



RĪGAS DOMES
LABKLĀJĪBAS
DEPARTAMENTS



HEALTH PROFILE OF RIGA CITY RESIDENTS



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FOREWORD

A healthy city constantly creates and improves its physical and social environment, expands the resources of the community, enables people to mutually support one another, as well as to fulfil all life functions and develop their potential. Health care is not the only determining factor that influences health – education, job environment and other general socio-economic, cultural and environmental circumstances are equally important in this respect (Figure 1). [1;2]

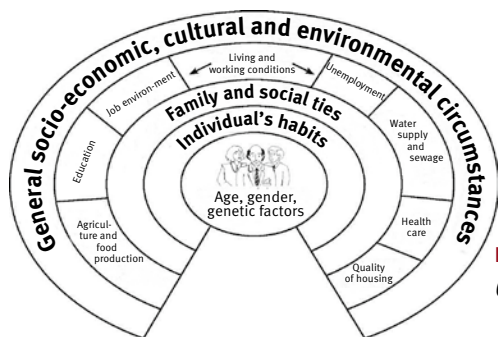


Figure 1. Model of factors that influence health (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991) [1]

One of the basic principles of public health is “health in all policies”. It is essential to ensure that all sectors are involved and are co-responsible for the promotion and preservation of the health of the population, therefore one of the objectives of Riga City Municipality is to continue the development of inter-sector cooperation in public health, creating an understanding that every branch has an impact on the health of the population (see Fig. 2), from the moment of the individual’s birth till the end of his/her life, and that the health of residents influences the development of the city in general. [1;3]



Figure 2. Examples of inter-sector cooperation in public health at Riga City Municipality

A healthy city is constantly aware of the importance of public health and tries to improve it. The city's health profile is a tool to achieve this. It contains information about the public health indicators which reflect the situation in Riga City Municipality, as well as programmes and activities implemented to improve the current situation. The objective of the profile is to provide evidence-based information for the planning of health activities and policy of the city community. [2;4]

The full version of the health profile is available on the website of the Welfare Department of Riga City Council (RCC) (see on the internet) www.ld.riga.lv, www.veseligrizdinieks.lv.



A morning at an event dedicated to World Heart Day in September 2014 at the intersection of Šarlotes Street and Brīvības Street next to Riga 1st Hospital.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF RIGA CITY

Policy planning documents for Riga, including the long-term strategy of Riga till 2025, is targeted at implementing three main desires or principal needs of Riga residents: possibility to gain income, to maintain oneself and one's family; possibility to engage in self-education, to develop and find one's real self and feel relevant; possibility to live in a comfortable, safe and healthy environment (see Figure 3). The above-said objectives comply with the conceptual model for development planning of a healthy and sustainable urban environment of the World Health Organisation (WHO) (T. Hancock's model), which determines that successful interaction of society, the environment and economy is the precondition of a healthy human being. [5;6]

In purposefully developing an understanding about public health and its importance in the development of the city and its residents, in 2012 Riga City Municipality approved the public health strategy of Riga City Municipality "Healthy Riga resident in a healthy Riga" for 2012 – 2021 (hereinafter – Public Health Strategy of Riga City Municipality). Its objective is to improve the health condition of Riga residents and to reduce the number of premature deaths. For the implementation of the determined strategic directions of action the Programme and Action Plan for the Implementation of the Public Health Strategy of Riga City Municipality for 2012 – 2016, have been developed, which can be accessed on the website of the Welfare Department of Riga City Council: www.ld.riga.lv, www.veseligrizdiniaks.lv. [7]

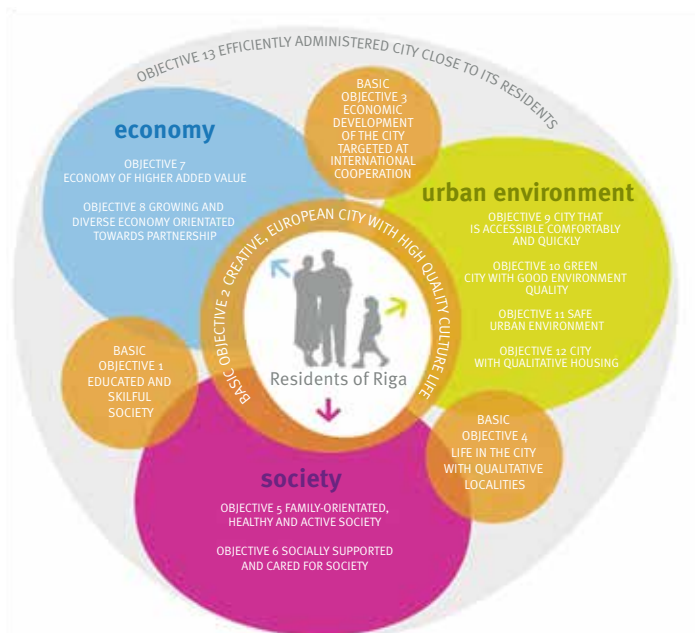


Figure 3. Objectives determined in the long-term development strategy of Riga till 2025 [8]

To ensure supervision over the implementation of this strategy and to facilitate the formation and realisation of public health policy of Riga City Municipality, the Health Council of Riga City Municipality has been established. It is composed of Riga City Council's deputies and representatives of departments of all sectors and separate agencies.

In 2014 Riga City renewed participation in the **WHO European Network of Healthy Cities**, as well as participated in the **National Network of Healthy Municipalities of Latvia**. Joining the network of healthy cities is a significant event, which can not only improve the international prestige of the capital of Latvia, but will also allow the attraction of European fund resources, in order to make the city environment as healthy as possible. For instance, to establish parks and green areas, to develop an infrastructure that urges people to spend more time in the fresh air and facilitate an active lifestyle (cycling routes, fitness equipment in the open air, well established recreation areas), to build new outpatient clinics and invest in green energy – these are a few Healthy city projects that allow one to apply for EU funding.



On 16 June 2014 during a festive ceremony a certificate to confirm the status of a Healthy city was received for the contribution of Riga Municipality to the health sector.

TERRITORIAL CHARACTERISATION OF RIGA

Riga as a Baltic metropolis concentrates a considerable population, economic and social potential. The area of the Riga City territory is 303.97 km² and it is divided into six administrative-territorial units: Central District, Northern District, Vidzeme Suburb, Latgale Suburb, Zemgale Suburb. A territorial division of Riga into 58 localities also exists (see Figure 4). The number of population in the city localities is uneven. The most densely populated localities in Riga are Pļavnieki, Avoti and Purvciems, but those with the least density – Spilve and Kleisti. Population density in Riga at the beginning of 2013 was 2 116 persons per 1 km² of territory, which is less than at the beginning of 2010, when the population density was 2 215.2 persons per 1 km² of territory. [8;9]



Designations

boundaries of localities

Figure 4. Localities of Riga City Municipality [10]

DEMOGRAPHY

32 % of Latvia's population have their declared place of residence in Riga, but during the last three years the number of residents in Riga has decreased. 643 368 persons resided in Riga at the beginning of 2014, out of which 283 724 were males and 359 644 were females. In 2013 7 040 children were born in this city, but 9 012 residents died. The natural growth in Riga in 2013 was negative (-1 972), which means that the number of deceased residents is larger than that of the newly born, but the migration balance was positive (1 725). It shows that the number of departing residents was less than the number of incoming residents. [11]

The age composition of the population is the most important demographic indicator of the state and city, characterising the available workforce, potential parents for the creation of a new generation, number of financially dependent persons and those in need of care, its proportion against the number of persons capable of working as well as predicted changes in the said basic age-groups within the next 10 – 20 years. At the beginning of 2014 in Riga the specific weight of permanent residents aged over 65 years was 19.46% (see Figure 5). [11]

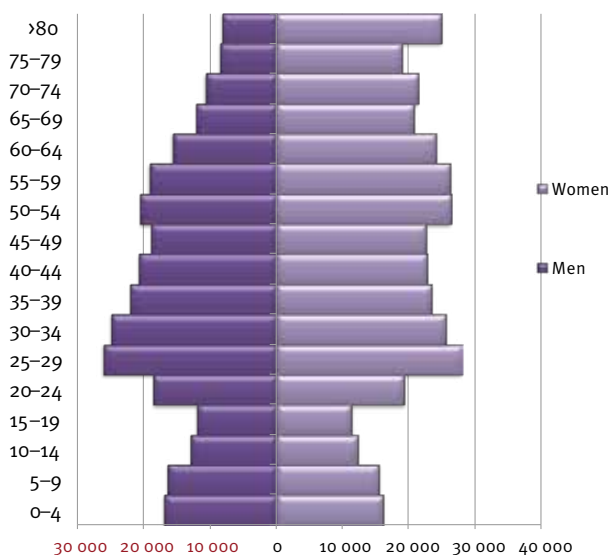


Figure 5. Composition of Riga region residents by gender and age at the beginning of 2014, in thousands of persons.

