efficiency, reliability and uninterrupted operation of rail transport in the city centre. Two of these objectives do not yet

have defined indicators or a monitoring system. The programme has measures that promote its objectives, and their progress is monitored. The progress of these measures has been slow, partly because the individual measures are relatively minor and cannot be combined into larger projects. The measures will also be partly implemented in the context of other projects, in which case their implementation will follow the schedules of those projects. The city is carrying out development work in cooperation with Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) and Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd. Progress has accelerated with new major projects, but the problem is limited planning resources for tram projects. The current resources will not allow more simultaneous projects to be carried out than at present.

There is high investment in rail transport

Never before has there been such major investment in rail transport as in recent years with the Jokeri, Crown Bridges and Kalasatama to Pasila tram projects, which are all under way simultaneously. Hundreds of millions of euros have been invested in these projects in recent years. The city is being developed specifically to be a rail network city, whereas previously, the focus was on road transport. For cycling, the annual investment target of 20 million euros set in the 2014 development programme was reached in 2020 for the first time. The specific target level for this investment had already been set in 2014 to build a target network for cycling and increase its share of transport modes. In practice, no investment budget is currently allocated to promoting walking, with the exception of the summer 2023 trials extending pedestrian areas in the city centre. In practice, the budget item funds dedicated to walking and cycling routes are directed at promoting cycling by extending the city centre's target network and the Baana cycling network. However, cycling projects will improve the segregation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian routes will also be created in all other road projects where a pedestrian route runs along that particular section of the road.

It is difficult to demonstrate the direct impact of these investments on the trends in the modal share of sustainable transport modes. Nevertheless, the investments will allow the implementation of programmes to develop these transport modes and the construction of infrastructure to increase their modal shares. Building infrastructure is slower than other development measures for influencing the share of transport modes.

There are problems in the joint preparation of transport projects within the city

The assessment found that there have been problems in cooperation between the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office (City Office) in promoting sustainable transport. The experts interviewed from the Urban Environment Division feel that

some decision makers in the City Office behave as if they do not endorse the sustainable transport goals. This was even considered to be the biggest obstacle to promoting sustainable transport. These experts found the conflicts with the City Office staff frustrating, and some interviewees felt they had experienced inappropriate behaviour. According to the division's management, some people in the City Office want to use the transport project steering group to steer and pivot transport planning in a direction that is not aligned with the transport policy prepared by the division. In some cases, the City Executive Office calls the division's expertise in transport planning into question. According to the Urban Environment Division's management, there are tensions in cooperation, particularly over perspectives on the role of private car use in economic policy. The Urban Environment Division and City Executive Office staff have different understandings of the research data on the link between transport and urban vitality. According to the division's management, they have lost employees because the conflicts have been considered detrimental to working conditions.

According to the City Executive Office's management, cooperation with the Urban Environment Division generally works well, but there can be clashes between individuals when both sides are passionate about their work. The experts at the City Office also have unpleasant experiences of the cooperation. According to the City Office's management, their role is to promote all the city's goals, which also includes considering the business community's views. Business community representatives have often felt that the objectives promoting sustainable transport modes undermine the conditions for business activity. Many different objectives require resources. The City Office must assess the value of different projects and make choices about where and in what order to spend funds. The management of the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office have discussed their differences of opinion. The intention has been to deal with conflicts openly. Differences of opinion also emerged in the assessment of streamlining driving, walking and logistics in Helsinki city centre. It found that, in the City Office's view, the Urban Environment Division was developing the city centre excessively in favour of pedestrian, cycling and public transport. However, the Urban Environment Division believes that these plans will not unreasonably reduce access to the city centre by car.

Conclusions

Sustainable transport modes have not been sufficiently promoted in accordance with the City Strategy to increase their share of transport modes during the 2017–2021 strategy period. The promotion of sustainable modes of transport has materialised through new mode-specific action programmes, but their objectives have not yet been achieved, and progress is slow.

However, investment in sustainable modes of transport such as trams has increased significantly.

The share of sustainable transport modes did not increase in the 2017–2021 strategy period, despite being a goal in the City Strategy. In 2021, the share of sustainable transport modes in daily trips was virtually the same as in 2017. In the longer term, when examined from 2010 onwards, the share of sustainable modes of transport has increased. In recent years, the share of trips by public transport in particular has decreased, and walking has increased, as the increase in remote work has reduced commuting by public transport. The share of cycling has remained roughly the same.

By the end of 2022, all five programme measures for promoting walking were at least in the planning stage. The most important measures are developing a pedestrian planning guide and defining a hierarchy for the pedestrian network. Of these measures, only the walking environment trials were in progress during the assessment. Based on the assessment, resources for promoting walking are very scarce. The goal of the programme promoting walking as the preferred mode of transport, which is prioritised in planning, implementation and maintenance, is not being met in practice. The city budget does not allocate funds to promote walking, except for the summer 2023 walking trials in the city centre. In practice, the budget item for pedestrian and cycling routes is entirely dedicated to promoting cycling, but it will also improve the conditions for walking by separating pedestrian and cycling traffic.

The cycling development programme's target for the share of transport modes has not been met. Just under half of the city centre's target cycling network has been built or is under construction, as is about a fifth of the Baana cycling network. According to a cycling expert, the slow progress is because the annual investment budget has been too low. To accelerate the construction of the target network, lightweight solutions have also been planned as an alternative to street renovation. The programme's measures are progressing quite well, but some measures are still at an early stage. Surveys show that cyclists are particularly dissatisfied with the level of winter maintenance. The annual investment target of 20 million euros for cycling was reached for the first time in 2020. The target level for this investment was already set in 2014.

