



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF CHILDREN,  
EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

# A good childhood lasts a lifetime

Action plan to combat violence and  
sexual abuse against children and youth  
(2014–2017)





## OVERVIEW OF MEASURES IN THE PLAN

No.	Measures	Competent ministry
1	Strengthen the municipality's preventive health work and health services' efforts to address the issue of violence	Ministry of Health and Care Services
2	Preventive efforts for the youngest children	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
3	Grants for municipal measures to support parents	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
4	Prepare a guide for municipalities on use of parental guidance programmes	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
5	Better follow-up of parents whose children have been removed from their care	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
6	Expand authority of the child welfare service to impose assistance measures	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
7	Maintain support for the 'Mothers as Guides' course	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
8	Strengthening of a pilot project to provide a core time period free of charge in day care centres	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
9	Formulation of a new youth health strategy on violence and abuse	Ministry of Health and Care Services
10	Fostering life skills development in schools	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
11	Guidance and support for schools with persistently high bullying rates	Ministry of Education and Research
12	More knowledge about cyberbullying	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
13	The police's online activities	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
14	Continue evaluating provisions on the duty of confidentiality and the duty to inform	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
15	Simplify and clarify current provisions on the duty to inform the child welfare service	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
16	In the country's health legislation, clarify the responsibility of the health and care services to help expose and avert violence and sexual abuse	Ministry of Health and Care Services

No.	Measures	Competent ministry
17	Ban on the use of children as interpreters	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
18	An expert group is to analyse serious cases	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
19	Review of cases from initial notification of police to final judgment, if any	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
20	Detection by health service personnel of maltreatment and abuse of children	Ministry of Health and Care Services
21	Better procedures for detecting violence and sexual abuse against children and youth with disabilities	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
22	Use feedback from children and youth to improve services for those who have experienced violence or sexual abuse	Ministry of Health and Care Services
23	Information for children and youth on violence and sexual abuse	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
24	Services for children exposed to violence – new funding scheme	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
25	A team around the teacher – multidisciplinary competence at school	Ministry of Education and Research
26	Closer collaboration between public health clinics and the family counselling service	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
27	Review services for children at crisis centres and the centres against incest and sexual abuse	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
28	Further development of the Children's House system	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
29	Procedures for dealing with children on police call-outs	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
30	Broader use of the SARA for Children risk assessment guide	Ministry of Justice and Public Security

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No.	Measures	Competent ministry
31	Cooperation through police councils and SLT	Ministry of Justice and Public Security
32	Strengthen municipal health and care services for children exposed to violence or sexual abuse	Ministry of Health and Care Services
33	Improved specialist health services for children who have been exposed to violence and sexual abuse	Ministry of Health and Care Services
34	Strengthen family counselling services for children exposed to violence and for young violent offenders	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
35	Review treatment services for youth at risk of violence and for young offenders	Ministry of Health and Care Services
36	Focus on violence and sexual abuse in professional study programmes	Ministry of Education and Research
37	Expertise on violence and sexual abuse will be strengthened in the health and care services	Ministry of Health and Care Services
38	Strengthen municipal employees' skills in talking with children	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
39	Train minority advisers in schools to talk with youngsters about violence and sexual abuse	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
40	Survey of child welfare measures in minority families	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
41	Health research and survey of services	Ministry of Health and Care Services
42	Pilot survey project on the extent of violence and sexual abuse against children and youth	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion
43	More knowledge about early intervention and parental support efforts	Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion



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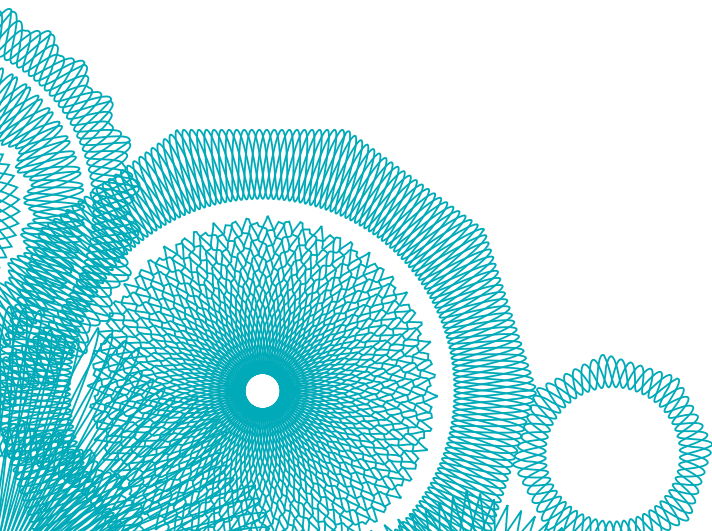




