Welfare, Public Health and Family policy area

- Flemish Minister
- Strategic Advisory Council

Management Committee

Policy Council

Flemish Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Family

- Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family
- Flemish Agency for Care and Health
- Youth Welfare
- Inspectorate for Welfare, Public Health and Family
- Child and Family
- Flemish Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Public Psychiatric Care Centre
- Public Psychiatric Care Centre Rekem
- Public Psychiatric Care Centre Geel
A host of tasks

The policy area of Welfare, Public Health and Family employs 4,800 civil servants who work day in day out to improve the population’s welfare and health, in Flanders and in Brussels. Their tasks include advising parents on raising children, providing child-care, offering guidance to young people, following up on health goals, providing resources to disabled people, funding the infrastructure of rest homes, etc.

Six agencies are in charge of implementing this policy: the Flemish Agency for Care and Health, Youth Welfare, Child and Family, the Flemish Agency for Persons with Disabilities and two public psychiatric care centres in Geel and in Rekem. The autonomous Inspectorate for Welfare, Public Health and Family oversees the quality of the services. The Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family first and foremost is in charge of global policy preparation and evaluation.

The end responsibility for the implemented policy resides with the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family. He or she is assisted in his task by a policy council and a strategic advisory council. In the frame of the policy council, the Minister and the senior officials of the department and the agencies define a clear policy approach. The strategic advisory council is a platform for the representatives of civil society and independent experts. Finally, the senior officials also make organisational agreements in the frame of the management committee.
The Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family has eight entities that carry out the department’s mission in a spirit of collaboration. It is responsible for any assignment aimed at implementing and supporting policy, as well as providing support to management. The Secretary-General is in charge of the Department.

**Policy support**
1. Executive Staff
2. Knowledge Centre
3. Management Monitoring Division
4. Policy Development Division

**Policy implementation**
5. Welfare and Society Division
6. Flemish Infrastructure Fund for Matters relating to Individuals (VIPA)

**Management support**
7. Operational Support Division
8. Personnel Division
Mission

The Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family was founded on 1 April 2006 and has 250 employees. Its aim is to help build the Flemish Government’s policy, which organises responsive care in an effective manner, together with the agencies and partners in the field.

The Department is an organisation of experts, who make available their expertise and knowledge to customers and strategic partners. To this end, it regularly consults with the Minister’s cabinet and with the various regional, local and international managers. As a result, they create a network that guarantees a nuanced idea of field work, based on experience. The Department uses this as a cornerstone to help shape Flemish welfare and health policy.

A culture of cooperation

The Department does not work on an island. All of its operations are founded on collaboration. In order to guarantee an effective performance, internal agreement between the departments is crucial. Being on the same wavelength is also a key characteristic of the relation between the department and the agencies on the one hand and between the department and external partners in the health and welfare sector on the other.

The Department mainly focuses on themes that concern more than one agency. Although the department sets up projects designed to support policy, together with the agencies, it does not act in their place. Instead it provides coordinating added value based on its helicopter view of the policy area.
Policy support

Executive Staff
coordinating and advising

The Executive Staff provides support to the Department’s Secretary-General as regards his assignments. All internal and external communication is coordinated under his direct responsibility. The Executive Staff also manages all organizational development, quality care and self-assessment, essential points for attention for a department. Flanders can conclude international treaties directly with foreign partners and also has its own diplomatic representatives. The Executive Staff coordinates international policy in the field of welfare, public health and family.

Knowledge Centre
supplying information

The Knowledge Centre systematically gathers scientific knowledge and data on the policy area of welfare, public health and family. This is done in collaboration with the Support Center for Welfare, Public Health and Family, a consortium of non-university colleges and universities, which focuses on policy-relevant research. The Knowledge Centre advises on research, subcontracts it or carries out its own research.

Next to this, the centre also processes quantitative data into policy information. The Knowledge Centre gathers the necessary documentation to support management monitoring and policy development.

Management Monitoring Division
finger on the pulse

The Management Monitoring Division provides support to the Minister for drawing up, following up on and evaluating management agreements for the relevant policy area. These set out all of the agreements between the Minister and the agencies about the implementation of policies. Monitoring such agreements helps control and adjust the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.

The division also coordinates the policy area’s budget and is in charge of coordinating the department’s customer complaints.
Policy Development Division
cooperating in order to develop a solid policy

The Policy Development Division prepares and evaluates policy. To this end, it bases itself on the government agreement, the Minister’s policy memo and the annual policy letters and regulatory agendas. Next to this, the division also provides juridical advice and deals with juridical differences. It pays additional attention to the quality of regulations in the policy area.

The division is also in charge of a special integrated youth aid project. In so doing, it develops a policy for cross-sectoral collaboration between youth aid facilities. The main aim is to ensure that the client experiences continuous youth aid.
The Welfare and Society Division works to create equal participation and opportunities for everyone. To this end, it pays special attention to people who are rarely heard.

The division supports the policy for various sectors: general welfare work, combating poverty, community development, debt settlement, services to detainees, local social policy, regional welfare consultation, volunteer work, integrated family care, etc. It recognizes, funds and controls organizations in the field.

The division contributes to an integrated social policy by encouraging regional and intersectoral consultation. It also tries to raise social support for welfare issues among specific target groups by providing information and setting up awareness campaigns.

VIPA’s field of action encapsulates seven sectors:
- care facilities;
- facilities for preventative and ambulatory healthcare;
- facilities for senior citizens and home care facilities;
- general welfare work centres;
- special youth care facilities;
- child-care facilities;
- facilities for disabled persons.

VIPA provides construction-technical advice for these facilities and contributes to the long-term strategy for the care offer in one or more regions.
Management support

Operational Support Division
ensuring that everything works

The Operational Support Division is in charge of logistical support and accounts. It gives advice on and provides support for IT projects and coordinates network and system management. Next to this, the Division offers support as regards communication and the development of websites and web applications.

The Division runs the “Domein Groendaalheyde” reception centre in Overijse. This location offers the Flemish Government and the organizations recognized by it opportunities for training, teambuilding activities, study days, etc.

Personnel Division
policy is made by people

The Personnel Division coordinates all the recruitments and manages the personnel files of all the Ministry’s functionaries. The Division is in charge of payroll administration and systematically reports on all HR-related matters. It has the lead on and is also the contact for Vlimpers, the Flemish Government’s electronic personnel system. The division also supports initiatives as regards organizational development and HRM.