Progress on the development programme measures focusing on the speed, efficiency, reliability and uninterrupted operation of trams has been slow, partly

because the individual measures are relatively minor and cannot be combined into larger projects. Some measures are implemented in the context of other projects, in which case their implementation will follow the schedules of those projects. Investment in tram infrastructure and the network has been high in recent years due to simultaneous construction on tram lines such as the Raide-Jokeri, Crown Bridges and the line from Kalasatama to Pasila. However, current planning resources will not allow more simultaneous projects to be carried out than at present. It is difficult to demonstrate the direct impact of these investments on the trends in the modal share of sustainable transport modes. In addition, building new transport infrastructure is a slow way to promote sustainable modes of transport.

There have been problems in cooperation between the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office in promoting sustainable transport. The interviewed experts from the Urban Environment Division feel that some people in senior positions in the City Office behave as though they do not endorse the sustainable transport objectives. Experts from both the City Office and the division have had unpleasant experiences of the cooperation. These conflicts have also led to employees leaving their jobs. In particular, these tensions are related to views on the role of private car use in economic policy. The management of the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office have discussed their differences of opinion. The assessment shows that a lack of shared vision between the division and the City Office, particularly regarding the role of private car use, makes it difficult to promote sustainable transport.

The Audit Committee finds that

the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ ensure that cooperation in promoting sustainable transport is effective in terms of both the city's sustainable transport objectives and staff well-being at work.

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ ensure that there are sufficient resources for promoting sustainable transport. In particular, promoting walking in transport planning requires greater attention than before.

Streamlining driving, walking and logistics in Helsinki's city centre



Has the efficiency of walking, driving and logistics been improved in the city centre?



Measures have been taken, but there has been little impact on efficiency thus far. There are differences of opinion within the city about development.

The main focus of the assessment:

Has the accessibility and functionality of the city centre been improved in terms of walking, driving and logistics in accordance with the strategic objectives?

Related questions:

1. Has the city implemented or initiated measures for improving the city centre's accessibility to pedestrians?
2. Has the city implemented or initiated measures for improving car parking and accessibility in the city centre?
3. Has the city implemented or initiated measures for improving the logistical conditions for business in the city centre?

In the 2021–2025 City Strategy, one of the key projects is to increase the city centre's vitality through urban planning. The City Strategy promotes accessibility and functionality by:

- ▶ Launching a vitality project for the city centre, focusing on a walkable and welcoming urban space. An integral part of this project is developing traffic arrangements to support increasing the vitality of the city centre.
- ▶ Planning for the development of a pedestrian centre, building on work from the last period, and submitting a proposal for decision.
- ▶ Examining the impact of transport projects on the city centre's accessibility.

- ▶ Implementing solutions to make more efficient use of underground parking facilities.
- ▶ Continuing the gradual transition to a market-based parking policy. Ensuring that there is sufficient parking.
- ▶ Continuing to implement the decisions on where to locate port activities.
- ▶ Ensuring the smooth flow of service and delivery traffic in the city centre.

These strategic policies will translate into land-use planning, separate programmes and projects, which will set goals. The most important of these are the 2016 Master Plan and its implementation programmes; the 2021 Underground Master Plan; the 2022 walking promotion programme; the 2014 parking policy and its 2022 update; the 2014 City of Helsinki's City Logistics Action Plan and its 2020 update; the 2021 development plan for the Port of Helsinki; Helsinki's 2020 city centre vision; and Helsinki's economic policy objectives for land use in 2022. The assessment was limited to the city centre and its surrounding area.

The assessment was based on relevant documents and monitoring materials, interviews, and requests for information from the persons responsible for the assessed issues in the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division. The Audit Committee's first commission also obtained information during its assessment visit to the City Executive Office.

The city has launched a vitality project and promoted a walkable city centre

The city centre's vitality project has been launched. In practice, the vitality project is a partnership group between the City of Helsinki and business representatives, established in 2021 by the City Manager, which aims to strengthen the vitality of the city centre (HELY). The need to establish a working group arose because the vitality of the city centre had been declining for some years. Conditions for the city centre's retail and catering sectors had deteriorated due to the coronavirus pandemic. In the spring of 2022, the City Board's

Economic Development Sub-Committee approved the Economic policy goals for land use (ELMA). The HELY partnership group is tasked with determining a common vision between the city and the business community for developing the city centre, and identifying the key development needs for implementing the policies and measures for the city centre outlined in ELMA.

The city has launched the measures related to promoting pedestrian access to the city centre in accordance with the strategy. The City Board's January 2021 decision will extend the pedestrian and walkable city centre, including the Esplanadi area in further planning. The planning will build on the preparatory work from the previous strategy period. The aim is to develop the pedestrian environment south of Eteläesplanadi, integrate it into an active business centre, and plan the Eteläsatama area as part of the new walkable city centre. The aim is also to reorganise port operations to free up space for other urban developments in Eteläsatama. In March 2022, the City Board adopted a programme to promote walking, and its measures are under way. The city intends to promote pedestrian access based on the city centre's 2032 land-use development plan and in the transport system plan. The land-use development plan for the city centre is expected to be submitted to the City Board in the spring of 2023, and the transport system plan is expected to be completed in September 2023.

The City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division have differences of opinion on development

According to the City Strategy, the city centre's development will be carried out with its residents and business community. Transport arrangements will be developed to support increasing vitality, and the overall impact of transport projects affecting accessibility to the city centre will be examined. The 2021–2025 City Strategy places particular emphasis on walking as a mode of transport in the city centre – private car use is not specifically mentioned, except for delivery and service transport and strengthening the electric car infrastructure, which is excluded from the assessment.

