



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Strategy

# Jobs Strategy for People with Disabilities

Annex to bill brought before Parliament, Proposition to Stortinget 1 S (2011–2012) – National Budget 2012







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# 1. Foreword

The right to work is fundamental for participation in society. The Norwegian Government's aim is to achieve a more inclusive labour market. The vision is a labour market accessible to everyone capable of working. The purpose of the Jobs Strategy is to realise this vision.

A key goal under the tripartite agreement between the Government and the social partners towards a More Inclusive Working Life (the IA Agreement) is to increase the employability of people with disabilities. So far this goal has not been reached. According to Statistics Norway, in 2011, 78,000 disabled people were looking for work. 22,000 of these were under 30 years of age. The employment rate for this group has been low even during economic upturns with high demand for labour. Accordingly, new labour market instruments must be tested and existing efforts must be intensified.

The aim is for more people with disabilities to enter the labour market. The benefits of achieving this will be many and varied: it will improve the financial independence and living conditions of the individual; it will also enable society at large and enterprises to make better use of the skills and labour resources which people with disabilities represent; and enterprises also stand to benefit from having employees with diversified backgrounds and experience in life.

In this strategy, the Government has decided to concentrate on people with disabilities under 30 years of age who need support in order to gain employment. Giving priority to young people is informed by the principle that a good start in working life is the best foundation for a long and

rewarding career. The focus is consequently on young people in the transition between education and working life. The various initiatives should also serve to counteract early retirement from the labour market on a disability pension. Proposed initiatives for 2012 are designed to reduce the obstacles and barriers currently faced by job-seekers, in order to improve their prospects on the labour market.

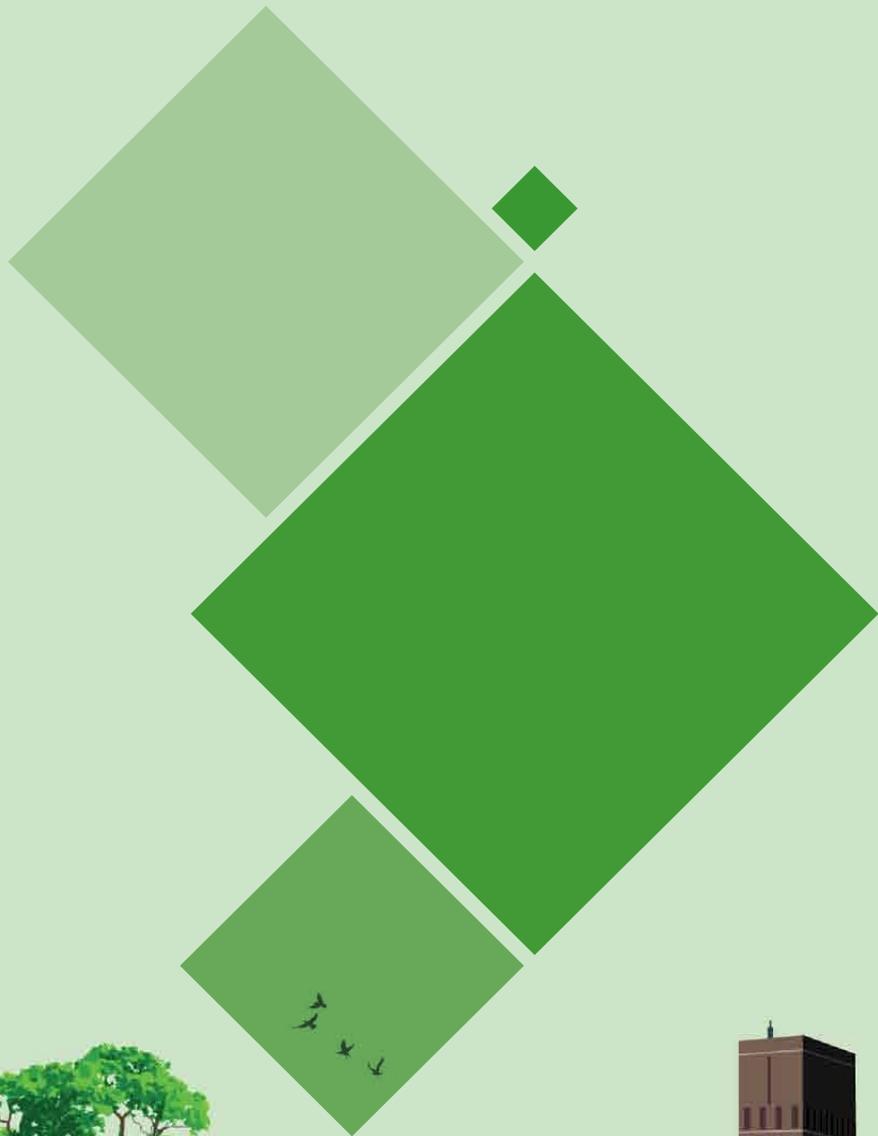
The Jobs Strategy demonstrates the Government's integrated approach to IA efforts.

In order to increase the employability of young people with disabilities, a wide array of initiatives and schemes must be employed. Work on the Jobs Strategy has been widely informed by discussions with the National Disability Council of Norway and *between the ministries*. Two panels have been commissioned to submit proposals for initiatives: a panel of representatives of organisations for people with disabilities and a panel of labour market and business and industry representatives.

The Work Research Institute has compiled a systematic review on existing knowledge of implementing policy in this area. The Norwegian Directorate of Labour and Welfare has been involved in formulating the present Jobs Strategy and will play an important role in its implementation. With this strategy, the Norwegian Government is seeking to increase the employability of people with disabilities. However, the challenges cannot be overcome by governmental initiatives alone. Opening the doors to employment will call for a large-scale, concerted effort, in which employers (not least) will have a key part to play.



Hanne Inger Bjurstrøm  
Minister of Labour



## 2. Introduction

The political platform for the majority government 2009-2013 (Soria Moria II) declares the intention to establish a Jobs Strategy for People with Disabilities. The same Jobs Strategy is also laid down in the new IA Agreement, which includes the objective of boosting employment among people with disabilities.

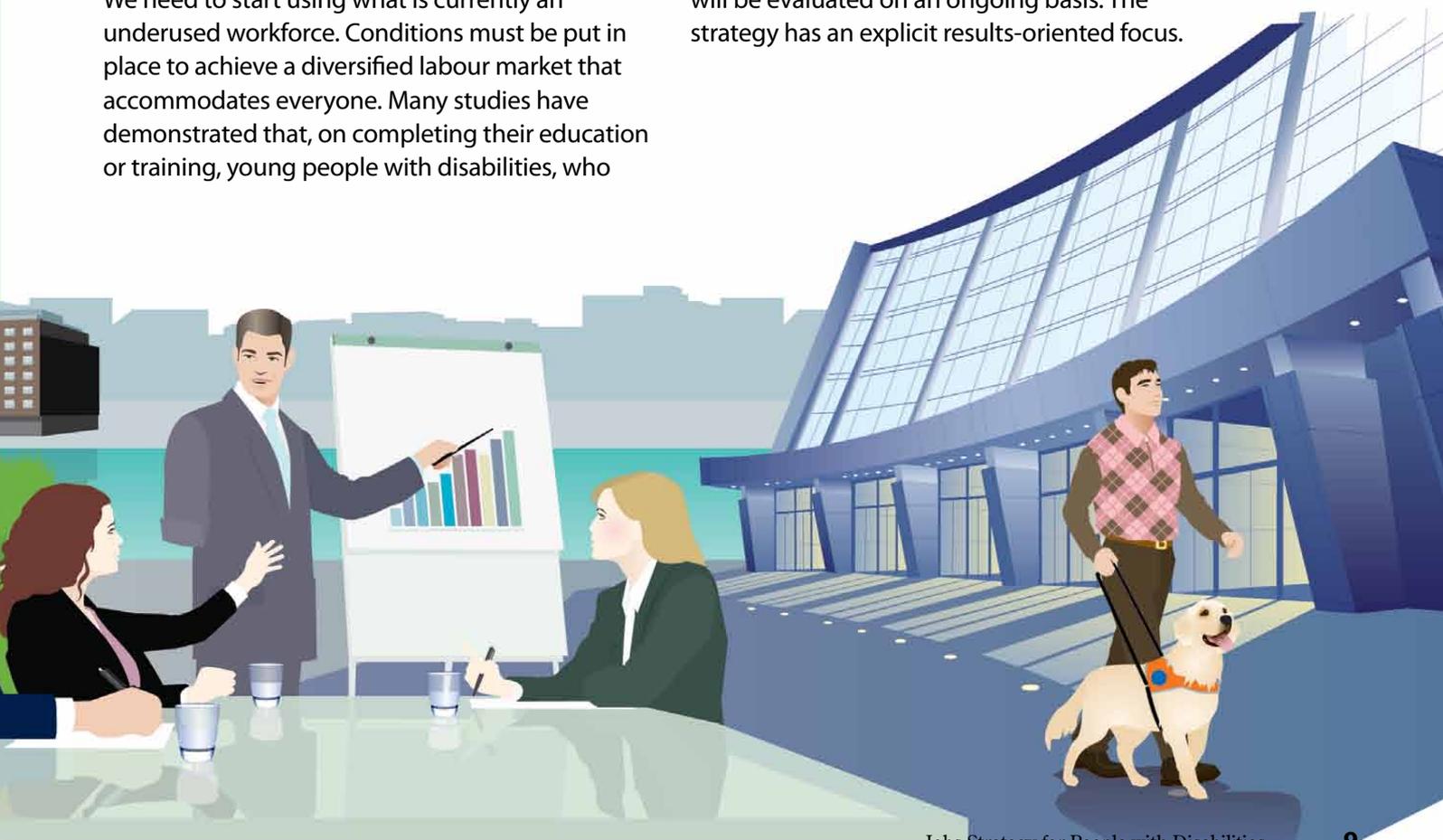
'Work for everyone' is one of the Norwegian Government's principal objectives. Everyone is to have the opportunity to participate in working life based on their abilities and resources. In the years ahead we will need more people with disabilities as active participants on the labour market. The political challenge consists of creating the frameworks that will allow this to be accomplished. If we succeed, greater numbers of people will have better prospects for labour market participation and increased welfare and we will achieve a more diversified labour market.

Proper use of labour market resources is a precondition for a sustainable welfare society and for sound living conditions for individual citizens. We need to start using what is currently an underused workforce. Conditions must be put in place to achieve a diversified labour market that accommodates everyone. Many studies have demonstrated that, on completing their education or training, young people with disabilities, who

often have little or no work experience, generally encounter major barriers in the transition from education to employment. Employers who succeed in recruiting from among a broader base of job-seekers stand to gain access to valuable experience and skills.

The Government intends to bring about the conditions necessary to enable people with disabilities to exercise their rights and obligations as active participants in the labour market. The Government abides by the principles of social equality and universal design in its undertakings. Universal design of the physical environment implies equal accessibility for everyone in order that the mainstream solution is one that may be used by as many people as possible.

In the present document, the Government presents both an overarching strategic plan for enabling more people with disabilities to participate in the labour market, but also proposals for specific initiatives for 2012. The strategy is long term. Efforts under the strategy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. The strategy has an explicit results-oriented focus.



