

Ministry of Labour and Social  
Inclusion

Action Plan

# In Charge of Your Own Life

- Strengthened Efforts against Negative Social Control  
and Honour-Motivated Violence

2025-2028



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# Foreword

*“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”*

*Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Everyone has the right to enjoy a life of freedom and safety. As a society, we have a responsibility to protect against threats, coercion and violence. This is what our efforts to prevent and combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence are about. Protecting the fundamental rights of each individual. This responsibility is rooted in both international human rights and national legislation.

The freedom to decide over one’s own life is a fundamental right for all people. This includes the freedom to choose what you want to be when you grow up, the freedom to marry whoever you want, and the freedom to be who you are – without being subjected to pressure, threats, coercion or violence. Everyone should be able to exercise this right. Unfortunately, this is not currently the case. The Government’s goal is to ensure that Norway is safe and free for all its residents.

The Government is pursuing a policy aimed at providing the population with security for tomorrow and confidence in the future. The Government is seeking to reduce social and geographical disparities, and combat poverty. A society that includes everyone is stronger for

everyone. When we reduce inequalities and ensure equal opportunities, more people have the freedom to enjoy a good quality of life. The Government seeks to build a stronger welfare state to ensure people’s security in everyday life.

We will assist those who are deprived of their basic rights and support those who help others. To achieve this, we need to concentrate our efforts in several areas. We need to co-operate broadly across sectors and administrative levels on preventive measures and competence enhancement in the service system, provide victims assistance and protection and, not least, ensure their legal safeguards.

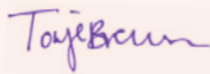
Eight government ministries are co-operating on this Action Plan. We would like to thank the municipalities, county authorities, other public sector actors, and civil society organisations across the country for their input.

The Government is united in its commitment to safeguard the right to life, liberty, and security of person for all. This Action Plan marks an intensification of our efforts.

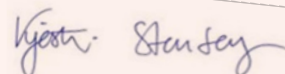
Presented by the Støre Government, 26 May 2025



**Jonas Gahr Støre**  
*Prime Minister*



**Tonje Brenna**  
*Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion*



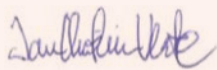
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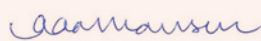
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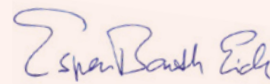
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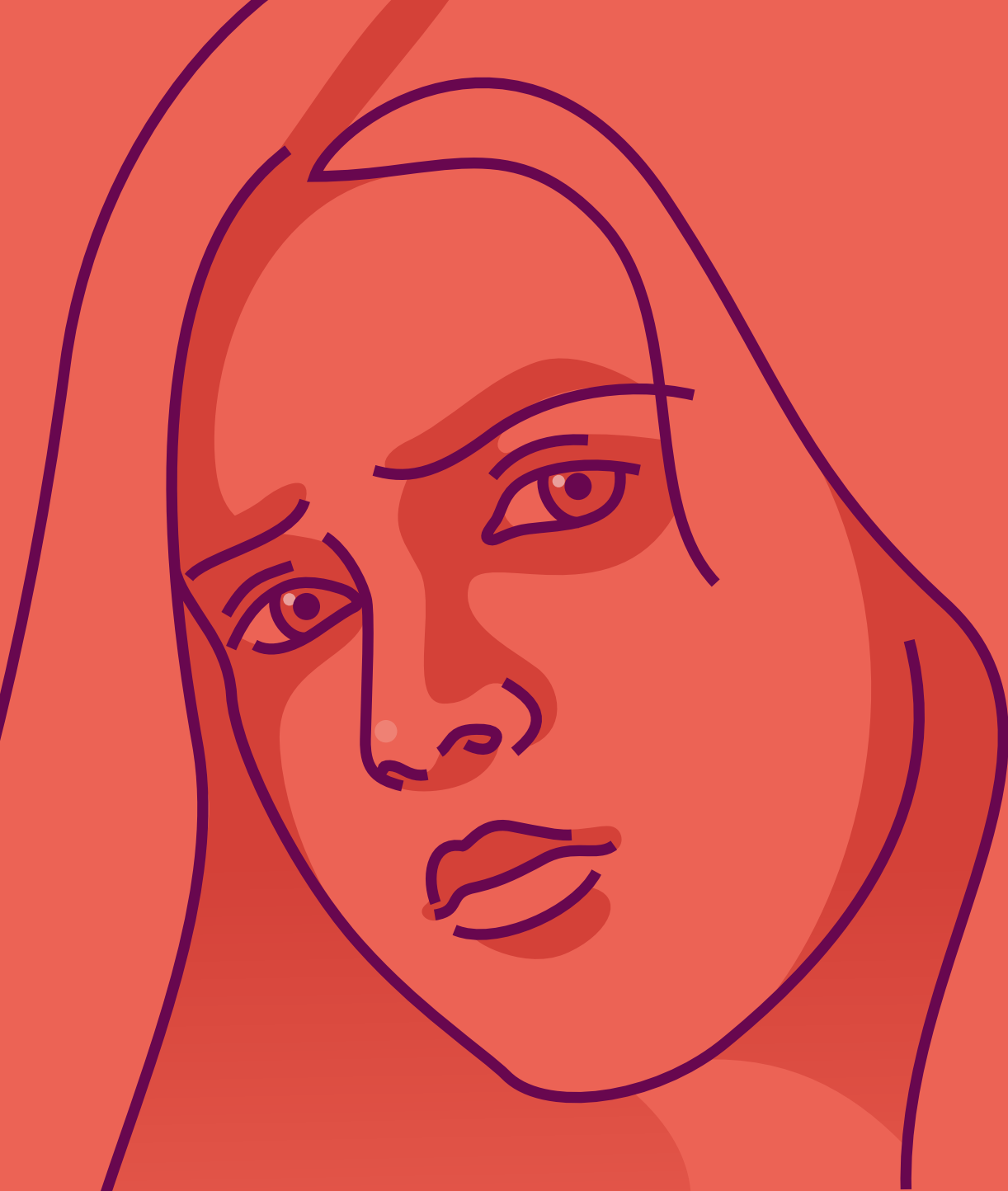
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*Minister of Foreign Affairs*



*"I think about how I wish things were different. I've lost my whole family. I don't have a family. I only have myself. That's just the way it is. I have to live with that. I'm on my own. Not because I've done anything wrong, I've just chosen to be human."*

Youth informant in the report *Negativ sosial kontroll gjennom sosiale medier* [negative social control through social media] (Proba, 2022) (available in Norwegian only)

# Introduction

## Challenges

Being subjected to threats, coercion and violence has serious consequences and can cause long-term physical and psychological harm. It can prevent participation in education and working life, lead to exclusion, and erode trust in society and in other people.

Children and young people who are subjected to negative social control growing up are often deprived of the opportunity to make their own choices. This can make it more difficult to build relationships, navigate society, express oneself and make independent choices based on one's own interests and needs, even into adulthood.

When negative social control is also exercised digitally, it can be ever-present and exercised by individuals across national borders. That is when nowhere is safe.

Legislation is an important policy instrument for protecting people from negative social control and honour-motivated violence. For the law to provide the necessary protection, it must be carefully crafted. We must place responsibility where it belongs, and prosecute those who deprive others of their freedom. In June 2024, a public committee submitted the Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only), which provides a comprehensive review of legislation and legal issues in cases involving negative social control, honour-motivated violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and psychological violence. The report contains a number of recommendations and proposals for legislative amendments to strengthen legal safeguards (see Box 5).

There are no exact figures on how many people are experiencing negative social control and honour-motivated violence, including forced marriage, involuntary stays abroad and female genital mutilation. However, there has been a noticeable increase in cases reported to the national expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence in recent years. In 2024, the expert team provided guidance in 1,402 cases. This represents a 23 per cent increase since 2023. An increase in the number of cases does not necessarily indicate that the scope has expanded. It may also suggest that the specialised services in the field (see Box 3) have become more widely recognised, and that more victims are aware of where they can seek help. Those who are afraid to ask for help, or who are unaware of where to seek it, do not appear in any statistics.

For the victim, reporting violence and threats can lead to significant consequences. A report to the police may result in the person facing further violence and threats or being forced to sever ties with their family. This is one of the reasons why it is believed there are significant unreported cases.

Negative social control and honour-motivated violence are serious societal issues that can occur in various environments and demographic groups. Although negative social control occurs across various groups and environments, it is more prevalent in families with backgrounds from countries where patriarchal and collectivist family structures, as well as conservative attitudes toward gender and sexuality, are more widespread than in Norway. In 2024, the expert team against negative social control and honour-based

violence received the most cases from persons with backgrounds from Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Many people find fellowship and a sense of belonging in religious and life stance communities. In some of these communities, negative social control may also occur, making it difficult to make individual choices and live life as one wishes. The consequences of breaking rules and going against expectations may include being ostracised from the religious community and risk losing contact with family, friends, and other networks.

### Action plans – a structured and targeted effort

Action plans have been a key tool in the efforts against what is now referred to as negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The plans have contributed to structured and targeted efforts, with measures that have led to legislative amendments, the establishment of specialised services, research and competence development.

Forced marriage and female genital mutilation were brought onto the political agenda in the 1990s. In 1995, a penal provision prohibiting female genital mutilation was enacted, and in 2003, Norway introduced a separate penal provision against forced marriage. In the 2000s, several specialised services with expertise in negative social control and honour-based violence were established. A national inter-agency expert team was established, diversity advisors were placed in schools and special representatives on integration issue were stationed at selected foreign service missions. A national team for competence building has also been established in the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). In addition to the specialised services, there are several programmes aimed at victims and the service system (see Box 4).

The aim of this Action Plan is to ensure effective prevention, systematic competence enhancement within the service system, improved support and protection for victims, and stronger legal safeguards in cases involving honour-motivated violence and involuntary stays abroad.

#### **Box 1: The Action Plan is to be understood in the context of the following documents, among others:**

*The Norwegian Government's Action Plan on Gender and Sexual Diversity (2023–2026).*

*Norway's National Action Plan: Women, Peace and Security (2023–2030).*

*NOU 2024: 13 Lov og frihet [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) (see Box 5).*

*Opptappingsplan mot vold og overgrep mot barn og vold i nære relasjoner (2024–2028) [Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse against Children and Domestic Violence (2024–2028) Safety for all] (available in Norwegian only) (see Box 2).*

*The Government's Action plan on racism and discrimination – New initiatives 2024–2027.*

*Handlingsplan for trygg digital oppvekst [Action Plan for a safe digital upbringing] (Norwegian Media Authority, October 2024) (available in Norwegian only).*

*Strategy for Gender Equality 2025–2030.*

*Meld. St. 18 (2024–2025) When trouble strikes abroad - Consular assistance and assistance from the Norwegian authorities in crisis situations abroad, white paper from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

White paper on social equality and mobility (spring 2025)

*Nasjonal strategi mot menneskehandel [National strategy against human trafficking (2025–2030)] (available in Norwegian only)*

National strategy for sexual health (to be launched in 2025)

## Box 2: Opptrappingsplan mot vold og overgrep mot barn og vold i nære relasjoner (2024–2028) Trygghet for alle [Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse against Children and Domestic Violence (2024-2028) *Safety for all*] (available in Norwegian only)

The Government's Escalation Plan addresses violence and abuse against both adults and children. The plan also includes measures against negative social control, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The measures are followed up in parallel with the measures in the Action Plan. Particularly relevant measures are enclosed with this Action Plan.

## Box 3: The specialised services

There are three central government, specialised services that contribute to the prevention of negative social control and honour-motivated violence. These services are described below. The specialised services exist in parallel with the ordinary service system, such as the police, schools, child welfare, and health and care services. The specialised services have a particular responsibility to prevent, identify and follow up individuals who may be experiencing negative social control and honour-motivated violence. They shall also contribute to enhancing competence on the topic within the broader service system and ensure better inter-agency co-operation by acting as an intermediary between various public agencies.

### Expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence

*The expert team* is a national inter-agency team that assists the service system nationwide in cases involving negative social control and honour-motivated violence, including forced marriage, involuntary stays abroad and female genital mutilation. In 2024, the expert team provided advice and guidance in 1,402 cases. The Government has strengthened and expanded the team in recent years.