To stop the decrease of population number in Riga and in the whole of Latvia, it is necessary to carry out actions to eliminate the causes of emigration and provide support to families for the increase of the birth-rate. **The strategic objectives of the conception “Family-friendly Riga” approved by Riga City Council in 2012 envisage improving the life skills for families and young people, developing a family-orientated environment and infrastructure in the municipality, as well as strengthening family values to enhance the prestige of families with many children, thus encouraging the development of the family as a value and birth-rate increase.** [8;12;13]

The increase in the number of persons over work-capability age shows that in Riga the number of elderly persons is growing, thus a suitable environment and opportunities for active and healthy old age must be created. The directions for action in the Public Health Strategy of Riga City Municipality, too, envisage the creation of the environment and implementation of measures targeted at the prevention of diseases and trauma and improvement of the health condition among elderly residents, as well as activities to promote the socialisation of seniors and to facilitate the acquisition of new skills. [7]

Consultations by social workers and wide possibilities for the spending of free time, for example, gymnastics, line dancing, computer and language training, are offered to the senior people at Day Centres of the Riga Social Service. [14]

Find out more:

about the centre most suitable to your interests, needs or place of residence on the website of the Welfare Department of the RCC www.ld.riga.lv in the section “Day Centres”:

- Day Centre “Ābeļzieds” – 24 Dzirciema Street, Riga, telephone 67181588;
- Day Centre “Vecmīlgrāvis” – 3 Emmas Street, Riga, telephone 67185230;
- Day Centre “Ķengarags” – 35/3 Aglonas Street, Riga, telephone 67181640;
- Day Centre “Ābeļzars” – 31 Avotu Street, Riga, telephone. 67037686;
- Day Centre “Kamene” – 2 Salnas Street, Riga, telephone 67181236;
- Day Centre “Kastanis” – 1 k-19 Lomonosova Street, Riga, telephone 67181808;
- Day Centre “Rīdzene” – 237/2 Brīvības Street, 49 Ūnijas Street, Riga, telephone 67105539.

WELFARE

The number of needy persons in Riga decreased over two years and continues to diminish – from 38 933 persons in 2012 to 27 691 persons in 2013. The reduction of the number of needy persons is related to the socio-economic situation in Latvia (improvement of unemployment indicators and increase of population's income) and changes in the laws and regulations. [15;16]

Out of all persons (families) who according to the resolution by the Riga Social Service have been recognised as needy persons (families), in December 2013 41% were persons capable of working, 33% were children, 17% were persons with a disability and 9% pension-age persons. By comparison in January 2013, out of all needy persons, (families) 47% were persons capable of working, 32% were children, 14% were persons with a disability and 7% were pension-age persons. One can draw the conclusion that in the structure of needy persons (families) the number of persons capable of working decreases most rapidly (by 3326 persons from January 2013 till December 2013). Simultaneously, in 2013 a trend was observable regarding the number of needy persons capable of working diminishing by 34 persons per month. It is explained by an improvement in unemployment indicators in Riga and Latvia in general. [15;16]

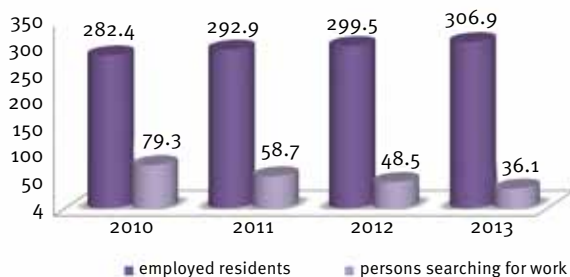


Figure 6. Economically active residents (15 – 64 years of age) in Riga: persons employed and persons searching for work [15]

The action plan of institutions of Riga City Municipality for 2014 – 2016 envisages that for every resident of Riga, at least his/her minimal basic needs should be secured, as well as every resident of Riga should receive qualitative and efficient social services according to his/her needs. One of the tasks in the Riga Long-term Strategy till 2030 and Riga Development Programme for 2014 – 2016 is “to improve the quality of social services provided by the municipality to residents”. [8; 17]

In order to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to promote social integration, the necessary social assistance is provided to residents of Riga in the form of relief and social services. In Riga during the last three years, the specific weight of recipients of social relief has diminished. In 2011 social relief was received by 12% on average but in 2013 – on average by 9% of all inhabitants of Riga. Relief for ensuring the guaranteed minimal income level is mainly received by families with children – 55% of all recipients of relief for guaranteed minimal income (in 2011 59%, in 2012 58%), persons at the age of working capability – 26% (in 2011 32%, in 2012 30%), pensioners/persons with disability – 19% (in 2011 9%, in 2012 12%). In 2013 the number of those families who received the services of social work continued to grow – from 3 416 families in 2012 to 3 618 families in 2013. There is also an increase in the number of those persons who have received social care services at their place of residence. The demand is growing for the services offered by day centres and day-care centres for adults. [15;16]

To motivate the unemployed to re-enter the labour market, support groups for the unemployed have been formed at the day centres of the Riga Social Service and other services are provided, too. In 2011 several social support activities for the unemployed were carried out – 23 support groups were organised, in which 198 clients received support and were motivated to get engaged in the labour market, 183 consultations by psychologists took place. [16]

Social services are provided to residents of Riga in accordance with Binding Regulation No. 184 of 04.09.2012 of Riga City Council “Procedure for the Reception and Payment of Social Services Provided by Riga City Municipality”. The objective for the provision of social services is to improve the life quality of the individual person, family, persons’ group and society on the whole and to enhance the ability of individuals to function socially and be integrated into society. Tasks of social services ensure the right for the individual to live as independently as possible in an environment which is customary to this person, providing social support according to the level of the person’s capabilities to function and enhancing the person’s responsibility for his/her life.

One can get information about the social services that can be received by the residents of Riga and about rights to claim social assistance on the website of the Welfare Department of Riga City Council www.ld.riga.lv.

Find out more:

Free-of-charge informative telephone about social services and social assistance in the city of Riga – 80005055.

Social service:

19/23 Baznīcas Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67105048;

- Latgale District Section – 31 Avotu Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67037695;
- Pārdaugava District Section – 46 Ed. Smiļģa Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67012271;
- Northern District Section – 3 Vidrižu Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67012126.

Find out more:

Shelter-care facilities of the municipality:

- Men's Section of the Riga Shelter-care Facility – 208 Maskavas Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67037120;
- Women's Section of the Riga Shelter-care Facility – 2 Bārdziņu Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67105634;
- Day Centre for Homeless and Destitute Persons of the Riga Shelter-care Facility – 57 Katoļu Street, Riga, telephone (+371) 67181663;
- Structural Unit of the Riga Shelter-care Facility – mobile brigade for street social work with homeless persons – telephone (+371) 27023550.

Municipal Crisis Centre:

- Crisis Centre of the Children and Youth Centre of the Welfare department of Riga City Council (RCC) – Maskavas iela 178, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67848107.

Municipal Day Centres for Children:

- Day Centre “Skudrupūznis”, Vaidelotes Street 13, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67105388;
- Day Centre “Čiekurs”, Maskavas Street 285/6, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67037477;
- Day Centre “Vecmīlgrāvis”, Emmas Street 3, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67181515;
- Day Centre “Kamene”, Salnas Street 2, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67181236.

Municipal Institutions for Long Term Social Care and Social Rehabilitation:

- Social Care Centre “Mežciems” – Malienas Street 3, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67181963;
- Social Care Centre “Gaiļezers” – Hipokrāta Street 6, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67817023;
- Social Care Centre “Stella Maris” – Birzes Street 54, Riga, telephone: (+371) 67012672.

For additional information on services, including services provided by contractual organisations, visit the website of the RCC Welfare Department: www.ld.riga.lv.