Photo: Shutterstock





# FOREWORD

Children and youth are individuals with inviolable rights. Adults have a responsibility to provide protection for children and young people. This year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Significant progress has been made towards securing the rights of children. Nevertheless, violence and sexual abuse are still a major social problem and public health concern. On a global basis, only 37 countries have banned corporal punishment of children. Violence is used in child rearing in many parts of the world. Children and adolescents who experience violence and sexual abuse may suffer the effects for the rest of their lives. With good preventive assistance, treatment and support, we as authorities can help to reduce the adverse impacts of such experiences for both the present and future generations. Efforts to safeguard the legal rights of children are important and necessary as long as children and youth continue to be abused.

We must help children and youth to live good, safe lives. Every child must have the opportunity to be seen, to participate and to develop in his or her childhood environment. No child must be exposed to violence or sexual abuse. Such acts are breaches of Norwegian law. If we are to combat them successfully, the scope of preventive and parental-support measures must be enlarged. The private and voluntary sectors must be involved in this work. Effective prevention requires that we as a society are willing to invest, even if we do not see any direct benefit in the short term. By taking targeted, preventive action, we will be able to prevent human suffering and spare society substantial costs. The Norwegian Government will therefore give priority to preventive efforts in the time ahead.

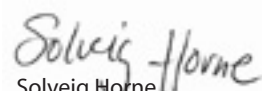
Parents are children's primary caregivers, and the Government therefore intends to strengthen the role of the family in society. Good parenting produces safe children, which is why it is important to help and support parents. If children do not receive adequate care in their own home, the health and social services must intervene at an early stage. Children and families in difficult circumstances must be given rapid assistance tailored to their needs. This can only be achieved through collaboration across services and administrative levels. The core focus of all our efforts must always be the child's best interests.

Combating violence and sexual abuse is not a private matter. Everyone who comes into contact with children and adolescents in their day-to-day work must dare to ask difficult questions, and listen to the stories that emerge. Knowledge plays a crucial role in these encounters, as does the ability to see and detect when children and youth may have been exposed to violence or abuse. We will upgrade professional expertise in several sectors, and will prosecute criminal acts.

We must take effective action and follow through on it. We all have a duty to act when we have reason to believe that a child or an adolescent is at risk. Management and the individual staff members in public service agencies have a special responsibility. It is also important that members of children's social networks act on any suspicion of violence or sexual abuse. We can all make a difference in the lives of children and youth at risk. There is no excuse for looking the other way.

Stamping out violence and sexual abuse poses a multitude of challenges. We must make use of all necessary means. Measures must be evaluated and, if appropriate, supplemented.

Combating violence and sexual abuse against children and youth is Norway's most important contribution towards fulfilling the obligations imposed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Solveig Horne  
*Minister of Children, Equality  
and Social Inclusion*



Bent Høie  
*Minister of Health and Care Services*



Anders Anundsen  
*Minister of Justice and Public Security*



Torbjørn Røe Isaksen  
*Minister of Education and Research*

## THE PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AND RAPE IN NORWAY

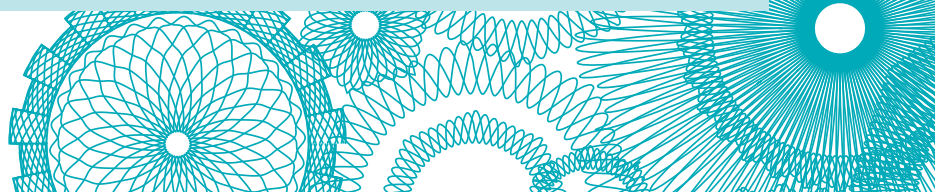
The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security to conduct a survey of the incidence of violence and sexual abuse in Norway.

The survey was carried out in 2013 and consisted of interviews with 2,435 women and 2,029 men aged 18 to 75. The survey participants were questioned about their experiences of physical violence and sexual abuse in their childhood and as adults.