The team provides competence enhancement and guidance to services and voluntary organisations that interact with victims in their work. Among those who contact the expert team are employees of the child welfare services, the police,

kindergartens, schools, asylum reception centres, health centre and school health services, crisis centres, Norwegian foreign service missions, the Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav) and the Directorate of Immigration (UDI). The expert team also provides guidance to victims on how to receive assistance. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) coordinates the team, which also consists of representatives from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), the Directorate of Immigration (UDI), the National Police Directorate (POD), the Directorate of Labour and Welfare (AVdir), the Directorate of Health (Hdir), and the Directorate for Education and Training (Udir).

### Special representatives on integration issue

There are *special representatives on integration issue* at the Norwegian foreign service missions in Ankara, Amman, Islamabad, and Nairobi. They provide consular assistance to individuals experiencing negative social control, honour-motivated violence, involuntary stays abroad, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. They also contribute to enhancing competence within the foreign service and the service system in Norway to prevent individuals from being sent abroad against their will. In 2024, the special representatives provided advice and guidance in 310 cases.

### Diversity advisors

Just under 70 *diversity advisors* have been deployed at selected lower and upper secondary schools in all of the country's counties, in addition to selected adult education centres. They provide advice and guidance to pupils and carry out preventive measures to make pupils aware of their rights and choices. Another important task of theirs is to enhance the competence of employees in the various support services. In 2024, the diversity advisors provided advice and guidance in 1,031 cases.

In addition to the diversity advisors, IMDi has *a national team for competence building* that works to prevent negative social control and honour-motivated violence through competence enhancement. The efforts of IMDi's national team are mainly aimed at employees in schools that do not have diversity advisors and staff in adult education centres and the refugee services, but the team also offers competence enhancement for other public support services and the voluntary sector.

# Overview of measures

## Priority area 1: Legal safeguards

- 1 Strengthen the legal safeguards of victims of honour-motivated violence, with a particular focus on children and young people (a, b)

*Ministry of Justice and Public Security  
Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 2 Legal regulation of the specialised public services that prevent negative social control and honour-motivated violence and provide assistance in individual cases

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

## Priority area 2: Prevention

- 3 Better prevention – a strengthened diversity advisor programme

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 4 Information about negative social control shall be targeted and easily accessible to those who need it (a, b)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 5 Explore the possibility of residence and self-sufficiency declarations for newly arrived refugees and persons arriving under family immigration (family reunification)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 6 Strengthen opportunities for increased participation in work and education for immigrant women (a, b)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 7 Strengthen the voluntary sector's efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence (a, b)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Culture and Equality*

- 8 Consider integration grants for resettlement

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 9 Strengthen the co-operation between the expert team and the crisis centre services

*Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- 10 Strengthen the assistance offered to perpetrators of violence or persons at risk of committing violence and abuse

*Ministry of Health and Care Services*

- 11 Consider the system of protected address for children in the care of the child welfare services

*Ministry of Children and Families*

- 12 New knowledge about negative social control and honour-motivated violence for more effective measures (a, b, c, d, e, f, g)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Culture and Equality  
Ministry of Health and Care Services  
Ministry of Children and Families*

- 13 Strengthen international co-operation to prevent negative social control (a, b)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

## Priority area 3: Competence enhancement

- 14 Strengthen the service system's knowledge of negative social control and honour-motivated violence (a, b, c)

*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Education and Research*

- 15 Strengthen the child welfare services' competence in cases involving various forms of violence and abuse (a, b, c, d, e)

*Ministry of Children and Families*

16 Enhance the competence of the police and the prosecuting authority  
*Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

17 Increase knowledge and use of specialised outpatient services for women subjected to female genital mutilation (a, b, c)  
*Ministry of Health and Care Services*

18 Further develop co-operation between the specialised services and religious and life stance communities  
*Ministry of Children and Families*

19 Enhance competence in kindergartens, schools, and out-of-school care (SFO) (a, b)  
*Ministry of Education and Research  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

20 Enhance competence on violence and abuse against elderly persons with minority backgrounds  
*Ministry of Culture and Equality  
Ministry of Health and Care Services*

21 Investigate the need for legislative amendments and inform religious and life stance communities about the rules concerning the duty of confidentiality, the duty to avert a criminal act, and notifications to the child welfare services  
*Ministry of Children and Families*

22 Enhance competence on negative social control, honour-motivated violence and female genital mutilation in the health and care services (a, b, c, d)  
*Ministry of Health and Care Services  
Ministry of Education and Research  
Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

23 Strengthen co-operation and knowledge transfer between the services that have measures against human trafficking and the specialised services against negative social control and honour-motivated violence  
*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

24 Enhance competence on negative social control in adult education  
*Ministry of Education and Research  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

#### **Priority area 4: Involuntary stays abroad**

25 Proposal for travel bans etc.  
*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

26 Measures before, during and after an involuntary stay abroad (a, b, c)  
*Ministry of Justice and Public Security  
Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Education and Research*

27 Explore the possibility of suspending public benefits and child benefits in the event of harmful stays abroad  
*Ministry of Children and Families  
Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

28 Investigate the possibility of establishing a right and duty to undergo education and qualification for individuals who have returned to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad  
*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

29 Better safeguarding of individuals subjected to involuntary stays abroad (a, b)  
*Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

### **Box 4: Other specialised schemes**

#### **National Housing and Support Service for individuals over 18 years of age subjected to negative social control and honour-based violence**

*The Housing and Support Service* is for individuals over 18 years of age who are at risk of or have been subjected to forced marriage, honour-motivated violence and/or negative social control and who need a safe place to stay. They may also need support to re-establish themselves. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) coordinates and allocates places in the National Housing and Support Service.

#### **Scheme for coverage of expenses to return to Norway**

Bufdir's expert team reviews applications for the scheme covering expenses related to the return of individuals abroad who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and/or negative social control.

#### **Mentoring scheme for victims**

A mentoring scheme has been established for individuals subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The mentoring

programme offers individuals who have broken away from their families companionship in everyday life and during holidays. The scheme consists of *Mentor Family* under the auspices of the Norwegian Red Cross, the *Together* network under the auspices of Oslo Crisis Centre, as well as projects awarded funding through the Directorate of Integration and Diversity's (IMDi) grant scheme for integration work under the auspices of voluntary organisations. In addition, Bufdir manages *Mentorhub*, a meeting forum for various organisations working with mentoring initiatives aimed at this group.

#### **Regional networks for competence enhancement**

The five Regional Resource Centres on Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (*RVTS*) organise education, guidance and network gatherings on negative social control and honour-motivated violence for employees in the service system throughout the country. A grant scheme has been established, which is available for the country's RVTS centres to apply for. The grant scheme is managed by IMDi and aims to help the ordinary services, such as the police, health services and child welfare services, to gain competence in identifying negative social control, violence and abuse, following up victims and increasing co-operation between the services.

# Terms

## Negative social control

Social control exists in all societies and cultures and is not inherently negative. Social control may be necessary, positive and empowering. The limits of what kind of control parents may exercise over their own children, for example, have changed over time. The main rule in Norwegian law is that parents, by virtue of their parental responsibility, have considerable freedom to make decisions and supervise their children. In principle, parents have the right to raise their children in accordance with their cultural background and religious beliefs. The lines between social or parental control and the forms of social control that are defined as negative are not always clear.

In this Action Plan, the term negative social control is used as an umbrella term that encompasses the use of pressure, surveillance, threats, coercion, or any other measures that systematically restrict a person's self-fulfilment, or repeatedly prevent the person from making independent choices about their own life and future. When assessing whether a pattern of behaviour constitutes negative social control, account must be taken of the age and development of the person subject to control and the principle of the best interests of the child. The purpose of the control may be to ensure that the person lives in accordance with the norms of the family or group, e.g., to preserve or restore honour or reputation. There may also be other motives for the control. This understanding of negative social control aligns with the use of the term in Norwegian Official Report NOU 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only).

## Honour-motivated violence

Honour-motivated violence refers to physical and psychological violence perpetrated against a person with the aim of preventing loss of honour or restoring honour in families, relatives or communities where social standing is considered a collective concern. Honour-motivated violence may include various forms of negative social control and serious criminal offences such as domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honour killings. This is based on the conceptual understanding in Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only).

Honour-motivated violence may occur in families and groups where individuals are expected to conform to the community and where each individual has a responsibility to ensure that the family and group have a good reputation. Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to honour-motivated violence as the honour of the family or group is often linked to the control of women's sexuality, and unwanted behaviour may therefore be perceived as bringing shame to the entire family or group.

*Honour-motivated violence* replaces the term *honour-based violence*, which was previously used. The exception is where *honour-based* is included as part of the name of services or is used in other public documents. This is in line with the terminology used in NOU 2024:13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only), and the Committee's justification:

*"The Committee has chosen to use the term honour-motivated violence or crime rather than honour-based. The reason is that honour as a motive for the criminal act or unlawful conduct is central."*

### Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation is an umbrella term for various procedures that harm the genitalia of girls and women. Female genital mutilation can have severe physical and psychological consequences for those affected, and is often associated with pain, genital discomfort, and sexual problems. Female genital mutilation is prohibited under the Norwegian Penal Code. It is uncertain how many girls and women subjected to female genital mutilation are currently living in Norway, but in 2013, the number was estimated to be around 17,300. These are mainly individuals who were subjected to the procedure prior to moving to Norway.



### Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not have the opportunity to choose to remain unmarried without being subjected to violence, deprivation of liberty, other criminal or unlawful behaviour, or undue pressure. In practice, forced marriage may also entail that the individual does not have the opportunity to break off their engagement or leave their marriage, or choose a partner contrary to the family's wishes, without being subjected to reprisals. Forced marriages are prohibited in Norway, regardless of the person's age and whether the marriage was entered into in Norway or abroad.

Non-legal marriages are not recognised as marriages under Norwegian law, but are marriage-like relationships entered into in accordance with religious or cultural traditions,

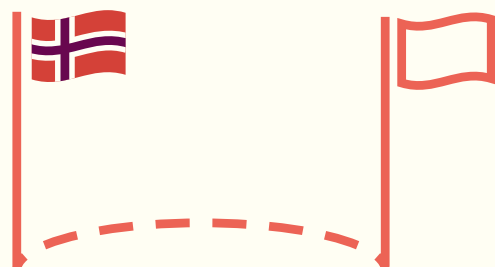
in Norway or abroad. Such arrangements may be perceived and treated as a marriage by the parties themselves, and their community, as well as in the parties' countries of origin. Non-legal forced marriages are prohibited under the Norwegian Penal Code, in the same way as forced marriages.

