

# FORUM

The Stiegelmeyer-Group's company magazine



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## **Fascinating insights into bed assembly in the Herford "Hub"**

**A care bed is always a very personal aid. Residents have different needs, nursing homes have different colour concepts, nursing staff prefer different ways of operating them. At Stiegelmeyer, hardly one order in the care bed segment is the same as another. Nevertheless, for short delivery times and a good price-performance ratio, it is important that the beds are assembled quickly according to standardised procedures. This is exactly what the "hub" in Herford has been enabling since May 2021.**

The "hub" is a main handling base and is one of those provisional project names that stay forever. It refers to assembly halls for putting together our care beds, especially the Elvido, Venta and Libra models. The FORUM team took a look at the assembly together with the Herford production manager Felix Leßmann.

The basic principle of the Hub is that no components are manufactured here, but finished components are assembled. The metal frames of the beds come from our Polish plants in Stolno and Kepno, the wooden surrounds from our German wood production in Nordhausen in Thuringia. In a way, the assembly hall resembles a supermarket: the assembler pushes the bed through the wide aisles, picks up what he needs along the way and adds it to the frame piece by piece.



Before this journey can begin, however, the metal frame must first be fitted with the desired equipment. To do this, the men use a crane to swing the frame from a large stack onto a lifting platform and first scan the barcode on the shipping label. Immediately, the entire configuration of this particular bed is visible on a monitor. "We use this code to track the bed through the entire production process," explains Felix Leßmann. "At each station, we see which work steps are still pending and which special features are requested."



After scanning the barcode, the entire configuration of the bed is visible on the monitor.

The Elvido, which the assemblers have just swung onto the lifting platform, is given a homelike chassis cover here at the first station. In addition, the paired castor brakes are extended to a central castor locking system with the help of additional mechanics.

Once the metal frame is completely configured, it rolls off the lifting platform and is handed over to the next colleague. The latter now pushes the bed through the aforementioned "shopping aisle", appropriately holding a "shopping list" in his hand on which all the required wooden components are noted. On the right-hand side of the path, all the components that the assembler will need in the coming days are already provided. So he doesn't have to search through the total of 650 possible wooden components stored on the left side of the path.



The Elvido on its way through the assembly line.

In the case of our Elvido, the fitter starts with the headboard and footboard in the natural beech decor and screws them both on with practised hand movements. "Of course, we love the bed orders with our Vario Safe system, where the wooden elements are simply clicked on without tools, explains Mr Leßmann. "But the few screws here are no trouble either."

The safety sides and mattress base follow, and after a few minutes the bed is ready. 70 to 80 beds of the Elvido family are assembled per day in a two-shift operation. In addition, 40 to 50 Libras are assembled in another hall. Eleven employees are involved in the assembly.

The finished bed is briefly stored in a buffer zone before the final inspection. At the latest here, enthusiasm

risers in the FORUM team. It's unbelievable what a wealth of shapes and colours our customers order! The stored beds glow in the sun-bright Magnolia décor, radiate the rich cosiness of the dark brown Bella Noce Choco or exude the practicality of the angular-grained Elme Baron Truffle. In the background, a bed rolls by whose coffered-look headboards have never been pictured in a catalogue before: "That's for France," says Mr Leßmann. Stieglmeyer really does make wishes come true.



A beautiful sight: Libra care beds in the elegant Magnolia decor.

But the most beautiful cosiness only makes you happy if the bed also functions perfectly – and that is what the colleagues check during the final inspection. In parallel, the beds are thoroughly checked again at three test stations. The employees carry out a leakage current measurement, register all electrical components in the unlikely event of a recall, move to all adjustment positions and test the stability of the safety sides. A final check is made to ensure that the configuration is correct. Then the assembly is completed and the shipping begins.



During the final inspection, the entire bed is thoroughly checked once again.

Before the beds travel to their places of use, they are first cleaned and provided with all the required technical labels. If customers have ordered accessories, e.g. a battery, an under-bed light or an Out-of-Bed system, these are attached or enclosed. If possible, the beds are arranged in stacks of two on top of each other to save space in the truck. A lifting platform is used to move the beds up to the loading ramp, where the truck has already docked during our visit.

"The beds are securely packed and strapped in the truck," explains Felix Leßmann. In the nursing home sector, smaller quantities are often ordered, so the truck picks up and distributes the freight for several homes. Logistics at Stieglmeyer therefore has to plan wisely in order to achieve our goal of sustainability: the shortest possible distances and the lowest possible emissions.



Cleaned and packed, the care beds are waiting to be loaded.

Our tour from the first Elvido station to the loading ramp took less than half an hour. Ideally, a bed arrives at the ramp every 15 minutes, Mr Leßmann explains. The "hub" and its staff have convinced us all around. They work quickly and efficiently, but at the same time thoroughly and with joy and humour.