### MAIN FINDINGS

- 8.2% of the women respondents and 1.9% of the men related that they had been subjected to serious partner violence
- 9.4% of the women and 1.1% of the men related that they had been raped
- 4.9% of the women and 5.1% of the men stated that on at least one occasion they had been subjected to serious violence by a parent or legal guardian (beaten, kicked, hit with a fist)
- 27.7% of the women and 33% of the men stated that during their childhood their hair was pulled and that they were pinched, shaken or struck by a parent or legal guardian
- 15.4% of the women and 11.2% of the men had experienced psychological violence from a parent or legal guardian during childhood
- An equal percentage of women and men – 10% – had witnessed physical violence between their parents during childhood
- 10.2% of the women and 3.5% of the men related that they had had sexual contact with a person at least five years older than themselves before the age of 13
- 4% of the female respondents and 1.5% of the males stated that they had had sexual relations before the age of 13. One out of four had never told anyone about it
- Most of the rapes and acts of sexual contact experienced by children under the age of 13 were committed by persons the children knew
- Being exposed to violence or sexual abuse as a child increases the likelihood that the person will be subjected to violence or abuse as an adult

Source: Siri Thoresen and Ole Kristian Hjemdal (eds.): *Vold og voldtekt i Norge. En nasjonal forekomststudie av vold i et livsløpsperspektiv (Violence and Rape in Norway. A National Prevalence Study of Violence in a Lifespan Perspective)*. Report 1/2014.



# INTRODUCTION

The action plan *A good childhood lasts a lifetime* covers the period 2014-2017, and comprises 43 measures aimed at combating violence and sexual abuse against children and youth. The primary goal of the plan is to prevent children and young people from being subjected to violence and sexual abuse in or outside their home. Children and youth who are exposed to violence and abuse must be given early, appropriate help, wherever they may live in Norway.

The action plan focuses on the following areas:

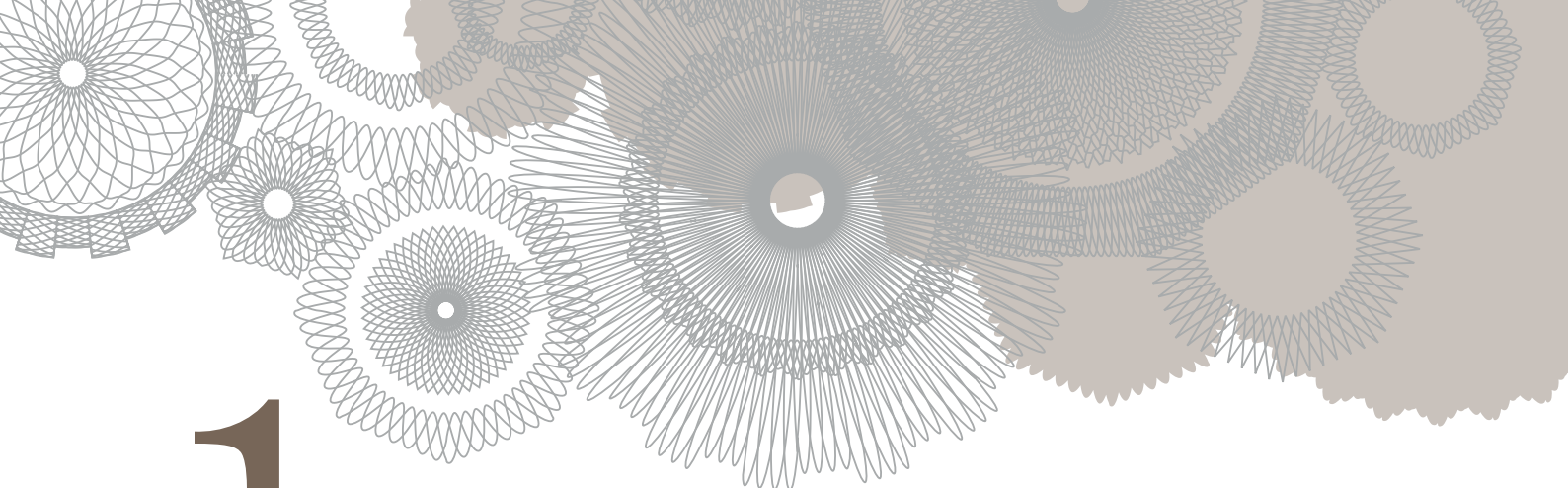
- Prevention and good parenting
- The responsibility of the public authorities
- Child and youth participation
- Interdisciplinary cooperation and the voluntary sector
- The right help and treatment at the right time
- Research and expertise

The action plan covers all children and youth between the ages of 0 and 18. The work on the plan has been coordinated by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, and the plan is to be implemented in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Education and Research and associated directorates. A number of voluntary organisations have contributed significant input. The plan is grounded in the knowledge base established through prior work in this field.

