

## **1.9 Current debates and reforms**

### **Forthcoming policy developments**

Across the Government's key focus areas for children and youth described in section [1.4 Youth policy decision-making](#) recent policy developments across ministries include:

#### **Family and community**

A new collaborative strategy for children and young people growing up in low-income families is being developed. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is leading the work in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization. An advisory youth panel has been set up to provide insights and proposed measures for the strategy. The strategy will be presented in 2020.

#### **School and working life**

A committee was set up in 2017 to assess the strengths and weaknesses of higher education as well as propose changes in its structure, organization, and professional composition. This resulted in two Official Norwegian Reports; [NOU 2018: 15](#) assessing whether upper secondary education has the structure and content to ensure that as many as possible complete upper secondary education. The second report [NOU 2019: 25](#) considered various models for upper secondary education and proposes concrete changes in structure and subject composition. Another [committee](#) was appointed in 2017 to look at the regulations for primary and secondary education. [NOU 2019: 23](#) proposes a new Education Act, which is intended to replace today's Education Act. The committee also proposes principles for regulatory governance. The reports form the basis for ongoing public consultations and consideration by the Government and Parliament. A third [committee](#) that was set up in 2017 to provide an evidence-based assessment of Norway's future skill needs. This assessment will form the basis for planning and strategic decision making of both authorities and in the labour market, regionally and nationally. The committee work until 2020 has been to assess national and international research. A total of three reports have been submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research; [NOU 2018: 2](#), [NOU 2019: 2](#) and [NOU 2020: 2](#). The Committee will continue from 2020 to 2026 but will no longer produce Official Norwegian Reports. It has the following task for the next six years:

- Analyse and assess the available knowledge base and give the best possible evidence-based analysis and assessment of society's future skill needs, including the education system's ability to cover these needs.
- Provide an analysis and assessment of the future skill needs both for the short, medium,

and long term.

- Facilitate and stimulate open dialogue and discussion about society's skill needs with different stakeholders and society more generally. The Committee is to highlight the input from the social partners.
- Produce at least one report every second year with analysis and assessment of Norway's future skill needs, nationally and regionally. The Committee may on its own initiative raise issues that concern skill needs in separate reports, articles, or other documents.
- The Committee's work and products should be made relevant to the development of skill policies by national and regional authorities, including planning in the education sector.

For more on youth policy related to education and training see YouthWiki chapter 6. Education and Training.

## Health and welfare

The [Government's strategy on young people's health 2016 – 2021](#) covers the age group 13–25 years and sets out several goals related to mental health, healthy lifestyles and sexual health among youth. The governments [Sexual Health Strategy \(2017-2020\)](#) includes activities for increasing young people's knowledge and skills to safeguard their own sexual health. The Government has also initiated a drug reform process with the goal of transferring responsibility for society's response to the use and possession of illegal drugs for personal use from the justice sector to the health sector. For more on youth policy related to health and well-being see YouthWiki chapter [7. Health and Well-Being](#).

The Government has initiated a collaborative effort between municipalities, the voluntary sector, and top-level authorities to ensure that all children and youth, regardless of their parents' social and financial situation, can participate regularly in recreational activities. In addition, the Government has initiated a 'Recreation Card' trial, with the aim of giving children and young people 6 to 18 years the opportunity to participate in organised leisure time/recreational activities regardless of economic resources. The aim is to develop a national universal scheme.

## Culture and leisure

The Government is developing a White Paper on children and youth culture. For more on youth policy related to creativity and culture see YouthWiki chapter [8. Creativity and Culture](#).

**Equality and social inclusion** is central to Norwegian youth policy. This involves equitable access to services so that no one experiences discrimination and exclusion. Recent policy developments include:

- The Government's [strategy for the equality of persons with disabilities for the period 2020–2030](#) and the Government's [Action Plan for Universal Design](#).

- The [Government's action plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression 2017-2020](#).
- Two Official Norwegian Reports on gender and young people that were released during 2019; one describes gender differences in school performance and educational attainment, another overall gender equality challenges among children and young people. The reports propose various measures to address identified issues. The reports form the basis for ongoing public consultations and consideration by the Government and Parliament.
- The [Action Plan to Combat Negative Social Control, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation 2017-2020](#) includes operational measures to liberate children and young people in Norway from negative social control and various forms of coercion.
- In 2019 the Government began work on a national action plan against discrimination and hatred against Muslims. The goal is to prevent racism and discrimination against Muslims and against people who are believed to be Muslims.

For more on social inclusion see YouthWiki chapter [4. Social Inclusion](#).