

Gender equality and health service infrastructures

Gender Mainstreaming

Health

Gender-sensitive infrastructure (*)

Public services such as health centres, transport and care facilities play an essential part in ensuring the well-being of Europeans. We use public service infrastructure every day; it underpins our lives, and is essential for the functioning of a society. Infrastructure is meant to deliver services that address the diverse needs of women and men and contribute to equal opportunities for all.

Health service infrastructure ranks first for helping with everyday life activities

In a survey carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), respondents ranked nine public services in order of how they helped them to participate in seven different everyday life activities. The respondents ranked health services as the most important type of public service in the EU because they enable people to engage fully in their everyday life activities. Furthermore, both women and men recognised health services as those that have the most transformative potential towards advancing gender equality in society. They create opportunities for people to be involved in education, employment and leisure.

All the respondents, regardless of whether they used the infrastructure provided or not, were asked to assess the importance of the existing services. This signals that health services and medical centres are important not only from the user's perspective but also because they are perceived as important for the community at large. Public transport was ranked as the second most important service for both women and men.

Events regarding other public infrastructure demonstrated gendered trends. For example, women emphasised the importance of nurseries, because they enable women's participation in paid work, while men highlighted the importance of playgrounds and libraries for morning, afternoon and park and other green areas for leisure time activities that support well-being.

Figure 3. What do health services and medical centres enable you to do? (in an increasing scale of importance from 1 to 10)

Activity	Women	Men
Physical and mental health*	9.8	9.6
Education*	8.34	8.2
School, care work*	8.2	8.1
Employment*	8.1	8.0
Social inclusion*	7.1	7.0
Leisure*	6.6	6.5

(*) Differences in means between women and men reached statistical significance ($p < 0.05$).

(*) EIGE is part of the Infrastructure for the benefit of Europeans project, which aims to assess the benefits of gender equality through the provision of public infrastructure designed to demonstrate 'how and to what extent gender equality is being achieved'. The project is a multi-part project of the EU Gender Equality Plan (GEP) on the benefits of gender equality infrastructure. It includes the survey design and the EIGE's leadership of the project. The survey design and the EIGE's leadership of the project are the main components of the project. The survey design and the EIGE's leadership of the project are the main components of the project. The survey design and the EIGE's leadership of the project are the main components of the project.

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Read more

[Benefits of gender equality through infrastructure provision: an EU-wide survey](#) →

[EIGE's Gender Mainstreaming Platform](#) →

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