

n
eu
ner
haus

du bist wichtig

Health services at neunerhaus

Carmen Ploch

Peer, neunerhaus mental health health service (Praxis Psychische Gesundheit)

Paula Reid

Health lead, Research and Innovation

FEANTSA Study visit
9th May 2023

du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus Overview

neunerhaus is a social organisation working in Vienna, Austria that enables people who are homeless and people at risk of poverty to lead a self-determined and dignified life through housing, health services and social participation. Our goal is to support people to develop the skills and resources needed to support themselves and sustainably improve and maintain their living situation.

Housing

neunerhaus operates three residential houses and three floating housing support teams (including Housing First) in Vienna. neunerhaus also founded a subsidiary social housing agency, neunerimmo in 2017.

Health

neunerhaus offers health services to people who are homeless or precariously housed, regardless of health insurance status. Over 5.800 people received medical care in 2022 in the neunerhaus health centre and through our mobile team of doctors working in homelessness services across Vienna.

Social participation

Social workers offering low-threshold advice and support are available in both the neunerhaus health centre and the adjoining neunerhaus café. The café offers a space offering healthy food on a donation basis, and where people can socialise without the pressure to buy anything.

Homelessness and health in Vienna - context



19.451 people registered as homeless in Austria in 2021

11.340 people in Vienna
(58%)

Source: Statistik Austria 2023

- Comprehensive infrastructure, but there are still gaps and challenges
- Austria has an insurance-based health system – difficult to estimate how many people do not have insurance
- Others with entitlement but barriers to access (language, navigating system, stigma, negative experiences)
- Not enough low-threshold health services to meet need
- Increased need for mental health support among people experiencing homelessness in recent years as a result of multiple crises

du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus health services

du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus health services

Since 2006, neunerhaus has been offering health services to people who are homeless and those without health insurance, free of charge.

The neunerhaus health centre and the team of neunerhaus mobile doctors provide medical care to about 5,800 people per year (60% of whom are uninsured).

The number of patients increased by 32% between 2019 and 2022.

Multi-professional team: general practitioners, social workers, receptionists, peer workers, nursing staff, dentists and dental assistants.

To overcome language barriers, a video interpretation service supports health and social staff to have conversations in more than 50 languages.

du bist wichtig



n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus doctor's surgery

The neunerhaus doctor's surgery offers acute care, as well as long-term therapeutic support, diagnostic clarification and coordination of further outpatient and inpatient treatments.

Doctors work in a person-centred way, taking their time in consultations. They work closely with other professions in the health centre – this multidisciplinary approach is central to neunerhaus' health services.

Through close cooperation with a network of specialists, laboratories and clinics, people can be referred for further examinations and treatments as needed.

In 2022, 1,928 patients were treated in the GP practice - 86% were patients without health insurance.



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

Person-centred nursing care

The nursing care needs of the people we support are high. There are hardly any nursing services for people without health insurance.

The neunerhaus health center has a team of three certified nurses.

Some of the key needs covered by the team: (Chronic) wound care, incontinence, problems with mobility, health promotion and literacy, pain management and support for long-term health conditions.

The nursing team also builds trusting relationships with our patients through respectful interactions, non-judgmental treatment and involving people in decisions about their care and treatment.



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus dental practice

The team is made up of volunteer dentists and dental assistants.

The team covers the full spectrum of dental treatment, including consultations, pain management, root canals, fillings, dentures, and wider dental health.

If required, patients can also be referred to the social work team in the neunerhaus health centre. This team can, for example, help with clarifying insurance status, housing queries, debts and other related issues.

In 2022, 1,808 patients were treated in the dental office (of which 74% were uninsured).



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

Social work in neunerhaus health centre

A team of social workers, including a peer worker, is embedded in the neunerhaus health centre.

The team provides a wide range of advice and support, including clarifying insurance status, counseling, information and orientation within the health and social system, accompanying people to external services and crisis intervention.

Since the start of the pandemic, and in light of the war in Ukraine and the increases of cost of living we are seeing increasingly complex cases and people coming to us experiencing high levels of distress.

Between 2019 and 2022, the number of appointments with social workers increased by 56%..