An inter-ministerial working group will have overall responsibility for implementing the action plan. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs will be assigned the task of coordinating the work. The actions in the plan will be funded within current budget limits, and may be further developed and supplemented during the plan period. The actions will be carried out when budget funds are available. Annual status reports on the work will be prepared and made available to the general public on the Internet.

Voluntary organisations engaged in work on these issues, in particular child and youth organisations, will be involved in the implementation of the action plan.





# 1

## PREVENTIVE EFFORTS AND GOOD PARENTING

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### UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 18 • PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.<sup>1</sup>

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Good parenting and secure family relationships are the most important underpinnings of a good childhood. The measures in this plan will help spread knowledge of the factors that promote good parenting, and of the way good care supports a child's development. The Government is committed to supporting families and strengthening care for children.

Good parenting begins in pregnancy, when the foundation is laid for parental bonds and caregiving. Prevention and early assistance will help to ensure that children form secure attachments in the first years of their life. Children's circumstances and experiences during these years have a significant impact on their development. Identifying children in difficult circumstances as early as possible is an important goal. A child's early years are among the factors that determine how well he or she will cope with problems later in life. Employees working for public service agencies must have the necessary expertise to ascertain when families are troubled and give them early assistance.<sup>2</sup>

Adults in the social networks of children and youth are important resources in preventive efforts. Persons working in the voluntary sector play a vital role because they are in contact with children and young people in connection with leisure activities. They must help to identify children and youth who are subjected to violence and abuse. Voluntary organisations strive to provide sound recreational activities in a safe environment. Each organisation must therefore put in place procedures for exposing abuse in its own ranks.

#### MEASURE 1

##### STRENGTHEN THE MUNICIPALITY'S PREVENTIVE HEALTH WORK AND HEALTH SERVICES' EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF VIOLENCE

- a) Regulations on health-promotion and preventive work in public health clinics and the school health service are to be revised. Responsibilities for combating violence will be clarified in the clause stating the regulatory objective.
- b) National professional guidelines for public health clinic and school health services are to be developed, and will include the topic of violence against children and youth.
- c) To strengthen public health clinic and school health services it is proposed that municipal financial budgets be increased by NOK 200 million in 2015, in addition to the amount of NOK 180 million carried forward from 2014, resulting in a total of NOK 380 million for 2015. The white paper to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) on primary health care in the future will cover the topic of services for children and youth.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Health and Care Services

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1 From UNICEF UK's summary version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2 Agencies that provide public services also include privately owned day care centres, schools, child welfare institutions and health institutions.

## MEASURE 2

### PREVENTIVE EFFORTS FOR THE YOUNGEST CHILDREN

a) The risk of maldevelopment in infants and small children (0-2 years old) must be reduced. The well-documented *Nurse-Family Partnership* programme is now to be tested in Norway. The target group is young, high-risk, first-time mothers. Under the programme, parents receive systematic, long-term follow-up from a very early stage of pregnancy. The results of this pilot project will determine whether the programme will be continued.

b) The lessons learned from the *Model Municipality project* (2007-2014) and the *Early In – Mental Health, Intoxicants and Domestic Violence* training programme will be assessed in an overall context with a view to continuing these activities. The Model Municipality project targets children whose parents are mentally ill and/or substance abusers. The project consists of testing assessment tools and models for interdisciplinary collaboration and coordination at the local level. The aim is to identify children at risk as early as possible and provide them with comprehensive assistance. An evaluation report will be published in the spring of 2015. The *Early In (Tidlig Inn)* intervention training programme aims at preventing children from growing up amid harmful patterns of violence and conflict and at providing assistance at an early stage to pregnant women and families with small children so as to avoid harmful development over time.

c) Work is in progress on a study of child welfare services for at-risk families with small children. Some of the services are currently provided at parent-children centres, which is a voluntary programme for pregnant women, single parents and couples with children up to 12 years of age.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services

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## MEASURE 3

### GRANTS FOR MUNICIPAL MEASURES TO SUPPORT PARENTS

A grant scheme for municipalities was established in 2014 to provide funding for parental guidance services and other activities to support parents. The large number of applications for such funding shows that there is a need for this type of service. A number of municipalities lack the necessary expertise, and the scheme is to be expanded to include funding for operating costs and the development of requisite skills.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## MEASURE 4

### PREPARE A GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES ON USE OF PARENTAL GUIDANCE PROGRAMMES

For all municipalities that run introduction programmes for recent immigrants, a special guide will be prepared and distributed with recommendations that municipalities use a parental guidance programme (such as the International Child Development Programme, or ICDP) whenever appropriate.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## MEASURE 5