RESIDENTS' HEALTH

Good health throughout a person's life ensures an increase in the foreseen length and quality of life. Healthy children learn better, healthy adults work more productively and healthy older people continue active participation in society. [3]

The forecasted duration of life for those new born in Latvia in 2013 was 69.5 years for men and 79 years for women. Men in Latvia live 10 years less than women, which is explained by the unhealthy lifestyle, more risky behaviour and the high suicide numbers among men. Moreover, the number of years potentially lived healthily (the foreseen number of years that will be lived healthily, without functional/activity restrictions) in 2012 in Latvia was 59.1 years for women and 54.8 years for men, where the average in the 28 European Union Member States was 61.3 and 61.9 respectively. The factors noted above indicate that in various activities and the development of planning documents, local authorities should increasingly turn to educating men to improve their health and thus minimise this difference in the data among the sexes. [18; 19]

Principal causes of death

The total number of deceased persons in Riga in 2013 was 9,015 or 1,401 per 100,000 residents. The most widespread cause of death in Riga is blood circulation system diseases, followed by tumours, and injuries, with intoxication and effects of external influence ranking third (see image 7). [20]

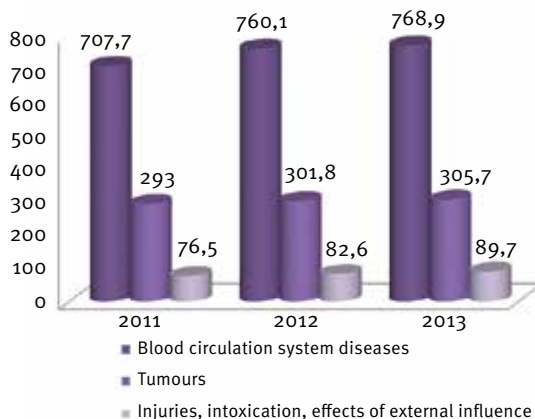


Image 7. Number of deceased from the three principal causes of death in Riga in 2011 – 2013, per 100,000 residents [20]

It is essential in heart and blood circulation disease (HCD) prevention to control the HCD risk factors, for example, blood pressure and cholesterol level, on a regular basis. [21]

Upon developing and planning public health activities it should be taken into account that the principal causes of death may be influenced preventively by promoting a healthy lifestyle that has an important role, especially in minimising heart and blood circulation disease factors, as well as by risk factor control and trauma minimisation.



Receiving a visitor at one of the Health Rooms of the city of Riga. The residents can receive free consultations on health affecting factors and health facilitation here.

Health habits

Principal features of a healthy lifestyle are sufficient physical activity, rational or physiological nutrition and not using addictive substances.

According to the details of the study of habits influencing the health of residents of Latvia performed in 2012 regarding respondents residing in Riga:

1. 62% of men and 52% of women consider their state of health as good or fairly good;
2. 15% of men and 12% of women perform physical exercises for 30 minutes at least 4 – 6 times a week;
3. 49% of women and 55% of men have a normal body mass (BMI 18.5 – 24.99) (see image 9);
4. 47% of men and 63% of women clean their teeth more often than once a day;
5. 23% of women and 50% of men are daily smokers (see image 8). [21]

A survey of residents of Riga ‘Satisfaction of residents of Riga with the local authority indicators’ was performed in 2012 where satisfaction with the sporting and active recreation possibilities in the city was indicated by a large number, 73.9% of residents. When mentioning the causes of dissatisfaction with the sporting and active recreation

possibilities in Riga, 40.5 % of the respondents answered that they do not have access to a place to perform sports while 37.3 % noted that the existing active recreation and sports services are for a charge and are too expensive. Because sporting activities may be not only physical activities but also a lifestyle, it is advisable to further improve the sports object infrastructure by developing sports halls next to schools in Riga and arranging sports grounds. New freely accessible places to practice sports free of charge should be developed, for example, forest trails with possibilities for jogging, Nordic walking, riding a bicycle or skiing in winter. [22]

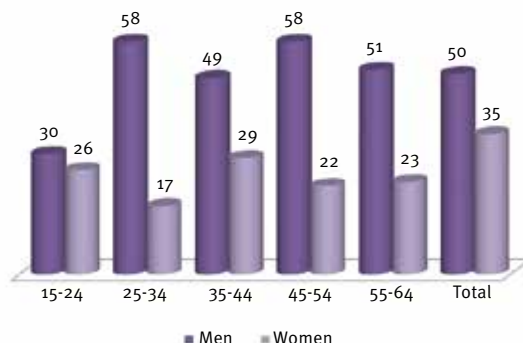


Image 8. Proportion of respondents, daily smokers residing in Riga (in %) per demographic groups [21]

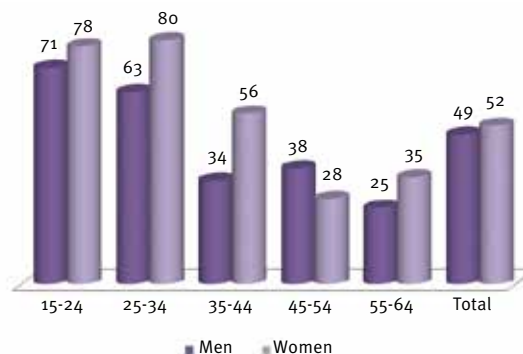


Image 9. Proportion of respondents residing in Riga that have normal body mass (BMI 18.5 – 24.99) per demographic groups (in %) [21]

The overall goal of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy until 2030 and the Riga Development Programme for 2014 – 2020 direction of activities “Varied sporting possibilities” is developing Riga as a city, the residents of which have motivation and

possibilities to practice a physically active, healthy lifestyle throughout the entire life, to achieve good sporting results in conveniently accessible objects of sports infrastructure meeting international requirements. The goals of the Riga City Sports Development Guidelines for 2012 – 2017 are a motivated and sporty public, improvement of the sports and active recreation infrastructure network, availability of sports education and sports proficiency. Directions of activities of the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy also foresee developing the environment and effecting activities that promote healthy habits, including using healthy nutrition and physical activities. [7; 13; 23]

There are health promotion and disease prevention activities implemented in Riga City, including organising different sports and active lifestyle events, workshops, seminars and cycles of lectures are being delivered regarding a healthy lifestyle for residents of all ages. Research is performed to reflect the public health indicators as well as to develop proof-based policies and programmes. Based on the principal identified problems, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations health promotion and disease prevention activities are planned and implemented on a yearly basis.

Bicycle paths are constantly being improved and developed additionally in Riga City, improvement of the *Daugava promenade and Mežaparks is being continued, which provides the residents of Riga with the opportunity to spend their free time in a safe environment suitable for active recreation. More information about the activities taking place in the Riga City local authority in the above sectors may be found in the Programme and Action Plan for Implementing the Riga City Local Authority Public Health Strategy for 2012 – 2016 that is available on the RCC Welfare Department website www.ld.riga.lv, www.veseligrizdinieks.lv.*

Find out more:

- about the health promotion and prevention activities in Riga City on the RCC Welfare Department website: www.ld.riga.lv, www.veseligrizdinieks.lv;
- about the planned activities and events in Mežaparks on the website www.rigasmezi.lv section Mežaparks;
- about the topicalities of the Riga Austrumu Executive Directorate and the possibilities for spending free time on the website www.rigasaustrumi.lv;
- about the topicalities of and the events organised by the association Latvian People's Sport Association on the website www.sportsvisiem.lv;
- about the competitions, sports activities and events taking place in Riga where everyone interested, both children and adults, and people with special needs and veterans may participate on the RCC Education, Culture and Sports Department website www.sports.riga.lv;
- about the topicalities of and the events and activities organised by the association Latvian Red Cross as well as about the opening hours of Health Rooms on the website www.redcross.lv.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

A healthy child is a prerequisite for a healthy society. The health of the mother and father and their knowledge about the health of and care for themselves and the expected child have a substantial role in the health and development of the child. [30]

During the recent three years the number of children born in Riga has increased by approximately 800. The decrease in the total number of abortions is evident as a positive trend in Latvia in general: from 16,278 (28,8 per 1,000 women aged 15 – 49) in 2006 to 8,715 (18,9 per 1,000 women aged 15 – 49) in 2013. This includes a decrease in induced abortion from 11,825 to 5,557 abortions during the above years. Induced abortion is mainly performed in Riga in the age group of 20 – 24, which evidences the need to increasingly implement information and education activities and to provide psychological and social support specifically for this age group. Moreover, it is required to promote increasing the responsibility of not only women, but also men in decreasing the number of abortions. [20]

Health of a child is substantially affected by the health and lifestyle habits of the other during pregnancy. Adverse effects on both the pregnant woman's health and development of the foetus are caused by smoking, using alcohol, narcotic and other substances developing addiction. Of all mothers of children born alive in 2011 in the Riga City health treatment institutions 8.3% were smoking, but the proportion of mothers of children already born lifeless that were smoking reached 18.2%, which indicates the possible adverse effect of smoking on pregnancy. In Riga in 2011, compared to the whole Latvia, there is a larger proportion of mothers with the noted addiction of using psychoactive substances, which should be considered in developing and implementing programmes for preventing the use of addictive substances. [20; 25]

Directions of activities of the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy also foresee improving the awareness of residents about reproductive health as well as promoting healthy habits, including the termination of or minimising smoking and the use of alcoholic beverages. [7]

Riga City Council Welfare Department also organises seminars and lectures during which the staff of educational institutions is informed about the reproductive health of children, so that such knowledge may be used in their work with children and the youth as well.