In the Jobs Strategy, the Government sets out the orientation of efforts within the priority areas over the coming years. In this way, the strategy identifies initiatives and schemes that will be of strategic importance in reducing the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities. Proposals for initiatives for 2012 break down into various action areas that aim to make it easier for young people with disabilities to join and remain on the labour market.

The Jobs Strategy attaches importance to strengthening and supplementing ordinary and general initiatives in different areas of policy with more targeted labour market instruments to compensate for different types of disabilities. In the field of labour market policy, this might mean implementing different forms of workplace facilitation initiatives and supervisory schemes. The idea is that when various supplementary services or compensatory solutions are combined with general instruments such as the use of labour market initiatives, this increases the chances of more young people with disabilities joining the labour market.

People with disabilities make up a diverse group with different challenges on the labour market. There is therefore a need for both individualised, tailored schemes and instruments, as well as universal solutions.

It is important to develop instruments that can help both job-seekers and employers to reduce their mutual uncertainty and risk. One example would be the labour market programmes that

give job-seekers the opportunity to try out their capacity for work and which give employers the opportunity to assess job-seeker employability based on proven capacity.

Responsibility for implementation of the Government's Jobs Strategy lies jointly with the social partners, organisations representing people with disabilities, employers, the Labour and Welfare Service and other public service providers and with the job-seekers themselves.

Certain key elements of the system of labour market instruments for people with disabilities will not be included in the proposals for initiatives for 2012. These include, for example, the assistive technologies area and the employment-oriented scheme which the Labour and Welfare Service currently procures from providers of sheltered employment. A dedicated national committee has been appointed and will be submitting its recommendation regarding employment-oriented initiatives in the sheltered sector by January 2012. The committee will be addressing aspects such as how to devise facilitated employment for persons with permanent disabilities.

### 3. Summary

From 2012, the Government will be implementing a Jobs Strategy for People with Disabilities. The strategy is informed by the vision that everyone who is able to must be given the opportunity to participate in working life. This is an overarching objective. With this Jobs Strategy, the Government is implementing different vigorous measures to find jobs for more people under the age of 30 with disabilities. The focus is mainly on young people in the transition between education and working life.

It has proved difficult to increase the rate of employment among people with disabilities.

The employment rate for this group has been low even during economic upturns. There is therefore no simple formula for how this situation can be reversed.

The Government's strategy will not resolve every challenge encountered by people with disabilities in working life. The strategy is however based on the following approaches:

- Four barriers are identified as preventing people with disabilities from gaining employment. Instruments covered by the strategy are geared to reducing these barriers. The barriers are defined as: the discrimination barrier, cost barrier, productivity barrier and information and attitudinal barrier.
- The strategy focuses on preventing the permanent exclusion or relegation of young people with disabilities from working life. We have to act at an early stage to prevent prolonged dependency on welfare benefits. If we succeed in this, the financial and social consequences will be very positive for both the individual and for society as a whole.
- The strategy operates with an integrative and long-range perspective. This entails testing out various initiatives and drawing lessons learned from attempts made along the way. We have to take one step at a time. The activities must be monitored closely in order that the course may be altered and

improved, and different initiatives tested out.

- The initiatives under the strategy must be undertaken in close cooperation with the social partners and organisations representing people with disabilities.
- In testing out new labour market instruments, we will be applying our own previous experiences; experiences from other countries and the findings of research on what initiatives and schemes are effective in helping more people to gain employment. Efforts must as far as possible be evidence-based. Much of what we know however about what is effective in this area is limited and uncertain. Consequently, one of the ambitions of the strategy is to acquire new knowledge of effective means and methods.

Close private-public partnerships will be crucial to the success of the Jobs Strategy. For many young people with disabilities, it is important to be given the opportunity to try out their capacity for working and gain essential work experience. Consequently, implementation of the strategy will require both labour market instruments capable of stimulating demand for people with disabilities and employers who are willing to take on the social responsibility of offering places on work-experience programmes and labour market programmes for the target group.

In addition to the proposed initiatives for 2012, are the general activities in different areas from which the strategy's target group also stands to benefit.



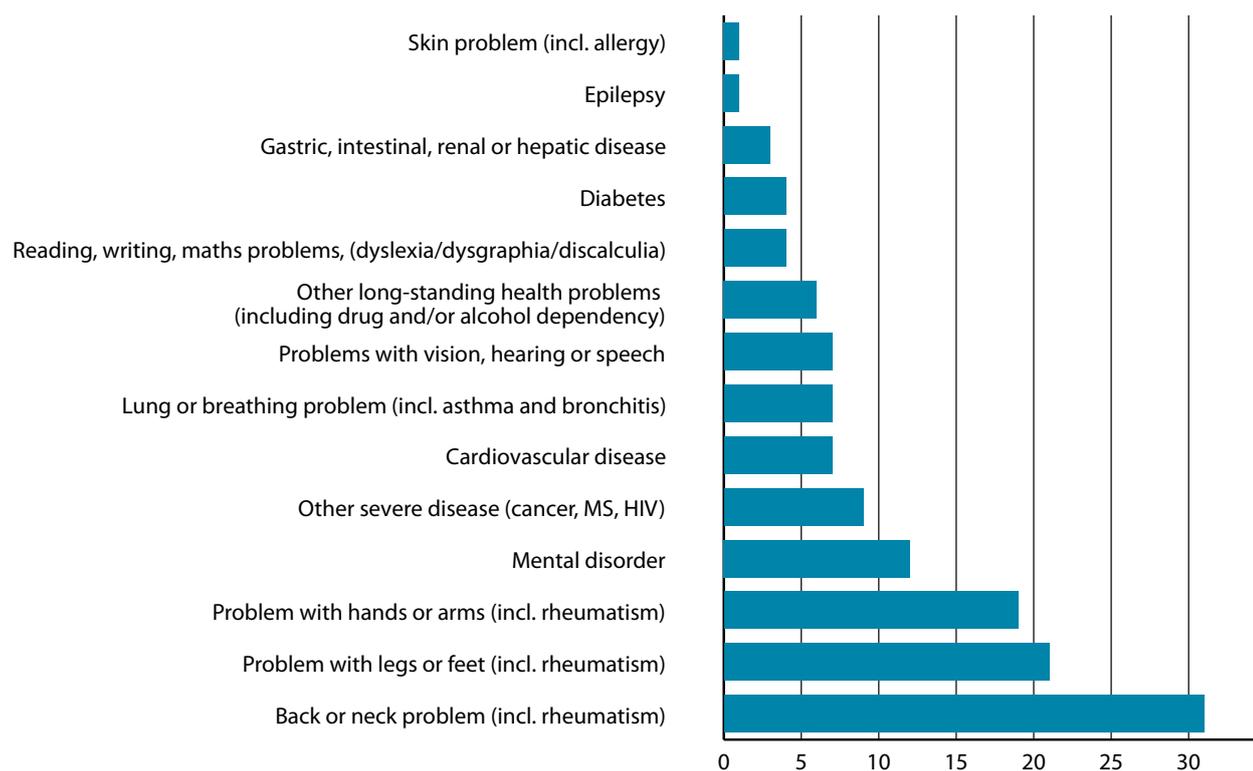
## 4. Who are people with disabilities?

Statistics Norway conducts an annual ad hoc survey, in supplement to its Labour Force Survey, on disability and people with disabilities on the labour market. According to Statistics Norway, the number of people with disabilities<sup>1</sup> in Norway in Q2 2011 amounted to 542,000 in the age-group 15-66 years, or 16 per cent of the population in the same age-group<sup>2</sup>. This proportion has remained more or less unchanged since the first Labour Force Survey was conducted in 2002. OECD statistics indicate that Norway has a mid-position among OECD countries in terms of the proportion of people with disabilities in the population<sup>3</sup>.

Some people have a congenital disability, but a large proportion became disabled in later life. While seven per cent of 15-24 year-olds have disabilities, the percentage is 34 per cent among persons aged between 60 and 66 years. The proportion of people with disabilities is slightly higher among women than among men; 18 and 14 per cent respectively in the annual survey.

Figures from Statistics Norway indicate that approximately one in three people with disabilities leave the 'disability group' annually. This indicates that disability is not necessarily a permanent condition or barrier to employment,

Figure 1. Distribution of people with disabilities aged 15-66 years, by type of health problem. 2011 (%)



Source: Statistics Norway

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Norway defines disability as "long-term health problems that may limit everyday life". For the Norwegian Ministry of Labour terminology definitions, see Appendix 2.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Norway's Labour Force Survey. *Ad hoc module on disabled people*, Q2 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *Sickness, disability and work: Breaking the barriers*. OECD, 2010

and demonstrates how difficult it is to delimit people with disabilities as a group. The figures presented by the Statistics Norway Labour Force Survey are based on whether survey respondents perceive themselves as having a disability (noting that in the original Norwegian-language survey, rather than its English translation, respondents are asked to consider whether they have a 'functional impairment' rather than a 'disability').

While 2 in 3 people with disabilities (or functional impairment) in the age-group 16-66 have completed upper secondary education, this is true of 3 in 4 of the general population. Part of the explanation for this difference is that people with disabilities as a group tend to be older than the general population.

People with disabilities make up a highly disparate group. The disabilities range from problems as disparate as musculo-skeletal disorders, heart and lung disease, psychological developmental disorders, mental disorders, severe sight or hearing impairment and learning disabilities in reading and writing (dyslexia and dysgraphia). Figure 1 shows the distribution of disabilities among people affected. Approximately three in four have musculo-skeletal disorders, while 12 per cent are affected by a mental disorder. Many people have to cope with several concomitant health problems.

The prospects of gaining and retaining employment depend both on the degree of disability and the types of jobs available on the labour market. Among people with disabilities who were in employment in 2011, 61 per cent stated that their disability limits the types of work tasks they can perform, in spite of any assistive technologies that may be available to them. 55 per cent stated that their disability restricts how much they are able to work, that is, their daily or weekly working hours. 56 per cent of employees had had their work situation adjusted to their disability in respect of work tasks, working time or physical facilitation. The need for facilitation and the proportion that would have experienced limitations on their working capacity are presumably greater among those who are not employed. The figures vary somewhat from one year to the next.

Many people with disabilities are dependent on short-term or long-term benefits. Table 1 shows that 313,000 people with disabilities in 2011 were receiving one or more benefits, according to the Statistics Norway Labour Force Survey. The proportion of benefit recipients was somewhat lower among employed persons than among unemployed persons. Disability pension was the main benefit, followed by work clarification allowance. The Jobs Strategy aims to assist more people to gain employment and prevent more people from leaving paid employment for a life on a disability pension.

Table 1. People with disabilities aged 15-66 years, by benefits received, 2011.

	All		Employed	
	Persons	Percentage	Persons	Percentage
Total	542,000	100	230,000	100
Receive no benefits	160,000	30	128,000	56
Receive one or more benefits <sup>1</sup>	313,000	58	84,000	37
Disability pension	204,000	38	48,000	21
Basic benefit or attendance benefit	11,000	2	6,000	3
Work clarification allowance	77,000	14	15,000	7
Sickness benefit	14,000	3	11,000	5
Other	26,000	5	7,000	3
Not stated	69,000	13	18,000	8

Source: Statistics Norway

<sup>1</sup> The same person may receive multiple benefits concurrently, and the sum total of recipients of the individual forms of benefit is therefore greater than the total number of recipients.