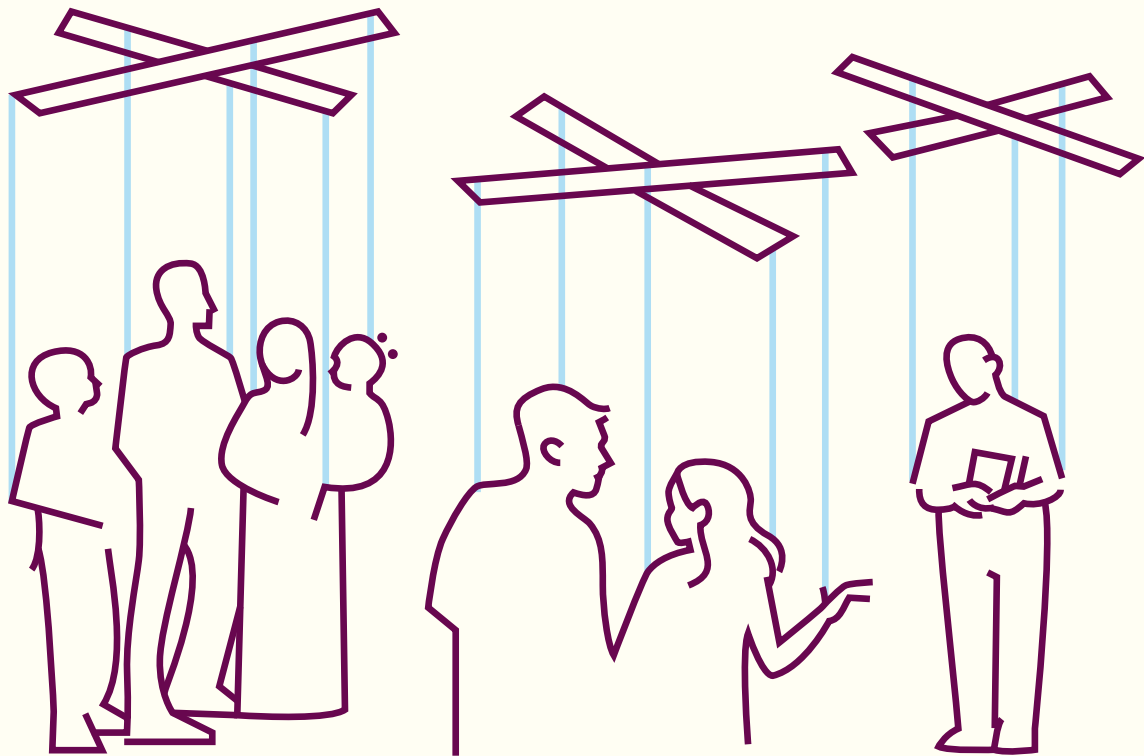
### Child marriage

Child marriage means that one or both of the parties to the marriage are under 18 years of age. The Norwegian Marriage Act sets an absolute age limit of 18 years for entering into marriage in Norway. As a general rule, marriages entered into abroad where one or both parties were under the age of 18 are not recognised in Norway. A child marriage entered into with a person under the age of 16 is prohibited under the Norwegian Penal Code.

### Involuntary stays abroad

Involuntary stays abroad is a serious form of negative social control and involves a person being sent, taken or left behind abroad against their will. In line with the terminology used in Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) this Action Plan uses both the term *involuntary stay abroad* and *harmful stay abroad* to describe several different situations that children and adults may experience when staying abroad. As for children, the term *involuntary stay abroad* refers to cases where the child's stay abroad falls outside the scope of the parents' decision-making authority under their parental responsibility, as set out in Chapter 5 of the Norwegian Children Act.





Involuntary stays abroad can cause physical and psychological harm. *Harmful stay abroad* is used in this Action Plan to describe situations where individuals are at risk of, or are subjected to, harmful acts while abroad. Harmful acts include forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence and abuse, severe neglect, or the parents actively preventing the child from attending school. A stay abroad may also be involuntary without the affected person being subjected to such harmful acts.

*Involuntary stay abroad* is a broader concept than *harmful stay abroad*. For example, an involuntary stay abroad may include cases where a child or adult has travelled abroad together with a parent, spouse or cohabitant, and the person is deprived of their travel document and left abroad against their will. This can lead to victims missing out on schooling, losing their Norwegian language skills, networks and connection to Norway.

### Particularly vulnerable groups

Research shows that young people with an immigrant background, and especially girls and

women, are vulnerable to being subjected to negative social control. Individuals who break with norms regarding gender and sexuality (LGBT+ people) are also particularly vulnerable. This applies to both those with and without an immigrant background.

Other vulnerable groups may include:

- newly arrived refugees and immigrants
- unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and refugees
- persons with disabilities
- elderly persons living in relationships of dependency
- individuals in certain religious and life stance communities

### The Action Plan's focus areas

With this Action Plan, the Government is further strengthening its efforts to combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence. We are strengthening our efforts in four areas: legal safeguards, prevention, competence enhancement in the service system and involuntary stays abroad.

# Priority area 1

## – Legal safeguards

*The Government will strengthen the legal safeguards of children, young people and adults subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence.*

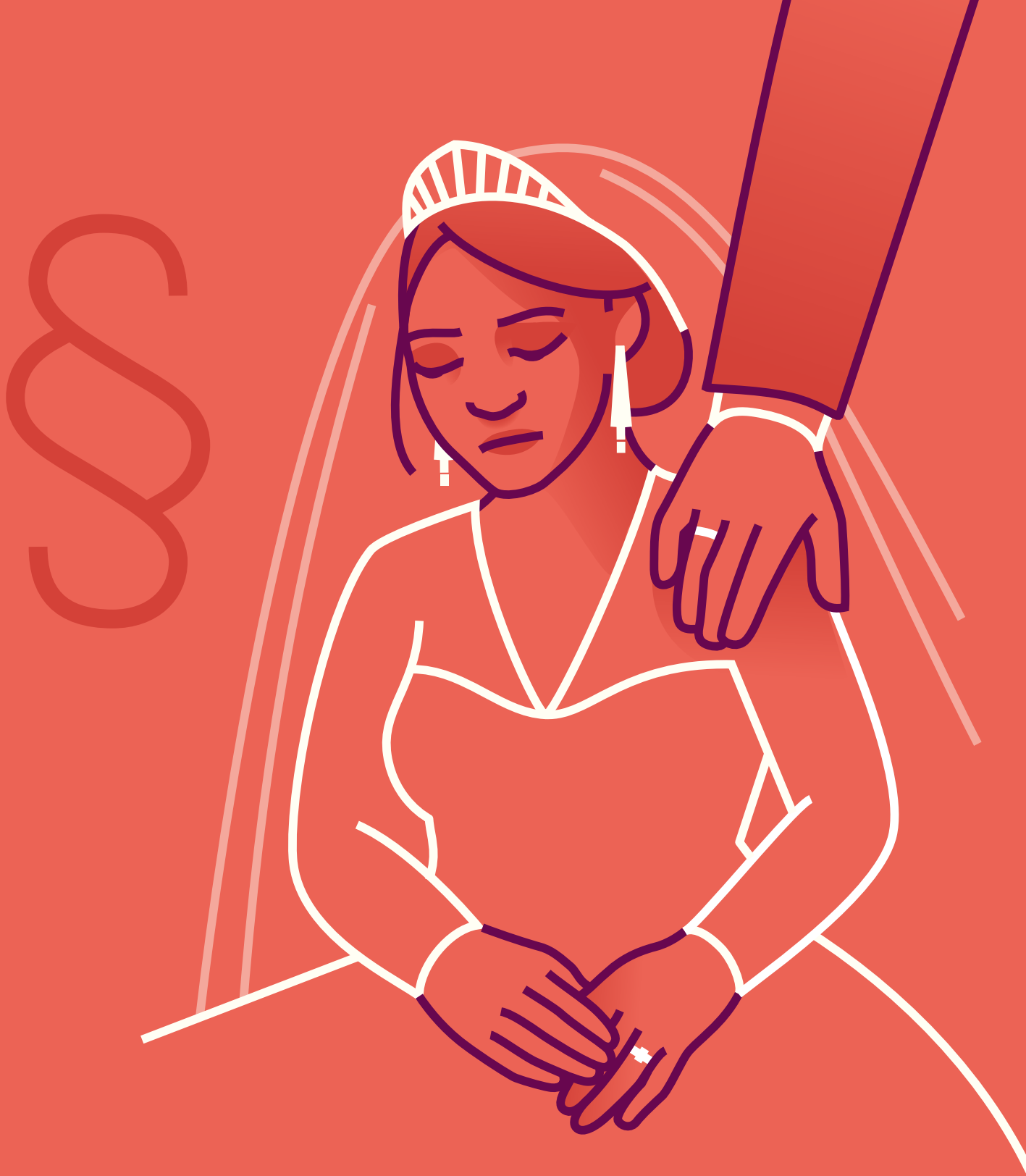
The Government is strengthening its efforts and proposing several legal measures to prevent and combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence. Norwegian Official Report (NOU) (2024) 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) is an important basis for the Government's continued efforts. The Committee has made a number of specific recommendations and proposals for legislative amendments to strengthen the legal safeguards of individuals at risk of or subjected to negative social control, honour-motivated violence, and similar practices. The report shows that legislation is indeed an important part of the broad range of measures aimed at protecting the right to freedom and safety from negative social control and honour-motivated violence.

For the Government, the goal is to criminalise more serious acts and ensure that those who commit honour-motivated violence, force others

into marriage, or subject children to female genital mutilation are held accountable. The Government also wants a targeted effort for children and young people who are, or are at risk of being, subjected to such acts.

Norway was among the early countries to adopt its own penal provisions criminalising female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and in recent years several legislative amendments have been adopted that have strengthened the legal safeguards of victims, including the following:

- The penal provision on forced marriage has been amended so that it also applies to non-legal forced marriages.
- The duty to avert a criminal act under the Norwegian Penal Code has been extended to include the averting of forced marriages and marriages involving children under 16 years of age, including non-legal marriages involving children under 16.
- A prohibition has been introduced against marriages between first cousins, and the Norwegian Marriage Act has been strengthened to combat child marriages.



*“You know, dad was afraid for us girls back then, and for the honour and all that. I remember hearing my dad talking on the phone about how he was going to marry me off.”*

*Young girl, informant in the report Det var ikke bare ferie [It wasn't just a holiday] by the Expert Group on Children and Young People Who Are Left Abroad Against Their Will (2020) (available in Norwegian only).*

**Box 5: NOU 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only)**

In September 2021, a public committee led by Professor Henriette Sinding Aasen was appointed. The committee was mandated to investigate the overall legal issues in cases concerning negative social control, honour-based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and psychological violence. The committee submitted its report Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) on 21 June 2024. The report provides a comprehensive review of the legal issues in cases involving negative social control and the extent to which victims have adequate legal safeguards.

The law committee has made a number of recommendations and more than 60 specific proposals for legislative amendments, including:

- important clarifications of key terms such as *negative social control*, *honour-motivated violence* and *involuntary stay abroad*.
- amendments to the Norwegian Penal Code, including that the provisions on domestic abuse are better adapted to the special features of honour-motivated violence cases. Furthermore, that forced marriages and child marriages be included as purposes of exploitation in the provision on human trafficking. A stricter and more comprehensive provision on child marriage is also proposed, which highlights the motive of honour as an aggravating circumstance.
- measures and regulations in the Norwegian Children Act and the Norwegian Child Welfare Act, including that emphasis be placed on whether the child's right to participation and self-determination has been seriously violated when assessing whether there is reason to believe that a child is being subjected to serious neglect.
- measures before, during and after an involuntary stay abroad, including proposals for a travel ban in the Norwegian Child

Welfare Act and aftercare for at-risk children. There are also proposed competence enhancement measures regarding the duty to report to the child welfare services when there is reason to believe that a child is or will be subjected to a harmful stay abroad.

The report has been subject to public consultation, and more than 80 *consultation responses* have been received.

**Measure 1: Strengthen the legal safeguards of victims of honour-motivated violence, with a particular focus on children and young people**

The Government believes that the legislative proposals in Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) are an important part of the broad range of measures aimed at protecting the right to freedom and safety from negative social control and honour-motivated violence. There is a need to promptly assess the committee's proposals and implement any legislative changes deemed necessary. During the Action Plan period, the Government will review the proposals in the NOU. This will be a highly prioritised effort.

**a) A targeted effort for children and young people**

The Government wants to implement the necessary legislative changes to strengthen the legal safeguards of children and young people, with particular consideration given to:

- amendments to the regulation of child marriage and whether forced marriage and child marriage should be included as purposes of exploitation in the Norwegian Penal Code's provision on human trafficking.
- better protection measures for children subjected to forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of Children and Families, and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### **b) Strengthen criminal legal protection for victims in cases of honour-motivated violence**

The Government wants to strengthen the criminal legal protection of victims in cases of honour-motivated violence, and will in particular consider:

- amendments to the regulation of honour-motivated crime, and in particular whether the Norwegian Penal Code's provision on domestic abuse should be better adapted to the special features of honour-motivated violence cases.
- whether the group of people who can be prosecuted for contraventions of the Norwegian Penal Code's provision on domestic abuse should be extended.
- whether a motive of honour should be specifically mentioned as an aggravating circumstance in the Norwegian Penal Code.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Justice and Public Security and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### **Measure 2: Legal regulation of the specialised public services that prevent and avert negative social control and honour-motivated violence and provide assistance in individual cases**

The specialised services, described in Box 3, carry out preventive work and provide guidance and assistance in individual cases. The cases often contain highly sensitive information that is collected and shared between multiple public bodies. These services are not specifically regulated in the legislation. An external report concludes that parts of the specialised services do not have an

adequate legal basis for collecting, storing, using and disclosing personal data, and recommends that the processing of personal data be regulated by law.