### BETTER FOLLOW-UP OF PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THEIR CARE

When the child welfare service takes a child into care, the parents will often find the situation extremely difficult. Better follow-up of the parents can help to reduce any conflicts between the parents and the child welfare service, prevent cases from being brought to court and provide the children with greater stability. The family counselling service is tasked with offering assistance to parents to deal with the upheaval of their child being taken into care, to ensure that their right of access to the child is exercised constructively, and to develop their parenting skills with a view to their assuming a potential caregiving role in the future. Information material will be developed to ensure that the programme is widely known among municipal child welfare personnel and the parents concerned.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## MEASURE 6

### EXPAND AUTHORITY OF THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICE TO IMPOSE ASSISTANCE MEASURES

Assistance is provided by the child welfare service on a voluntary basis, and can help to prevent a child being taken into care. A study will be carried out of a potential amendment to the Child Welfare Act which would expand the child welfare service's authority to order parents or other caregivers to accept assistance. The study also focuses on such important considerations such as the child's best interests, the value of a voluntary approach and use of coercion.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## **Bullying**

Being bullied poses a substantial risk of health problems, both while the bullying is taking place and later in life. Bullying is defined as repeated negative or malicious behaviour on the part of one or more persons targeting a person who has problems defending himself or herself. The same definition applies to repeated teasing in an unpleasant, hurtful manner. Bullying may also consist of physical, mental or psychological violence.

A fair amount of the bullying and abusive behaviour that children and young people experience occurs on the Internet, or through mobile phones. Online and mobile phone bullying can take place at any time of the day and night, and can be spread to an unknown number of recipients. We know too little at present about the scope and effects of such bullying. Cyberbullying is often invisible to adults, and it can be hard to trace.

The Education Act provides that all pupils are entitled to a physical and psychosocial environment conducive to well-being and learning. Schools have a statutory duty to engage in continuous, systematic efforts to prevent abusive words or acts such as bullying, discrimination, violence or racism. According to the national preschool curriculum, day care centres must foster positive behaviour that counteracts rejection, bullying and violence. The care and learning environment in day care centres must be designed to promote children's well-being, happiness, coping skills and self-esteem.

A government-appointed committee is currently assessing all the means available for creating a good psychosocial school environment and preventing and dealing with bullying and other undesirable incidents in schools. The committee is to submit its report by Easter 2015. The purpose of this study is to systematise knowledge of the factors that create a good psychosocial learning environment free from bullying or other abusive behaviour. The study will consider which instruments, including the regulatory framework and its administration at different levels, are effective in preventing and dealing with bullying. On the basis of the study, the Government will draw up a revised policy to prevent and combat bullying.

## **MEASURE 7**

### **MAINTAIN SUPPORT FOR THE 'MOTHERS AS GUIDES' COURSE**

The MiRA Resource Centre for Immigrant and Refugee Women has developed a programme for mothers who wish to act as guides for other women in their local community. The women are trained as guides through courses on alternative methods of upbringing, the Norwegian social services and the rights of children in Norway and internationally. The overarching goal is to empower women with an immigrant background and strengthen their role and engagement in efforts to prevent the use of violence in child rearing. Funding for the course will be maintained in 2015.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## **MEASURE 8**

### **STRENGTHENING OF A PILOT PROJECT TO PROVIDE A CORE TIME PERIOD FREE OF CHARGE IN DAY CARE CENTRES**

This pilot project is an important means of encouraging increased day care centre attendance in areas where there are many minority-language children. The primary objective is to prepare children for starting school. The day care centre is an important arena for providing guidance for parents and detecting child neglect. As from August 2014, the project entailing a free core period in day care centres will target low-income families in the Gamle Oslo district of the capital and in Bergen and Drammen. At the same time, the parents of children in the pilot project are required to participate in activities such as Norwegian language courses, educational programmes, work or other activities. The Government is increasing its funding for this trial project by NOK 20 million in 2015.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## **MEASURE 9**

### **FORMULATION OF A NEW YOUTH HEALTH STRATEGY ON VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

There is a need to examine the entire array of challenges related to young people's health. Work on the strategy is designed to ensure that challenges are seen in an overall context, across sectors, service levels and focus areas. Efforts to combat violence and sexual abuse against, between and by young people will be included in the youth health strategy. Representatives from a wide range of youth organisations and agencies will be invited to take part in this work.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Health and Care Services

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## INFORMATION GUIDES ON ANTI-BULLYING EFFORTS IN DAY CARE CENTRES

In 2012, a web-based resource for parents of kindergarten children (FUB), which is funded by the Ministry of Education and Research, published the brochure *Mobbing i barnehagen (Bullying in day care centres)*. The brochure contains advice for both parents and day care centre staff.

