

Norway - ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

Academic networks and resources

The [Nordic Network on Disability Research](#) (NNDR): the main network among disability researchers in the Nordic countries.

The [Norwegian Network on Disability Research](#) (NoNDR): the national network of NNDR in Norway:

[Scandinavian Journal on Disability Research](#) (SJDR): the main Nordic journal in this field of research, which publishes articles in English. It welcomes articles from other countries as well

Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

Several departments in the Norwegian government have responsibility for disability law and policy, according to the principle that each department has responsibility for disability policy in their area. However, the [Ministry of Children and Equality](#) (Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet) co-ordinates disability policy:

In addition the following could be noted:

Likestilling og diskrimineringsombudet: The [equality and anti-discrimination ombud](#) (LDO) is an independent agency promoting and enforcing equality and anti-discrimination legislation in Norway, including legislation on disability rights. In addition to promotion activities, individual complaints and cases can be taken to this agency.

Likestillings- og diskrimineringsnemda: The [Norwegian Equality Tribunal](#) (LDN) is an appeal body. Cases decided upon by LDO can be raised for LDN.

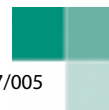
[States råd for likestilling av funksjonshemmete](#) (SRFF) (The Norwegian State Council on Disability) is an advisory council, mainly giving advices to the Government on disability policy. It consists of people proposed by disability associations (5 persons) and individually appointed experts (8 persons).

Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

The [Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People](#) (FFO), which represents 70 member associations, with a total 325 000 individual members.

Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:



[Samarbeidsforumet av funksjonshemmedes organisasjoner](#) (SAFO) (The forum of collaborating disability organisations), which represents three associations, among them is the association for physically impaired people and the association for intellectually disabled people.

Links to specific disability organisations can be found on the web-sites of the federations.

National law and strategy

Norway has signed the [United Nations Convention](#) but not the [Optional Protocol](#).

Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include:

The question of ratification and signing the optional protocol for the UN Convention is under consideration and a decision is expected in 2009.

Important national laws include:

The act on prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of disability (Lov om forbud mot diskriminering på grunnlag nedsatt funksjonsevne) (2009) – also called the [Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act](#) (English language summary and unofficial translation).

The [Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act](#) defines the organisation and activities of the LDO.

Amendment to the [Planning and Building Act](#) has tightened requirements for accessibility in design of the built environment, but affects mainly new buildings.

The [Act Relating to Councils for Persons with Disabilities](#) requires municipalities to address a range of issues affecting disabled people by establishing representative councils involving disabled people.

In addition a number of welfare, social security, labour market and education acts are of relevance.

Important policy documents include:

Public committee reports:

2001, no 22 [Fra bruker til borger](#) (From User to Citizen)

2005, no 8 [Likeverd og tilgjengelighet](#) (Equality and Accessibility)

White paper:

2002-03, no 40: [Nedbygging av funksjonshemmende barrierer](#) (Reducing disabling barriers):

Other:

The [Programme of Action for Universal Design](#)

Facts and figures

Data on population indicate that:



The number of disabled people varies considerably between surveys due to different definitions. According to the Labour force surveys 15% of the population (aged 16-66) has a limiting chronic illness or disability. Other surveys tend to find that 17-20% of the population has a disability or long-standing illness, but there are examples of surveys with broad definitions counting about 25% of the population as having an impairment.

The source that is most likely to be comparable with other European countries is the EU-SILC survey. According to this 20% of Norwegians aged 16+ had a limiting long-standing illness or disability, 17% among men and 24% among women. The proportion increases with age, from 9% (16-24 years of age), through 26% (45-67 years of age) to 42% (more than 79 years). (Source: Statistics Norway, paper 2008/39)

According to a survey on the living conditions of disabled people (age 20-66), 30% of disabled people have a mobility impairment, 24% chronic pain, 11 % mental illness, 10% sensory impairments, 8% cognitive difficulties, and 16% other (source: LKF data-file, not yet published)

Data on employment indicate that:

According to the Labour Force Survey in 2007 (people aged 16-66) the employment rate for disabled people was 45.3%, compared to 74.8% in the population as a whole (including disabled people).

The employment rate has remained constant since these statistics started to be gathered in 2000. The gap between disabled people and the total population has also remained constant, varying around 28-30 percentage points.

Data on education indicate that:

The proportion of disabled people with higher education (more than 12 years) is lower than among non-disabled people (23% compared to 37%). The difference is constant through the age span from 20-66 years of age. It is also constant across sex and between people becoming disabled before or after the age of 30.