The Government will submit for public hearing a proposal for legal regulation of the specialised services that prevent and avert negative social control and honour-motivated violence and the safeguarding of privacy.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### **Box 6: Report on honour killings in Norway**

In the intelligence report *Æresdrap i Norge 2020-2022* [honour killings in Norway 2020–2022] (available in Norwegian only), the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) states that the extent of honour killings is difficult to determine both nationally and internationally since homicides are often not registered according to motive, and it can be difficult to distinguish honour killings from other homicides unless honour has been a key part of the investigation.

The report concludes that it is likely that at least 24 honour killings were committed or ordered in Norway in the period 2000–2022. Very few of the cases have been identified, investigated and prosecuted as honour killings by the police and prosecuting authority. The motive of honour is mentioned in the actual judgment in only six of the cases.

Honour killings are organised homicides. In 11 out of 24 cases, there is concrete information that someone other than the perpetrator passively or actively supported or was complicit in the actual homicide. In only one of the cases has an individual been convicted of complicity.

The report points out that honour killings are forewarned homicides. In a majority of the cases, the family was aware of concrete death threats or plans prior to the homicide, and in more than half of the cases, the victim reported the perpetrator for violence or death threats prior to being killed. In six cases, the victim was killed a few months after the incident was reported to the police.

# Priority area 2 – Prevention

*The Government wants to prioritise more systematic and comprehensive preventive efforts.*

The Government aims to prevent negative social control and honour-motivated violence. Being subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence can have significant consequences for physical and mental health and participation in education, work and society. Some will need long-term support and follow-up. Good prevention can spare individuals considerable suffering and society significant costs.

The Government prioritises integration measures and violence prevention. This includes early intervention, access to advice and guidance and accessible information about laws, rights and duties – and opportunities for participation in various social arenas.

Prevention includes efforts to reduce the incidence of negative social control and honour-motivated violence. This involves, among other things, minimising harmful effects and preventing recurrence. Safety measures and measures aimed at perpetrators are therefore also part of the preventive efforts.

The voluntary sector plays an important role in preventive efforts. The voluntary sector fulfil several roles and in many situations serves as an important link between victims and the ordinary service system. Good co-operation between the voluntary sector and the public sector helps to ensure that more people receive assistance at an early stage.

Norway has a long tradition of knowledge-based policy. In order to develop effective measures against negative social control and honour-motivated violence, we require up-to-date knowledge. Negative social control and honour-motivated violence is a global problem, and international knowledge development and sharing of experiences are important to further develop efforts.

The Government is focussing its measures on the following areas:

- Early intervention and participation
- Information about rights, legislation and support services
- New knowledge
- International co-operation



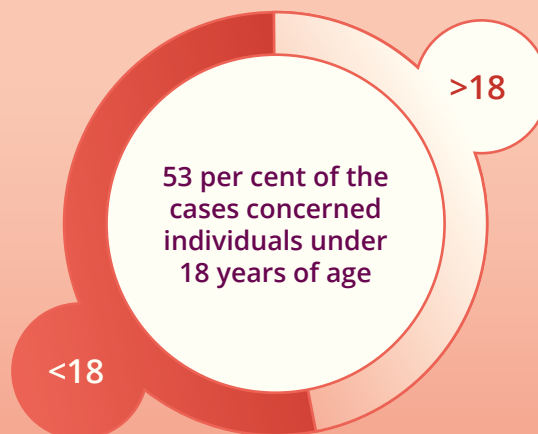
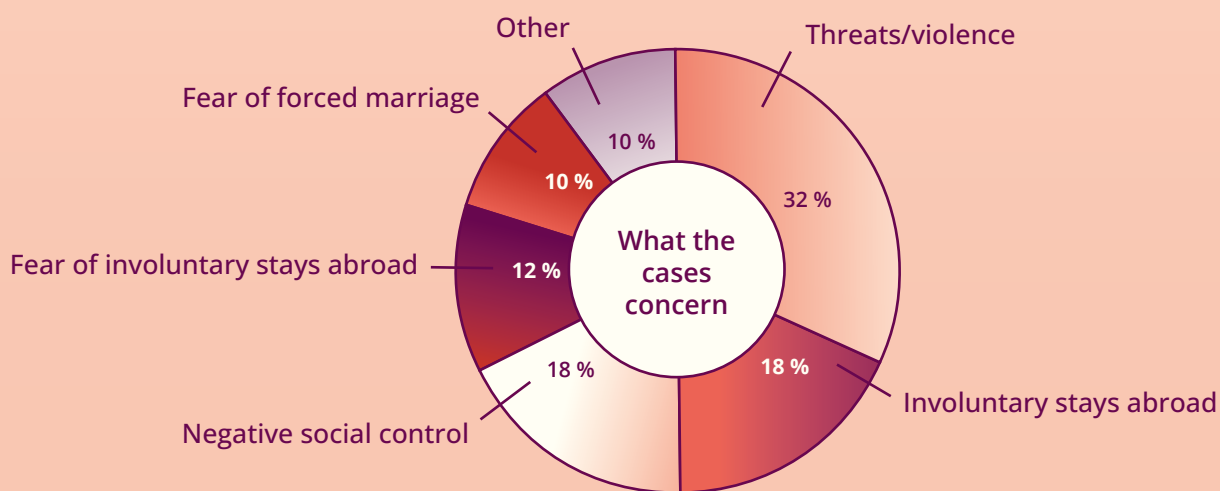
*“My job is to ensure the well-being of the pupils. I’m there for small things, and if they get used to me being there for small things, they’ll eventually come to me for big things. They come with everything from “can you open the lift?” to “mum and dad are beating me.”*

*Social work associate, informant in the report *Negativ sosial kontroll på skolen* [negative social control among pupils in a school context] (Proba, 2024) (available in Norwegian only)*

### Number of cases to the specialised services against negative social control and honour-based violence



### Cases to the national expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence in 2024



### **Measure 3: Better prevention – a strengthened diversity advisor programme**

There are just under 70 diversity advisors at lower and upper secondary schools in all of the country's counties, and at some adult education centres. They provide advice and guidance to pupils at the schools where they work, and also assist with competence enhancement and guidance at schools that do not have diversity advisors.

Several reports and recommendations have been published that are relevant to the work of strengthening prevention, including NOVA's follow-up evaluation of a trial involving diversity advisors at lower secondary schools and adult education centres. Among other things, the report recommends that greater emphasis be placed on preventive efforts; in lower secondary schools through co-operation with parents and in adult education through knowledge about the role of parents and the rights of children and adults in Norway.

The Government will continue to develop the diversity advisors scheme as part of its preventive efforts. Particular attention will be given to how to strengthen efforts related to parents and schools that do not have diversity advisors.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### **Measure 4: Information about negative social control shall be targeted and easily accessible to those who need it**

There are already online resources and services available on the topic, but they may be perceived as fragmented and insufficiently known. Reports also point to the need for targeted information programmes aimed at newly arrived immigrants, young men and parents.

The Government will:

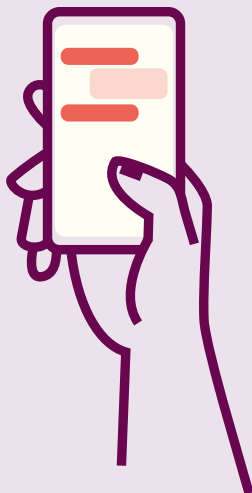
- a)** increase awareness of existing online resources and services. The measure will also contribute to better coordination of information initiatives.
- b)** develop information initiatives that are particularly targeted at newly arrived immigrants, young men and parents. The information initiatives will include an explanation of negative social control, the consequences of being subjected to it, how to prevent and help, as well as relevant rights and laws in Norway.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### **Box 7: Negative social control on social platforms**

Negative social control is also exercised on social media and digital platforms. Control may be exercised by family members, romantic partners, friends and other members of the same community, both in Norway and from abroad.

Digital negative social control and honour-motivated violence can occur in all channels used for communication. Social media such as Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook are examples of arenas where negative social control occurs, through unwanted disclosure, or threats of disclosure, of photos or videos, rumour spreading, defamation, exclusion, pressure to share photos, demands for money and services, or surveillance and control through location functions.



Effective prevention depends on the service system being aware that negative social control can also occur on digital platforms. Parents should also be familiar with children's digital lives, and digital services must be properly regulated for children.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children's well-being and that their rights in both the digital and physical environment are safeguarded. Striking the balance between protection and children's right to privacy can be challenging. Parents can monitor search history, check content on mobile phones and track their children's movements via GPS on mobile phones and smartwatches. Parents secretly tracking their children can jeopardise children's right to privacy and the trust between children and parents. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child warns against routine surveillance of children and young people.

The Government has initiated work to strengthen efforts to ensure that children and young people enjoy a safe digital upbringing:

- The Government will present a white paper on the digital upbringing of children and young people. The white paper on a safe digital upbringing will contribute to a comprehensive policy in this area. The report will explore both opportunities and challenges related to the digital everyday life of children and young people.
- The Government wants to set an age limit of 15 years for when children can independently consent to social media processing their personal data. The government also aims to introduce legislation setting an absolute age limit for social media and is continuing to work on how this can be implemented.

**Measure 5: Explore the possibility of residence and self-sufficiency declarations for newly arrived refugees and persons arriving under family immigration (family reunification)**

The aim is for newly arrived immigrants to be integrated into Norwegian society at an early stage and become financially independent. Good Norwegian language skills, knowledge of Norwegian society and formal qualifications are important in order to establish a lasting connection to the labour market. Newly arrived refugees and immigrants can be particularly vulnerable to negative social control and honour-motivated violence, which can hinder their opportunities for integration into Norwegian society. Therefore, it is important that individuals are aware of their rights and duties.

The Government will explore whether a residence and self-sufficiency declaration should be introduced in Norway, which newly-arrived refugees and persons arriving under family immigration must sign, stating that they have received information about key rights, duties and expectations.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 6: Strengthen opportunities for increased participation in work and education for immigrant women**

Employment rates among immigrants are lower than those in the general population. Employment rates among immigrant women are also lower than among immigrant men, although this varies widely between immigrant groups and by country background. Among women from certain countries in Asia and Africa, employment rates are very low, regardless of duration of residency. There is a need for measures that contribute

to increased employment, particularly among women from groups with very low employment rates in Norway. The Government will:

- a) consider strengthening Jobbsjansen, a job opportunity programme. Jobbsjansen is a full-time qualification programme that aims to increase employment among stay-at-home immigrant women who are not covered by other qualification schemes. Through grants for Jobbsjansen-projects, municipalities are able to offer an individually adapted programme. The Jobbsjansen programme has yielded positive results for several years. Based on the results in recent years, it is estimated that 75 per cent of the participants will go directly into work or ordinary education after completing the programme.
- b) consider conducting trials of introduction programmes for women who immigrate under family immigration to reunite with Norwegian and Nordic citizens and individuals with permanent residence permits.

The measures will help immigrant women increase their basic and formal qualifications, with a view to participation in employment or education. Increased participation in the labour market fosters economic independence and allows more people to live free lives.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### Box 8: Voluntary sector

The voluntary sector is an important supplement for the authorities in their efforts to combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The voluntary sector often reaches groups that are hard for the authorities to access. They establish dialogue, offer safe spaces and build trust, thereby lowering the threshold for seeking assistance. The voluntary sector also plays a crucial role in supporting young adults who have severed ties with their families.

There are several organisations that work actively with negative social control, including:

- The Norwegian Red Cross operates the [\*Red Cross helpline on negative social control and honour-based violence\*](#) and provides guidance and support to individuals who are victims of negative social control and honour-motivated violence.
- [\*Hjelpeskilden\*](#) provides assistance to individuals from closed or strict religious environments. They work preventively and provide advice on the process of leaving religious communities, mental health problems, exclusion, negative social control, domestic violence and the rights of the child.
- [\*Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees\*](#) (SEIF) provides assistance to immigrants and refugees. In particular, they assist young people at risk of forced marriage, honour-motivated violence, female genital mutilation and negative social control.
- [\*Equality, Integration, Diversity\*](#) (LIM) promotes immigrants' participation, trust and sense of belonging in Norwegian society. They provide advice and guidance to the public sector on how to identify and avert negative social control. They also give talks at schools about the right to live free lives.