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

dock

dock is a service run by neunerhaus in cooperation with the Vinzenz Gruppe, a healthcare provider in Vienna. It provides specialist medical care for people without health insurance.

Medical specialities include: gynecology and obstetrics, internal medicine, orthopedics and pain medicine, urology, ophthalmology. Doctors work on a voluntary basis.

Appointment is by referral only – patients are referred from low-threshold health services in Vienna.

Nursing staff and midwives support the doctors in the practice. neunerhaus social workers are also available to offer orientation and support.



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus mobile doctors

A team of mobile neunerhaus doctors work in 29 homelessness services across Vienna, ranging from day centres to residential services.

The treatment and support offered by the team depends to some extent on the type of service they are working in:

- In low-threshold facilities, the doctors predominantly offer acute care, wound care, diagnostic clarification of chronic diseases and initial medication.
- In residential services, the team can offer more long-term medical support to regular patients, or provide additional support in acute cases for people whose healthcare is primarily managed elsewhere. They can also visit people in their rooms/apartments if needed.

In 2022, 1,965 patients were treated by the mobile doctors.

du bist wichtig



n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus health telephone

Set up in March 2020 together with the city of Vienna as a pandemic contact point for employees of:

- homelessness services,
- women’s refuges
- services for refugees and for
- services for people with disabilities.

Doctors provided information about COVID regulations – quarantining, testing, vaccinations etc. – that were specific to the target groups and the services. Telephone interpretation services were available as needed.

Between March 2020 and December 2022, the phone line received 14,465 calls – over half from the homelessness sector.

Since January 2023 operating as part of the mobile doctors service – doctors available to give both patients and employees in homelessness services to give medical advice, signpost to appropriate services etc.



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

Praxis Psychische Gesundheit (PPG)

Interdisciplinary Team

- Social worker (team lead)
- GP
- Peer worker
- Psychiatrist
- Nurse

Service components

- “Zeit zum Reden” – 5 days a week
 - Members of the team present for ad-hoc conversations, appointments, crisis intervention and case discussions
- Psychiatry clinic twice a week
- Two weekly group sessions
 - “Offen Reden” open to everyone and “Frauen Reden” specifically for women
- Alcohol management programme (based on the “kontolliertes Trinken” approach)



Funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Social Affairs, Health, Care
and Consumer Protection

n
eu
ner
haus

Praxis Psychische Gesundheit (PPG) - key elements

- Interdisciplinary team bringing different professional backgrounds and expertise but not defined in team by professional role. Also embedded in wider interdisciplinary work of the health centre.
- Removing barriers to access:
 - no requirements regarding health insurance or social security entitlement
 - possible to contact team without an appointment
 - childcare available
 - video interpretation to support people in their first language
 - flexible settings for conversations (neunerhaus café, community garden)
 - adapted approach to alcohol treatment programme
- Conversations are open-ended without pressure to define a problem/find a solution

Funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Social Affairs, Health, Care
and Consumer Protection

n
eu
ner
haus

Peer work in health services

du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

neunerhaus Peer Campus

neunerhaus has worked since 2018 together with FSW on a project to develop paid peer work in homelessness support services. The neunerhaus Peer Campus has three components:

- Training: seven module peer worker certification course with an internship and final project. Application for the course is open to people who have previously experienced or currently experiencing homelessness.
- On the job support: once Peers have qualified and have paid roles in homelessness services, the Peer Campus offers forums and opportunities for further training. It also supports organisations employing Peers.
- Think tank: the Peer Campus also offers space to anyone interested in peer work to come to events and forums to learn more and share experiences.



du bist wichtig

n
e
u
n
e
r
h
a
u
s

Peer work in health services

There are two peers working in the neunerhaus health centre – in the multidisciplinary PPG and in the social work team.

Peer workers use their expertise and lived experience in health services in a number of ways, including:

- offering a low-threshold contact point for patients on which relationships can be built
- providing orientation in the health and social system based on experience
- bringing in the expertise of lived experience to case discussions, interdisciplinary team meetings and service development
- supporting patients to develop confidence in using health services and increase health literacy
- accompanying people to external appointments (hospitals, authorities etc.)



du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

Questions

du bist wichtig

n
eu
ner
haus

du bist wichtig