Health of children and the youth

Promoting and improving health of children and youth is one of the priorities of the health sector. The ability of students to make a healthy choice is a precondition for maintaining and improving the state of health and maintaining healthy lifestyle during further life as well. [26]

According to the data from the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in Riga in 2013 52.6% (see table 1) of children (0 – 14 years) corresponded to the first health group, which is less than the average in Latvia, 59%. While in the age group of 15 – 17 years 47.4% of teenagers corresponded to the first health group. Children who are healthy and have no chronic illnesses during the period of observation correspond to the first health group. The obtained data demonstrate that, possibly, children in Riga have a less healthy lifestyle: less physical activities, less healthy nutrition, more polluted environment, etc. [25]

Table 1. Condition of health of children (0 – 14 years) and teenagers (15 – 17 years) in 2013. [25]

Country, city	Division of children under observation into health groups, %		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
	Children (0 – 14 years)		
Latvia	59	37,5	3,5
Riga	52,6	43,8	3,6
	Teenagers (15 – 17 years)		
Latvia	57,7	38,7	3,6
Riga	47,4	47,9	4,7

Details of the children's anthropometric parameter and school environment study performed in 2012 demonstrate that 24.1% of boys in their first year at school in Riga had excess body mass or obesity, with girls 20.9%. Details of the study of 2012 evidence that the proportion of 7-year-old schoolchildren residing in Riga having normal body mass is still the lowest compared to those residing in other cities and in rural areas. It should be noted though that the proportion of 7-year-old schoolchildren with obesity has decreased for those residing in Riga and in their first year at school from 12.3% in 2010 to 8.4% in 2012. [27] The indicators demonstrate that it is required to continue educating children at school about the basic principles of healthy nutrition and the role of physical activities in a healthy lifestyle.

In turn, the children's dental health indicators and the WHO recommendations indicate the need to perform preventive and educating activities for improving the dental health of children, therefore the Riga City Council Welfare Department has started dental health lessons for teachers of pre-school educational institutions to enable the development of basic dental hygiene skills already in the pre-school environment.

Details of the study "Influence of risk and protecting factors on the level of use of substances causing addiction among the youth" performed in Riga in 2012 demonstrate that 67 % (72% in 2010) of the youth at the age of 15 – 16 have tried smoking cigarettes. During their lives 63% of the surveyed schoolchildren have smoked a hookah, 19% have sniffed tobacco while 14% have chewed tobacco. Compared to the details of 2010, only

one indicator has decreased, namely, 28% of the youth specified in 2010 that they have sniffed tobacco during their life. When the details of 2012 are compared to the results of the study of 2010, it is evident that overall the proportion of those schoolchildren that have used alcohol during their lives 40 or more times has decreased, namely, if in the survey of 2010 such an answer was provided by 31% of respondents then in 2012 it was 20%. The number of boys that tried marijuana has decreased as well: 23% in 2012, 30% in 2010, but the number of girls has remained unchanged: 16% in 2012, 16% in 2010. [28]

The ESPAD (European School Survey Project regarding Alcohol and Other Drugs) study performed in 2011 demonstrates that during recent years the distribution of use of various new drugs has become more topical in both Latvia and Riga, including the use of different herb mixtures or so-called synthetic drugs, for example Spice floral mixtures that have been tried most often by schoolchildren in Riga (16%). A generic system with basic formulas of psychoactive substances has been operating since December 2012 that will allow restricting the use of all substances included in these chemical groups. Amendments have been made to legal acts to prevent the distribution of such floral mixture drugs as Spice and to combat the places of trade in synthetic drugs. [29]

The DMF index (the total sum of decayed, missing, filled teeth against the number of patients) for permanent teeth of children at the age of 6 to 12 in Riga in 2011 was 0.6 and 2.9. The WHO recommendations suggest decreasing the DMF index to 1.5. [30]

The above discussion evidences that the prevention of use of substances causing addiction (alcohol, smoking and other addictive substances) among the youth should be continued by especially emphasising floral mixture drugs. Considering all the above factors, the directions of the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy foresee improving the knowledge of children, the youth and their parents about health and the factors affecting it as well as to perform the prevention of addictions.

Psychic health

Good psychic health of society is an essential precondition for developing a stable, safe and prosperous society. The number of listed patients with psychic and behavioural disorders in Riga in 2013 was 23,553 or 3,660.89 per 100,000 residents, with a trend of growth during recent years, but the number of newly listed patients was 2,426 or 377.01 per 100,000 residents. [20]

According to the study of habits affecting the health of residents of Latvia performed in 2012, during the recent month the most tension, stress or depression was felt in Riga by respondents of the age group from 55 to 64 (68% of men and 35% of women). The problem of suicide is still topical. A total of 443 suicides were committed in Latvia in 2012, moreover an increase in suicide indicators has been observed during the years of the financial crisis. Attempted suicides are performed by younger people (15 – 40 years old), but the indicators of completed suicides in 2012 are higher in the age groups after 45. The total number of

attempted suicides does not differ significantly between sexes; for men they end in death almost five times more often. [20]

Although suicide indicators in Riga have stayed below average in the country (the average indicator in the country is 21.8 per 100,000 residents), it is essential to perform preventive measures that direct the attention of residents to strengthening psycho-emotional health, including suicide prevention. Therefore one of the directions of activities in the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy provides for the performance of addiction and suicide prevention by acting in the fields of both universal and selective prevention to identify youth that are facing difficulties at school that may lead to drug use or committing suicide. [5; 24]

Specialists of the RCC Welfare Department provide information and effect addiction prevention and health promotion activities intended for children, youth and their families as well as for specialists. City children and youth that have daily difficulties in dividing their time between studies, free time and time at the computer, that are subject to the risk of starting to use intoxicating substances or for whom it is difficult to manage anger and other emotions are offered behavioural intervention groups. Specialists offer support groups for co-addicted that have faced an addiction problem in the family and that want to receive support, information and skills in solving these problems.

Infectious diseases

Distribution of infectious diseases is facilitated by lifestyle, social and economic factors, migration, drug use, unavailability of hygiene and prevention means, changes in climate, etc. The events of infectious diseases most listed in Latvia in 2013 were viral intestinal infections, 577.5 per 100,000 residents, including specified and non-specified intestinal infectious diseases. Contracting tuberculosis (see image 10), hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections is still topical. In 2013 in Riga there were 193, or 30.0 events per 100,000 residents, diagnosed events of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which is less than in 2012 when 224 events, or 34.6 events per 100,000 residents, were listed. [20]

To minimise the distribution of infectious diseases the directions of activities in the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy provide for promoting the prevention of infectious diseases by educating society and promoting the timely starting of treatment.

The RCC Welfare Department financially supports the DOTS (directly observed treatment, short-course) programme implemented by LLC Riga East University Hospital for tuberculosis outpatients having their declared place of residence within the administrative territory of Riga City, who administer the dose of medicines under the supervision of medical staff, by co-funding public transportation costs and the purchase of food for patients.