### Measure 7: Strengthen the voluntary sector's efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence

Voluntary organisations are instrumental in the efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence. For most young people, the volunteer sector is a place to meet friends and engage in leisure activities. For others, it is an important low-threshold service that supports people in making difficult and sometimes life-changing choices for their own future.

Therefore, the Government wants to strengthen the voluntary sector with the aim of increasing inclusion and improving prevention:

- a) There is a need for increased competence and guidance on how voluntary organisations can prevent and address negative social control and honour-motivated violence. In co-operation with voluntary organisations, the Government will develop information material and courses that are accessible to and adapted to the sector.
- b) Through the grant scheme *Tilskudd til integreringsarbeid i regi av frivillige organisasjoner* [Grants for integration work under the auspices of voluntary organisations], organisations can apply for project funding for awareness-raising and preventive efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The grant scheme was evaluated in 2024, resulting in recommendations related to the design and management of the scheme. The Government will consider the recommendations of the evaluation.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, and the Ministry of Culture and Equality*

### Measure 8: Consider integration grants for resettlement

It is challenging to arrange secondary settlement for victims of violence and threats when this is necessary. The settlement and resettlement of refugees is a voluntary task for the municipalities. When refugees are settled, the municipalities receive an integration grant from the central government for the first five years. It often takes time for refugees subjected to violence and threats to seek help. If large portions of the integration subsidy have already been disbursed, experience shows that many municipalities refuse to agree to relocation. Refugees who relocate within the integration grant period without an agreement forfeit the right to the introduction programme and introduction benefit. If the relocation has not been agreed, the municipality of relocation may reject an application for social services with reference to the responsibility of the municipality of settlement, unless this is clearly unreasonable. When refugees subjected to violence and threats are denied relocation, the consequences are often prolonged stays in shelters and absence from Norwegian language training and the introduction programme.

The Government will consider extending the right to integration grants to municipalities for the resettlement of newly arrived refugees subjected to threats and violence.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### Measure 9: Strengthen the co-operation between the expert team and the crisis centre services

Victims of negative social control and honour-motivated violence can come into contact with the crisis centres (shelters) during an acute phase to achieve safety.

The expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence can assist the crisis centres with advice and guidance on how to handle such cases, and offer competence enhancement. Not all crisis centres are aware of the assistance the expert team can offer, or of the National Housing and Support Service for individuals over 18 years of age subjected to negative social control and honour-based violence.

The Government wants to strengthen co-operation between the expert team and the crisis centres in cases involving negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The work will help to clarify how the expert team can assist and co-operate with the crisis centres, including in individual cases.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Children and Families, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 10: Strengthen the assistance offered to perpetrators of violence or persons at risk of committing violence and abuse**

Services for perpetrators of violence and persons at risk of perpetrating violence are an important part of violence prevention efforts. There is a need to facilitate equal access to support services and to ensure that treatment is adapted so that individuals from different backgrounds can benefit from the services.

The Directorate of Health has developed a national strategy for the health sector’s work with perpetrators of violence and abuse, and is working on follow-up measures. The overall aim of the strategy is to prevent and reduce violence and abuse in the Norwegian population by focusing more on perpetrators of violence and sexual violence.

The Government wants to strengthen the assistance available to persons who perpetrate or are at risk of perpetrating violence and abuse.

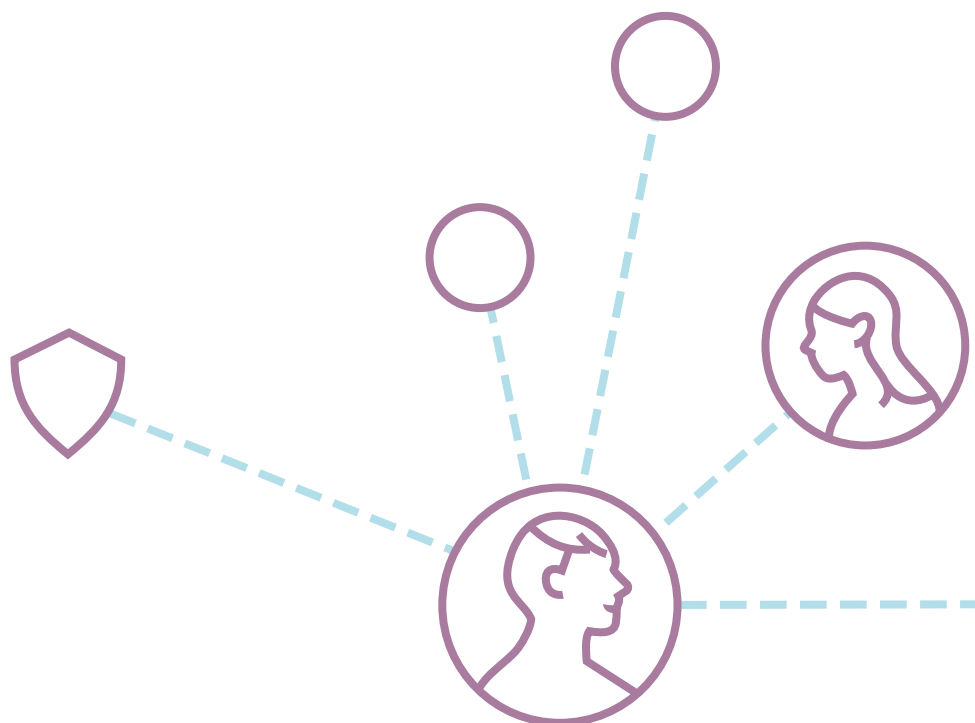
*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**Measure 11: Consider the system of protected address for children in the care of the child welfare services**

Protected address is an intrusive measure, especially for children. A number of people have criticised the current system, including that the legislation appears fragmented and inaccessible, and that the use of protected address should be limited. In the autumn of 2024, NOVA submitted an evaluation of protected address (codes 6 and 7) in cases of domestic violence.

The Government has initiated a review of the situation and will consider how the proposals in the evaluation can best be followed up. The county governors have been asked to ensure that all child welfare services are familiar with their responsibilities and the rules of procedure.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Children and Families*



### Box 9: Various networks for knowledge development

#### Network for knowledge development and competence enhancement

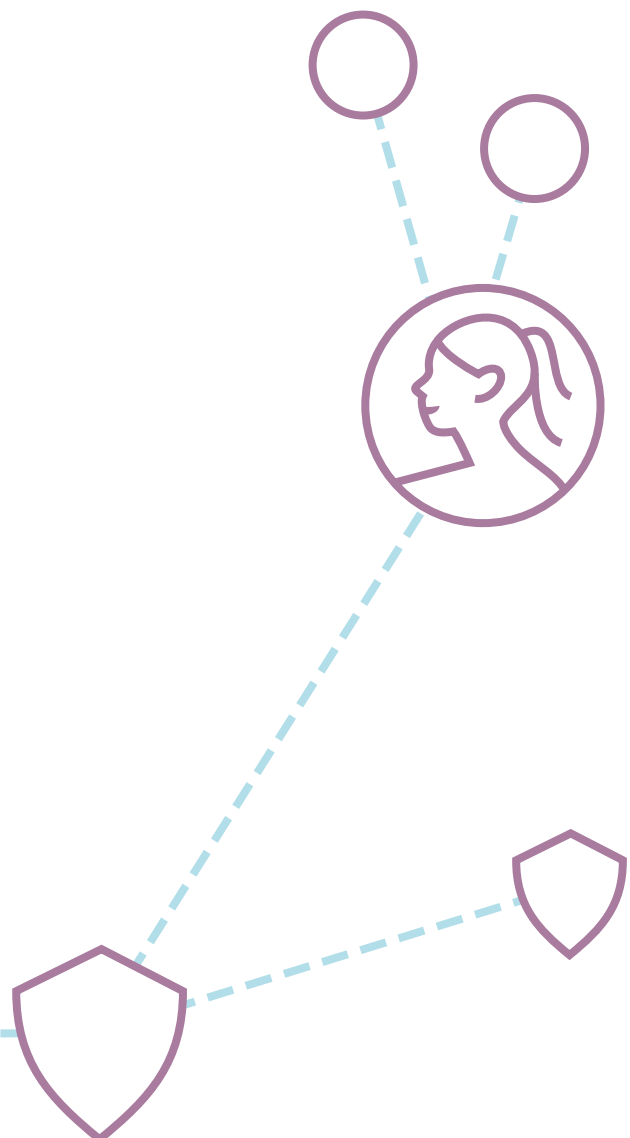
The network will facilitate effective coordination, exchange of experience and co-operation in the efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence. It will also contribute to updating relevant guides and resources and ensure that these are disseminated. The network consists of the Directorate of Labour and Welfare (AVdir), the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir), the Directorate of Immigration (UDI), the National Police Directorate (POD), the Directorate of Health (Hdir), the Directorate for Education and Training (Udir) and is led by the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). The work of the network should be seen in the context of the directorate group on domestic violence, which is led by Bufdir in co-operation with the Central Administration of the National Mediation Service.

#### Nordic network for combating negative social control and honour-based violence

Regular Nordic network meetings are held at the official level for exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge. The network is led by the Presidency in the Nordic Council of Ministers.

#### IMDi's dialogue council for voluntary organisations

The council will be established by IMDi and consist of voluntary organisations from different parts of the country that work against negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The Council is a continuation of the "Reference Group" established in the Action Plan *Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour-Based Violence (2021–2024)*. The council will provide input to the authorities in the efforts to combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence, and contribute to raising awareness of these efforts.



### **Measure 12: New knowledge about negative social control and honour-motivated violence for more effective measures**

There are still many unknowns regarding negative social control and honour-motivated violence, and the field is constantly evolving. In order to gain a better understanding of the challenges and develop effective measures for the future, we need more knowledge. The Government will facilitate increased knowledge development and research in the field, including through the following projects:

#### **c) More knowledge about preventive measures against negative social control and honour-motivated violence**

The specialised services are important in the efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence. They are to prevent, identify and follow up on people at risk, and shall contribute to improving the competence of the service system. In order to lay the foundation for further development of the services, methods will be developed to document the specialised services' guidance and competence enhancement efforts. It will also be considered how services can best meet the needs and rights of victims.

#### **d) Link between negative social control and violence**

Negative social control is a phenomenon that ranges widely, from mild to severe forms. Few Norwegian studies have so far analysed the relationship between restrictions and negative social control on the part of parents, and violence. The study will examine the relationship between negative social control and violence and how this varies between different groups.

#### **e) Autonomy and control over your own life choices in the transition to adulthood**

The study will investigate the extent to which different groups of young adults with and without an immigrant background experience autonomy, influence and control over their own life choices, for example in relation to education, work, choice of partner, place of residence and starting a family. The study builds on data from The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study in Norway (CILS-NOR), which has followed a cohort of young people from around the age of 16. They are now in their mid-20s, and in this project, a new survey will be conducted among the same individuals.

#### **f) Methods for mapping negative social control in schools**

Much of the previous research on negative social control has focussed on control exercised by parents, siblings and other family members, but in 2024, the Proba report on *negative social control among pupils in a school context* provided insight into how negative social control manifests itself among pupils. A project will be initiated to develop methods that can provide regular and updated knowledge about negative social control in schools.

#### **g) Parenting in an integration perspective**

Parenting can be challenging. This is especially true when you are new to a country with different norms and expectations. It is important to know how parents understand and manage their parental role in the context of Norwegian society. A project will be carried out to gather more information about parents' attitudes, including to social control, and their knowledge of the legal and health consequences of negative social control, honour-motivated violence, female genital mutilation and involuntary stays abroad. The project will also provide knowledge about whether parents feel they receive the necessary support when interacting with relevant services.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**h) Develop a tool for identifying and protecting adults in vulnerable life situations**

It is important that employees in the services are able to identify cases of negative social control and honour-motivated violence and assess when it is necessary to report concerns. This can be particularly challenging when interacting with people in vulnerable life situations.