## 5. The Jobs Strategy's target group

In selecting its main target group, the Government has decided to direct efforts at young people with disabilities who are in the transitional period from education to working life. The target group consists both of job-seekers who have completed education or training and who are available for work, and people with disabilities who are long-term recipients of the work clarification allowance (transitional benefit pending clarification of working capacity). Enabling more people in this target group to gain employment and achieving fewer people on continued benefits will benefit the national economy and be of great significance for the individual's income and living conditions.

The majority of people with disabilities who are about to enter the labour market are registered users of services from the Labour and Welfare Service. This applies to recipients of the work clarification allowance (WCA) among others. In June 2011, approximately 29,000 WCA recipients were under the age of 30. Of these, around 18,600 had received WCA for 12 months or longer. These are the people we define as being long-term recipients of WCA, and who come under the definition of the strategy's target group. In addition, the target group includes some 3,000 young people with disabilities under the age of 30 who each year complete education above lower-secondary-school level. It is not known how many of these individuals apply for and need employment-oriented assistance from the Labour and Welfare Service in order to join the labour market.

### *The Jobs Strategy and the focus on a new disability pension reform*

People under the age of 30 account for a relatively small proportion of all disability pensioners, but the number of young persons awarded disability benefit has increased in recent years. The increase has been high notably among persons with mental disorders. The majority of people who acquire a disability at a young age have little or no previous work experience.

The Government is proposing to strengthen efforts to increase the employability of people who would otherwise be awarded a permanent disability pension. Prevention and early intervention are the main measures for boosting participation in education and working life and for reducing the transition to disability benefit in all age groups.

In order to reduce the number of new young disability pensioners, the Government is proposing a strategy which, in addition to Ministry of Labour policy instruments, also comprises the instruments of other Norwegian ministries. In order to prevent young people from being excluded from working life, the following are imperative:

- Earlier and better preventive efforts
- Better cooperation and coordination between sectors and intensified employment-oriented interventions
- Improved knowledge concerning young people with disabilities and regular evaluation of progress in implementing the strategy

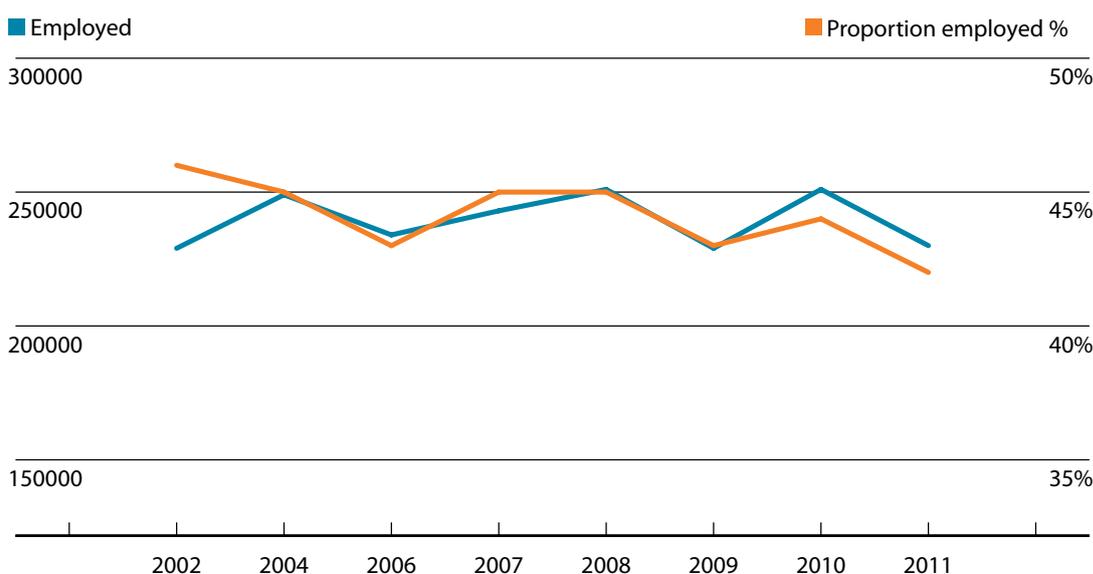
The introduction of a new disability benefit will underpin efforts under the Jobs Strategy and will enable more young people with disabilities to gain and retain employment.

## 6. Labour market participation

According to figures from Statistics Norway, in 2011, 42 per cent of people with disabilities were in employment. The proportion of employed persons has remained relatively stable over time; see figure 2. The proportion of employed persons is lower than in the population as a whole, where 74 per cent were working in 2011. In the same period, some 13,000 people with disabilities were unemployed, corresponding to 2.5 per cent of all people with disabilities. The proportion of unemployed persons was 2.8 per cent of the population.

Many people with disabilities who are out of work are capable of working given the right circumstances. According to Statistics Norway, in 2011, 78,000 unemployed people with disabilities were looking for work. 22,000 of these were under 30 years of age. Although many who wish to work are not actively job-seeking, the numbers do suggest that more people with disabilities are able to join the labour market than are participating at present.

Figure 2. Absolute number of employed people with disabilities, and proportion of employed people with disabilities (%), aged 15-66 years.



Source: Statistics Norway

Figures from OECD indicate that the employment rate among people with disabilities is low in Norway compared with Denmark, Iceland and Sweden.<sup>5</sup> Many persons in Norway receive a disability pension; see table 1. Denmark has been working actively to put conditions in place to promote increased employment among people with disabilities. In Sweden, the government has presented a plan to ease the transition to

employment for people with disabilities. The Danish and Swedish policies are characterised by a larger wage subsidisation component than in Norway, in the shape of the Danish *flexjobordningen* (flexi-job scheme) and the Swedish *lönebidraget* (wage subsidy). Personal assistance and assistive technologies are other key components of initiatives in these countries.

<sup>5</sup> Sickness, disability and work: Breaking the barriers. OECD, 2010.

## 7. Efforts to date

Universal policy instruments and the sectoral responsibility principle are the foundation for the Norwegian policy on people with disabilities. Mainstream services in society are to comprise everyone – including people with disabilities. Based on the specific goal of achieving full participation and equality, each sector is required to set goals for its domains, and to achieve them.

The Government has relied on the traditional Norwegian tenet of the primacy of employment, known as the 'work approach', *arbeidslinje* (informed by 'the right and duty to work'), in establishing initiatives and policy instruments for the national labour and welfare policy. The main tack in elaboration of the 'work approach' is to sustain and realise the ambition embodied by the 'NAV reform' of 2006 in which the national employment service and the National Insurance Service were merged under the current Labour and Welfare Service. The main elements are:

- Employment-orientation. Efforts from day-one to be directed at easing each individual into employment.
- Individualised treatment. The initiatives must be adapted to the individual's circumstances and needs.
- Rapid and early intervention. The shortest possible period of time must be allowed to elapse between an employee experiencing problems or having to leave employment and starting on a back-to-work scheme.

The Labour and Welfare Service's assistance to people with disabilities entails options for employing a wide range of initiatives tailored to the needs of the individual. Anyone who contacts a NAV office shall be entitled to have his or her assistance needs evaluated. Needs assessment may include assessment of the person's prospects of gaining employment, and whether the person needs different types of employment-oriented assistance, facilitation, assistive technologies etc. in order to accomplish this objective.

The Government's education and training policy is to promote personal development, reinforce democratic values and facilitate innovation, productivity and economic growth. With the increasing skills requirements of business and industry and the increased importance of efforts to ensure sound living conditions, education and training is increasingly important as a gateway to labour market participation.

The number of jobs that do not require upper secondary or higher education is diminishing. Education generally and higher education specifically are major determinants of whether people with disabilities are able to gain employment. A central objective is to reduce the deflection ('drop-out') rate from upper secondary education and training; see, for example, the 'NY GIV' project at local-government level to increase upper-secondary-level completion. In order to realise the new employment policy, we also have to successfully implement the national education and training policy.

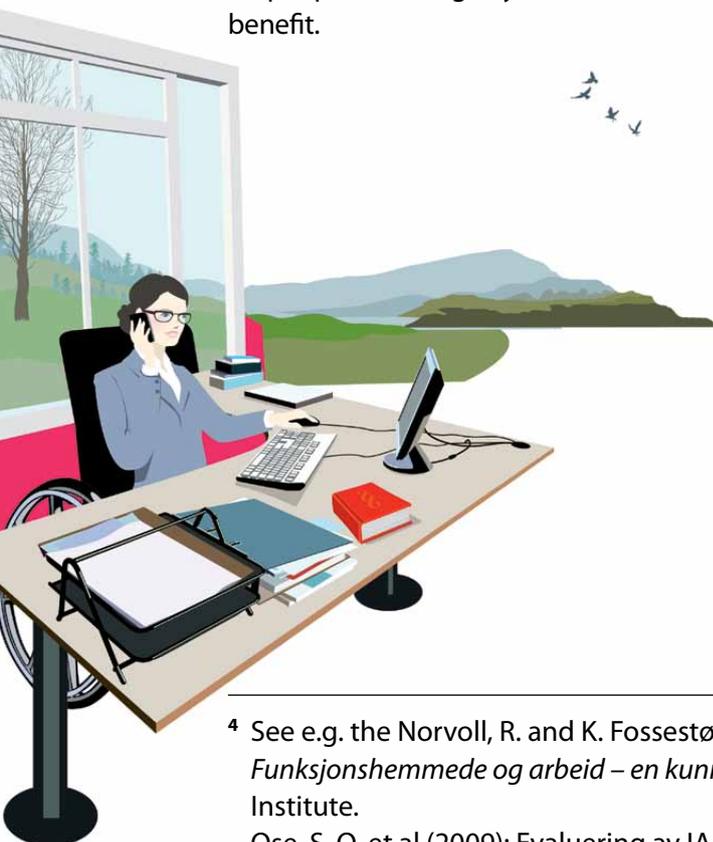
Use of the Welfare and Labour Service's employment-oriented instruments and initiatives often entails the involvement and concurrent assistance of different parts of the health service. Doctors for example play an important role in the sickness absence phase; a physiotherapist and occupational therapist will be involved in workplace evaluation and facilitation etc. "*Raskere tilbake*" (back-to-work) is a scheme based on the employment and welfare sector's need for rapid access to relevant rehabilitation and health services, and is a supplementary programme of individualised services to help people return to work following extended sick leave. "*Individuell plan*" (individual plan) is a tool for coordinating the activities of different service providers such as the Labour and Welfare Service and the health service for people requiring long-term and coordinated services.

Health care may be an important element in joining the labour market or returning to work. Key health services to that end are prevention,

diagnostics, treatment, coaching, training and rehabilitation.

National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health (2007-2012) is aimed specifically at facilitating employment for people with mental health problems. The present Jobs Strategy will intensify efforts under the National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health by implementing new employment-oriented initiatives and instruments, which will also benefit the Strategic Plan's target group.

Support for physical activity and participation in sports is beneficial to health and aids the ability to cope and participate in society generally. There are several good examples of initiatives where sports activities are offered as low-threshold schemes for health-related benefit recipients who need assistance in order to return to working life. One example of such schemes is "*Aktiv på dagtid*", in which local sports associations run adapted physical activity programmes during the daytime for people receiving any form of health-related benefit.