The City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division differ in their opinions on how the city centre should be developed. According to the City Executive Office, the business community's views are not adequately considered in the city centre's development, and the Urban Environment Division is developing the city centre in a way that is too transport-oriented, favouring light and public transport. They say that building new bicycle lanes and tram lines in the city centre will worsen the flow of vehicle traffic and the parking situation. Meanwhile, the Urban Environment Division feels that the views of certain business operators excessively influence the City Executive

Office's policies on the city centre. The City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division disagree on how significant an impact motorists have on the city centre's vitality. This is evident in the differing views on how much emphasis should be placed on the smooth flow of vehicular traffic and predictability of car travel compared to developing the pedestrian environment by closing car lanes, for example. The Urban Environment Division's view is that access to the city centre by car is quite good, and decisions favouring public transport or light traffic will not unduly reduce that accessibility. The differences of opinion between the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division also emerged in the assessment of sustainable transport modes. It found that these differences of opinion made it more difficult to promote sustainable transport. There are also differences of opinion on how to influence parking and reduce the negative impacts of delivery and service traffic.

Most of the street space is reserved for vehicles and parking

Helsinki's Master Plan emphasises the city's polycentricity and improving transport accessibility with sustainable transport modes in different city areas. Transport projects in cities do not usually involve only one transport mode, but rather the promotion of all modes of transport is interconnected. According to a 2021 calculation based on the register of public areas, 86% of the street space in Helsinki's city centre was reserved for motor vehicles. In addition to private cars, this space is used for public transport, parking, and service and delivery traffic. Measures involving vehicle traffic can also have an impact on walkability and comfort.

The city has initiated certain measures for improving the flow of traffic and logistics in line with its strategy. The City of Helsinki has continued to implement the decisions on siting port activities in cooperation with the Port of Helsinki in accordance with the Port Development Programme. The local detailed plan for the Port Tunnel, which is important for logistics, is being prepared in 2023. There is a provision for building the northern end of the Sörnäinen tunnel in the Kalasatama-to-Pasila tramline project, but no budget has yet been reserved for the rest of the tunnel. There are no construction decisions yet, but the master plan's implementation programme estimates that the projects will be completed in the short term before 2035.

The strategy's goal of examining the impact of transport projects on the city centre's accessibility is to be carried out using the city centre's transport system plan. The schedule of Helsinki's major transport projects and their impact on traffic during construction has been a topic that has often been discussed in the HELY working group. In the working group, business

community representatives and the City Executive Office have especially stressed the need to renovate Mannerheimintie and Hakaniemi at different times, so that access to the city centre will not worsen significantly. According to the Urban Environment Division, the schedule for these projects has been changed to ensure a smooth traffic flow, but according to the City Executive Office, not enough. The scheduling of street renovations is influenced by factors beyond the smooth flow of traffic during construction.

Helsinki has significant regional differences in accessibility by different modes of transport. Helsinki's centre is easily accessible by car, but public transport and cycling are also viable alternatives. Walking is the most common form of transport in the city centre. Accessibility is monitored using a travel-time matrix developed by the University of Helsinki. It is based on information from the Helsinki Region Transport's Journey Planner and the calculated travel times for cars, pedestrians and cyclists in geographic data sets. Data on accessibility are only available from 2013 to 2018, so it was impossible to use the material to compare trends in accessibility since 2018. The difference in travel times between cars and more sustainable transport modes shrank from 2013 to 2018 in every part of the metropolitan area. This was because of improvements in public transport and lower speed limits for cars. Travel times to Helsinki Central Station by car have increased from 2013 to 2018 due to the reduced speed limits.

The key measures of the parking policy that came into effect in 2014 have been implemented

The city has implemented almost all the parking-related measures for improving the city centre's accessibility in accordance with the 2014 parking policy. However, these measures have not had the desired effect of freeing up street space by shifting residential and other longer-term parking off the streets and into underutilised parking facilities, for example.

In the city centre, a key measure in the transition to market-based parking is increasing the price of residential, business and kerbside parking to better reflect the costs borne by the city for parking. The price can also be used as an incentive for residents to park in parking facilities rather than on the streets. The freed-up kerbside spaces could be used for short-term customer parking or other activities that could enhance the vitality of the city centre. Prices have been increased in line with the objectives in the 2014 Parking Policy and continued to increase in 2022. The 2022 parking policy aims to transition to a service-based pricing system in which the utilisation rate of parking spaces in an area would influence the price of parking there. Progress was made in 2022 with the piloting of utilisation counts.

The city has sought to make more efficient use of underground parking by entering into agreements with private parking facilities. Under these agreements, a person entitled to a resident parking permit is given a discount on parking in the facility if they give up their permit. However, contract parking has gained little popularity among city residents, as parking in the car park, even after the discount, is too expensive compared to the price of residential parking on the street. Developing cooperation with private parking operators is also a measure of the latest parking policy that came into force in 2022, but the city did not take any new action on contract parking in 2022.

It would facilitate parking and the rational use of street space if motorists looking for parking were provided information about available spaces from a centralised source. In 2018, the city introduced an interface to provide data on the use of parking spaces in Helsinki, but it is unaware of the extent to which private operators have developed applications based on it. Access to real-time parking information is also a measure in the 2022 parking policy. However, according to the information received for the assessment, no specific action has been taken to advance it, even though that measure was already scheduled to be introduced in 2021. However, in line with the 2014 parking policy, paying for parking has been made easier with the widespread introduction of mobile payments.

Logistics targets have been partly met

Some of the updated measures in the comprehensive 2020 City Logistics action plan have been implemented, and some have not. New properties were still connecting to the underground service tunnel in 2015–2016, but the measures since have not increased the number of connections. In reality, the growth in service traffic through the underground service tunnel has been very limited since the completion of the entire route in 2011. Connecting to the underground service tunnel is tied to the total above-ground floorspace of a property, which is a financial burden for operators who do not need services or deliveries through the tunnel. According to the City Executive Office's Economic Development Department, some ways to increase service tunnel users could be changing the criteria for determining the connection fee or waiving the connection fee by granting additional building rights. The most significant property owners in the city centre are the pension insurance company Ilmarinen and the municipal pension insurance company KEVA.

The Urban Environment Division made considerable progress in preparing to introduce a parking permit for delivery services under the City Logistics Programme. However, the permit has not been implemented due to data protection issues with implementing a mobile application developed by a private service provider.

