

Summary

The white paper on public health and living conditions in the Sámi population builds on the Public Health Report. Norway's general public health policy also applies to the Sámi population. Other important starting points for this white paper are the Escalation Plan for Mental Health and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.

There is limited knowledge about public health and living conditions in the Sámi population. However, a knowledge synthesis from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and the Centre for Sámi Health Research at UiT The Arctic University of Norway shows that there are only small differences in health between the Sámi and the rest of the population, especially compared with indigenous peoples in other parts of the world.

However, the Sámi are slightly more likely to report poor mental health than non-Sámi. They are also more likely to report having been victims of violence either in childhood or adulthood, and to be discriminated against or harassed because of their Sámi background. An input process has been carried out for the work on the report, where the mental health of the Sámi population was emphasised in the feedback.

The report provides a broad description of public health challenges from a cross-sectoral perspective, and also emphasises health-promoting resources in Sámi culture and community life. It is based on an acknowledgment that public health and living conditions policy has so far emphasised Sámi perspectives to a limited extent, and identifies areas where this will be bolstered. The main approach is to integrate Sámi perspectives into ordinary work. At the same time, Sámi language and culture must be protected and stimulated. The municipalities will play a key role in these efforts.

The white paper contains a strategy with six priority areas to promote good living conditions and good health and quality of life for the Sámi population. Chapters 3 to 8 discuss the six priority areas as follows:

1. promoting good living conditions in the Sámi population
2. including Sámi perspectives in public health policy
3. public health work to promote good mental health and quality of life
4. promoting healthy living habits and a health-promoting environment
5. strengthening knowledge about public health and living conditions in the Sámi population

6. promoting cross-border cooperation on public health in the Sámi population