In 2013, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training published the guide *Barns trivsel – voksnes ansvar. Forebyggende arbeid mot mobbing starter i barnehagen (Children's well-being – adults' responsibility. Efforts to prevent bullying begin in day care centres)*. Among other things, the guide emphasises the responsibility of the day care centre owner and the centre director for putting the psychosocial environment on the agenda. It is their task to ensure that the centre staff adopt a systematic, long-term approach to this issue, and regularly assess their own work.

## MEASURE 10

### FOSTERING LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS

For several years, the ministries have received inquiries from youth organisations and groups concerning the need to include issues relating to life skills development in the school curriculum. There is a significant need to address topics such as mental health, violence, abuse, sexuality, pressure to excel, digital bullying, family problems, neglect, gender roles and gender identity, and to create an arena for discussions of such issues in a protective setting. To meet this need, the ministries will ask the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU), in cooperation with various child welfare and youth advocacy organisations such as Barnevernsprofene, Mental Helse Ungdom, Landsforeningen for barnevernsbarn, Ungdom og Fritid (a national youth club organisation), the School Student Union of Norway and others to concretise and further develop these signals into a proposal for possible use in schools. The proposal will be assessed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Education and Research

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## MEASURE 11

### GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS WITH PERSISTENTLY HIGH BULLYING RATES

a) Through a special project run by the national authorities, schools and municipalities may request guidance and support through customised programmes designed to promote a good learning environment. The Centre for Learning Environment has established four advisory groups to assist in this work.

b) The Government will present a draft law which specifies that a pupil who bullies others may be moved to another school if no other solutions can be found.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Education and Research

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### Online abuse of children

The same laws and rules that govern society in general apply to the Internet. Defamation, invasion of privacy, threats, racist statements, identity violations and identity theft are examples of criminal offences that may be committed in connection with Internet use. Other offences are directly linked to Internet use, such as hacking and grooming.<sup>3</sup> Possession and dissemination of representations of child sexual abuse, or representations that sexualise a child, are criminal offences that primarily take place on the Internet.

Efforts to prevent Internet-related child abuse include online policing. In Norway, the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) is a core centre of expertise for exposing possession and online distribution of child abuse material. It is crucial that district police forces also have the necessary expertise and capacity to investigate such cases. It is also important that the police are alert to and can deal with digital aspects of cases that may not be fundamentally Internet-based.

When children and young people experience potential online offences, it is important that it is easy for them to report this abuse. Many websites have incorporated an official “Red Button” link on their pages. By clicking on this button, the user is transferred directly to Kripos’ tip page, where he or she can report abuse, sexual exploitation, racist utterances, human trafficking and other offences. Another service is the website [slettmeg.no](http://slettmeg.no), which provides information on how to demand the deletion of unlawfully published material on the Internet.

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<sup>3</sup> Arranging a meeting with children under 16 years of age with the intention of sexually abusing the child.

### MEASURE 12

#### MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CYBERBULLYING

A report on the status of knowledge of cyberbullying will be prepared, and an expert meeting will be held on the issue. The objective is to obtain up-to-date information on developments and on effective measures for combating bullying in social media.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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### MEASURE 13

#### THE POLICE’S ONLINE ACTIVITIES

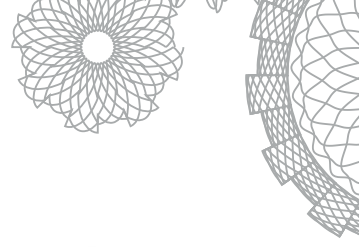
a) Efforts to combat the possession and sharing of abusive material on the Internet will be increased by improving the capability and capacity of the police to expose such offences. The expert knowledge required to secure and review abusive material will be enhanced. Action will be taken to ensure that expertise is updated frequently and to provide training to enable the police to keep abreast of changes in the risk picture.

b) Courses and supplementary training will be provided to give the police the technical know-how to identify possible digital aspects of a case and be able to ask the right questions.

c) A study will be conducted to ascertain whether Kripos’ Red Button link, the [slettmeg.no](http://slettmeg.no) service ([slettmeg](http://slettmeg.no) = [deleteme](http://deleteme.no)) for people who experience privacy violations online and other resources adequately meet the needs of children and their parents and legal guardians for reporting offences and assistance. Efforts will also be made to ensure that the target groups are aware of available reporting and assistance mechanisms.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Justice and Public Security

