Youth employment measures

Norway does not have a youth-specific labour market policy.

Special target groups are however prioritized in accordance with economic trends and the situation in the labour market. These may be:

- Youth.
- Immigrants.
- People with reduced capacities for work.
- Long term unemployed.

With the introduction of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) reform in 2006, it was desired to shift focus from target groups to individual needs.
Young people are a prioritized group when it comes to labour market initiatives/measures.

The Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) administers a number of initiative schemes for young people who are not yet ready for work, but who need help to find a job.

The work-oriented means are to contribute to

- Ease young unemployed people's way of obtaining a job.
- Supply people with reduced working capacities in need of work-oriented assistance with an offer of assistance, so that they may return to work more rapidly.

The situation in the labour market and the political guidelines determine the structure, extent and combination of the work-oriented initiatives. Generally, the extent of the initiatives is adapted to the economic trends so that the initiatives are stepped up when the unemployment rate increases and stepped down again when the unemployment rate decreases.

Labour market initiatives are not a right but are provided on the basis of individual evaluation of the individual's needs for initiatives in order to get a job.

‘The follow-up service’ [Den fylkeskommunale oppfølgningstjenesten (OT) [1]]

Is a service operated by the County Education Administration is catered to NEET youth between the ages of 15 and 21.

‘The follow-up service’ is a service for youth who have

- Not applied for upper secondary education
- Not accepted a placement at a school or in-service training establishment
- Interrupted your education/training before it was finished
- Do not have a regular job
- Lost their entitlement to education and training as the result of a decision to expel them for the remainder of the school year, or to repeal their apprenticeship/ training contract.

The follow-up service is to provide assistance by mediating offers of educational or training options, jobs or other forms of employment. The education or training should, as far as possible, lead to university admissions certification, vocational competence or basic competence.

The follow-up service collaborates with county, municipal and state agencies that are also responsible for young people.

The OT scheme corresponds to the youth guarantee scheme that is administered by the NAV county offices.

The Office of the Auditor General of Norway [2] [Riksrevisjonen [3]] released a report in March 2016 (Dokument 3:9 (2015-2016) [4]), where the main conclusions were:

- Findings of large variation between county follow-up practices of students who have discontinued their upper secondary school education.
That very few of the students that do receive follow-up services, are given concrete curricular objectives [læreplanmål].

That the co-operation between different follow-up services is not working optimally.

Early school-leavers and immigrants are a prioritized group in the follow-up service.

There are special programmes for immigrants such as the "introduction programme for foreign speakers" and "courses in Norwegian with a view to work". In cooperation with the local authorities, there is for example an introduction scheme for newly-arrived immigrants.

**Initiatives for Youth with Reduced Work Capacity**

Working capacity is defined as the ability and potential to meet the demands and expectations of working life seen in relation to the individual's health, education, competencies, work experience and life and family situation (NAV, 2010).

Section 14(a) of the NAV Act – the follow-up decision – stipulates who belongs to the target group for initiatives among people with reduced working capacities. About 16,000 of those under 30 years who were registered as having reduced working capacities with the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) at the end of 2010 were participating in initiatives (Bråthen & Vetvik, 2011: p.27). That is about 40 percent of all young people with reduced working capacities.

One of the most important means administered by the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) to get people back into work is work-oriented initiatives. These initiatives may have different purposes, target groups and structures.

**Table 3.14** displays which type of initiatives young people with reduced working capacities participated in in December 2010. The most utilized initiatives were training, predominantly consisting of further education within the ordinary educational system, as well as labour market training (AMO) followed by work practice, follow up, and wage supplements.
The Qualification Programme

The Qualification Programme [5] [Kvalifiseringsprogrammet (KVP) [6]] is administered by the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

The programme is aimed at people with a marginal connection with the labour market in the form of poor work experience and weak working capacities due to poor mental or somatic health, addiction problems or a low degree of education.

In the qualification programme, the participants will be given close and coordinated assistance through an individually adapted programme intended to improve the participants' opportunities in the labour market.

The Qualification Programme provides recipients of social assistance with an opportunity to utilize work-oriented initiatives that were previously to a high degree reserved for unemployed or people in rehabilitation.

The programme may for example consist of

- Labour market initiatives.
- Job training, training.
- Training in motivation and coping.
- Possibly in combination with
  - Time for medical treatment.
  - Rehabilitation.
  - Personal activities in the form of job seeking.

