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Social

## **Ministerial visit to Bocholt: care must "organise itself**

### **NRW Health Minister Laumann speaks at discussion event in Bocholt // Concerns, but also opportunities // Facilities present themselves in Bocholt city centre on Friday**

When "long-term care" is discussed in Germany, the talk quickly turns to a state of emergency and collapse. It is already clear today that the issue will gain in importance like an avalanche in the foreseeable future when the baby boomers reach senior age. What is to be done? A discussion event was held in Bocholt. Prominent political guest was NRW Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann.

He discussed with experts from local care services and facilities in the Stadtparkasse Bocholt. The senior citizens' advisory council of the city of Bocholt had invited 150 listeners.

Staff shortages, bureaucracy, slow digitalisation, image problems - Laumann listened attentively and showed understanding for the concerns and hardships that were described to him by specialist services and caring relatives from practice.

Monika Niermann, for example. She looks back on decades of professional experience as a carer and also knows the role of a carer in her own family. Her impression: "Caring relatives are often overburdened - sometimes I don't know who is sicker: the person to be cared for or the person who is supposed to care." The relief provided by outpatient services is therefore important.

The topic of appreciation: nursing professions suffer from an image problem. It is not easy to recruit new staff. Michaela Schneider, managing director of the outpatient care service "wohnhof": "Say 'I'm a carer' as a 19-year-old in your circle of friends - it's not cool. Yet care is multifaceted and has to do with many emotional moments." Her conclusion: "We have to show more backbone, need more lobby - but we also have to do more ourselves."

Frank Heßling, Director of Nursing at the Kardinal Diepenbrock-Stift, reported on this. He said that schools were being visited to arouse curiosity about the profession and to recruit trainees. Advertising via social media is important, but: "You have to experience nursing yourself to see if it can be something for someone professionally," was the conviction of Ingo Jansen, Nursing Director at Klinikum Westmünsterland.

At the same time, it is important to recruit nursing staff abroad. Addressing Laumann, the experts wished for less bureaucracy and faster recognition procedures. Digitalisation could also save unnecessary effort.

For Minister Laumann it was clear: "We need professional staff, we also need the caring relatives such as family, neighbourhood, friends in parallel." Laumann sees a main problem in the lack of organisation of "care". "Wherever decisions are made about care, care is not at the table. We have to change that. Care must organise itself better, because otherwise care will be determined by others. Care should represent its concerns as an independent profession and be there for the well-being of people on an equal footing with other different professions."

The event began with an interview with Mayor Thomas Kerkhoff. "We have to take more care of the people who provide care," he was convinced. Recognition plays an important role in this, he said. Raimund Stroick moderated the evening with charm and wit despite the serious topic.

## Event on Friday

Next Friday is the "International Day of Care". Various facilities and services will then present themselves to the public in Bocholt's city centre between 10 am and 4 pm. "Giving care a face" is the motto on this day.



*NRW Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann (2nd from right) discusses the topic of care with experts from Bocholt.  
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*NRW Minister of Health Karl-Josef Laumann (r.) and Mayor Thomas Kerkhoff at the discussion event on "Care" in Bocholt.*

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