HIV prevention and psycho-social services for drug users and their contact persons have been provided in Riga since 2003 in both the premises of the association DIA+LOGS and in the minibus of the association in the Riga City suburbs that takes a defined route, visiting the places where injection drug users gather. [14]

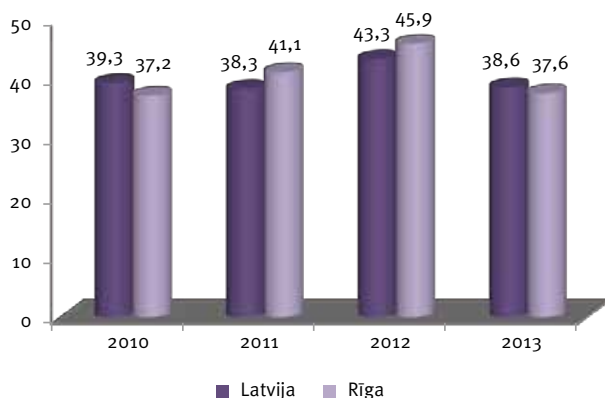


Image 10. Events of tuberculosis registered for the first time in Riga and Latvia per 100,000 residents in 2010 – 2013 [20]

Find out more:

- about tuberculosis on the website of the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control www.spkc.gov.lv/infekcijas-slimibas/252/tuberkuloze
- about the association DIA+LOGS at Dzirnavu street 135, Riga, LV-1050, on the website www.diacentrs.lv, telephone: (+371) 67243101.



A photograph from the anti-tobacco campaign “Switch from a Cigarette to an Apple!” organised by the RCC Welfare Department in 2014.

HEALTHCARE

Highly specialised healthcare services are concentrated in Riga City and are received not only by residents of Riga but by residents of the entire country and are provided by healthcare institutions that are state, local authority or private capital companies of the healthcare profile. According to the law “On Local Authorities” one of the permanent functions of local authorities is ensuring the availability of healthcare that is characterised by both the financial possibilities of residents and the possibilities to get to the healthcare institution. The provision of healthcare services paid for by the state is within the competence of the state.

According to the information provided by the National Health Service the outpatient healthcare services financed by the state are provided in Riga by 56 outpatient healthcare institutions that are evenly distributed throughout the territory of Riga (of those 4 are capital companies of the local authority and 5 are capital companies of the state, the outpatient sections of hospitals). A new capital company of the Riga local authority healthcare profile, LLC Riga Health Centre, which has been established by uniting 6 capital companies of the Riga local authority, has started operating as of 14 July 2014.

To receive healthcare services paid for by the state the residents must visit their family doctor/ primary healthcare practitioner. Vast multi-profile outpatient healthcare is provided in all of the largest hospital-type healthcare institutions, there is a wide range of specialist-consultants and diagnostic investigations available. In Riga in 2013, primary healthcare practitioner services in 104 operational locations were provided by 452 doctors that had 715,818 listed patients. [16]

There are 5 state hospital-type healthcare institutions in Riga City, 2 hospital-type healthcare institutions of the Riga local authority (RLA LLC Riga Maternity Hospital and RLA LLC Riga 2nd hospital) and several private hospital-type healthcare institutions.

Riga local authority has also provided for a certified general practitioner to work in the Riga Home Day Centre who services the low-income residents of Riga and persons without a specific place of residence. Therefore persons without a specific place of residence, if they do not have their family doctor, are also able to receive all the required healthcare services paid for by the state as well as medicinal products compensated by the state by registering with the doctor in the Riga Home Day Centre. [16]

Emergency medical assistance (EMA) is provided in Riga in 24-hour mode for residents in a condition critical to life and health, in the pre-hospital conditions on site and during transportation to the nearest EMA hospital, by the around-the-clock team of 41 persons of the EMA Service Riga Regional Centre that is structured in 4 team support centres (substations). EMA is provided at 11 emergency medical assistance points. 238,937 EMA

calls were performed by the Riga Regional Centre in 2013, including 172,075 calls in Riga City. The proportion of calls performed in a timely manner was 89%.

The performance tasks of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and the Riga Development Programme 2010 – 2013 goal “Family-orientated, active and healthy society” foresee improving the availability of healthcare.[13]

Find out more:

- about healthcare services paid for by the state and their providers, including family doctors, on the National Health Service website www.vmnvd.gov.lv or by calling the information Freephone 80001234, as well as by writing to the e-mail address: nvd@vmnvd.gov.lv;
- to receive medical consultations and advice outside of family doctor working hours on how to proceed in the events of acute illness or exacerbation of chronic disease, call the family doctor information number 66016001;
- in the event of accident, sudden health deterioration threatening health or life emergency medical assistance may be requested by calling 113;
- information about healthcare institutions where medical assistance paid for by the state may be received more quickly or easily may be learned on the website www.rindapiersta.lv.

Outpatient healthcare services funded by the state may be received in the territory of Riga City in the following capital companies of the Riga local authority (LLC):

- LLC Riga Health Centre www.rigasveseliba.lv:
 - branch Ilģuciems; www.ilguciemapoliklinika.lv telephone: (+371) 67468292;
 - branch Ķengarags; www.bvckengarags.lv telephone: (+371) 67250607;
 - branch Torņakalns; www.tornakalnapoliklinika.lv telephone: (+371) 67612274;
 - branch Imanta; www.vcimanta.lv telephone: (+371) 67410952;
 - branch Bolderāja; www.bolderajaspoliklinika.lv telephone: (+371) 67433278;
 - branch Ziepniekkalns; www.ziepniekkalns.lv telephone: (+371) 67677515.
- RLA LLC Riga 1st hospital; www.1slimnica.lv telephone: (+371) 67366323;
- RLA LLC Riga 2nd hospital; www.slimnica.lv telephone: (+371) 67614033;
- RLA LLC Riga Maternity Hospital; www.rdn.lv telephone: (+371) 67011225.

ENVIRONMENT

Quality of the environment directly affects human health, working abilities and welfare. It is formed by air quality, potable water and bathing water quality as well as noise pollution, etc.

Air quality

Good air quality is an especially topical issue in urban territories where active economic operations are underway: production, construction as well as intensive transport flow is evident.

Air pollution monitoring is performed in Riga on both a national (background pollution in the city) and local authority (in streets with intensive traffic and production-affected territories) level. Thresholds set forth for dust (particles PM₁₀) are exceeded in the centre of Riga, there is also periodically high nitrogen dioxide concentrations in streets with intensive traffic (Kr.Valdemāra, Brīvības, Valmieras, Marijas – Čaka streets). [32]

Air quality has been included on both the task and indicator level in the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025, within the goal “Clean and green city”. Activities for nitrogen dioxide and dust pollution minimisation to improve air quality in Riga City have been planned in the Riga City Air Quality Improvement Action Programme 2011 – 2015, for example, optimisation of transport flows is being continued to minimise pollution, regular cleaning of streets is performed by using dust suction equipment (especially in the spring season), air quality aspects are considered when choosing fuel, etc. [8; 33]

Find out more:

- about the air quality monitoring places, indicators and air quality in Riga City on the RCC Housing and Environment Department website www.mvd.riga.lv.

Potable water quality

Quality and safe available water with acceptable organoleptic properties is one of the most important factors for the comfort and wellness of people. Temporary, relatively insignificant deviations from the defined concentration limits do not mean that water is not usable. A threat to health may be caused by the prolonged use of water containing some chemical substance in a concentration threatening human health. LLC Rīgas ūdens regularly controls potable water quality in the Riga City centralised water-pipe distribution network. The daily average volume of water supplied by LLC Rīgas ūdens in 2011 is 120,173 m³, but the total number of water users in Riga is 664,840. Access to centralised water supply services is currently provided for approximately 97% of all residents. Residents that do not have access to the centralised water supply services get water from shallow underground water wells. [34]

Quality of water produced and supplied to the city during the period from 2008 to 2011 meets the requirements of the European Union Directive. An exception is made for water from preparation stations in the Baltezers district and the city water-pipe network, where concentrations of iron and manganese have been above the norm, however correspond to the special norms for iron and manganese content (0.4 and 0.2 mg/l respectively). LLC Rīgas ūdens offers residents of Riga free access to potable water meeting the quality standards in public places in the city: Volei 11a; Krēmeri behind building No. 8; Rātslaukums 1 (Roland's Statue); Kaķasēkļa dambis 22; Jūrmalas gatve 133; Kundziņsala 15. line/9 šķērslīnija. Residents and guests of the city use these free places of access to water intensively during the hot summer months. [35]

Performance tasks of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and the Riga Development Programme 2010 – 2013 goal “Green city with a good quality environment” provide for supplying residents of the city with potable water meeting European Union standards. In the LLC Rīgas ūdens Strategic Development Plan for 2012 – 2025 developed in 2011 it is planned to achieve the iron and magnesium level set forth in the standard by implementing the project “Construction of a water preparation station in Baltezers” (2013 – 2014) within the Cohesion Fund project “Development of water management in Riga, 4th round”. To improve the general condition of the existing water supply and sewerage networks and safety of water management, a water supply and sewerage network renovation plan was elaborated that has been included in the LLC Rīgas ūdens Strategic Development Plan for 2012 – 2025, which was developed in 2011. [35; 44]

Find out more:

- about the quality of potable water available in Riga as well as to announce water-pipe damage and view the topical map of damage, on the LLC Rīgas ūdens website www.rigasudens.lv. Information about the services of LLC Rīgas ūdens may be received in the Customer Service Centres.