Users participating in the Qualification Programme are paid a fixed salary (qualification benefits) instead of financial support. The Qualification Programme is intended for youth aged 19+ years.
The Youth Guarantee

Norway has no public Youth Guarantee scheme equivalent to the one described in the European employment strategy. [7] Yet, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is the responsible authority and implementer (at the county level) of a more narrowly defined youth guarantee in Norway.

The purpose of the youth guarantee is to ensure that unemployed youth are provided with an offer of labour market initiatives and to prevent long term unemployment and passivity. In principle, the guarantee applies to everyone under the age of 20 years who has neither a job nor a place in the educational system (NEETs).

As from 2009, an initiative guarantee was introduced concerning youth between 20 and 24 years who have been unemployed for six consecutive months or more. It is also a follow-up guarantee for youth between 20 and 24 years.

The guarantee involves the implementation of an activity plan [Omv aktivitetsplanen – NAV] no later than one month after the youth has come in contact with the labour and welfare services. It is also a goal than no less than 90 percent of youth under follow-up services are to be without an activity plan.

The Youth Guarantee in Norway is not legally binding.

A NAV counsellor or representative will first have to certify a NEET youth as ‘someone who needs to receive specific follow-up services’ for the youth guarantee to be valid. [A so-called ‘vedtak om behov for situasjonsbestemt innsats’(directly translated: a certified need to receive situational efforts/support)].

This means that the youth guarantee is only valid for youth who are already within the NAV administrative system. NAV reports that the current youth guarantee functions as an internal work document, thus little information is available online, or to the general public. See NAV’s note on the youth guarantee [in Norwegian – Ny ungdomsgaranti].

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

Flexible employment schemes: Wage Supplements

Wage supplements is a work-oriented initiative aimed at motivating employers to employ people on general wage and work conditions.

Wage supplements are granted to general private enterprises and public enterprises for a limited part of time in which the participant is employed. The intention is to introduce new employees to employers, increasing the likelihood of continued employment with the same employer following the end of the wage supplement period.

On the basis of the assessment of need and working capacity, the duration of the wage supplement is to be adapted to the participant's individual need.

Effective security provision: Financial Social Assistance [Økonomisk sosialhjelp]

Financial social assistance is meant to assure the subsistence of people who for various reasons are unable to provide for themselves. Many young unemployed contact the social centres because they as beginners to the labour market have not earned rights to daily cash benefits or other social protection benefits.
Financial social assistance is only granted when all other possibilities are exhausted. In practice, it means that the applicant must first have tried to find work or have applied for other financial rights before becoming entitled to social assistance.

Financial support is a benefit based on assessment and is granted after an individual needs test.

In 2009, there were 46,000 youth between 19 and 29 years drawing social assistance one or several times during the year, and of those a little more than 20 per cent were immigrant youth, or children of immigrants. After the financial crisis in 2008, the number of young social assistance recipients increased by more than 5,000 from about 41,000 in 2008. The number has steadily decreased from 2010 to 2015.

Young unemployed people receiving social assistance are highly characterized by difficult circumstances during their childhood and adolescence; poor mental health; a high drop out rate from school; and a high level of addiction problems (Hammer, 1993).

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Norway does not have any youth-specific policy on the reconciliation of private and working life.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

The Youth Guarantee

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the County Administrations, and the municipalities (varies between the local offices).

‘The follow-up service’ [Den fylkeskommunale oppfølgningstjenesten (OT) [1]]

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the County Administrations.

Initiatives for Youth with Reduced Work Capacity

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the County Administrations, and the municipalities (varies between the local offices).

The Qualification Programme [The Qualification Programme [5] [Kvalifiseringsprogrammet (KVP) [6]]

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the County Administrations, and the municipalities (varies between the local offices).

Flexible employment schemes: Wage Supplements [Midlertidig lønnstilskudd [11]]

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).
Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the County Administrations, and the municipalities (varies between the local offices).

**Effective security provision: Financial Social Assistance [Sosialstønad]**

The source of funding at top level: the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Mechanisms of co-funding between State institutions and social partners: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the County Administrations, and the municipalities (varies between the local offices).

The amount of funding (in real numbers and/or as a percentage of the overall budget) for 2016 is not available.

No EU funds (e.g. ESF, Development and Cohesion Fund) are used for labour employment integration measures in Norway.

**Quality assurance**

Information is not publicly available.