However, based on a survey of service operators and the feedback received, the number of distribution and unloading points has increased, but there is still a need to improve them, as delivery traffic has increased in recent years. The introduction of local distribution stations and smaller-scale delivery solutions has also been promoted through several trials conducted with businesses. The City Logistics Programme has promoted cooperation in logistics between different operators. However, the City Logistics Programme lacks systematic monitoring: for example, no indicators have been developed for implementing the measures, despite this being one of the programme's measures. According to the information received during the assessment, some of the City Logistics Programme's measures that fall under the city's executive responsibilities have not been implemented due to insufficient resources.

Vitality and activity in the city centre remain low

According to an assessment of the city centre's vitality, it declined by 6.2% between 2019 and 2022, which is more than in other large cities except for Jyväskylä. However, the decline was less pronounced in 2022 than in previous years. Traveller volumes across the Helsinki peninsula increased slightly in 2021 compared to the previous year but were still far from those in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic. At the time of the assessment, there was no information about the trends in traveller numbers in the city centre in 2022. Based on mobile phone data, the number of people in the city centre in October 2022 was still below the number in 2019. Alongside the coronavirus pandemic, changes in retail trade have also affected vitality and activity, including online shopping and the opening of large shopping centres outside the city centre. In addition, remote work is still very prevalent, which reduces commuting. Based on the information available for the assessment, it is impossible to assess the extent to which the city's measures have contributed to developing the city centre's vitality.

Conclusions

The city has carried out or initiated numerous measures for improving the city centre's accessibility and functionality in terms of walking, driving and parking in accordance with the City Strategy and separate programmes. However, no significant impact is evident – at least not yet. The City Logistics measures have been partially implemented. The city has promoted some projects to improve vehicle traffic and logistics, such

as the Sörnäinen tunnel and the Port Tunnel. The city centre's vitality project and measures for promoting walking have been launched. In 2022, traffic and vitality in the city centre had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Many major transport projects are underway in the centre of Helsinki that affect access to the city centre. The assessment found conflicts between the Urban Environment Division and the City Executive Office. The differences of opinion are mostly related to what extent the plans for the city centre are based on transport planning and how much the business community drives them; how important private car use is for the vitality of the city centre; and the extent to which the smooth flow of vehicular traffic is emphasised compared to light and public transport. In particular, conflicting views exist on the practical scheduling of transport projects in the city centre. Similarly, there are differences of opinion on the implementation of pedestrian projects and ways to reduce the negative impact of delivery and service traffic on other activities in the city centre.

There is a need for cooperation between the city and businesses to redirect kerbside parking to parking facilities to free up spaces for customer parking or other activities. However, the popularity of contract parking between residents and parking facilities has not increased significantly in recent years. It would facilitate parking if drivers were provided with up-to-date information about available spaces. In 2018, the city introduced an interface to provide data on the use of parking spaces in Helsinki, but there is no information about whether this has been used to develop applications.

Some measures that the city was responsible for implementing under the 2020 City Logistics Programme have not been carried out due to insufficient resources. The City Logistics Programme also lacks indicators and systematic monitoring. There have been efforts to promote connections to the underground service tunnel, but there is no incentive to do so if operators do not think that they need underground service or distribution. Incentives have been proposed to encourage connections to the service tunnel, such as changing the criteria for setting the connection fee or waiving the connection fee by granting additional building rights. The city has spent considerable time preparing to introduce a parking permit for delivery vehicles, but this has not progressed due to data protection issues.

The Audit Committee finds that

the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ allocate sufficient resources for the measures for which the city is responsible and that are needed to achieve the objectives of the City Logistics Programme, set indicators and monitor the progress towards the programme's objectives.
- ▶ initiate measures for promoting the use of the service tunnel by encouraging property owners to connect new properties to it.
- ▶ increase cooperation with private parking operators to increase contract parking in private parking facilities instead of kerbside parking.

the Urban Environment Division should

- ▶ resolve the data protection problem with the parking permit for delivery services to make it operational.



The effectiveness of the Audit Committee's recommendations from the 2020 assessment report



Have measures been taken in accordance with the recommendations in the 2020 assessment report?



Action has been taken on 90% of the recommendations from the 2020 assessment report.

The main focus of the assessment:

What impact have the Audit Committee's recommendations had?

Related questions:

1. What measures have the Central Administration and divisions taken to address the recommendations in the Audit Committee's 2020 assessment report?
2. What impact have the recommended measures had?

The 2020 assessment report addressed 19 assessment topics and presented 51 recommendations. The effectiveness of the recommendations was assessed by examining the statements on the assessment report, the report given by the City Board to the City Council in December 2021, and by sending email inquiries to the management of the relevant service or other responsible parties. A four-point scale was used to assess the implementation and impact of the measures (Figures 28 and 29). Table 7 summarises the implementation of the recommendations by assessment topic. More detailed descriptions of the implementation of these recommendations can be found in the assessment memoranda on the effectiveness of the recommendations at www.arviointikertomus.fi

Measures have been taken that are mainly consistent with the recommendations.

Actions have been taken on 90% of the recommendations in the 2020 assessment report (Figure 28).

This figure summarises the assessment results on the measures taken. For comparison, the figure shows the implementation of the recommendations made in the 2018 and 2019 assessment reports. In 2020, the share of recommendations for which no action was taken was 10% (five recommendations). The rate of implementation has slightly decreased compared to previous years. The percentage of fully implemented recommendations has varied: the situation is currently worse than last year, but slightly better than two years ago.

The Urban Environment Division had the most success implementing the recommendations to reduce emissions from construction and building use. All four recommendations were carried out. The division improved monitoring of emissions reduction targets, developed construction guidelines to reduce emissions, and increased the use of wood construction. The recommendations for participatory budgeting were also implemented well. There were four, three of which were fully implemented, and one of which was partially implemented. For example, the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division have developed the monitoring of project costs, and the Urban Environment Division has improved communication to residents about projects.