### ***Cooperation regarding a More Inclusive Working Life (IA Agreement)***

Secondary goal 2 of the IA Agreement is to increase the rate of employment among people with disabilities through increased recruitment of job-seekers and by putting initiatives in place to prevent employees with disabilities from being excluded from working life.

Evaluations of the IA Agreement (2001-2009) however did not find that the agreement had resulted in increased employment among people with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> One reason for this may be that IA efforts so far have concentrated on reducing sickness absences (secondary goal 1), while fewer IA instruments were aimed at increasing the employability of people with disabilities. The new IA Agreement 2010-2013 remedies this situation. The following key performance indicators will be used in monitoring the success of this initiative:

- Reduced number of persons passing from employment to benefits.
- Increased proportion of persons on long-term sick leave who progress to the work clarification allowance.
- Increased proportion of people with disabilities who make the transition from national insurance benefits to paid employment.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. the Norvoll, R. and K. Fossetøl, systematic review of disability and employment (2010): *Funksjonshemmede og arbeid – en kunnskapsstatus*. Report 2010:13 (Norwegian only), Work Research Institute.

Ose, S. O. et al (2009): *Evaluering av IA-avtalen 2001-2009* (Evaluation of the IA Agreement 2001-2009), published (in Norwegian) by the independent research institute, SINTEF.

## 8. Evidence basis for new efforts

### 8.1 Findings to date

The Work Research Institute was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour to produce a systematic review of the employability of people with disabilities.<sup>6</sup> The following lists key findings:

- Vocational rehabilitation has a positive effect on labour market participation for those who complete the associated initiatives. The greatest effect is on people who require extensive assistance in order to start working. Initiatives based on ordinary employment appear to have the greatest effect.
- Profitability and efficiency requirements may make it difficult for people with disabilities to engage in working life. Discrimination may also occur. Governmental initiatives in this area have come under criticism.
- Conditions on the labour market generally and at workplaces specifically have great influence on the prospects of gaining/retaining employment. Initiatives based on *workplace facilitation* are also highly significant.
- The labour market's attitude to people with disabilities varies – not least depending on someone currently has a job or is looking for work. Attitudes to employee retention are more positive than they are to recruitment.
- The Work Research Institute found scarce literature to account for the weak results in achieving secondary-goal 2 of the IA Agreement on increasing the employability of people with disabilities. The Institute indicates that financial incentives for

systematic IA efforts to recruit people with disabilities are either inadequate or lacking altogether.

- The majority of businesses in Norway are SMEs with limited administrative capacity. There are also substantial differences between different segments of the labour market as regards the conditions governing how work is performed. This may indicate the need for a more nuanced and diversified inclusion policy.
- A large body of research identifies challenges in how the public assistance system deals with its users.
- People with disabilities constitute a highly disparate group with differing needs for assistance and facilitation. In many cases, their need for assistance will extend across prevailing administrative and professional divides. Bridging these divides calls for integrative policy and interdisciplinary efforts.

### 8.2 What initiatives are effective?<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to determine what initiatives are most effective in facilitating the transition to employment. This is due in part to it being far from arbitrary who is recruited for participation in a labour market programme. One and the same labour market programme may also have different effects on different participants, depending on the individual's capacity, needs and the quality of the programme. Effects, positive or negative, may be derived from the programme both before, during and after it is run. Owing to these challenges and variation in the data material and methodologies,

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<sup>6</sup> Norvoll, R. and K. Fossetøl: *Funksjonshemmede og arbeid – en kunnskapsstatus* (systematic review of disability and employment). Report 2010:13 (Norwegian only), Work Research Institute.

<sup>7</sup> This section is based largely on Norvoll, R. & K. Fossetøl (2010): *Funksjonshemmede og arbeid – en kunnskapsstatus*, Notat 2010:13 (see earlier mention), Work Research Institute, and "Virkning av arbeidsrettede tiltak for personer med nedsatt arbeidsevne – En litteraturstudie", Rapport 2011-02 (the effect of employment-oriented initiatives for people with disabilities. A systematic review), Proba Research. Both reports were commissioned by the Ministry of Labour.

the research findings are not consistent. In addition, some caution must be exercised in transferring the experiences of other countries to Norway since there may be differences in programme content and design and the background of the participants.

Findings from other countries indicate that labour market programmes based on near-ordinary employment are most effective in facilitating the transition to employment. Danish and Swedish studies of welfare benefit recipients and people on long-term sick leave indicate that work experience is conducive to employment. A number of studies find that education/training is an effective initiative, although it is not possible to draw conclusions as to the effect of course-based training on the basis of existing studies. Special training programmes may be detrimental in that they lock participants in on the programme so that the chances of transition to employment are reduced for the duration of the programme. This results in a negative employment gain over the short term. This is particularly the case for persons who are closest to gaining access to the labour market. Work experience combined with follow-up from a supervisor and medical professionals would appear to have a positive effect on persons with mental disorders.

Recent Norwegian register-based research indicates largely positive employment outcomes from initiatives for people with disabilities. Wage subsidies have also proved an effective initiative. Labour market courses run by the Labour and Welfare Administration for both ordinary job-seekers and for those with reduced working capacity, education and work experience in ordinary enterprises would also appear to increase

their employment prospects.<sup>8</sup> Wage subsidisation schemes pose a challenge in that some employers may apply for wage subsidies for persons who would otherwise have been employed on ordinary terms.

Conditions on the labour market generally and at workplaces specifically have great influence on the prospects of gaining/retaining employment. Initiatives geared to workplace facilitation and personal supervision also appear to greatly influence the prospects of vocational rehabilitation resulting in lasting employment.

### 8.3 Evidence from other countries

A recently published report by WHO and the World Bank estimates that people with disabilities account for approximately 15 per cent of the global population.<sup>9</sup> The increasing age of the population and an increase in the number of persons with chronic medical conditions has caused the rise in this percentage over the last few decades. The report reveals that people with disabilities face major barriers when accessing health services or entering the labour market for example.

People with mental disorders especially, face discrimination and stigmatisation. The report describes that in many countries, people with disabilities are treated as second-class citizens. Within the OECD area, the rate of labour market participation among people with disabilities has been measured as 44 per cent, that is, around the rate we have in Norway, while the proportion in the rest of the population of the OECD area is 75 per cent. The three main recommendations of the report are:

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<sup>8</sup> See for instance Lars Westlie: The Long Term Impacts of Vocational Rehabilitation, Ragnar Frisch Centre for Economic Research, June 2008

<sup>9</sup> World Report on Disability. WHO/The World Bank, June 2011

- Enable access to all mainstream policies, systems and services  
Invest in specific programmes and services for people with disabilities  
Adopt a national disability strategy and plan of action (which embody the 2 foregoing recommendations and are cross-sectoral)

The NOVA research institute (under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research) examined models in selected countries for assisting people with disabilities to make the transition to employment.<sup>10</sup> The report provides a summary of policy instruments to promote employment among people with disabilities who are excluded from the ordinary labour market in the US and Europe (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK).

The report indicates that Norway is not that different from other European countries in terms of total expenditure on financial benefits and services to the population as a whole, but that the Scandinavian countries allocate a larger proportion of their total welfare expenditure to financial provisions and services for people with disabilities. The Scandinavian countries are also distinct in having a high degree of public financing of income maintenance systems. As such, this points to a distinctly Scandinavian model.

Differences do however exist between the Scandinavian countries. Norway differs in spending a larger proportion of GDP on an income maintenance system for people with disabilities than other European countries. Sweden is characterised by having a higher level of expenditure if we take services and assistance to people with disabilities as one, while Norway and Denmark have a somewhat

lower total expenditure level. In Sweden, employer contributions to financing income maintenance are higher than in Denmark and Norway. NOVA points to the fact that the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands have consistently spent more resources on employment-oriented initiatives than other OECD countries. Employment-oriented initiatives comprise programmes to promote increased employment and do not include expenditure on income maintenance. According to NOVA, Norway allocated relatively more resources to employment-oriented initiatives for people with disabilities participating in employment-qualifying programmes, typically education/training, while Sweden and Denmark tend to favour financial incentives for employers. Sweden and Denmark attach more importance to on-the-job training at ordinary workplaces and wage subsidies for employers than Norway does.

NOVA concludes that the use of sheltered employment varies extensively in the countries under review, but that the main trend is for national authorities to aim to move away from permanent sheltered employment in favour of active labour market initiatives to promote a greater degree of inclusion in ordinary working life.

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<sup>10</sup> Halvorsen, Rune & Hvinden, Bjørn: "Models for promoting labour market participation of persons with disabilities in Europe and USA" (English version) NOVA. 2011.

## 9. Barriers to employment

There are many factors to account for the relatively low (if stable) rate of labour market participation among people with disabilities. In proposals for initiatives for 2012, we have chosen to direct efforts at four main barriers reducing labour market participation. These are barriers that appear to be important from the perspective of both employers and job-seekers and which may be preventing more people with disabilities from joining the labour market.

**Discrimination barrier.** People with disabilities may be exposed to discriminatory attitudes and actions. The barriers may consist of simple prejudice about people with disabilities, or physical, environmental and technological solutions that fail to take everyone in the population into account. In spite of the fact that anti-discrimination rules in Norway are now more stringent, many employers in Norway are still prejudiced against recruiting job-seekers with disabilities. It is documented, for example, as less likely that highly qualified wheelchair users and blind persons will be invited to a job interview than other candidates. People with disabilities who are already in employment may also experience discrimination.

This discrimination barrier can be countered both by legislative means and by helping more people with disabilities to find employment. Public-sector employers have a special responsibility for reducing this barrier. Efforts to implement universal design of the public transport system will also be highly conducive to increased labour market participation by the strategy's target group.