Bathing water quality

One of the most essential environmental factors that may affect the health of holidaymakers and swimmers is bathing water quality. Polluted water may cause different diseases to people. Sources of water pollution include insufficiently treated plant waste waters, agricultural waste waters, leaks from dump-sites and household waste waters. [36]

There were four places for swimming in Riga in 2011: Daugavgrīva, Bābelīte, Vecāķu Beach, and Vakarbuļļu Beach. According to the bathing water monitoring performed by the Health Inspectorate in 2011 the overall microbiological quality in the Daugavgrīva and Bābelīte swimming places is good, the quality of Vakarbuļļu Beach was assessed as excellent and it was awarded the Blue Flag certificate. The overall microbiological quality on the Vecāķu beaches was assessed as bad (low). Although Riga is rich in surface water resources, the availability of places for swimming may be considered insufficient with respect to the possibilities for developing such. It is planned to develop new places for swimming in the territory of Riga City, for example, it is planned to include the Lucavsala place for swimming in the official list of places for swimming. [36; 44]

One of the performance tasks of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and of the draft Riga Development Programme 2014 – 2020 goal “Convenient and safe urban environment pleasant for residents” provides for the protection of bathing water resources. [44]

Find out more:

- to enable the timely prevention of a possible threat to the environment, it is possible to report the observed damage caused to the environment or pollution on the RCC Housing and Environment Department website www.mvd.riga.lv, telephone 67012453;
- the most topical information about bathing water quality on the Health Inspectorate website www.vi.gov.lv, section “Bathing water monitoring”.

Green zones of the urban environment

The role of parks and green zones in urban environment development is often not estimated sufficiently. Parks and gardens may serve several purposes: aesthetics, recreation, as a place of rest for children and adults, etc. Almost one third (24.44%) of the territory of Riga is occupied by greenery and nature territories. The local authority owns 38 gardens and parks and 67 small public gardens in the territory of Riga. There is one nature park in the territory of Riga, Piejūra, and 3 restricted nature areas (Vecdaugava, Jaunciems and Krēmeri). More than 900 secular trees of national and local importance are attributed to the natural monuments in Riga. 11 micro-restricted areas have been developed in Riga. Specially protected nature territories occupy 1,858.18 ha or 6.05% of the territory of Riga City. Nature protection plans have been developed for all protected territories in Riga City. [8; 33]

The tasks of direction of activities of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and of the Riga Development Programme 2014 – 2020 goal “Convenient and safe urban environment pleasant for residents” provide for ensuring the effective management and arrangement of nature, greenery and recreation territories in the city as well as maintaining biological diversity in Riga. One of the long-term development goals of LLC Riga forests is maintaining, caring for and improving garden, park and greenery territories in Riga to provide for a high value and aesthetic level of urban environment as well as to maintain and arrange natural, cultural and historic objects and recreation places significant for the public. [44; 45]

Find out more:

- about the green zones in Riga City and their locations on the RCC City Development Department website www.apkaimes.lv;
- about activities offered by LLC Riga forests on the website www.rigasmezi.lv;
- about locations of playgrounds in Riga City on the RCC website www.riga.lv, section Playgrounds.

Waste

Waste coming into the environment contaminates soil, ground waters and the atmosphere resulting in affecting environmental health. Residents of the city themselves are responsible for maintaining a viable environment for themselves and next generations, therefore it is topical to minimise the amount of waste. Approximately one third of all residents of Latvia resides in Riga, but they produce approximately 40% of all household waste produced in the country. One resident of Riga generates on average 448 kg or 2.24 m³ of waste per annum. A large portion of waste is formed by household waste, but relatively there is a lot of construction waste, hazardous household waste and healthcare waste. [40]

Waste sorting and its selective recycling is one of the most effective ways to minimise the amount of waste and it should be considered as a driving force for positive trends in waste management development in Riga. A part of the household waste generated in the city is collected in a sorted way: paper/cardboard, PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles and plastic as well as glass. ~3200 containers for sorted household waste have been installed for the needs of residents in Riga for household waste sorting. The amount of sorted waste in Riga in 2010 reached 40,445 thousand tonnes and an increase of this indicator is evident with respect to previous years. If no containers for waste sorting are available in the neighbourhood, the resident should require his house manager to install such. [41]

Riga City household waste is mainly stored in Getliņi landfill. Getliņi ecological landfill takes care of waste collection and ecological management throughout the Riga waste management district. Waste that is not possible to recycle is stored in environmentally safe, closed bio-degrading cells with no access of air or storm water. The landfill gas that is formed in the cells is transferred to the Getliņi energy block, burned there and turned into electric and thermal energy, but all waste waters are collected and treated. Heat produced in the energy block is used for heating the Getliņi greenhouses by providing a beneficial environment for agricultural production, and a sheep flock takes care to ensure the grass on the landfill does not overgrow. [42]

Basic priorities set forth in the Riga City Waste Management Plan for 2006 – 2012 were defined as waste amount minimisation (by collecting and managing in a sorted manner as much as possible), safe waste storage, waste accounting and control improvement and providing for quality services to the residents. In turn, one of the tasks of the Riga Environment Programme for 2011 – 2017 provides for facilitating the development of the waste management system. [40; 43]

Find out more:

- more information about waste sorting and recycling on the RCC Housing and Environment Department website www.mvd.riga.lv, section Waste;
- about waste, its sorting and recycling on the websites www.atkritumi.lv, www.zalajosta.lv, www.zalais.lv, www.cukmens.lv

Environmental noise

Environmental noise means undesired or hazardous noise outside the premises that may adversely affect human health. Environmental noise is caused as a result of activities of people (including the noise resulting from road, railway and air traffic as well as industrial activities). The noise level at night is substantial as it may cause sleeping disorders, including insomnia, and increase in medicinal product consumption. [37]

The principal sources of noise in Riga City are road traffic (arterial streets), railway and tram traffic and the airport. Upon studying environmental noise contamination it should be concluded that in 2008 39% of residents in Riga were subjected to more noise at night than admissible (the norm is 55Db(A)). [8]

To implement environmental noise minimisation activities the local authority has elaborated the Noise Prevention Action Plan that has been integrated into the Riga Territory Plan for 2006 – 2018. Minimising the speed of movement and the construction of anti-noise screens and greenery belts along the sources of noise, as well as other activities, are planned to minimise noise. Riga agglomeration strategic noise maps have been developed, where the noise level from various constant sources at different times of the day has been determined. [39]

Find out more:

- For information on noise maps of Riga City that reflect the level of noises generated by various sources (traffic, industry, etc.) – visit the section *vide, trokšņu kartes* (environment, noise maps) of the RCC Housing and Environment Department website www.mvd.riga.lv.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The number of passengers transported in 2013 reached 150.1 million. The number of passengers has increased by 6.2% compared to 2012 when a total of 141,371,668 passengers were transported by public transport. [46]

To provide convenient, safe and comfortable public transport for passengers and to increase the number of passengers, comfortable low-floor buses, trolleybuses and trams adjusted to persons with functional disorders, pregnant women and persons with small children have been purchased as provided for by the Riga City Public Transport Development Concept for 2005–2018 and the guidelines of the Riga City Electric Transport Development Concept for 2004 – 2018, and external legal acts. The number of public transport vehicles adjusted for those persons with special needs against the number of public transport vehicles in use has been gradually increasing since 2008 and in 2013 it was 74%. [46]



Source: Riga City Council Traffic Department Yearbook 2011

Walking and cycling are types of movement that positively affect human health and minimise traffic jams and environmental pollution. Moving around on a bicycle is actively promoted and facilitated in Riga City. The length of bicycle roads constructed in Riga by 2014 is almost 44 km (see image 12). [48] 15 bicycle routes were arranged by 2013, which one can research in a leaflet specially developed for this purpose. [46]

Improving bicycle transport infrastructure and modernising the transport system must be continued, including adjusting the transport for people with limited movement disorders, and minimising noise and air contamination caused by transport.

