

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

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Structure of decision making

At the central level

The responsible authority for overall youth policy is the [Ministry of Children and Families](#). The Ministry is responsible for [children and young people's participation](#) and provides basic support for national and international work in voluntary youth organisations. However, strategies and measures affecting different aspects of young people's lives may lie with other ministries or are often devised and implemented cross-sectorally. The following ministries are the most important ones in terms of responsibility for policies and services affecting youth:

- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Education and Research
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Health and Care Services
- Ministry of Justice and Public Security

The division of tasks and responsibilities demands cooperation and coordination between ministries and among different levels of administration. The Ministry of Children and Families and its underlying agency the [Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs](#) often coordinate state efforts for children and youth.

At the local level

Norway is divided into 11 counties and 356 municipalities. Practical implementation of national child and youth policy priorities lies primarily at the municipal level through the provision of services. The main responsibilities of the municipality relating to youth are primary education (until 10th grade), youth health stations and school health services, outpatient health services, unemployment and other social services and economic development.

Many national youth policy goals are not enshrined in legal regulations and do not trigger earmarked funds. Therefore, the municipalities have much freedom in how they implement and finance national policy goals, such as in youth work. Child and youth organisations are important collaborating actors at the municipal level.

Main themes

The [Government's 2015 Plan on child and youth policy initiatives](#) presents the overall goals and focus areas of the Government's child and youth policy but does not include all measures. The plan is based on the following goals and principles:

- A safe upbringing in family and in the local community
- Equal rights and opportunities
- Participation and influence
- High quality services for everyone

Key focus areas of the plan are:

- Family and community
- Kindergarten, school and working life
- Health and welfare
- Culture and leisure

The strategies and measures relevant to the youth population described in the document are covered in detail in the YouthWiki chapters where applicable and if still relevant. For recent developments in these areas see section [1.9 Current debates and reforms](#).

The national agency for youth

There is no National Agency for Youth. However the [Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs](#) is the governmental office for the welfare and protection of children and families. Its main objective is to provide quality services to children, young people, and families. The directorate hosts the website [Ung.no](#), targeting young people aged 13 – 20 with public information and guidance about rights, opportunities and obligations.

The following agencies also play an important role in the implementation of youth policy goals

[The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training](#) is the executive agency for the Ministry of Education and Research and is responsible for the development of primary and secondary

education. In The Directorate has the overall responsibility for supervising education and governance of the education sector, as well as the implementation of Acts of Parliament and regulations.

[The Norwegian Integration and Diversity Directorate](#) implements the government's integration policies. The directorate is tasked with strengthening the municipalities, sector authorities, and other collaborative partners' competence in the field of integration and diversity.

Some of the directorate's key responsibilities include:

- Resettlement of refugees
- Facilitating to assist immigrant participation in the labour force and in local communities
- Efforts against negative social control, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation
- Provide professional and knowledge-based recommendations for further development of integration policy and ensure coordination in the field of integration
- Manage grant schemes aimed at municipalities and voluntary organizations
- Produce and disseminate research, analysis, statistics, and best practice

[The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration](#) administers one third of the national budget through schemes such as unemployment benefits, work assessment allowances, pensions, sickness benefits, child benefits and cash-for-care benefits. The local authorities and central government cooperate through 456 NAV offices in municipalities and city boroughs. Each local authority and NAV agree on what local authority services their office should provide. The services provided by a NAV office will thus vary from local authority to local authority.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

The policies and measures relating to youth are devised and implemented cross-sectorally. Evaluation may be conducted by a ministry or agency or they may choose to make the evaluation subject to competition. In most instances, analyses, consultancy services, and evaluations are subject to [procurement rules](#). [Doffin](#) is the Norwegian national notification database for public procurement. The website assists the authorities to create and publish notices in accordance with the regulations and makes it easy for suppliers to find relevant competitions in the public sector.

In cases relating to draft laws regulating people's rights and duties, draft changes in how the public administration is organised (for instance relocation) and jurisdiction changes, public consultations are initiated by the Government to allow the public, civil society, and the business community to state their opinion, and to control how the public administration works and performs their tasks. Public consultations are also used after the publication of Official Norwegian Reports (NOUs) that report on different aspects of Norwegian society, laws or administrative practice, and which often suggest new policy or legislative measures.