The division of labour between the City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division has become more clearly defined to implement the environmental policy objectives in procurement, and environmental awareness and competence have increased. The City Executive Office has created a procedure to monitor the auditor's recommendations. Palvelukeskus Helsinki, the Rescue Department and the Urban Environment Division have clarified how they present binding targets as recommended.

The Education Division has followed the recommendations in matters such as the centralised allocation of positive discrimination funds for schools, the collection of data on the well-being of primary school students, and improving access to counselling services. The Culture and Leisure Division has increased gender-neutral spaces and adopted the principles for

safer spaces more widely. In addition, the Culture and Leisure Division and Education Division have intensified their cooperation to empower young people.

The Social Services and Health Care Division has followed the recommendations by providing better information about substance abuse services and treatment facilities, renewing the website of substance abuse services, and increasing cooperation with child welfare, for example. The statutory staffing levels are met in child welfare, but there are challenges in staffing institutional care.

The clearing of the care backlog has not improved access to health stations

There have been many efforts to increase access to health station physicians for non-urgent care through various measures, including developing operating models, division of labour and management, service vouchers, procuring outsourced services, and developing digital and self-care services. Two outsourced health stations have started operations and have carried out additional work to reduce the backlog. Training opportunities have been increased for health station physicians, but there is still work to be done on retention and working conditions. Efforts have been made to improve working conditions by using temporary funding to increase the number of pharmacists and auxiliary nursing staff. Funding related to the coronavirus pandemic has been authorised to recruit

36 doctors, but recruitment has been unsuccessful. In addition, when the calculated physician shortage was 24 vacancies in December 2022, the total shortage was 60 physician vacancies. In 2020, the shortfall peaked at more than 70 positions. The shortage of physicians is a national phenomenon.

The impact of the measures seems limited, as access to care and availability of treatment have largely remained at the same level as they have been at for years. Considering the changes in the environment, particularly the reduction of the care backlog caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the division believes that even maintaining the same level of access to care is an achievement. Based on a comparison of T3 figures, waiting times are approximately at the same level as before the coronavirus pandemic, as can be seen in Table 6. Differences in access to care between health stations have levelled out. However, this is due to longer waiting times for access to health stations, where it used to be quicker. The T3 figure refers to the waiting time in days for the third available non-urgent doctor's appointment.

The Social Services and Health Care Division has taken measures for developing statistics on access to non-urgent care, but due to problems with the Apotti client and patient information system, reliable data on access to non-urgent care that conforms to the national health care guarantee statistics are not available from Helsinki's health stations.

Table 6. Average T3 figures by area for Helsinki's health stations in December 2019–2022. The health station locations have been divided into regional units according to the 2022 organisational structure of health stations. Source: T3 figures for 2019–2020 from the statistics portal of Helsinki's Social Services and Health Care Division, and T3 figures for 2022 from the City's website on 3 January 2023.

Regional unit in accordance with the 2022 organisational structure	T3 average on 3 December 2019	T3 average on 7 December 2020	T3 average on 1 December 2022
Eastern Health Station (Kivikko, Kontula, Myllypuro, Vuosaari)	42	39	43
Central Health Station (Kalasatama, Laajasalo)	42	42	42
City Centre Health Station (Kivellä [in 2019–2020 Laakso* and Töölö], Lauttasaari, Ruoholahti [started in 2021], Viiskulma)	38	36	35
Northeastern Health Station (Jakomäki, Malmi**, Puistola, Suutarila)	29	21	23
Western Health Station (Haaga, Kannelmäki, Malminkartano, Munkkiniemi, Pitäjänmäki)	38	37	37
Northern Health Station (Oulunkylä, Maunula, Paloheinä, Pihlajamäki)	15	9	47
Average for all health stations	34	30	38

* The T3 figure for the Laakso Health Station is missing for 2020, as it was operating as a coronavirus health station at that time.

** The T3 figure for the Malmi Health Station is missing for 2020, as it was operating as a coronavirus health station at that time.

Figure 28. Actions taken based on the recommendations made by the Audit Committee in 2018–2020, as a percentage