For the purpose of increasing traffic safety the RCC Traffic Department has elaborated the action programme of the Riga City Traffic Safety White Book for Improving Traffic Infrastructure (2010 – 2014). An action programme for increasing traffic safety in Riga has been developed based on the Riga City Development Plan for 2006 – 2018, the Road Traffic Safety National Programme for 2007 – 2013 and the European Road Safety Charter. [48]

Image 12. Existing and prospective bicycle routes in Riga.



Source: Riga City Council Traffic Department

Find out more:

- information about fare discounts on the RCC Traffic Department website www.rdsd.lv;
- information about public transport movement, routes and timing on the LLC Rīgas satiksme website www.rigassatiksme.lv. Information Freephone **80001919**;
- damaged streetlights, road signs, obstacles on the road may be reported to the RCC Traffic Department Traffic Management Centre Freephone **80003600**;
- the RCC Traffic Department has developed the information material about 15 route maps with objects of interest. The material is available also electronically on the website www.rdsd.lv, section Riga Bicycle Guide.

SAFETY AND ORDER

Safety is one of the basic needs of people. The definition of safety includes several factors, but the most essential ones are the crime level and safety on the roads. There is 1 member of Municipal Police staff per 1,880 residents working in Riga on average per day. [49]

In 2013 the Riga Municipal Police Duty Desk answered 60,888 calls of residents, which is 20.5 % more than in 2012. Noise generated by neighbours or adjacent entertainment institutions is a topical problem. According to the information in the Riga Municipal Police Annual Report the applications of persons received in 2013 were most often regarding making noise – 1,255 applications, which is however less than during the previous year 2012 when 1,287 applications were received. The most often registered administrative violations in 2013 were regarding open packages of alcohol, being in the state of alcohol intoxication, residing in the Republic of Latvia without a declared place of residence and residing in the Republic of Latvia without a personal identification document. [49]

1,922 administrative violations by minors were recorded in 2013. 3,960 preventive discussions were held with minors and their parents. Most often the violations are smoking, holding packages of alcohol and their use, presence in the street unaccompanied by adults at night, etc. Significant attention must be paid to minimising juvenile delinquency by both continuing the prevention of breach of law by children and promoting the useful spending of free time. [49]

In terms of taking care of order and safety in city streets, patrolling work has been provided for and maintenance of the city video surveillance system is continued. 1,896 violations were registered by the video surveillance centre in 2013. The number of criminal offences per 10,000 residents in Riga in 2010 was 317; during recent years a decrease of this indicator is evident. [8; 49]

Arranging of the environment and lighting play a significant role. Different criminal offences are committed in the city in unarranged, overgrown and degraded places, in slums. Therefore it is essential to put the territories of such a kind in order. [8]

In 2013 the number of traffic accidents within the city limits was 7,970. The number of people injured in traffic accidents in 2013 was 1,730, which is more than in 2012 (see image 13). A total of 1,516 people suffered and 25 died in traffic accidents in 2013; compared to previous years the number of fatalities has decreased but a trend of increase in the number of traffic accidents is evident. [50]

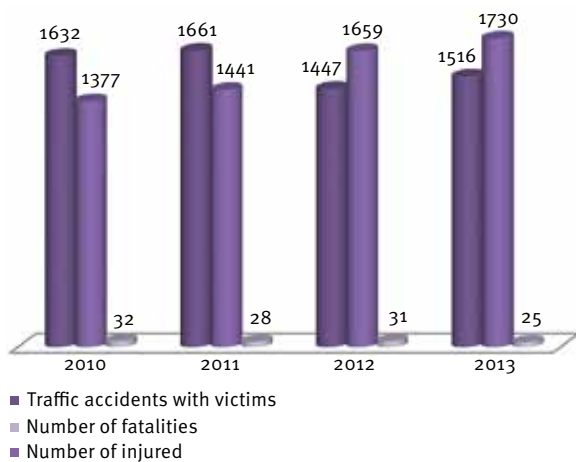


Image 13. Distribution of traffic accidents in Riga in 2010-2013. [50]

According to the results of the study of habits affecting the health of residents of Latvia performed in 2010, of all the respondents residing in Riga, the traffic rules are almost always complied with by women in the age group of 25 – 34, with the least being by men of the same age group (see image 14). [21]

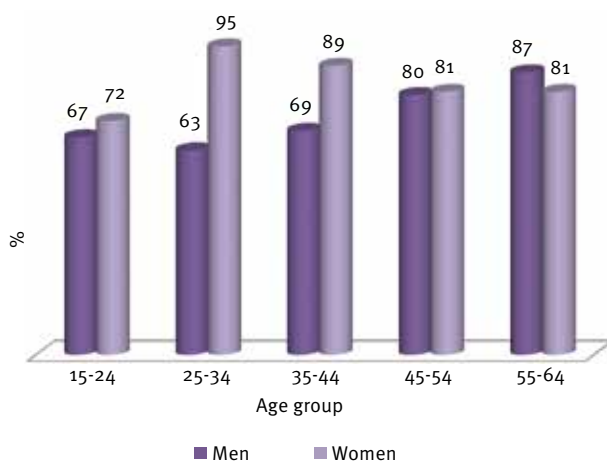


Image 14. Proportion of respondents in Riga City that always comply with the traffic rules, in demographic groups (%). [21]

The results of the survey within the study regarding the safety situation in Riga performed in 2010 demonstrate that residents of Riga feel safest while at home, but least safe when walking in the neighbourhood of their place of residence and generally being outside. Residents of Riga are worried about the possibility that they may become victims of crime. Most of all residents of the city are worried that their dwelling could be robbed, that they may suffer in a traffic accident because of aggressive drivers or that they could be robbed in the street or suffer from a physical assault by unknown persons. [51]

One of the goals of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and the Riga Development Programme for 2014 – 2020 is a “Convenient and safe urban environment pleasant for residents” that is aimed at promoting safety in the streets (for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers) and public safety (working environment, criminal situation, etc.). One of the directions of action in the Riga City local authority Public Health Strategy is also improving the knowledge of children, the youth and their parents about safety at home and in public places. [41]

Find out more:

- about topicalities, information and advice on safety at home and in public places on the Riga Municipal Police website www.rpp.riga.lv. RMP trust telephone (+371) 67037555;
- on the State Police website www.vp.gov.lv;
- on the Road Traffic Safety Directorate website www.csdd.lv.



Residents' level of education determines the choice of a healthy lifestyle to a large extent. Pre-school education is the first stage of education where the multi-faceted individuality of the child is formed, health is strengthened and the child gets prepared to master principal education. There are 155 general-type and special pre-schools in Riga in 2014.

In the 2012/2013 academic year there were 152 pre-school educational institutions with a number of pupils amounting to 26,700 (see image 25). In Riga in 2011, 60.7% of pre-school age children were attending pre-school educational institutions compared to 53.8% in 2010. Activities for improvement of the Riga City local authority pre-school educational institution network were continued in 2011 resulting in the provision of availability of pre-school education to 549 more children in 2011. Riga City local authority will try to provide for new places in pre-schools in the future as well. [8; 52]

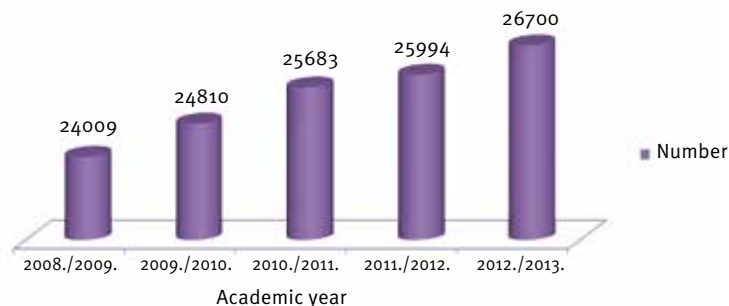


Image 25. *Number of pupils in pre-school educational institutions in Riga in 2008 – 2013. [52]*

In the 2012/2013 academic year there were 119 schools in Riga where learning had been started by 64,951 pupils. During the recent four years the number of pupils in Riga has decreased. A decline in the number of pupils is expected during the next years as well. The decline in the number of pupils is related to the demographic situation and emigration of residents as well as to the development of professional education. Both due to a decline in the number of pupils and for the purpose of promoting an increase in the quality of education, school network improvement has been ongoing in Riga for several years already. [52]