The Government will develop a tool to better identify and assess adults in vulnerable life situations who may be subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence. The tool will support employees in identifying and assessing whether there is reason to report their concerns about an at-risk adult. A literature review will first be conducted to identify research and experiences from similar tools. The tool will then be developed, tested and adapted as a practical aid for employees in various services, in co-operation with TryggEst municipalities<sup>1</sup> and the expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Culture and Equality, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and Care Services*

**i) Knowledge gathering on how the child welfare services understand and work with cases of negative social control and honour-motivated violence**

The work of the child welfare services in cases of violence and abuse places particular demands on a comprehensive understanding of the family's situation,

participation, contact with parents, and interaction with other services.

The Government will gather knowledge about how children, young people and families experience their encounters with the child welfare services in cases of negative social control and honour-motivated violence. In addition, the child welfare services' understanding of and competence on the topic will be highlighted. The research will form part of the knowledge base for further assessment of the services' needs and possible measures.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, in co-operation with the Ministry of Children and Families*

**Measure 13: Strengthen international co-operation to prevent negative social control**

Several countries face the same challenges of negative social control and honour-motivated violence, and there is a need for greater cross-border knowledge sharing to learn from each other's experiences. This will provide a better basis for establishing effective measures.

The Government will

- a) strengthen international co-operation in the field and exchange knowledge about research, statistics and measures with authorities, research institutions and other relevant actors in comparable countries.
- b) further develop the Nordic network of practitioners for competence sharing. The network was established under the previous action plan and consists of representatives from primary services, directorates and voluntary organisations.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

<sup>1</sup> TryggEst is a simplified and standardised system designed to lower the threshold for reporting violence and abuse. It is designed to help municipalities safeguard at-risk adults and to help prevent, detect and address violence and abuse.

# Priority area 3 – Competence enhancement

*The Government wants to better equip employees in public services to help individuals who experience negative social control and honour-motivated violence.*

Employees in the service system, such as the police, schools, and health and care services, interact with both victims and perpetrators of negative social control and honour-motivated violence in the course of their work. They meet children, young people and adults in vulnerable situations and are instrumental in preventing, uncovering, averting and providing help and follow-up to victims and people at risk.

The health services can be a gateway to help, and health centres and school health services are important low-threshold services. The kindergarten is an arena for early intervention, among other things by entering into dialogue and building trust with parents. This can facilitate greater trust in the school when the children start there, and in society in general. It is important that victims and people at risk dare to contact the police, and that the police work to build trust, especially with groups that are difficult to reach. The child welfare services are responsible for protecting children and

young people under the age of 18 and helping and supporting parents to be safe caregivers. Employees in asylum reception centres, refugee services, adult education and Nav offices must have the competence to help those who have little knowledge of Norwegian society, legislation and support services.

To combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence, it is important that employees in the service system have good knowledge of the topics. They must also be able to build trust and provide advice and help adapted to the needs of victims. In addition, they should be familiar with the specialised services (Box 3) that can provide advice and guidance in individual cases.

The Government is focussing its measures on the following areas:

- Competence enhancement in the service system
- Increased awareness of the specialised services
- Parental support and guidance that builds on parental responsibility and safeguards children's rights and needs



*“Sometimes we should have involved the police, but we don’t dare. A misstep there could mean death for the [victim] who has reported it. We haven’t dared to do that.”*

*Adult education employee, informant in the report *Kompetansebehov om negativ sosial kontroll og æresrelatert vold blant ansatte i opplærings- og integreringstjenestene* [competence needs regarding negative social control and honour-based violence among personnel in training and integration services] (Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), 2022) (available in Norwegian only)*

**Measure 14: Strengthen the service system's knowledge of negative social control and honour-motivated violence**

Employees in the service system often interact with both victims and perpetrators of negative social control and honour-motivated violence in the course of their work. This includes those who work in schools, adult education, the police, NAV, as well as other services. Parts of the service system do not have sufficient competence to identify or provide adequate follow-up for people at risk and victims, and not everyone is aware of the relevant specialised services.

The Government will:

- a) Increase knowledge of negative social control and honour-motivated violence among employees in the service system and raise awareness of the specialised services. This will be done e.g., through digital guides, courses or campaigns.
- b) co-ordinate existing resources aimed at employees in the service system and raise awareness of them.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- c) Increase knowledge, skills and competence regarding negative social control and honour-motivated violence in relevant professional education and continuing education programmes.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 15: Strengthen the child welfare services' competence in cases involving various forms of violence and abuse**

Employees in child welfare services possess varying levels of competence regarding different forms of violence, how they manifest, and the most effective ways to prevent them. It is crucial for the quality of the work that the child welfare services have a comprehensive understanding of violence as a phenomenon and how it affects family dynamics and the health and development of children. The child welfare services need professional support to enhance their competence in distinguishing between various cases of violence involving different issues, in order to provide appropriate assistance. The Government will:

- a) develop a guide for the child welfare services' work on investigations and assistance measures in child welfare cases involving various forms of violence, including negative social control and honour-motivated violence. Among other things, the guide will provide the child welfare services with a basis for strengthening their work in terms of systematic case processing, risk assessment, assessment of severity and the use of mapping tools. It will also provide skills training in talking about violence with children and parents, and in conversations during the investigation phase in cases of negative social control and various forms of violence.
- b) consider a model for parental guidance and conversations with children and parents about violence for families receiving assistance measures from the child welfare services. Parenting styles and the rights of the child, including co-determination, will be key.

- c) Strengthen the child welfare services' investigative work in religious and life stance communities and assess the need for support materials.
- d) Strengthen the child welfare services' competence regarding the prevention and detection of involuntary stays abroad. It must be ensured that victims do not feel misunderstood when seeking help, and that cases are not closed due to important statements from the child being overlooked.
- e) Strengthen the child welfare services' work with families living with honour-motivated conflicts. In cases where children and young people are in conflict with their family due to challenges and issues related to the family's honour, there may be an increased risk of being sent abroad. This risk can also increase in families where the child welfare services and/or the police become involved. The child welfare services must therefore have sufficient competence to be able to work preventively with these challenges within families.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Children and Families*

### **Box 10: Strengthened trust in the child welfare services**

Norway has a well-functioning public administration, with a generally high level of trust among its citizens. Openness, participation, transparency, and control mechanisms are key characteristics that provide the public administration with trust and legitimacy.

Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the immigrant population expresses low trust in the service system in general and in the child welfare services in particular. This is particularly challenging when the public administration has to make decisions that can have major consequences for families. Stories and anecdotes have contributed to perceptions in some communities that the primary goal of the child protection is to 'remove' children. Similarly, on the part of the child welfare services, meetings with minority families can be characterised by a lack of understanding on the part of caseworkers who have preconceived notions about who they are interacting with and what the problem is.

This can make co-operation challenging and lead to misunderstandings and communication problems, which in turn affects the trust users have in the services. We know that children with immigrant backgrounds are overrepresented in the child welfare services, and there is much to suggest that trust between the child welfare services and families is particularly jeopardised in cases involving violence. The child welfare services' approach in such cases can lead to parents not wanting to co-operate and contribute to making the situation more difficult for the child. It is known that this can act as a trigger for children being sent abroad. Low levels of trust can also be a barrier for families who are seeking help from the child welfare services.

The Government wants to strengthen trust in the child welfare services through increased openness, improved dialogue and inclusive processes. It shall become easier for the public, the media and decision-makers to obtain the necessary information about decisions, procedures and the state of the sector.

### Box 11: Trust-building policing

The police emphasise dialogue and trust-building efforts. It is necessary that the population has confidence in the police, especially hard-to-reach demographic groups. An important target is to lower the threshold for contacting the police.

Nationally and at the district level, the police will take the initiative to establish dialogue and meeting places with various groups of residents to ensure mutual exchange of information and build relationships and trust. Particular emphasis is placed on reaching out to different minority groups.

### Measure 16: Enhance the competence of the police and the prosecuting authority

Investigating crimes that may be motivated by honour requires knowledge and competence regarding the phenomenon. The police districts shall ensure that relevant employees have knowledge of the subject and are familiar with internal procedures.

A number of competence enhancement measures have been implemented in the area of honour-motivated violence, including mandatory annual training for investigators and police prosecutors. A separate page on honour-motivated crime has been created on the police's national specialist portal KO:DE, which includes a guide for investigating honour-motivated violence and crime. The police representative in the expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence guides the police districts in individual cases. However, there continues to be a need for competence enhancement.

The Government will develop and implement further measures to enhance the competence of the police in order to ensure effective handling of criminal cases.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

### Box 12: The work done at the Eastern Unit in the Oslo Police District

The Section for Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences at the Eastern Unit has specialist expertise in the investigation of honour-motivated violence. Through its own subject matter expert, the Section takes a strategic and inter-agency approach to focus attention on honour-motivated issues. As part of the Eastern Unit, Stovner Police Station established Project November in 2015. Project November was the precursor to the RISK model, which is now being rolled out to additional police districts (see Box 13).

The Section gives lectures on honour-motivated crime to the Norwegian Police University College, the police, the child welfare services, Muslim communities, judges, and others. The Section has taken an active role in the media to inform the public about the topic. The Section supports other police districts in cases where a motive of honour is a hypothesis, and has contributed to several convictions.

The Section has a strong professional environment. A success criterion is that the entire Eastern Unit has competence in honour-related issues, from the first unit on-site conducting immediate investigations to the prosecution that determines the case.



### Box 13: The RISK model in the police

The Oslo Police has achieved good results by working according to the RISK model (risk analysis and crime prevention of domestic violence), see also Box 12 on the work of the Eastern Unit in the Oslo Police District. Through RISK, police specialists and social work and health professionals collaborate in teams to prevent violence, including cases of honour-motivated violence. Among

other things, RISK follows up victims of violence in the form of conversations and advice, and helps identify suitable safety measures. The programme also targets perpetrators of violence and the children of victims of violence. RISK works in both reported and unreported cases and collaborates closely with other support services.

In the Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse against Children and Domestic Violence (2024-2028), it is stated that the Government will extend the RISK model to the whole of Norway. From 2024, the roll-out of RISK's working methods and methodology has started in three geographical operating units in three of the country's police districts: Nordland, South-West and South-East. In 2025, all geographic operating units in Oslo Police District will also be covered.

### Measure 17: Increase knowledge and use of specialised outpatient services for women subjected to female genital mutilation

The specialist health service provides services, follow-up and treatment for women subjected to female genital mutilation. The specialised outpatient clinics allow women who have been subjected to female genital mutilation to contact them directly for assistance. It is important that healthcare professionals and health services are informed and know where to direct enquiries regarding female genital mutilation. Many women are still unaware of the health consequences and their right to healthcare if they have been subjected to female genital mutilation prior to arriving in Norway.

The Government will:

- a) contribute to raising awareness and use of the specialised outpatient clinics among users and referral bodies.
- b) clarify the issue of exemption regarding the duty to refer in relation to women who have been subjected to female genital mutilation, as this has not been formalised as a permanent arrangement.

- c) strengthen and adapt information for women who are victims of female genital mutilation.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

### Measure 18: Further develop co-operation between the specialised services and religious and life stance communities

For several years, the expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence has highlighted the challenges associated with negative social control in religious and life stance communities.

The Government will facilitate the further development of the co-operation between the Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities (STL) and the specialised services in the efforts against negative social control. The purpose will be mutual competence enhancement and understanding of the phenomenon.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Children and Families*

### Box 14: Online resource to help enhance the competence of employees in primary and secondary education and training and out-of-school care (SFO)

Employees in schools and out-of-school care must have sufficient knowledge about the role of other services to know which professional bodies to contact when they have a concern that a child or young person is being subjected to violence or abuse. The Directorate for Education and Training (Udir) has developed an online resource to help enhance the competence of employees in primary and secondary education and training and out-of-school care on the subject of negative social control and honour-motivated violence. It also covers involuntary stays abroad: [Negative social control | udir.no](https://www.udir.no/negative-social-control)

### Measure 19: Enhance competence in kindergartens, schools and out-of-school care

Children and young people spend large parts of their daily lives at school, kindergarten and in out-of-school care. These institutions are instrumental in the prevention, detection and follow-up of children and young people who are, or have been, subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence, including involuntary stays abroad. These issues are often complex, and it is important that employees have competence regarding the subject and know where they can turn for discussion and guidance.