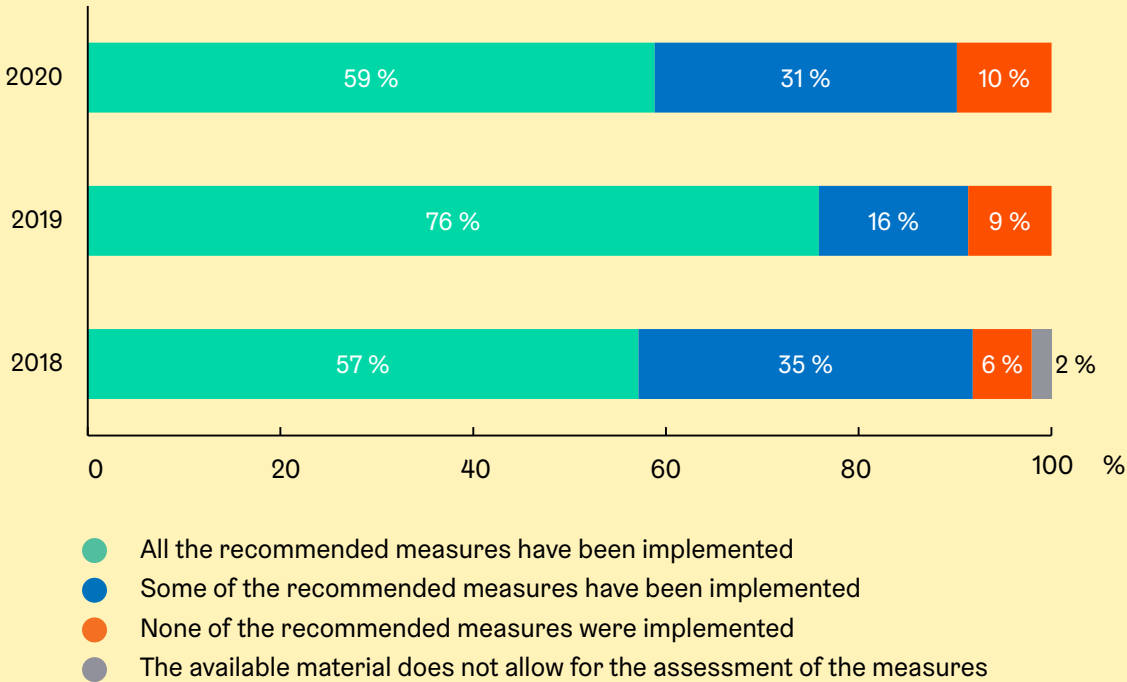
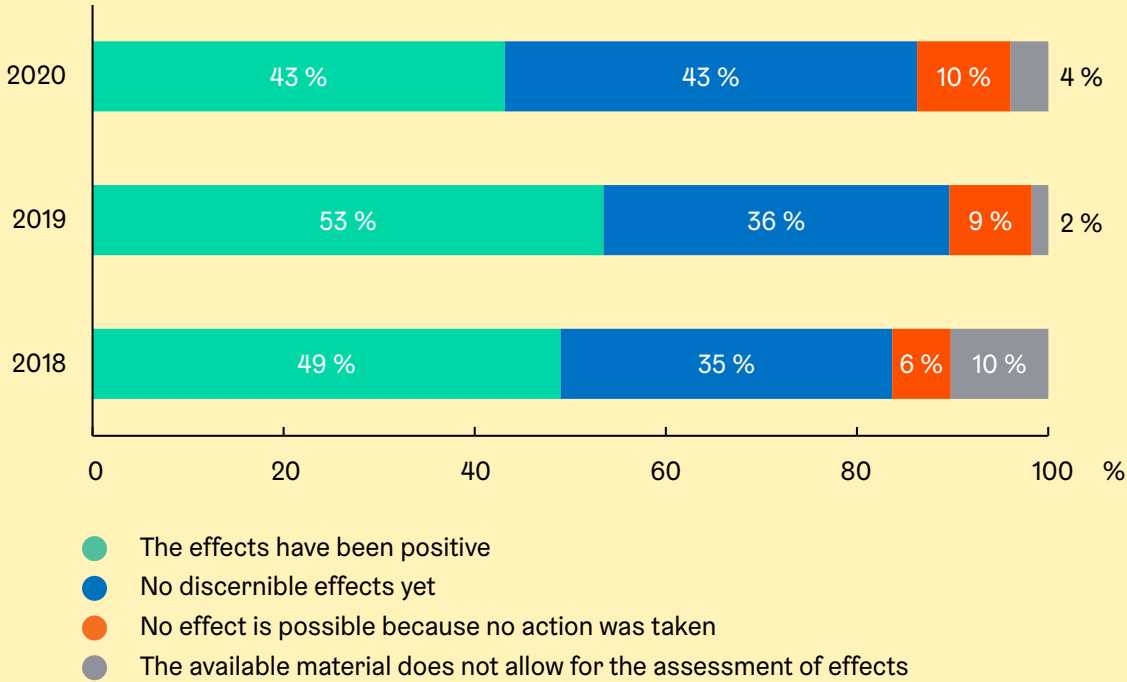


Figure 29. Impact of the measures taken following the Audit Committee’s recommendations in 2018–2020, as a percentage



The readability of the figures has been improved by rounding the percentages. This is why the total sum is not always 100.

Table 7. Implementation summary of the 2020 assessment report's recommendations by assessment topic

The result is calculated by scoring the assessments of individual recommendations (●=5; ●=3 and ●=1) and averaging them. The number of recommendations per topic ranged from one to six.

- Average score 4.5–5: measures have been taken based on the recommendations, or the effects have been positive
- Average score 3.5–4.4
- Average score 2.5–3.4: partial measures have been taken based on the recommendations, or effects are not yet discernible
- Average score 1.5–2.4
- Average score 1–1.4: no measures have been taken based on the recommendations

Assessment topic	Actions	Impact
Monitoring recommendations from the audit of accounts	●	●
Assessing binding operational targets	●	●
Finances		
Assessment of the city's finances	●	●
Olympic Stadium renovation and renewal project	●	●
Preventing inequality and social exclusion		
Preventing residential segregation	●	●
Impact of positive discrimination funds in primary schools	●	●
Mukana programme and Me school development to prevent social exclusion	●	●
Services for substance users	●	●
Sufficient foster care in child welfare	●	●
Promoting gender equality in the Culture and Leisure Division	●	●
Health and well-being from services		
Access to non-urgent care at health stations	●	●
Community-based student welfare in primary education	●	●
Inclusion and openness		
Implementing participatory budgeting in the Urban Environment Division	●	●
Empowering young people	●	●
The built environment and environmental sustainability		
Reducing emissions from construction and the use of buildings	●	●
Meeting environmental policy objectives in procurement	●	●
The city's attractiveness and internationality		
Maritime Helsinki	●	●
Ownership policy		
Corporate governance of business premises companies	●	●

No action was taken on five recommendations

The following Audit Committee recommendations had not been implemented by the follow-up period in December 2022:

- ▶ The City Executive Office and the Urban Environment Division should experiment with converting individual houses in the most important Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) rental concentrations into condominiums and after the government interest subsidy ends, consider renovating individual houses into owner-occupied houses, so that the distribution of housing tenure meets the objectives of the housing and land-use implementation programme in all areas.
- ▶ The City Executive Office, with the Urban Environment Division and the Culture and Leisure Division, should examine what a viable model would be for reserving funds for maritime development at the city level.
- ▶ The City Executive Office should prepare an addition to the Group Guidelines so that the guidelines or their annexes indicate how the issuing of operational instructions differs in companies and foundations, and how the provisions of the Limited Liability Companies Act affect the activities of a member of the Board of Directors of a company as a representative of the City.
- ▶ The City Executive Office should ensure that there is no conflict between the prior consultation procedure in the Group Guidelines and current practice in selecting externally contracted managing directors.
- ▶ The Social Services and Health Care Division should, with the City Executive Office, ensure that physician salaries in Helsinki's health stations are competitive.