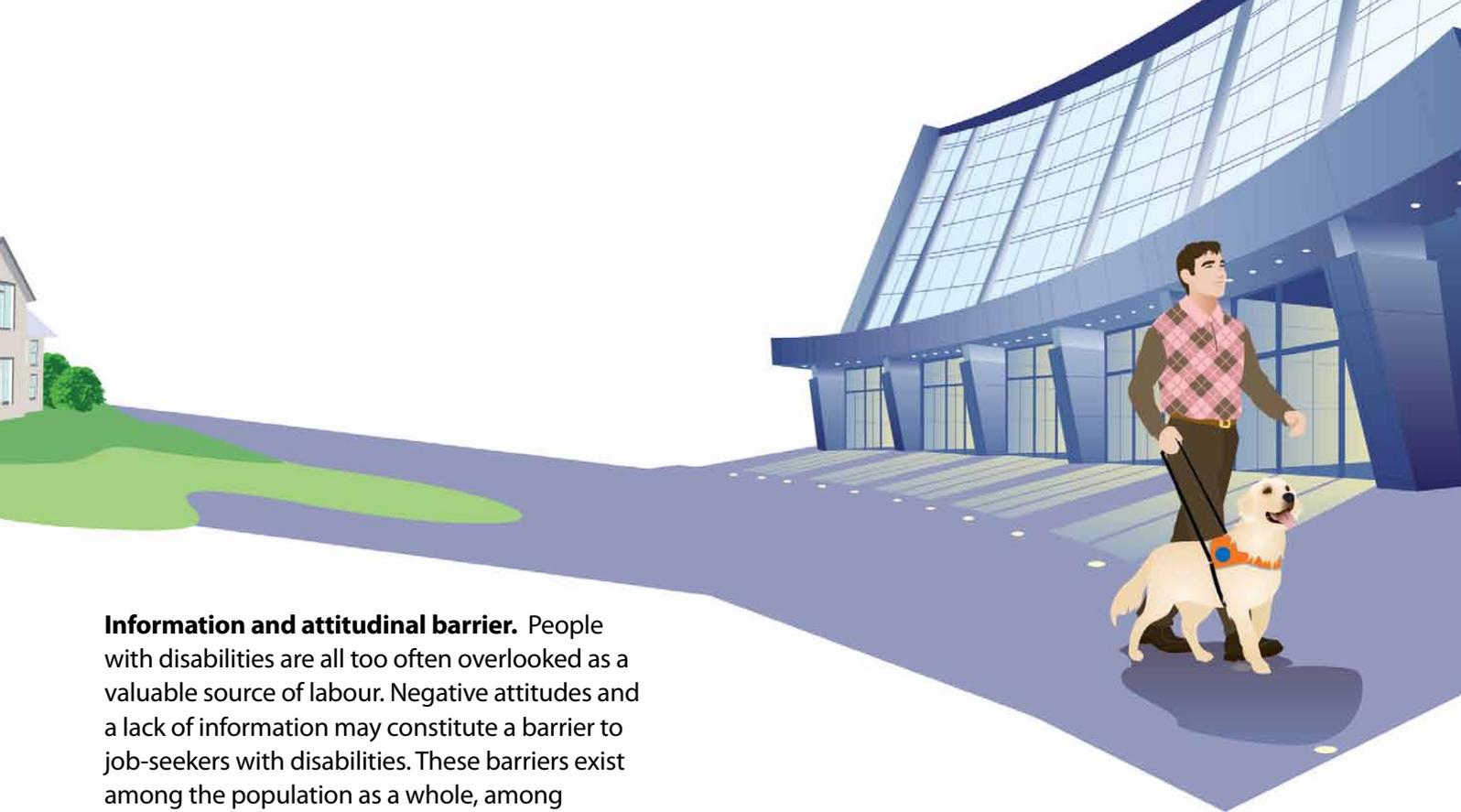


**Cost barrier.** In hiring persons with reduced capacity for work, many employers assume that their organisation may incur a number of costs in workplace facilitation and providing individual supervision. The individual may require assistive technologies in order to perform the work, or practical and physical facilitation of the work situation, training and advice for colleagues, special transport to and from work etc.

One way of reducing the cost barrier is to operate public-sector schemes covering a proportion of the employer's documented expenditure on facilitation and supervision.

**Productivity barrier.** Even with effective facilitation and close supervision of the individual and the enterprise, many prospective employers believe that people with disabilities will have less capacity for work and lower productivity than other employees. These organisations may therefore feel that they are running a financial risk if they have to bear the full salary costs of recruiting people with unstable or permanently reduced capacity for work.

One way of reducing this barrier is by implementing wage subsidies or by ensuring that persons with a weak educational background receive the necessary training and vocational experience.



**Information and attitudinal barrier.** People with disabilities are all too often overlooked as a valuable source of labour. Negative attitudes and a lack of information may constitute a barrier to job-seekers with disabilities. These barriers exist among the population as a whole, among employers, co-workers etc. But among people with disabilities themselves, there may also be attitudes and lack of information that constitute a barrier to employment. Eligibility for employment-oriented benefits is conditional on the person being registered with the Labour and Welfare Service. It is therefore important for the individual to actually make contact with the Service.

For both the employer and job-seeker, work performance and productivity will be an unknown factor until the candidate's capacity for work has been tried out in a real work setting. For the enterprise, incorrect assessment of the candidate's capacity for work will constitute a risk in terms of unforeseeable costs, while the candidate himself/herself risks public failure. Both enterprises and job-seekers themselves consequently need labour market schemes that can reduce this mutual risk or uncertainty.

The information and attitudinal barrier can be reduced for example by establishing new settings for trying out capacity for work, on-the-job training and work participation for people with no previous work experience. This barrier can also be reduced through labour market initiatives that promote proactive opinion-forming and awareness-raising among different stakeholders and groups in society.

## 10. Strategy to boost employment

Norway has a well-functioning labour market with sound and well-regulated workplace conditions, high productivity, and low unemployment /high rate of employment. Nonetheless, people with disabilities face barriers that other job-seekers may never encounter.

With a Jobs Strategy aimed specifically at people with disabilities, the Norwegian Government will be launching a long-term and targeted drive to boost labour market participation among people with disabilities generally and among young people specifically. The strategy is long-range and cross-sectoral.

The structure of the Jobs Strategy is as follows:

- Target group identified and delimited.
- Target group situation on the labour market described.
- Policy pursued for boosting labour market participation described.
- Evidence for the effect of efforts to date in Norway and abroad discussed.
- Barriers reducing the target group's labour market participation identified.
- Initiatives to reduce barriers and boost labour market participation identified.
- Efforts recorded, reported on and evaluated.
- Initiatives in the Jobs Strategy shall underpin and supplement other targeted efforts such as the National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health.
- Activities implemented via the Jobs Strategy shall also support the universal labour market and welfare policy with targeted initiatives and programmes.
- The Ministry of Labour shall have lead responsibility for effective implementation of the strategy jointly with the ministries participating with initiatives under the strategy.

Arrangements must be made to facilitate active involvement by organisations for people with disabilities, the social partners and other key stakeholders.

The Jobs Strategy is founded on the current Norwegian labour and welfare policy. In addition to universal schemes comprising the general population, there is a need for more targeted interventions for people with disabilities.

Although founded on existing policy, the Jobs Strategy also challenges traditional approaches. We propose both adopting new policy instruments and methods while intensifying the efforts surrounding initiatives and schemes already in existence. All current policy instruments will be available to the target group within the Jobs Strategy. Arrangements will also be made to put together special policy instrument packages consisting of a mix of appropriate initiatives and schemes. The Labour and Welfare Service will be strengthened to enable the strategy to be implemented efficiently and reliably.

# 11. Brief summary of the Jobs Strategy's policy instruments

In Appendix 1, the Government presents various proposals for initiatives for 2012 together with other proposals currently under review. These initiatives will be geared to reducing the barriers defined earlier: the discrimination barrier, cost barrier, productivity barrier and information and attitudinal barrier.

## ***Initiatives to reduce the discrimination barrier***

- A review of the regulations appertaining to the Act relating to civil servants etc. is in progress with regard to the rules on interview procedure and recruitment in the public sector, which would promote increased recruitment of people with disabilities.

## ***Initiatives to reduce the cost barrier***

- The Government proposes piloting facilitation subsidies for job-seekers with disabilities as a new scheme to cover documented expenses on workplace facilitation for employees with disabilities.
- The Government proposes enhancing various forms of supervisory programmes under the Labour and Welfare Service. This applies to a mentoring scheme and extended trials of functional assistance. The scheme for user-controlled personal assistance is especially important in enabling people with extensive assistance requirements to gain and retain employment.
- Job-seekers in the strategy's target group who require different forms of employment-oriented assistance will be given a facilitation guarantee so that both the job-seeker and employer are fully informed of what they are entitled to in the way of assistance from the Labour and Welfare Service and when the various initiatives and arrangements will be put in place.

## ***Initiatives to reduce the productivity barrier***

- In order to cover a proportion of the employer's salary expenses on people with disabilities, existing wage subsidy schemes will be made a key component of employment-oriented services.
- Intensified efforts will be directed at ensuring that more people complete upper secondary education so that the transition from school to work is not hindered by a lack of qualifications.

## ***Initiatives to reduce the information and attitudinal barrier***

- Increased use of work-experience programmes under both central and local government will serve to reduce uncertainty and lack of knowledge among employers about the target group and give more young people with disabilities an opportunity for on-the-job training and essential work experience. The Government proposes that 500 places on labour market programmes be earmarked specifically for the strategy's target group.
- At the NAV Inclusive Workplace Support Centres, the proposal is to establish dedicated workplace support coaches to further activities under the Jobs Strategy. The coaches will conduct outreach work, e.g. by assisting employers who wish to hire people from the strategy's target group or offer them a place on a labour market programme.
- It is proposed to create dedicated project manager or coordinator positions within the Labour and Welfare Service with responsibility for information activities and professional development within the Service.
- A contact person scheme will be introduced within the Labour and Welfare Service for people with disabilities who need assistance to gain employment. The contact person scheme will be a component of the facilitation guarantee.

## 12. Follow-up and cooperation on the Jobs Strategy

Systematic follow-up of the strategy is essential in monitoring that it is being executed as intended and the extent to which it contributes to increased employment in the target group. Follow-up will be two-pronged. The Directorate of Labour and Welfare will be reporting on results achieved and an external evaluation will be conducted of strategy execution and effects.

Each year, in connection with the budget bill, the Government will report on progress and the results of the strategy. The aim of this is to determine what works and what does not. This will enable us to change course if and when necessary. The aim is to develop new and more effective instruments for helping more people into employment.



Close cooperation with the social partners and organisations representing people with disabilities on increased attainment of secondary goal 2 of the IA Agreement and the development and execution of the Jobs Strategy must be continued. Creating a genuinely inclusive labour market in which job-seekers with disabilities are able to realise their capacity for work will require an effort from more than just the authorities alone. Opening up the labour market to those seeking entry will entail active participation by employees and employers, organisations representing people with disabilities and job-seekers themselves. To that end, the IA cooperation is vital.

The Labour and Welfare Service also plays a key role in assisting stakeholders with its expertise and financial instruments. Consequently, the Jobs Strategy proposes strengthening the Labour and Welfare Service's efforts to extend its in-house professional expertise and external outreach activities. This will be done by, for example, advising, informing and assisting employers in order to facilitate labour market entry for young job-seekers with disabilities. These activities entail the active involvement of organisations and institutions for people with disabilities in order to build up the Labour and Welfare Service's expertise in this field and to provide inputs for ongoing work on the strategy.



# Appendix 1



# Initiatives in 2012

## 1. Initiatives to reduce the discrimination barrier

- 1a Employer's duty to make active efforts and to report
- 1b Regulatory amendments relating to interview procedure etc.
- 1c Follow-up on the IA Agreement within central government
- 1d Universal design and increased accessibility
- 1e Health and care policy instruments

## 2. Initiatives to reduce the cost barrier

- 2a Use of facilitation guarantees
- 2b Pilots of workplace facilitation subsidies
- 2c Provision of assistive technologies
- 2d New mentoring scheme
- 2e User-controlled personal assistance
- 2f Strengthen the scheme for functional assistance at work
- 2g Improve opportunities for people with disabilities to start their own business
- 2h Pilot of occupational and educational travel

## 3. Initiatives to reduce the productivity barrier

- 3a Cover a proportion of employer salary expenses
- 3b Initiatives in education and training

## 4. Initiatives to reduce the information and attitudinal barrier

- 4a Increase the number of places on work-experience programmes
- 4b Partnering with local authorities
- 4c Trainee programmes within governmental enterprises
- 4d Places on work-experience programmes within governmental enterprises
- 4e Dedicated project manager or coordinator positions within the Labour and Welfare Service
- 4f New positions within the Labour and Welfare Service as workplace support coaches
- 4g In-house professional competence development programme within the Labour and Welfare Service
- 4h Information about the Jobs Strategy
- 4i Action areas within governmental employer policy
- 4j Follow-up and evaluation of the Jobs Strategy
- 4k Joint job listings

# Initiatives in 2012

In this appendix, we review specific initiatives for 2012 and other proposals currently under review. These span a number of ministerial remits and policy areas that are determinative for the prospects of labour market participation for

people with disabilities. These initiatives will be geared to reducing the barriers discussed so far: the discrimination barrier, cost barrier, productivity barrier and information and attitudinal barrier. The following describes the initiatives in more detail.