The Government will:

- a) help ensure that municipalities, county authorities and private owners of kindergartens, schools and out-of-school care have good access to educational resources to enhance employees' competence on these matters. Access to resources will be ensured through a mandate to the Directorate for Education to establish access to relevant digital resources on the topic of violence. The work will take place in co-operations with relevant directorates.
- b) develop e-learning courses that are suitable for use in the schools' competence enhancement. The target groups for the courses are employees in primary, lower and upper secondary schools, and possibly educators in the refugee service. School administrators will also be given the competence to lead courses on prevention, as well as follow up on long-term preventive efforts. The content of the courses will be adapted to the various target groups. The courses shall be free of charge, easily accessible and professionally relevant.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### Box 15: Working with the team around the pupil

The Government will work to strengthen the team around the child and pupil, and the interdisciplinary efforts in the form of, among other things, child and youth professional competence, social work associates, social educators and strengthened health centre and school health services. The Government will also introduce a comprehensive system for competence and career development for all employees in kindergartens and primary and secondary education and training that will be phased in during 2025 and 2026. In addition, the Government will strengthen the team around the pupil by enhancing the knowledge base on competence and co-operation within the team, as well as developing support and guidance resources, and following up on efforts to disseminate knowledge and best practices of local work involving interdisciplinary cooperation. The team around the child and pupil is a topic in the [\*white paper on a more practical school – better learning, motivation and well-being in grades 5–10\*](#) (Meld. St. 34 (2023–2024)) (available in Norwegian only) and in the planned white paper on social mobility and social equality.

### Measure 20: Enhance competence on violence and abuse against elderly persons with minority backgrounds

Elderly persons living in relationships of dependency may be at increased risk of being subjected to violence and abuse. This also applies to elderly persons with a minority background.

The Government wants to enhance competence in the handling of violence and abuse against elderly persons with a minority background living in relationships of dependency with adult children or other carers. Through the TryggEst model, Bufdir will further develop guidance, materials and tools to strengthen relevant services, as well as improve the dissemination of relevant information to these segments of the population.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Culture and Equality, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and Care Services*

### **Box 16: The Norwegian Religious and Life Stance Communities Act**

*The Norwegian Religious and Life Stance Communities Act* contains provisions that may cover negative social control and honour-motivated violence. Religious and life stance communities may be denied funding if the community, or individuals acting on their behalf, use violence or coercion, make threats, violate the rights of the child, violate statutory prohibitions against discrimination or otherwise seriously violate the rights and freedoms of others.

Religious and life stance communities that encourage parents to use violence in the upbringing of children, or that discourage children from receiving necessary healthcare or education, that facilitate female genital mutilation, or that promote child marriage by providing contacts abroad, may also be affected.

The new guide to the Norwegian Religious and Life Stance Communities Act encourages communities to use the course material prepared by the Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities. Communities are also asked to consider the need to establish policies and training internally regarding negative social control.



### **Measure 21: Investigate the need for legislative amendments and inform religious and life stance communities about the rules concerning the duty of confidentiality, the duty to avert a criminal act, and notifications to the child welfare services**

Religious and life stance communities may come into contact with individuals with challenges related to negative social control and honour-motivated violence. They may be victims of neglect or criminal offences, such as child marriage or domestic abuse. Knowledge of the legislation that regulates duties and opportunities related to the follow-up of such cases varies.

The Government will investigate the need for legislative amendments regarding the duty of confidentiality, to ensure that the duty to avert a criminal act is followed up and that the scope for reporting to the child welfare services is clear for employees and volunteers in religious and life stance communities. The Government also wants to inform religious and life stance communities about applicable rights and duties related to these topics.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Children and Families*

**Measure 22: Enhance competence on negative social control, honour-motivated violence and female genital mutilation in the health and care services**

The health centre and school health services are key to providing assistance, guidance, support and early detection of challenges. Regular general practitioners (GPs) interact with *both* victims of violence and patients who may have been, or are at risk of being, subjected to female genital mutilation, and it is important that GPs have sufficient competence to help such victims. The national professional guideline for antenatal care contains recommendations on detecting domestic violence and female genital mutilation in pregnant women. There is a need to further enhance competence in the health and care services.

The Government will:

- a) Prepare competence-enhancement material for employees in the health centre and school health services on negative social control and honour-motivated violence.
- b) Continue the work of the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) on research, knowledge dissemination, and competence enhancement on female genital mutilation.
- c) *Enhance* GPs' competence and knowledge of negative social control, honour-motivated violence and female genital mutilation.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Health and Care Services*

- d) when revising relevant study programmes in the National Curriculum Regulations for Norwegian Health and Welfare Education (RETHOS), the inclusion of learning outcome descriptions concerning sexuality,

negative social control and honour-motivated violence shall be assessed.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Health and Care Services, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Children and Families and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 23: Strengthen co-operation and knowledge transfer between the services that have measures against human trafficking and the specialised services against negative social control and honour-motivated violence**

Victims of human trafficking may also be experiencing various forms of negative social control and honour-motivated violence. There is a need for mutual competence enhancement on these topics in the specialised services that work to combat negative social control and honour-motivated violence, as well as in the services that work to combat human trafficking.

The Government will develop areas of co-operation and procedures for competence enhancement between the services. The goal is for the services to work in a more knowledge-based and comprehensive manner in relation to adjacent topics.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

### Measure 24: Enhance competence on negative social control in adult education

Reports indicate that employees in adult education lack sufficient competence on negative social control and honour-motivated violence, and that they desire to gain more knowledge on the topic.

Participants in adult education may have a limited network in Norway and/or little knowledge of where they can seek help. Therefore, it is important that employees in these services possess competence on how to prevent, identify, address and follow up cases of negative social control and honour-motivated violence.

The Government wants to raise the level of competence regarding negative social control for employees who teach adults under the Norwegian Education Act or who provide education in Norwegian language and social studies under the Norwegian Integration Act.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

### Box 17: Videos and communication

The expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence has prepared *short films* in which they provide answers to frequently asked questions from the services and individuals.



# Priority area 4 – Involuntary stays abroad

*The Government will strengthen its efforts to prevent involuntary stays abroad and safeguard individuals who are subjected to, or who are at risk of being subjected to, such stays abroad.*

Involuntary stays abroad is a serious form of negative social control and involves a person being sent, taken or left behind abroad against their will. Both children and adults may be subjected to involuntary stays abroad. Preventing individuals from being subjected to involuntary stays abroad is a priority area for the Government.

In line with the terminology used in Norwegian Official Report (NOU) 2024: 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) this Action Plan uses both the term *involuntary stay abroad* and *harmful stay abroad* to describe several different situations that children and adults may experience when staying abroad. See further description under the section on Terms.

There are various reasons why parents send their children out of the country. There may be a desire for the children not to become 'too Norwegian' and for them to have a stronger connection to the culture of their parents' country of origin. Other reasons include alternative schooling, behavioural problems, substance abuse or negative experiences from contact with the support system in Norway. Children and young people who are

at risk of being taken abroad against their will may fear the consequences of resisting the journey. Adults, who have the legal right to make decisions about their own lives, may find that their families do not accept them making independent choices.

In principle, Norwegian acts and regulations do not apply abroad. Those located in another country must comply with that country's legislation. However, under certain conditions, Norwegian criminal law applies to certain criminal offences committed abroad, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Essentially, it is a requirement that either the perpetrator or the victim is a Norwegian citizen or resident of Norway. Cases involving negative social control and honour-motivated violence are particularly challenging if they involve circumstances that are punishable under Norwegian law, but are not necessarily punishable in the country in which the person is staying. Once someone has been taken abroad, it may therefore be too late to prevent them from being subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence.

It is important that employees in both the ordinary and specialised services are aware of the risk of involuntary stays abroad and know how to prevent, identify and avert such stays. It is also important that parents are aware of the consequences of subjecting their children to involuntary stays abroad.

*“Mum suddenly said to me: ‘I think we need to go on holiday, you’ve been through so much with the child welfare services. You need a break.’ I believed it of course (...) The first thing that happened when we got there was that she took away my passport and said that we were never going back to Norway again. I was completely shocked and I was crying.”*

*Youth informant in the report It wasn't just a holiday by the Expert Group on Children and Young People Who Are Left Abroad Against Their Will (2020) (available in Norwegian only).*



Individuals who return to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad may have significant follow-up needs from the service system. The specialised services report that boys and young men in particular who are assisted in returning to Norway have few adapted support services on arrival. Behavioural problems, substance abuse and crime may be reasons why boys and young men are sent on involuntary stays abroad. A lack of follow-up when they return to Norway can lead to a risk of them returning to the same environment. The Government wants to ensure that individuals returning to Norway from involuntary stays abroad receive comprehensive and coordinated follow-up.

This Action Plan strengthens both the preventive work and the follow-up of vulnerable people returning to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad, with measures in the following areas:

- Strengthen the legal safeguards of individuals who are or are at risk of being subjected to an involuntary stay abroad
- Comprehensive and coordinated follow-up before, during and after an involuntary stay abroad

#### **Measure 25: Proposal for travel bans etc.**

Norwegian Official Report (NOU) (2024) 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) contains several proposals for legislative amendments that would strengthen the legal safeguards of individuals subjected to involuntary stays abroad.

The Government aims to present proposals on:

- a travel ban for children and young people who are at risk of being subjected to harmful stays abroad, and the possibility of penalising anyone who takes a minor out of the country in violation of such a travel ban.

- amendments to the passport legislation and rules on information exchange/duty to provide information when issuing, refusing or revoking passports and travel documents to ensure that the travel ban has the necessary effect.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, Ministry of Children and Families and Ministry of Justice and Public Security*

#### **Measure 26: Measures before, during and after an involuntary stay abroad**

Norwegian Official Report (NOU) (2024) 13 *Lov og frihet* [Law and Freedom] (available in Norwegian only) proposed a package of measures before, during and after an involuntary stay abroad. The Government believes that the proposals are important and will help to strengthen efforts to prevent children and adults from being subjected to such stays abroad. The Government will review the proposals in NOU 2024: 13. This will be a highly prioritised effort.

a) The Government will particularly consider:

- whether the Penal Code – including the provision on the duty to avert a criminal act – adequately protects children from harmful stays abroad.
- the possibility of a continued residence permit in Norway if the residence permit has lapsed as a result of the stay abroad.
- clarification of the child welfare services' responsibilities and jurisdiction in cases concerning children who may be subjected to involuntary stays abroad.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Ministry of*

*Children and Families, and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

- b) Establish regulations for a scheme for coverage of expenses to return to Norway

The Government will consider proposals to establish regulations for a scheme to cover the expenses of persons who are abroad and who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, negative social control, forced marriage or female genital mutilation, to return to Norway.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

- c) Extraordinary admission to upper secondary education and training after returning from an involuntary stay abroad

For children and young people who return to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad, it is important to give them the opportunity to reintegrate into Norwegian society. The Ministry of Education and Research will in particular consider the proposal from NOU 2024: 13 on admission to upper secondary education and training after the application deadlines for pupils returning to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Education and Research, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 27: Explore the possibility of suspending public benefits and child benefits in the event of harmful stays abroad**

In NOU 2024: 13, the Committee proposes a new penal provision on harmful stays abroad for children, which will make it a criminal offence for parents to send

children abroad where there is a serious risk that the child will be subjected to criminal offences, etc. The payment of public benefits and child benefits to parents who subject their children to harmful stays abroad may be perceived as public funding and legitimisation of such conduct. In cases involving international child abduction, the legislation allows for the suspension of public benefits and child benefits, see the *Act of 6 June 2014, No. 19 relating to the stoppage of public benefits and child benefits when one parent has abducted a child to another country.*

The Government will investigate the suspension of public benefits and child benefits in cases where children are subjected to harmful stays abroad.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Children and Families and Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

**Measure 28: Investigate the possibility of establishing a right and duty to undergo education and qualification for individuals who have returned to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad**

Individuals who are in the target group for the introduction programme, but who are withheld from participation due to abuse, negative social control, honour-motivated violence or involuntary stays abroad, may lose their right to participate in the introduction programme if the participant has extensive absences for which permission has not been granted. Individuals who have been held back abroad against their will may be granted a residence permit pursuant to *Section 8-9 of the Norwegian Immigration Regulations*. Individuals with such a residence permit are not in the target group for introduction programmes under the Norwegian Integration Act. They may have lost their

language skills and need to undergo education and qualification upon return to Norway.