ARA housing in ARA rental concentrations has not been converted to different tenure types, as the same goal is being pursued by other means such as new construction. There is still no effective model for allocating funds for maritime development at the city level.

The findings highlighted in the assessment report have not been taken into account in updating the Group Guidelines. As a starting point, the City Executive Office assumes that Board members are familiar with the relevant provisions of the Limited Liability Company Act, the Foundations Act or the Limited Liability Housing Company Act. The recommendation on the prior consultation procedure proved to be unwarranted, as the City Executive Office's interpretation is that the tasks of the contracted managing directors, who work part-time in real estate companies, are not those of a managing director but rather a property

management service.

No significant measures had been taken to ensure the competitiveness of physicians' salaries in Helsinki's health stations by December 2022. The 2023 salary development programme may change this situation.

So far, less than half the recommendations have had impacts

At the time of the assessment, 43% of the measures taken in response to the 2020 assessment report's recommendations had discernible positive effects (Figure 29). In 43% of the recommendations, the effects of the measures were not yet discernible. There could not be effects in 10% of the cases, where no measures were taken based on the recommendations.

The 2020 assessment report made two recommendations whose impact could not be assessed with the available data. These impacts were related to developing implementation planning in construction projects and achieving non-urgent access to health stations within the statutory deadline. It was impossible to reliably monitor access to care in 2022 due to missing data in the Apotti client and patient information system, and the data are not comparable with previous years.

Conclusions

Ninety per cent of the recommendations in the Audit Committee's 2020 assessment report had been acted upon by the divisions, either partially or fully. So far, less than half the recommendations have had an impact.

In line with the Audit Committee's recommendations, measures are being taken to e.g. prevent segregation in neighbourhoods and schools, promote residents' participation through participatory budgeting and empower young people. Environmental awareness has increased in procurement and construction. There is better access to information about substance abuse services on the redesigned website. In social work for child welfare, the statutory staffing levels are met, but there are staffing challenges in institutional care.

Decreasing the backlog of care caused by the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a situation where access to care at health stations has remained relatively the same, despite a high level of intervention. Problems with the Apotti client and patient information system contribute to the lack of a fully reliable way of measuring access to care.

The Audit Committee finds that

the Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division's health and substance abuse services should

- ▶ continue to improve access to care in health stations.

Monitoring recommendations from the audit of accounts

According to the City of Helsinki's Administrative Regulations, the Audit Committee is tasked with monitoring that the persons responsible for the accounts and other persons in charge of the activities have taken the necessary measures for addressing the recommendations and objections raised by the audit of the accounts.

The city auditor reports to the Audit Committee three times a year on the financial audits performed. The reports are distributed to the management of the city and its divisions, departments and municipal enterprises, as well as to other persons responsible for administration and financial management. The audit report and the audit summary report for the financial year are prepared and submitted to the City Council for discussion. The reports set out the findings and recommendations resulting from the audits.

Monitoring of financial audit findings for 2020–2021

During the financial year, the auditor reports to the Audit Committee on the financial and administrative deficiencies that had been repeatedly identified in the

2020–2021 audits. Recurring findings were made in the following areas: documentation of purchase and expense invoices, capitalisation and inventory of fixed assets, supporting receipts, payroll accounting, balance sheet breakdowns and administration. In some of these areas, the situation has improved.

The Audit Committee considers it appropriate to remind the divisions, departments and municipal enterprises that they have a duty to take immediate action to remedy any deficiencies found during a financial audit. This applies especially to the specific bodies mentioned in the reports, but the recommendations will also benefit those who were not audited by the particular audit that was carried out.

The Audit Committee finds that

- ▶ the City Board should ensure that those responsible for the accounts take the measures recommended by the auditor to remedy any identified irregularities without delay.

The Audit Committee's division of responsibilities in 2022

- Central Administration
 ● Urban Environment Division
 ● Culture and Leisure Division
● Central Administration's municipal enterprises
 ● Education Division
 ● Social Services and Health Care Division

First commission	Second commission
City Board	● Education Committee ●
City Executive Office	● Early childhood education and pre-primary education ●
Board of Directors of Financial Management Services	● Primary education ●
Financial Management Services municipal enterprise	● Upper secondary education, vocational education and training, and liberal adult education ●
Board of Directors of the Service Centre municipal enterprise	● Swedish-language services ●
Service Centre municipal enterprise	● Culture and Leisure Committee ●
Board of Directors of the Construction Services municipal enterprise	● Library Services ●
Construction Services municipal enterprise	● Cultural Services ●
Board of Directors of the Occupational Health Centre municipal enterprise	● Youth Services ●
Occupational Health Centre municipal enterprise	● Sports Services ●
Urban Environment Committee	● Social Services and Health Care Committee ●
Land use and city structure	● Family and Social Services ●
Buildings and public areas	● Health and substance abuse services ●
Services and permits	● Hospital, rehabilitation and care services ●
Board of Directors of Helsinki City Transport	●
Helsinki City Transport	●
Rescue Committee	●
Rescue Department	●

Key subsidiaries in the first commission's area of responsibility

Regional and infrastructure

- Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd

Apartments

- Helsingin Asumisoikeus Oy
- Helsingin kaupungin asunnot Oy
- Kiinteistö Oy Auroranlinna