## 1. Initiatives to reduce the discrimination barrier

People with disabilities may be exposed to discriminatory attitudes and actions that prevent their participation in working life. The barriers may consist of simple prejudice about people with disabilities, or physical, environmental and technological solutions that fail to take everyone in the population into account. In spite of the fact that anti-discrimination rules in Norway are now more stringent, many employers in Norway are still prejudiced against recruiting job-seekers with disabilities. It is documented, for example, as less likely that highly qualified wheelchair users and blind persons will be invited to a job interview than other candidates. People with disabilities who are already in employment may also experience discrimination.

Interventions and initiatives in 2012 concerning the discrimination barrier will contribute to reducing discrimination against people with disabilities on the labour market.

The discrimination barrier can be countered by legislative means, but the focus on universal design of the public domain greatly influences the prospects for increased labour market participation.

### 1a Employer's duty to make active efforts and to report

Section 3 of the Anti-discrimination and Accessibility Act states that employers have a duty 'to make active efforts and to report'. This duty applies to employers in the private sector with more than 50 employees, and to all public authorities. The duty 'to make active efforts' means that employers are to work actively, purposefully and according to plans to promote equal opportunities and equality and to prevent discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The Government will be making a detailed appraisal of how efforts by enterprises to recruit and include people with disabilities can best be undertaken in pursuance of Section 3 of the Act.

The Government is reviewing proposals for a new anti-discrimination act in response to the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Government will seek, jointly with the social partners and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, to stimulate intensified efforts on the labour market to promote equality based on gender, ethnicity and disability through calls to apply for project funding. The intention is for this to contribute to observance of the duty to make active efforts and to report. Private-sector employers, public-sector employers (local, regional and central government bodies); foundations working to promote equal

opportunities on the labour market and in public service provision; and trade unions and professional associations had the opportunity to apply for funding in 2010 and 2011.

#### **Applications may be made for funding for initiatives to develop routines/tools for:**

- Systems for training and advising on equal opportunities and the duty to make active efforts and to report.
- Reporting on and anchoring equal opportunities efforts.
- Development of models for partnering with different stakeholders.
- Training in and advice on equal opportunities and the duty to make active efforts and to report.
- Concrete equal opportunities initiatives and planned equal opportunities work, including action plans.

### **1b Regulatory amendments relating to interview procedure etc.**

The Government is reviewing the regulations appertaining to the Act relating to civil servants with a view to enabling the regulations to promote increased recruitment of people with disabilities in the central government sector. This concerns both rules regarding participation in traineeships and procedures for interview and possibly quota-based appointments.

### **1c Follow-up on the IA Agreement within central government**

The IA Agreement requires that the participating enterprises prevent and reduce sickness absences, promote job presence and counter employee relegation and defection. The enterprises are to set activity and performance targets for reducing sickness absences; increase hiring of people with disabilities; and encourage job retention after age 50 by an additional six months.

The Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs is responsible for overarching employer policy at governmental level. The Government is committed to targeted pursuance of the IA Agreement within its own domains. On behalf of the Government, the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs will be calling on all central government bodies to be particularly mindful of the need to recruit more young people with disabilities.

The same Ministry will be continuing its close cooperation with the main unions and associations to fulfil the IA Agreement in the central government sector. One important initiative will be to encourage the organisations to refer to a new guide to the IA Agreement for the central government sector. The Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs will also be working to ensure that Article 5.6 of the Main Tariff Agreement under which the unions are permitted to apply for funding to cover competence development and reform projects is used more extensively in pursuance of secondary goal 2 of the IA Agreement.

### **1d Universal design and increased accessibility**

The vision of the Government's Action Plan for Universal Design and Increased Accessibility 2009–2013 is for Norway to be universally designed by 2025. 16 ministries are contributing initiatives to this action plan.

Priority action areas in the above action plan consist of planning of public spaces, buildings, transport and ICT. Increased employment for people with disabilities is a consistent objective in the plan and the commitment to the four action areas will serve to make it easier for people with disabilities to gain employment and participate in the labour market. Among other things, the plan will ensure improved accessibility to teaching

buildings, workplace buildings, ICT, infrastructure and public transport.

### ***Specifically concerning initiatives relating to a universally designed system of public transport***

It ensues from the Anti-discrimination and Accessibility Act that universal design is defined in such a way that infrastructure and public transport can be used by everyone, of all ages and of differing abilities.

At present there is no general appraisal of the Norwegian public transport network. Aside from ensuring that bus stops or railway stations in the public transport network and ferry quays are universally designed, it is important to ensure the accessibility of the means of transport in themselves. This will involve long-term, targeted efforts.

There is a need to upgrade intersections, terminals, bus stops and stopping places along the trunk road network and stations in the railway network. The initiatives will be concentrated on a few selected geographical areas, and on the busiest public transport arteries so that they may be coordinated and facilitate transfers between different means of transport. In this way, good accessibility will be provided for the needs of different groups and travel patterns.

Initiatives under National Transport Plan 2010-2019 will be instrumental in achieving the objectives for a universally designed transport system:

- **Bus fleet:** For the new scheduled suburban and express buses, from 1 January 2010, there are requirements for accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **Rail fleet:** NSB, the national rail operator, has a programme for train upgrades comprising, for example, installation of wheelchair lifts on a proportion of its rolling stock. NSB has signed a contract for the

supply of 50 new train sets which will meet the requirements for universal design. The plan is to introduce the train sets gradually from 2012.

## **1e Health and care policy instruments**

Employment is important for public health. An inclusive working life which prevents sickness absences, prevents exclusion and gives all citizens an opportunity to participate on the labour market is of great value for Norway as a society, while it also promotes participation, personal independence and dignity for all groups, including people with disabilities. The white paper, Report No. 20 to the Storting (2006-2007) *National strategy to reduce social inequalities in health*, lays down guidelines for a policy in this area also. Sound, universal, health-promoting schemes, combined with initiatives aimed specifically at vulnerable groups will serve to assist people with disabilities in gaining employment.

The "Coordination Reform" (promoting continuity of care in the Norwegian health service) also covers factors affecting people with disabilities. Healthcare may be an important element in joining the labour market or returning to work. Key health services to that end are prevention, diagnostics, treatment, coaching, training and rehabilitation. The new Municipal Health Services Act is an important element in the Coordination Reform. This Act details the role of personal coordinators, and lodges responsibility for Individual Plans with a coordinating unit within each municipality. The Health Personnel Act explicitly sets out the duty of health personnel to engage actively in Individual Plans.

The specialist health service operates with a number of initiatives in hospitals, outpatient clinics via outpatient services and learning & coping centres. Important initiatives are also being implemented within private-sector training and rehabilitation institutions contracted to the

regional health authorities. A number of these institutions offer programmes in which the transition to working life is in focus.

In accordance with the new Municipal Health Services Act of 1 January 2012, the provision of social, psychosocial and medical habilitation and rehabilitation is a statutory municipal responsibility. This is defined as time-delimited, planned processes with clear-cut goals and resources in which multiple actors cooperate on supplementing the user's own efforts with the necessary assistance in order to achieve the best possible functioning and coping ability, independence and participation socially and in society at large. The municipal authorities are required to maintain an overview of individual needs and to plan such activities.

The care service will also be an important agent for many young people with disabilities in facilitating their participation in working life. Such services include home-help, personal assistance, including practical assistance, and support contact and user-controlled personal assistance. The municipal authorities are required to ensure that citizens are provided with services that are well coordinated and adapted to the individual. One main feature of the Government's policy for the municipal health and care services is the importance attached to quality of life, coping ability and dependability in everyday life. The municipal authority is required to ensure the necessary provision of services to aid stimulation of own learning, motivation, increased functional and coping ability, equality and participation. The services are to be provided and supplied from a user-centred perspective; and must be coordinated, interdisciplinary and planned either in or near the user's familiar environment in what for the user makes for a meaningful existence. This is emphasised in the new Municipal Health Services Act.

Against this background, it is a given that young people with the right to essential care services can expect to receive assistance in time to allow them to get to work or school. In each individual instance, this will ensue from the requirement regarding proper services, including that the individual patient or user is to receive a service that respects his or her dignity; see Section 4-1 of the Municipal Health Services Act. The opportunity to take up employment may be decisive in assessment of both the scope and type of service provision. People who need such services are to be issued with a formal decision document describing the service they are to be provided with. It is important that this document is sufficiently precise in order that the person can depend on the predictability of the service provision.

People with neurological conditions represent the group that has undergone the highest growth in municipal care service users in recent years. Under *NevroPlan 2015*, the Ministry of Health and Care Services will be contributing to upgrading the competence and quality of municipal service provision for this target group.

## 2. Initiatives to reduce the cost barrier

When employing people with disabilities, many employers will incur a number of costs entailed by workplace facilitation and the need for individualised supervision. Initiatives to reduce such costs will be directed at ensuring that people with disabilities are provided with the necessary assistive technologies and other assistance. Schemes to that end may be aimed at compensating employers for expenditure on assistive technologies and other practical aids together with various forms of supervision.

### 2a Use of facilitation guarantees

In order to ensure that the target group for the Jobs Strategy receives the best possible supervision and facilitation, a written service guarantee will be issued by the Labour and Welfare Service. This guarantee will cover anyone who is about to take up employment, whether in the form of an ordinary position or a place on a labour market programme. Under this guarantee, the Labour and Welfare Service pledges to provide rapid case processing, comprising a needs or working-capacity assessment and individually adapted employment-oriented assistance to the participant and employer. The assistance must be necessary and appropriate. The guarantee will also ensure swift provision and effective coordination of necessary financial instruments (subsidies).

In order to ensure accessibility and support from the Labour and Welfare Service, the guarantee includes a provision whereby both the job-seeker and employer are assigned a regular contact person at the NAV offices for either party to get in touch with if they need advice, guidance or support. An evaluation of this scheme to date indicates that the current guarantee scheme has been

very well received.<sup>11</sup> 11 A facilitation guarantee for the target group in the Jobs Strategy can be tailored to the needs of the individual.

A service guarantee is not a legally-binding agreement concerning financing, but does help to clarify in advance what type of support the parties are eligible for and when such support will be provided. This provides increased security and reduces the risk for both the job-seeker and employer.

The panel of labour market, business and industry representatives indicated in its recommendation that the facilitation guarantee scheme should be allowed to benefit more people. Proposals for a facilitation guarantee were presented by the parties to the work on the IA Agreement, and from 2008, the scheme went nationwide. The facilitation guarantee may include all instruments and initiatives within the Labour and Welfare Service.

### 2b Pilots of workplace facilitation subsidies

Facilitation subsidies currently represent one of the most widely used and popular labour market instruments within the IA area. This instrument is also highlighted in the recommendations received by the Government from user organisations and enterprises.