In the 2012/2013 academic year a total of 69,783 trainees were involved in interest educational programmes in Riga, 29,831 of them in interest educational institutions, 600 in sports educational institutions, but 39,352 in interest sections at schools. There were 11 sports schools with 7,017 trainees in Riga in the 2012/2013 academic year. [52]

Each academic year the local authority co-funds children's and youth camps; 36 camps were supported in the summer of 2014. A healthy lifestyle is promoted in the camps as well and various physical activities are organised there. [52]

In the 2013/2014 academic year there were 24 free time centres operating in Riga, where children and the youth may spend their free time in a useful manner. Attendance of the centres demonstrates their large popularity: the number of visitors in 2010 was 93,000 and in 2011 it was 111,600. Results of the survey of residents of Riga "Indicators of satisfaction of residents of Riga with the local authority" of 2012 demonstrate that 51% of respondents positively assessed the possibilities for children to participate in special sections and amateur performance teams (choirs, dance groups, etc.), and this number, compared to the surveys of the previous two years, has increased. In the survey of 2012 the possibilities for children to participate in special sections and amateur performance teams was assessed best by the respondents in Ziemeļu District, 64.8%, but the worst in Kurzemes District and Zemgales Suburb, 46.4% of respondents. [22; 52]

One of the goals of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and the Riga Development Programme 2010 – 2013 is an "Educated and skilful society", where one of the performance tasks provides for ensuring the availability of general education (including pre-school and special educational institutions) and the variety of quality educational programmes according to the needs of society, ensuring the development of interest education and the availability of free time spending possibilities to children and the youth as well as promoting education throughout life. [8]

School is the most cost-effective means for improving the health and economic condition and facilitating the development of children and the youth. School is able to reach the youth during a critical age for development when a particular lifestyle is formed and developed under the influence of the school, teachers, friends, parents and others. Therefore the Riga City local authority Health Council has promoted the introduction of the Health Promoting Educational Institution Initiative in the local authority. 7 educational institutions responded to the introduction of this initiative in 2014 (Riga Secondary School No. 80, Riga Secondary School No. 40, Riga Centre Humanitarian Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 84, Riga Annīmuižas Secondary School, Riga Teikas Secondary School and Juglas Secondary School).

Find out more:

- about the topicalities for pupils, parents and teachers, about educational institutions in the Riga local authority on the RCC Education, Culture and Sports Department website www.e-skola.lv;
- about the professional improvement of teachers of educational institutions, methodological work of teachers of schools of general education, study subject Olympics and competitions as well as the life-long educational process in Riga City on the Riga Education and Informative and Methodological Centre website www.riimc.lv.

Culture is an essential factor in characterising a healthy city. The city offers vast opportunities for getting involved in cultural events and participating in amateur art groups and sections. In 2014 Riga was granted the status of Cultural Capital of Europe and cultural organisations of Latvia and partners of the foundation Riga 2014 were involved in the organisation of a variety of events. A vast and diverse range of cultural events was included in the programme of events for 2014: world-level Latvian artists performed in Riga; all operas of Richard Wagner's cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung* as well as the opera *Rienzi* were staged; several events of an international scale took place including the World Choir Olympics that involved 20,000 singers from all over the world, and the European Movie Academy Award Ceremony. Therefore 2014 has not just been a year of new impressions for the residents of Riga and its guests, but also a year of possibilities for both Riga City and its businessmen. [47]

Results of the survey of residents of Riga "Indicators of satisfaction of residents of Riga with the local authority" of 2012 demonstrate that the most recognition was provided by the respondents to cultural events; overall 89.6 % were satisfied with these, but comparatively in the survey performed in 2010 they were 83.3% and in 2008 they were 76.2%. Those residents that noted that they are not satisfied with cultural events in Riga specified the expensive tickets (28.9 %), uniform, low quality and uninteresting events (11.2 %) as well as that everything takes place in the city centre with few events in the neighbourhoods (9.3 %) as the main reasons for dissatisfaction. [22; 41]

Performance tasks of the Riga Long-Term Development Strategy up to 2025 and one of the goals of the Riga Development Programme 2010 – 2013, Creative and European city with a highly value cultural life, provide for ensuring the balanced availability of cultural services to all residents of Riga, organising cultural events of local and international importance, supporting cultural variety and promoting the creative spending of free time by residents, etc.

Find out more:

- about the scheduled cultural events in Riga on the RRC Education, Culture and Sports Department website www.kultura.riga.lv;
- about the tourism possibilities in Riga, plan of events (concerts, theatres, museums, exhibitions, sports, entertainment, etc.) for both residents and guests of Riga on the Riga Tourism Development Bureau website www.liveriga.com.lv;
- about the cultural events taking place in the Riga Dome Church on the website www.doms.lv;
- about the history of Riga and places to see on the Cita Rīga website www.citariga.lv.
- about Riga as a Cultural Capital of Europe and the related events on www.riga2014.org.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The number of the population in Riga is decreasing; although the migration balance in Riga is positive, the natural reproduction increase is negative, and thus the proportion of older people above working age is increasing. To facilitate the improvement of the demographic situation in the city, the development of family as a value should be promoted and the increase of births should be facilitated. The older population should be provided with a suitable environment and possibilities for active, healthy old days, including knowledge and living skills for growing old healthily both mentally and physically.
2. The main causes of death (HCD, oncology, external causes of death) may be influenced with preventive measures, therefore it is essential to facilitate the formation of healthy lifestyle habits and their strengthening in the population.
3. Residents of Riga are subject to a high suicide risk, therefore it is required to take preventive measures that direct the attention of residents to strengthening psycho-emotional health, including educating in recognising symptoms of mental diseases as well as suicide risk factor prevention.
4. There is a growing proportion of children and youth in Riga who have excess body mass and obesity, bad cavity health condition as well as there are large numbers of smoking children and youth and those who have tried alcohol and drugs, therefore it is required to continue improving the knowledge of children, the youth and their parents about health and the factors influencing it as well as an environment should be developed where making a healthy choice is easy and available. To strengthen the knowledge and skills of pupils and school staff in issues related to health promotion, the participation of schools in the Health Promoting Educational Institution Initiative should be effected and promoted.
5. There is still a high incidence of infectious diseases like HIV and tuberculosis, therefore it is important to continue supporting the DOTS programme that is implemented in Riga as well as the availability of HIV prevention and psycho-social services to drug users and their contact persons.
6. Riga City local authority provides for the availability of healthcare services, however attention should be paid to the increasing proportion of primary healthcare doctors working in Riga that have reached the age of retirement, wherewith certain lack of resources of doctors may threaten in future.

7. The main indicators influencing environmental health are the quality of air, water and green zones of the urban environment. Air quality should be characterised critically (dust, nitrogen dioxide), wherewith it is essential to continue the performance of the activities set forth in the air quality improvement action plan.

8. Upon developing the traffic infrastructure of the city the promotion of safety should be continued both on the roads and while being in the vehicle as well as the adjustment of the environment and transport for people with movement disorders. To promote a healthy lifestyle and physical activities of residents, special attention should be devoted on a daily basis to developing and maintaining the bicycle traffic infrastructure.

9. In 2013 Riga Municipal Police recorded 1,922 administrative violations by minors (smoking, using alcohol and being in the street unaccompanied by adults at night, etc.), which indicated the need to pay attention to minimising juvenile delinquency by continuing the prevention of violations of law by children and by promoting the meaningful spending of free time.

10. In Riga in 2011, 60.7% of children of pre-school age attended pre-school educational institutions; to increase the proportion of attending children, it is essential to continue the improvement of the pre-school educational institution network, increasing its availability in Riga City.

11. Satisfaction of residents with cultural events in Riga has increased, however expensive tickets, the quality of events and the lack of events in the neighbourhoods were mentioned as reasons for dissatisfaction. To strengthen the activity of residents and their participation in cultural events the provision of availability of balanced cultural services and the creative spending of free time should be continued for all residents of the city.

12. Riga City local authority is developing inter-sector cooperation in public health and integrating the health term into all sectors by developing the consciousness that every sector and the decisions taken by it affect the health of the population. For Riga to continue improving its potential of a healthy city, the participation of Riga in the WHO European Healthy City Network and the Latvian National Healthy Local Government Network should be continued.

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