Vitality and Marketing

- Forum Virium Helsinki Oy
- Helsingin kaupunkitilat Oy
- Helsinki Events Foundation sr
- Helsinki Partners Ltd
- Korkeasaaren eläintarhan säätiö sr
- Stadion-säätiö sr

Operating on market terms

- Finlandia Hall Ltd
- Helen Ltd
- Port of Helsinki Ltd
- Kiinteistö Oy Kaapelitalo
- MetropoliLab Oy
- Palmia Oy

Commercial facilities

- Helsinki City Premises Ltd

Support services and others

- Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut Oy

Subsidiaries in the second commission's area of responsibility

Culture

- Helsingin Musiikkitalon säätiö sr
- Helsingin teatterisäätiö sr
- UMO Foundation sr

Sport and exercise

- Jääkenttäsäätiö sr
- Mäkelänrinteen Uintikeskus Oy
- Urheiluhallit Oy
- Vuosaaren Urheilutalo Oy

Social services and health care

- Helsingin Seniorisäätiö sr
- Niemikotisäätiö sr
- Oulunkylän kuntoutuskeskus sr

Audit Department staff who assisted the Audit Committee's commissions

First commission

Petri Jäske
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Senior Performance Auditor

Hanna Kurki
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City Auditor

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City Auditor

Jaakko Seppälä
City Auditor

Minna Tiili
Assessment Manager

List of the assessment memoranda prepared for the Audit Committee (in Finnish)

First commission

- Impact of residential planning on green spaces
- Streamlining driving, walking and logistics in Helsinki's city centre
- Resident participation in land-use planning
- Promoting sustainable modes of transport
- Efficient use of building assets
- Effectiveness of recommendations, first commission
- Safety in the city's various areas

Second commission

- Access to early-stage mental health services for adults
- Employee well-being, retention and attraction in senior centres
- Employee well-being, retention and attraction in early childhood education and care
- Services in social and family services to support the well-being of informal carers
- Effectiveness of recommendations, second commission
- Promoting the well-being of upper secondary school students
- Maternity and child health services to support families with children

Abbreviations and glossary

AM programme

The housing and related land use implementation programme prepared by the City of Helsinki for each council term

VET Student Survey (Amisbarometri)

Survey conducted by the Finnish Association of Vocational Students (SAKKI) for students in vocational education and training institutions

Apotti

A client and patient information system

ARA housing

Rental housing built with assistance from the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA)

Cool Kids Chilled method

A treatment programme based on cognitive behavioural therapy to treat anxiety in young people

ELMA

The City of Helsinki's economic policy goals for land use

Frontline services

A service within Helsinki's psychiatric and substance abuse services that supports mental health and substance abuse work in primary care by assisting with psychiatric consultation, handling psychiatric referral and assessment, and providing emergency psychiatric outpatient and inpatient care.

Fiilari

The City of Helsinki's personnel survey

Helsinki-kanava channel

The City of Helsinki's video communications channel

Helsinki benefit

A benefit paid by Helsinki to supplement the home care allowance paid by KELA

Heka

Helsingin kaupungin asunnot Oy

Hijat

A personnel payroll and information system, which was originally procured jointly by the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa in 1984

HKL

Helsinki City Transport

HSL

Helsinki Region Transport

HELY working group

A partnership group between the City of Helsinki and business community representatives to strengthen the vitality of the city centre

ACT method

Acceptance and commitment therapy based on cognitive behavioural therapy, which teaches skills for handling unpleasant thoughts and feelings

HUS

Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa

Crown Bridges

The Crown Bridges tramline will connect Laajasalo, Korkeasaari and Kalasatama to Hakaniemi in 2027

IPC method

Interpersonal counselling to prevent and treat symptoms of depression

IPT-N therapy

Interpersonal psychotherapy and a short-term therapeutic method for treating depression

Kunta10

A survey carried out every two years by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health on the well-being of municipal employees

LUMO

The City of Helsinki's Biodiversity Action Plan

Maisa customer portal

An online channel for accessing social services and health care

MAL

Land-use, housing and transport agreements between the municipality and the state

Mieppi

A low-threshold mental health service unit for people aged 13 and over

Natura 2000 network

An EU network of protected areas in the Member States to safeguard biodiversity under the Habitats Directive

Neuropsychiatric symptoms

Autism spectrum disorders, activity and attention disorders, tic disorders, and a wide range of learning and developmental disorders

Neuvola päiväkodissa model

An examination for children at the age of 3 carried out jointly by child health clinics and day-care centres

Youth Station

Provides services to young people aged 13–23 with moderate mental health and substance abuse problems and their families in Helsinki.

LTP

Long-term plan

Raide-Jokeri

An express tramline being built between Itäkeskus in Helsinki and Keilaniemi in Espoo

Sarastia

The Sarastia365 HR system is a human resource management system that includes payroll. Sarastia Oy is a company owned by municipalities, joint municipal authorities and municipal group companies that produces and develops financial and human resources management services, other support services, and marketing and development services for its owners.

School to Belong

A HelsinkiMissio programme that aims to combat loneliness in schools

Seure

Seure Henkilöstöpalvelut Oy

Stadin AO

Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute

T3 figure

The waiting time for a non-urgent doctor's appointment

Task Force working group

A working group appointed by the Mayor to address the shortage of employees in the early childhood education and care sector

Therapy Navigator

a digital questionnaire designed to speed up the care management process, which the client fills in before meeting with a professional

THL

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

Facilities Service

A service in the Urban Environment Division, responsible for providing facilities and housing for the city's needs, managing property and renting city-managed spaces to businesses.

Safe Helsinki

a cooperative network whose mission is to create an overview of safety risks, identify safety-risk signals, and plan preventive measures

Varaamo

The city of Helsinki's space reservation service for reserving city facilities, equipment and tools



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The logo for the City of Helsinki, featuring the word "Helsinki" in white text inside a white speech bubble shape on a blue background.

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