We currently have a dedicated scheme for IA enterprises linked to secondary goal 1 of the IA Agreement for subsidisation of workplace facilitation for employees on extended sick leave and for employees at risk of having to take sick leave, but who are still working. As part of the Jobs Strategy, a new nationwide pilot scheme of

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<sup>11</sup> Rambøll Management: Følgeevaluering av prosjektet "Tilretteleggingsgaranti". Sluttrapport (Post-evaluation of the "Facilitation Guarantee" project: Final Report), August 2008

workplace facilitation subsidies will be implemented for job-seekers with reduced working capacity. The target group for this new scheme will be people with reduced working capacity who are excluded from the labour market. The pilot will be open to all organisations that recruit persons with reduced working capacity.

The purpose, duration and size of the subsidy will be in line with the existing scheme. The subsidy may be used for example in setting up initiatives in the form of job try-outs, facilitation or on-the-job training. Grants may be awarded for training in the form of courses and short training programmes.

Under the pilot scheme, subsidies will also be available for purchasing fixtures and work-related assistive technologies as is the case under the existing scheme for employees on extended sick leave. In the long term, a decision will have to be made concerning the format of financing and organisation of work-related assistive technologies. The expertise at the Assistive Technology Centres may be able to provide advice and guidance and access to technologies to compensate for disabilities. In order to succeed in reducing barriers in society generally and on the labour market specifically, it will be important to adopt new technologies and instruments.

Facilitation involves more than assistive devices and technologies. Advice from the Assistive Technology Centres on solutions and processes in conjunction with the user and employer in order to create integrated solutions is often of great importance.

It is also important to coordinate the use of instruments more effectively, and to ensure that essential facilitation of the workplace is completed rapidly and efficiently. This is carried out via ongoing innovation and development work in the field of assistive technologies. It is important to make use of these technologies in order to ensure that more people with disabilities can gain

employment. A pilot scheme of new facilitation subsidies tailored to the target group in the Jobs Strategy will commence in 2012.

For people with disabilities, it may also be important to arrange for facilitation and adjustment of their working hours in order, for instance, to allow the person to receive treatment or complete a training session during the working day. It is important to demonstrate the range of options open to the employer and employee for arranging effective solutions to suit each particular job. The Government wishes to raise awareness of the possibilities afforded by the current regulations.

Provided that it causes no significant inconvenience to the employer, it is, for example, permissible for employees to work outside of the usual working hours of 8am to 4pm. Through the facilitation subsidy, the employer will be eligible for compensation of the costs entailed by various adjustments to the work situation.

## **2c** Provision of assistive technologies

In 2011, the Labour and Welfare Service will be establishing a new resource centre for assistive technologies and facilitation. The main constituents of the centre include what were formerly specialist units for ICT-based assistive technologies and the NAV Centre for occupational rehabilitation. One of the principal objects of setting up the centre is to provide requirements and respond to challenges within the Labour and Welfare Service entailed by the more extensive employment-orientation of the initiative.

It will be necessary to intensify efforts in the areas of employment and education in both the user-oriented and system-oriented programmes. The resource centre mentioned above will be a source of support for both the Assistive Technology Centres and the NAV offices' professional competence development programmes. Initiatives to

stimulate extended interdisciplinary cooperation with other units under NAV (NAV office, NAV Workplace Support Centres, employment advisory centres and the Assistive Technology Centres) will be central to tasks undertaken by the resource centre. We would also draw attention to Norwegian Official Report 2010:13 on 'Work for Health', which indicates the need to develop welfare technologies in preventing physical and psychological disorders and sickness absences.

Via the resource centre, the Labour and Welfare Service will be participating in a Nordic innovation network on welfare technology, which the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues has taken the initiative for setting up. The purpose of this network is to promote the sharing of experience concerning welfare technology solutions; more efficient collaboration between researchers and businesses; and the creation of Nordic innovation clusters in priority areas.

## **2d** New mentoring scheme

Different forms of supervision and personal assistance may be crucial in getting more young people with disabilities to join the labour market. Many studies indicate the need for social support and counselling in order to gain and retain employment, especially among persons with musculo-skeletal disorders and mental disorders.

To that end, the Government is proposing to strengthen and update two of the current supervisory schemes: the functional assistance scheme (see separate discussion) and the mentoring scheme. The mentoring scheme is at present a little-known type of supervisory scheme. This is unfortunate, since outcomes of this type of scheme have been positive for many different user groups.

The mentoring scheme is designed to provide supervision for persons taking part in various training schemes and programmes run within ordinary companies, or in the transitional phase

from a scheme to ordinary employment. The scheme provides the labour market programme participant or the employee with essential occupational, social and practical support at the workplace or training location. The mentor may be a co-trainee/co-participant or a co-worker who on an hourly basis provides the support needed for the participant/employee to succeed in accomplishing the tasks entailed by the job or the traineeship.

As of 1 January 2012, a new set of regulations will be put in place for the mentoring scheme, which will comprise persons with impaired working capacity participating in different forms of training and labour market programmes in ordinary businesses, and also persons progressing to ordinary employment status.

The mentoring scheme has aspects in common with the peer learning programmes run by organisations for people with disabilities. Such organisations receive Government subsidies for peer learning programmes linked to employment-oriented initiatives. This subsidy is intended to encourage the organisations to run peer learning programmes for people with disabilities who are participating in employment-oriented initiatives, are leaving employment or who may require job counselling and motivation in order to remain in employment. An evaluation of the subsidy for organisations for people with disabilities is in progress.

## **2e** User-controlled personal assistance

User-controlled personal assistance is a service provision made up of the municipal care services of practical assistance and training.

This form of assistance is intended for persons with extensive disabilities. Basically, the scheme is an arrangement whereby the user is the "supervisor" of assistants retained on a regular basis, and decides, within the number

of hours allocated, what tasks the assistants are to perform and when. The last decade has seen steady growth in the number of users receiving user-controlled personal assistance, from almost 700 in 2000 to more than 2,600 in 2010. Nearly three in five of the users of this form of assistance are under the age of 50.

In future, the Government will be permitting the municipal authorities to extend the user-controlled personal assistance scheme. This will be especially important in enabling people with extensive service requirements to participate in education/training and working life. For further details, please refer to the Ministry of Health and Care Services' budget bill.

## **2f Strengthen the scheme for functional assistance at work**

In 2012, the Government will be strengthening the scheme for functional assistance at work. This scheme comprises persons with extensive physical disabilities, and involves a paid assistant helping the recipient with practical tasks at their place of work.

The Government's advisory panels have indicated the need for essential workplace facilitation and supervision. The Government will consequently be extending the pilot scheme of functional assistance at work and regulating the pilot in a separate set of regulations.

Econ has evaluated this scheme.<sup>12</sup> The evaluation indicates that the functional assistance at work scheme helps persons with severe disabilities to gain and retain employment. Users of the scheme report satisfaction with the scheme, stating that it meant a great deal to their ability to work.

## **2g Improve opportunities for people with disabilities to start their own business**

In the ministerial letter of instruction to Innovation Norway, the Government's main instrument for innovation and development of Norwegian enterprises and industry, the value-creation potential of entrepreneurs with disabilities will receive specific mention. It is important that applications from people with disabilities are considered on an equal basis with those from other applicants.

## **2h Pilot of occupational and educational travel**

Facilitated transport may be of great significance in enabling people with disabilities to gain or retain employment. The pilot scheme of occupational and educational travel is a support programme for people with disabilities who are unable to make use of public transport or a private vehicle. This scheme is intended to cover needs-assessed travel expenses in order to attend work or education.

An evaluation of the pilot scheme for occupational and educational travel has been launched in order to map the socioeconomic consequences of the scheme, and the nature of the needs covered by the scheme vis-à-vis other established transportation schemes. The evaluation report is due in 2012. Based on this, the Ministry will be deciding on further alignment of the scheme. The present pilot scheme will be continued in 2012.

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<sup>12</sup> ECON: Med litt bistand kan flere jobbe. Evaluering av ordningen med funksjonsassistanse i arbeid. Rapport 2008-039 Econ: Med litt bistand kan flere jobbe. Evaluering av ordningen med funksjonsassistanse i arbeid. Rapport 2008-039 ("With a bit of help more people can work. Evaluation of the functional assistance at work scheme. Report 2008")

### 3. Initiatives to reduce the productivity barrier

Even with effective facilitation and close supervision of the individual and the enterprise, many prospective employers believe that people with disabilities will have less capacity for work and lower productivity than other employees. The organisations may therefore feel that they are running a financial risk if they have to bear the full salary costs of recruiting people with unstable or permanently impaired capacity for work.

For both the employer and job-seeker, work performance and productivity will be an unknown factor until the candidate's capacity for work has been put to the test in an actual work setting. For the enterprise, incorrect assessment of the candidate's capacity for work will constitute a risk in terms of unforeseeable costs, while the candidate himself/herself risks public failure. Both enterprises and job-seekers themselves consequently need labour market schemes that can reduce this mutual risk or uncertainty.

One way of reducing this barrier is by using various public-sector wage subsidies or ensuring that persons with a weak educational background receive the necessary training and vocational experience.

#### 3a Cover a proportion of employer salary expenses

Use of existing wage subsidy schemes will serve to cover part of employers' salary expenditure on people with disabilities. Subsidised labour market programmes in ordinary companies can be combined with different types of supervision and facilitation when necessary and appropriate.

Within the funding allocation for labour market initiatives for 2012, people with disabilities under the age of 30 with a need for employment-

oriented assistance will be given priority when places on labour market programmes are awarded. This will entail an intensified and more targeted effort as a whole for this age group. The existing wage subsidy schemes will be a core component of the employment-oriented service to the target group.

#### 3b Initiatives in education and training

The Government emphasises the importance of having strategies and initiatives in place for kindergartens, secondary school education and higher education. Initiatives and strategies to improve learning and education aim to reach all groups of children, pupils, apprentices/trainees and students. Sound, mainstream schemes are important in giving people with disabilities good prospects for completing training and education. Special schemes and interventions supplement mainstream schemes as and where necessary to provide different groups of pupils, apprentices/trainees and students with equal opportunities for completing training and education.

The white paper, Report no. 18 to the Storting (2010-2011) *Learning together*, sets out the Government's strategy for early interventions and sound learning settings for children, young people and adults with special needs. The report emphasises the importance of kindergartens and schools improving their capacity to identify and follow up on those who require help and support. If kindergartens and schools are to succeed in catering to a diversity of children's and young people's needs and abilities, more specialised and targeted competence will be required.

The quality of special needs educational assistance and special needs teaching must be improved. Kindergartens and schools are to have good access to integrative special needs educational support nationwide, among other things, by giving the National Support System for Special Needs Education (Statped) a more multidisciplinary service profile. Improved information and cooperation for users of the local, regional and national service system is a priority area. Cooperation with parents of children who need special help and assistance must also be improved through information and coordination.

In response to the white paper, Report no. 18 to the Storting (2010-2011) *Learning together*, the Ministry of Education and Research will be requesting its Directorate of Education and Training to prepare target figures and implement initiatives to recruit more people with disabilities to positions within the National Support System for Special Needs Education (Statped).