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# 2

## THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

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### UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 19 • PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

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To help children and young people who are exposed to violence or sexual abuse, it is important that the circumstances are detected as early as possible. When employees of public service agencies suspect that a child or adolescent is being subjected to violence, they have a duty to take action. Employees must have the expertise to recognise signs or behaviour that give reason for concern. They must know how to deal with that suspicion and ensure that the child or young person receives the necessary assistance. All employees of public service agencies must be familiar with the rules relating to the duty to inform and the duty to avert criminal acts.

It is the responsibility of the management of public service agencies to ensure that systems and procedures are established to identify children living in unacceptable conditions. This applies to every administrative level. The management is also responsible for ensuring that employees have the necessary skills to deal with such cases. Moreover, the management is responsible for seeing to it that the service has established procedures for booking and using a qualified interpreter, training employees in how to use an interpreter and ensuring that interpreters are summoned when necessary.

In some families, the adults may have a limited knowledge of Norwegian. Children must not be placed in a situation where they are required to act as interpreters for their own parents.

Abuse of children and young people takes place in secret and is difficult to expose. This applies in particular to abuse of children and adolescents growing up in families who have limited contact with their local community or society at large. Employees of public

#### MEASURE 14

##### CONTINUE EVALUATING PROVISIONS ON THE DUTY OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE DUTY TO INFORM

Efforts aimed at clarifying provisions relating to the duty of confidentiality and the duty to inform in public administration are to be followed up. The goal is to reach a clear understanding of these provisions that can replace existing guidelines and potentially lead to amendments in current provisions.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Justice and Public Security in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Education and Research

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#### MEASURE 15

##### SIMPLIFY AND CLARIFY CURRENT PROVISIONS ON THE DUTY TO INFORM THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICE

The duty to inform the child welfare service is to be simplified and clarified. Similar provisions in the rules and regulations applicable to other services will also be assessed. The purpose is to increase the awareness and understanding of various authorities and professionals of their duty to inform the child welfare service, and their compliance with this duty.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Education and Research

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## DUTY TO INFORM THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICE

All public services and agencies have a statutory duty to notify the municipal child welfare service of any serious concerns regarding a child's care situation or behaviour. The legal authority for this duty is provided by section 6-4 of the Child Welfare Act and a number of other laws that apply to the individual services. The duty also applies to a wide range of professionals, regardless of whether they work in the private or public sector. The duty is an independent, personal responsibility, and can only be fulfilled by immediately notifying the municipal child welfare service.

Everyone who sends a report of concern is entitled to a reply from the child welfare service (see section 6-7 a of the Child Welfare Act). The information the child welfare service is required to give depends on whether the report came from "a public reporter" or from a private individual. The duty to reply is intended to strengthen confidence in the child welfare service and to promote constructive, cross-functional collaboration between child welfare professionals and other services.

service agencies must be keenly alert to the potential vulnerability of such children.

In 2013, the day care attendance rate for children aged 1-5 was 90%. Day care staff see children and their parents every day, and are therefore well placed to identify children whose home situation is difficult. All day care centre personnel should have the necessary skills to identify children who need help and should not hesitate to raise any concerns with their colleagues and the day care centre director. Section 22 of the Day Care Centre Act emphasises that, in their work, day care centre staff must be alert to circumstances that may call for action on the part of the child welfare service. Notwithstanding their duty of confidentiality, the staff must provide information to the child welfare service when there is reason to believe that a child is being maltreated at home or if there are other forms of serious neglect. The same applies if a child has shown persistent serious behavioural problems.

Several serious cases of violence and abuse against children have shown how the public authorities have failed to fulfil their responsibilities. There is a need for more knowledge of why the social and welfare services have not been able to meet these children's needs for protection and care. By obtaining such know-how, we will strengthen the public authorities' ability to protect children.

Through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Norway has committed to protecting children from all forms of physical or psychological violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or

## MEASURE 16

### IN THE COUNTRY'S HEALTH LEGISLATION, CLARIFY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES TO HELP EXPOSE AND AVERT VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

In order to better protect children and other persons from violence and sexual abuse, an assessment will be made of the need to define this responsibility more clearly in health legislation.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Health and Care Services

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## MEASURE 17

### BAN ON THE USE OF CHILDREN AS INTERPRETERS

A proposal to prohibit the use of children as interpreters has been circulated for consultation. The purpose of the proposed ban is to protect the child's best interests. Children should be spared the burden and the conflict of loyalty inherent in acting as interpreters for their parents. In cases concerning violence and abuse, such a role would jeopardise the children's due process rights. Generally speaking, the consultative comments on the proposal were positive.