The Government will investigate whether individuals who have been held back abroad against their will and have a residence permit pursuant to *Section 8-9* of the Norwegian Immigration Regulations should be given the right and duty to undergo the introduction programme. The Government will also investigate how individuals who are in the target group for the introduction programme may retain their rights when they are withheld from participation against their will.

*Responsible government ministry: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*

one or both conventions in cases where a child has been taken abroad. However, both conventions presuppose that Norway and the country to which the child has been taken have entered into formal co-operation. The conventions cannot be applied to countries with which Norway does not have formal co-operation.

The Government has presented a white paper on consular assistance and assistance from Norwegian authorities in crisis situations abroad: [\*Meld. St. 18 \(2024–2025\) Når uhellet er utenlands. Konsulær bistand og bistand fra norske myndigheter i krisesituasjon i utlandet \[When trouble strikes abroad - Consular assistance and assistance from the Norwegian authorities in crisis situations abroad\], white paper from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.\*](#) Among other things, the white paper discusses the foreign service's scope of action to provide assistance to individuals subjected to negative social control and honour-motivated violence abroad.

### **Box 18: Assistance to victims abroad**

Every year, the foreign service provides assistance in around 250 cases involving negative social control and honour-motivated violence abroad. The Norwegian Embassies in Amman, Ankara, Islamabad, and Nairobi have special representatives on integration issue. Most individuals who receive assistance have a connection to a country in the Middle East, East Africa or South Asia. Many of the victims have dual citizenship, which may affect whether Norwegian authorities can offer certain forms of consular assistance. Many are also travelling to countries where Norway has limited or no consular presence.

The Norwegian authorities are particularly limited in what they can do if the victim is under the age of 18.

Norway is a party to the Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children of 1996 and the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction of 1980. Bufdir is the central authority for both conventions. Norwegian authorities can utilise

### **Box 19: Regarding funding of trips abroad**

It has become known through the media that some child welfare services have funded trips abroad. These have been both voluntary, short journeys, but also longer, involuntary stays that later turned out to be harmful. Even in cases where the child welfare services believe they have control, it is important to emphasise that Norwegian law does not apply abroad. No potentially harmful stays abroad are to be facilitated and shall not be financed by the services. This is clear advice and an expectation for municipalities to prevent the risk of these types of harmful stays abroad. The annual emergency preparedness letter sent to county authorities, municipalities, and county governors before the summer holidays addresses funding from the child welfare services for stays abroad. The aim is to prevent the risk of harmful stays abroad for children and young people. See also the guidelines here: [\*Barn i utlandet – retningslinjer om etterlatte barn i utlandet \[Children abroad – Guidelines for children left behind abroad\] | Bufdir\*](#) (available in Norwegian only)

### Measure 29: Better safeguarding of individuals subjected to involuntary stays abroad

Several reports underscore the need for better follow-up of individuals subjected to involuntary stays abroad.

The expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence is the focal point for the foreign service and coordinates reception and follow-up with the service system in Norway in cases where victims are assisted to return to Norway.

The Government will:

- a) strengthen co-operation between the expert team, Norwegian foreign service missions and other relevant public services in the follow-up of individuals subjected to involuntary stays abroad. The work will include updating and strengthening information, developing guidelines/guides and other initiatives that can help clarify responsibilities.
- b) consider further measures to better safeguard individuals returning to Norway from an involuntary stay abroad.

*Responsible government ministries: Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

### Box 20: Pilot – housing programme for individuals returning from involuntary stays abroad

In 2024, the Government launched a pilot scheme with a housing and support programme for individuals over the age of 18 who have returned from an involuntary stay abroad. The service is an extension of existing housing and support services for individuals subjected to negative social control and honour-based violence (see Box 4). An external evaluation will be initiated towards the end of the pilot period.

The background to the pilot scheme is the report *It wasn't just a holiday* by the Expert Group on Children and Young People Who Are Left Abroad Against Their Will (2020) (available in Norwegian only), which highlighted the need for a service for young people returning from stays abroad, but who do not meet the criteria for accommodation under the existing housing and support services.

The target group for the pilot scheme is individuals who have returned from an involuntary stay abroad, and

- a) are, or have been subjected to, negative social control and/or honour-motivated violence,
- b) are in need of housing and support services, and adapted environmental therapeutic follow-up and
- c) have significant assistance needs and/or additional problems such as substance abuse, crime and/or physical and mental health challenges.



# About the work with the Action Plan

The Action Plan has been prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Children and Families, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, the Ministry of Culture and Equality, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has coordinated the work. In the work on the Action Plan, input meetings have been held with municipalities and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) representatives from civil society, voluntary organisations and religious

and life stance communities. Organisations, individuals and agencies have also contributed with written comments via [regjeringen.no](https://www.regjeringen.no).

The measures in the Action Plan will be implemented in the period 2025–2028. The Government will prepare a midway progress report on the status of the measures and will use the report as a basis for further efforts against negative social control and honour-motivated violence.

The measures are implemented within the current budget limits of the responsible government ministries.

# Appendices

## Who you can contact

### Emergency line for children and young people (*Alarmtelefonen*)

Telephone: 116 111

E-mail: [alarm@116111.no](mailto:alarm@116111.no)

### the Norwegian National Domestic Violence Helpline (VO-line)

Telephone: 116 006

Chat: [volinjen.no](https://volinjen.no)

The VO-line is a helpline for anyone who experiences violence or domestic abuse.

### Red Cross helpline on negative social control and honour-based violence

Telephone: 815 55 201 (anonymous line)

E-mail: [rodekorstelefonen@redcross.no](mailto:rodekorstelefonen@redcross.no) (non-anonymous line)

Chat: [rodekorstelefonen.no](https://rodekorstelefonen.no) (anonymous line)

### Diversity advisors at lower and upper secondary schools

See phone numbers for each school on IMDi's [website](https://www.imdi.no)

### Expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence

Telephone: 47 80 90 50

E-mail: [kompetanseteamet@bufdir.no](mailto:kompetanseteamet@bufdir.no)

### IMDi's National team for building competency

E-mail: [post@imdi.no](mailto:post@imdi.no)

### Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees (SEIF)

Telephone: 22 03 48 30

E-mail: [seif@seif.no](mailto:seif@seif.no) or [local office](#)

Travel information and contact details for Norwegian embassies can be found on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website](#)

## Online resources

### Target group: Victims

[Ung.no](https://ung.no) is a public information site for young people, which also covers negative social control, domestic violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and has an anonymous question and answer service.

- Target group: Young people
- Responsible: Bufdir

[Dinutvei.no](https://dinutvei.no) is a national guide on domestic violence, sexual assault and other sexual abuse, and has an anonymous question and answer service.

- Target group: Victims
- Responsible: NKVTS

[Imdi.no/nora](https://imdi.no/nora) is an online portal on negative social control aimed primarily at young people. The portal shares real-life stories of young people living under pressure. The portal provides information and an overview of rights and who to contact for assistance. The online portal also provides guidance material and educational resources for employees in the support services.

- Target group: Victims and the support system
- Responsible: IMDi

## Target group: Employees in the services

[The Handbook for Prevention and Handling of Negative Social Control and Honour-Based Violence](#) (available in Norwegian only) is a guidance resource and aims to contribute to the handling of cases involving negative social control, honour-motivated violence, forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation.

- Target group: Employees in schools, adult education, and refugee services, as well as others who work with children, young people, and adults for whom these topics are relevant.
- Responsible: IMDi

[Rettentil.no](#) is an information portal for professionals who interact with young people who may be subjected to negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

- Target group: Individuals who work with young people
- Responsible: RVTS East.

[The police's guidance pages](#) for individuals who experience domestic violence.

- Target group: Victims, perpetrators, support services, and the general public
- Responsible: The Police

[Negativ sosial kontroll, tvangsekteskap og æresrelatert vold – en veileder til barnevernstjenesten \[Negative social control, forced marriage and honour-based violence – a guide for child welfare services\]](#) (available in Norwegian only)

- Target group: Support services
- Responsible: Bufdir

[Negativ sosial kontroll og æresrelatert vold \[Negative social control and honour-based violence\]](#) | [udir.no](#) (available in Norwegian only)

- Target group: School employees who work with children and young people
- Responsible: Udir

[STL's course material on negative social control.](#)

The courses address both religiously motivated negative social control and the constructive role religious and life stance communities play for individuals and society as a whole, with legitimacy and an insider perspective. The material has been translated into Amharic, Arabic and Urdu.

[Guidelines for children left behind abroad](#)

(available in Norwegian only). The guidelines are intended as a working tool for professionals in public bodies in circumstances where children are left behind abroad.

- Target group: Public bodies
- Responsible: Bufdir

Duty to report: [Report to the child welfare services as a public-sector employee or professional here.](#)

Duty to report: [Report to the child welfare services as a private individual here.](#)

Duty to avert a criminal act: [Read more about the duty to avert a criminal act here.](#)

## Relevant measures in the Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse against Children and Domestic Violence (2024-2028) *Safety for all* (available in Norwegian only)

### Measures

- Gather knowledge about domestic violence, honour-based violence and negative social control among users of the labour and welfare administration
- Increase the grant scheme for parental support measures in the municipalities
- Map the availability of counselling on female genital mutilation and voluntary genital examinations at the health centre and school health services
- Update guidance or prepare professional advice for the health centre and school health services on the prevention of female genital mutilation
- Enhance competence on negative social control and honour-based violence in the police
- Strengthen family counselling's work with negative social control and honour-based violence
- Further develop TryggEst and facilitate the introduction of the model in more municipalities
- Strengthen information about rights and support services for victims of violence to people arriving under family immigration (family reunification)
- Strengthen and further develop the expert team against negative social control and honour-based violence
- Strengthen the diversity advisor programme
- Strengthen the National Housing and Support Service for individuals over 18 years of age who are subjected to negative social control and honour-based violence
- Expand the Housing and Support Service to include places for individuals over 18 years of age who have returned from an involuntary stay abroad and who are not covered by the current services
- Further develop the treatment programme for girls and women who are victims of female genital mutilation
- Strengthen the follow-up of individuals who do not participate, or inadequately participate, in the schemes under the Integration Act due to negative social control, honour-based violence or other domestic violence
- Make it easier for newly arrived refugees who are subjected to violence and threats to move to a new municipality when necessary

## Current petition resolutions

- **Document 8:96 S (2023–2024)**, Recommendation 320 S (2023–2024), Resolution 660  
The Storting requests the Government to focus on and ensure that employees in schools, kindergartens, the child welfare services, the health service and the police are given increased knowledge and competence in order to identify and follow up situations where children are subjected to negative social control and honour-based violence at an early stage.
  - The Resolution is followed up in particular in measures 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 22 in this Action Plan
- **Document 8:96 S (2023–2024)**, Recommendation 320 S (2023–2024), Resolution 661  
The Storting requests the Government to prepare, update and strengthen information and guidelines on how children and young people who are staying abroad against their will shall be followed up and provided assistance if they make contact with embassies, the child welfare services or other public bodies, to ensure that the children concerned feel that they are taken seriously.
  - The Resolution is followed up in particular in measures 14 and 29 in this Action Plan
- **Proposition to the Storting 99 Bill (2023–2024)**, Recommendation 427 Bill (2023–2024), Resolution 770  
The Storting requests the Government to present a strengthened action plan against forced marriage and to inform the Storting in a suitable manner.
  - The Resolution is followed up through a number of measures in this Action Plan against negative social control and honour-motivated violence, which also includes forced marriage.

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