For the Government, enabling more young people to complete upper secondary education is a prime objective. NY GIV is a three-year project that aims to establish long-term cooperation between central, regional and local government authorities to improve the prospects of pupils for successfully completing upper secondary education. These efforts will also benefit pupils with disabilities.

Under the Universities and Colleges Act, Norwegian higher education institutions are given responsibility for their students' learning environment. This applies equally to students with disabilities. Under Section 4-3 of the Act, the institutions shall ensure that the learning environment is designed according to the principle of universal design. This means that it must be laid out and equipped in such a way that

all students, irrespective of their functional ability, are able to complete higher education with minimal use of special needs solutions. The institutions shall assign liaison officers to students with disabilities. This service shall provide information about study centre and study facilitation. In addition, at a number of institutions, careers centres have been established to provide advice and counselling to students progressing to employment. This is a provision from which students with disabilities also stand to benefit.

In order for people with disabilities to be able to participate in and complete higher education, in some areas it is important for the surroundings to be specially adapted for this group. Special schemes in studies financing have long been available for students with disabilities. In recent years, the Government has improved studies-financing for people with disabilities. In 2009-2010, the definition of eligibility for the special schemes was amended, and as of 2011-2012, additional initiatives have been introduced to enable more people with disabilities to pursue higher education.

Students who are unable to take on paid employment alongside their studies or during the summer holidays are eligible for a monthly scholarship and an educational grant to cover the summer months as well as term time. Students whose education is delayed because conditions at their place of education have not been adapted to the student's disability are entitled to receive the entire student grant as a scholarship if their studies are delayed by more than a year.

## 4. Initiatives to reduce the information and attitudinal barrier

People with disabilities often tend to be overlooked as a source of labour. Negative attitudes and a lack of information may constitute a barrier to job-seekers with disabilities. These barriers exist among the population as a whole, among employers, co-workers etc. But among people with disabilities themselves, there may also be attitudes and lack of information that constitute a barrier to gaining employment.

Eligibility for employment-oriented benefits is conditional on the person being registered with the Labour and Welfare Service. It is therefore important for the individual to actually make contact with the Service.

The information and attitudinal barrier can be reduced, for example, by establishing new settings for trying out capacity for work, for on-the-job training and work participation for people with no previous work experience. The barrier can also be reduced through labour market initiatives that promote proactive opinion-forming and awareness-raising among different stakeholders and groups in society.

### 4a Increase the number of places on work-experience programmes

As part of the Jobs Strategy, special priority will be given to providing places on work-experience programmes in ordinary working life. The object is to give young people with disabilities who have no previous experience of working an opportunity to try out an ordinary job, if only for a short period. The government proposes that 500 places be allocated specifically for the strategy's target group. These will include places on work-experience programmes.

### 4b Partnering with local authorities

Work-experience places offer both enterprises and people with disabilities useful experience. Local authorities are major employers with many tasks and opportunities, and even now have a higher proportion of people with disabilities among their staff than the private sector or governmental sector. A joint project has been initiated with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities on further contributions by the municipal sector. An assessment will be made of whether this can be realised within the frameworks of the labour market programme for 'work experience in an ordinary enterprise'. The object is to give job-seekers with disabilities essential work experience and training.

### 4c Trainee programmes within governmental enterprises

In 2011, the Government launched the third trainee programme for people with disabilities and higher education. The object of the programmes has been to recruit qualified employees to governmental enterprises and to offer intensive training in order to improve their employment prospects. Another object has been to increase the competence and experience of state employers as regards recruitment and facilitation for this group.

One important outcome of the programmes has been the success in raising awareness that many people with disabilities constitute a valuable resource in enterprises that make high demands regarding professionalism, pace and quality. In many enterprises there was formerly limited experience with this group, and many managers have benefited from gaining more experience of

the necessary workplace facilitation. Many managers found it an eye opener that disabilities soon faded into the background where there was a good match between qualification requirements and trainee competencies.

Experiences of the trainee programmes have been evaluated in research reports by the Fafo research foundation and the Work Research Institute, and will hopefully serve as an encouragement to enterprises in other sectors.

The Government is proposing that the trainee programme be established as a permanent scheme, and that a new programme of calls to invite enterprise participation be launched in 2012.

#### **4d** Places on work-experience programmes within governmental enterprises

In line with the panels' recommendations, the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs will be assessing the possibility of involving governmental enterprises more actively in creating places for on-the-job training and traineeships.

#### **4e** Dedicated project manager or coordinator positions within the Labour and Welfare Service

Effective implementation and follow-up of the Jobs Strategy will be essential in increasing the transition to employment among people with disabilities. Extensive clarification will be carried out by means of working capacity assessments, and an appropriate employment-oriented assistance scheme will be designed for persons who often have little or no work experience. This

drive will require dedicated staff resources and development of targeted expertise within the Labour and Welfare Service. The Government therefore proposes appointing dedicated project managers or coordinators in each county and within the Directorate of Labour and Welfare Service linked to the Jobs Strategy.

The Labour and Welfare Service's systematic investment in methodology development and competence development is key to enhancing the Service's capability. In order to direct and coordinate this work, staff resources will be required for supervision and follow-up. Additional staffing will permit consolidation, anchoring and follow-up of the Jobs Strategy during the implementation and execution phases.

A scheme involving county coordinators linked to the National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health has been evaluated by the Telemarksforskning research institute. Outcomes were reported as positive. One of the main conclusions is that the county coordinators' role as change agents is decisive in the interests of disseminating information about new initiatives within the Labour and Welfare Service.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4f** New positions within the Labour and Welfare Service as workplace support coaches

A lack of know-how and experience in retaining employees with disabilities may cause many employers to regard it as risky to hire young people with disabilities. A trial project of employer pilots under the National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health (2007-2012) has been evaluated by the Work Research Institute. Experiences of this trial project indicate that employers have received excellent assistance from the pilots and have been extremely pleased with

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<sup>13</sup> Geir Møller, Bent Aslak Brandtzæg & Joar Sannes: "Evaluering av fylkesvise koordinatorstillinger i NAV og bruk av øremerkede tiltaksmidler". Telemarksforskning. Rapport 238. 2007. (Evaluation of county coordinator positions within NAV and the use of earmarked scheme funding.)

the expert support provided in demanding individual cases and at system level. The employer pilot scheme represents a type of expertise that is in high demand because it is rarely available at the workplace <sup>14</sup>

#### **4g In-house professional competence development programme within the Labour and Welfare Service**

The Government is proposing to create a dedicated specialist and competence development programme to tie in with the Jobs Strategy. The object is two-fold:

(1) To provide courses and other training for employers and other stakeholders on the labour market. This model has been used previously under the National Strategic Plan for Work and Mental Health (2007-2012) for the Workplace Support Centres (a course called "*Sees i morgen*" (See you tomorrow)). Experiences from this programme have been positive.

(2) To launch a dedicated competence development programme for staff within the Labour and Welfare Service, which the Service will be responsible for developing in close cooperation with organisations representing people with disabilities and the social partners. The project manager/coordinator positions will also be involved in this activity.

#### **4h Information about the Jobs Strategy**

In order to realise the objectives of the Government's Jobs Strategy for people with disabilities, it is important to disseminate information about the strategy's goals and instruments. Special funds have consequently been earmarked for this purpose. Dissemination of information can be carried out through information channels within the Labour and Welfare Service, via the social partners or organisations representing people with disabilities.

Dissemination of information is a key means of reaching both people with disabilities who are looking for work and employers looking to hire or offer places on labour market programmes to young people with disabilities. It is also important to keep user organisations and other affected stakeholders informed of work on the strategy.

#### **4i Action areas within governmental employer policy**

With its responsibility for overall employer policy within the state, the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs is especially committed to supporting enterprises in their efforts to attain its sector-specific objectives. To that end, the Ministry of Administration, Reform and Church Affairs is committed to promoting greater awareness that diversity in human resources policy is conducive to goal-attainment within core tasks.

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<sup>14</sup> Angelika Schafft & Øystein Spjelkavik: "Arbeidsgiverlos - evaluering av pilotprosjekt". Underveisrapport. AFI notat nr. 6. 2010 (employer pilots - mid-term evaluation report on the pilot project. Work Research Institute report no. 6 2010)

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#### 4j Follow-up and evaluation of the Jobs Strategy

Systematic follow-up of the strategy is essential in monitoring that the strategy is being executed as intended and the extent to which it contributes to increased employment of the target group. Follow-up will be two-pronged: the Directorate of Labour and Welfare will be reporting on results achieved and an external evaluation will be launched of strategy execution and impacts.

The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has taken the initiative for conducting a socioeconomic analysis of the costs and benefits of increasing the employment rate among people with disabilities.

#### 4k Joint job listings

The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has joined forces with an organisation that represents young people with disabilities in which all job listings from the Ministry will be published on the organisation's website; [www.jobbessurs.no](http://www.jobbessurs.no). The aim is for the job listings to reach as many of the website's readers as possible and thereby help to procure a broader recruitment pool for the Ministry.



# Appendix 2



# Disability and impaired working capacity

A *disability or functional impairment* denotes an individual's physical, mental or cognitive abilities and functioning. Physical functions pertain to mobility, sight or hearing function, or chronic conditions such as allergy, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease etc. Mental functions comprise the ability to control thoughts, emotions and behaviour and the ability to adapt to changes and cope with adversity. Examples of cognitive functions include capacity for mental processes such as language, recall, problem-solving, and the acquisition of skills and experience.

Traditionally, a disability or functional impairment was regarded as an attribute of the individual. It was formerly closely bound up with a medical perspective, in which disability was regarded as a consequence of disease, damage or injury. Within the last 20 years, the biomedical perspective has been challenged by the principle that this perspective fails to take sufficient account of the society that surrounds the individual.

The definition we now apply to disability or functional impairment is relational. It is informed by the relationship between the individual's functional ability and the requirements made by both the physical and the social surroundings of the individual in different life phases. A disability or functional impairment arises when a gap or mismatch exists between the individual's abilities and the requirements made by the environment or society regarding functional ability in areas that are significant in establishing and maintaining independence and a social existence. A disability or functional impairment need not therefore imply limitations on societal participation, since this will be determined by the degree of facilitation and universal design present in society and working life.

## ***People with impaired working capacity and people with disabilities***

Norwegian welfare legislation, public documents and surveys variably use the expressions *persons with impaired working capacity* and *people with disabilities*. Unlike people whom the public-sector assistance system, through various surveys, conclude as having impaired working capacity, *people with disabilities* tend as a group to be associated with personal perceptions of disability and are hence defined by subjective opinion. In practice, this group tends to overlap with the group of people with impaired working capacity, but a person may well have a disability without this affecting his or her working capacity to any significant extent.

## ***Statistics Norway's Labour Market Survey***

Persons included as having a disability (the original Norwegian term in the survey means 'functional impairment') in the Statistics Norway Labour Force Survey include those who perceive themselves as having a disability, based on the following question: "A disability is taken to mean physical or mental health problems of an enduring nature that may cause limitations in daily life. Examples might include severe sight impairment or hearing, reading or writing problems, mobility impairment, heart or lung problems, a psychological developmental disorder, a mental disorder or other problems or conditions. In your opinion, do you have a disability?"

As such, Statistics Norway's survey is based on the respondents' subjective opinion. The survey also asks what type of disability/impairment or health problem the respondent has.





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