The last finding suggests that it is not just a fact that disabled people have less education, but also that less educated people have a higher risk of becoming disabled in later life (Source: Molden, Wendelborg and Tøssebro: Levekår blant personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne (Living conditions of disabled people), Report, NTNU Social Research 2009.

Data on accessibility indicate that:

27% had problems using public transport last year. The figures were 34% for people with mobility difficulties and mental illness, and 46% among people with cognitive difficulties. Bus appears to be the means of public transport causing most problems. (Source: Molden et al. op cit)

The Government is conducting a review of the accessibility of public goods and services, to be completed in July 2009.

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:



Data on income distribution suggest that disabled people, on average, have about 80% of mean disposable income (Source Statistics Norway, 2006/18).

The 2007 survey on living conditions suggests that about 14% of disabled people live in a household with income of less than 200,000 NOK a year. This is not far from the poverty line of 60% of median income, but the estimation is extremely unofficial. The corresponding figure for the non-disabled population is 10%.

Most studies on income differentials indicate lower income among disabled people and households with a disabled person, mainly due to lower employment rates.

Data on attitudes indicate that:

In 2005, 53% fully agreed that physically disabled women are as fit to be a mother as other people, whereas 15% disagreed or did not answer. The figures are stable since 1999.

45% fully agreed that sports associations should change their activities in order to open up for disabled people. 25% disagreed.

Women tend to have more positive attitudes than men, people aged 35-55 more positive than younger people, and people sceptical of immigration also have less positive attitudes to disabled people (Source: Norwegian monitor, NOVA-report 4/2008)

Data on public spending indicate that:

In 2005 Norway spent 4.4% of GNP on incapacity related benefits (OECD Social Expenditure Database)

According to national statistics on pensions and benefits, Norway spent 15.3% of GNP on social expenditures in 2007, of which 2.6% of GNP was on disability related social expenditures (including disability pensions, disability related benefits, rehabilitation benefits, and technical aids). 1.8% was spent on disability pensions/benefits. (Source: www.nav.no, www.ssb.no)

In 2006, disability benefits accounted for 18.8% of all benefits expenditure (both cash and in kind benefits) compared to an EU27 average of 7.5%, the highest proportion of any EU/EFTA country (European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics)

Social protection

Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the [MISSOC](#) database December 2008):

Disability benefits

The number of people on disability pensions (working age only) has increased gradually since the 1960s. The number was 159,725 in 1980, 264,353 in 1999 and 295,072 in 2008.

Recently a growing number are receiving temporary disability pension. Adding those gives 266,243 in 1999 and 336,334 in 2008.

The proportion of the population receiving disability benefits was 3.9% in 1980, 6.0% in 1999 and 7.1% in 2008 (including people with disability pension and temporary disability pension).

58% of people receiving disability benefits in 2008 were women. 38.7% were aged 60-66, and 32.3% aged 50-59.

(Source: [Statistics Norway](#), Historical statistics, 1994)

In 2004 single person households with disability pension had a disposable income of 73.5% that of the general population, corrected for household composition. 82% of the income for single person households with disability benefits is from benefits (18% from work or capital income)

Rehabilitation and re-training

Medical rehabilitation services are typically provided by the health authorities free of charge. The system for occupational rehabilitation is quite complex and not described here. It includes education, training, supported employment etc. 47,222 people received rehabilitation allowances in 2008 (about 1% of the population).

Preferential employment and quotas

There is no preferential employment or quota scheme in Norway, but there is an [action plan](#) to facilitate more disabled employees in the state sector.

In the state sector, if there are qualified applicants with a disability, a minimum of one should be called for a job interview. The employer can hire a disabled person even if there are more qualified job applicants.

Long-term support and care

These are provided by local authorities. There is no uniform financial system. The typical pattern is that people pay housing rents from their pensions, and also a personal share of costs for some services such as house cleaning, but typical care and support services are free. Service provision is, in general, based on needs assessments (according to Acts on social services and local health services). Even though national policies and recommendations exist, local authorities determine the organisation and provision of such services, within the frames set by law.

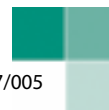
Practical assistance and care at home is carried out by municipal home services assistants, nurses, social workers and other professionals. Home care services are available day and night. A few municipalities have contracted out the provision of services to private sector providers.

Additional information

Useful sources of more detailed information about the situation of disabled people, and the policies and support available, include:

Annual 'Status reports' from the National Centre for Documentation on Disability (from 2009 part of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud). The [2008 Status Report](#) is available online (in Norwegian).

Updates on policies can be found on the [government disability web-site](#)



Statistical information and reports can be found on the web-site of [Statistics Norway](#) and also under the social inclusion theme at the web site of the [Directorate of Health](#) (links to disability search terms in Norwegian or English).