In NOU 2014: 8 *Interpreting in the public sector*, the Interpreting Services Review Committee proposes to enact a special law making it mandatory for public service agencies to use qualified interpreters in certain situations. This proposal will be considered in conjunction with the proposal of a ban on the use of children as interpreters.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## MEASURE 18

### AN EXPERT GROUP IS TO ANALYSE SERIOUS CASES

A group of experts will be tasked with analysing a selection of cases in which children and youth have been subjected to violence and sexual abuse. The purpose of this analysis is to uncover deficiencies and challenges in the public services' handling of the cases.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Ministry of Education and Research

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## MEASURE 19

### REVIEW OF CASES FROM INITIAL NOTIFICATION OF POLICE TO FINAL JUDGMENT, IF ANY

A review is to be conducted of cases of violence and sexual abuse against children, from the time they are reported to the police, through each step of the criminal proceedings, to a judgment, if applicable.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Justice and Public Security

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## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF SOUND MINIMUM STANDARDS IN THE CHILD WELFARE ACT

The child welfare service's duty to provide sound minimum services and measures was recently established in statutory form in section 1-4 of the Child Welfare Act. One of the intentions was to indicate to users and the child welfare service itself the requirements and expectations that must be met by the services provided. The enactment of this requirement also strengthens the supervisory authorities' possibility of verifying that both the municipal child welfare service and the central government's child welfare service carry out their statutory functions. The requirement will also help to improve collaboration between the child welfare service and other services.

exploitation, including sexual abuse. The States Parties to the Convention must take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to meet this commitment.

### **The duty to inform and the duty to avert a criminal act in relation to the duty of confidentiality**

It has been argued in several quarters that, due to current rules and regulations, children and youth who are subjected to violence and sexual abuse are not receiving the right help at the right time.

The duty of confidentiality is intended to prevent certain information, including information on personal matters, from becoming known to unauthorised persons. This duty prohibits the communication of such information to other persons. Where the law imposes a duty to inform the child welfare service, for instance, the duty to provide information supersedes the duty of confidentiality. Rules regarding the duty to inform may also allow the communication of confidential information. The duty under the General Civil Penal Code to avert a criminal act supersedes the duty of confidentiality.

Under Section 139 of the General Civil Penal Code, anyone who fails to report to the police, or otherwise fails to try to prevent a criminal act or its consequences, is liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to one year. The duty to avert a criminal offence applies to the criminal acts specified in section 139, which was expanded in 2012 by legislative amendment to include section 200, second paragraph, of the Penal Code on sexual activity with children under 16 years of age, etc., section 193 on abuse of power or the like in a relationship, and section 219 on ordinary or gross maltreatment in close relationships and complicity in such maltreatment.

The duty to avert a criminal offence arises when it is deemed to be certain, or most likely, that the offence will be, or has been, committed. Complicity in a breach of the duty to avert an offence, such as by persuading someone not to notify the police, is also a criminal act.

## MEASURE 20

### **DETECTION BY HEALTH SERVICE PERSONNEL OF MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE OF CHILDREN**

a) *Retningslinjer for svangerskapsomsorgen – hvordan avdekke vold (IS-2181) (Guidelines for pregnancy care – how to detect violence)* describe how to raise routine questions about violence and abuse and follow up on them. To implement the guidelines, training will be provided for health personnel and follow-up action will be defined. Violence and sexual abuse will be included as a topic in the health card of pregnant women when a new electronic health card is produced.

b) The health and welfare services do not always realise that children have been exposed to violence and traumatic experiences, and the symptoms of such experiences may resemble those of other experiences or ailments. As a result of a failure to detect children's exposure to violence or traumatic experiences, children and youth may not be given the right help. This topic will be included in training to upgrade staff skills.

c) The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) has produced an electronic manual for health personnel in the specialised health services for use when physical abuse is suspected. The manual is to be expanded to include dental health services and municipal health and care services. The NKVTS and the Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) will assist in implementing the manual. The manual is to be updated regularly.

d) Detection of violence and sexual abuse will be included as a topic when future relevant guides and professional guidelines are drawn up by the health and care services.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Health and Care Services

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## MEASURE 21

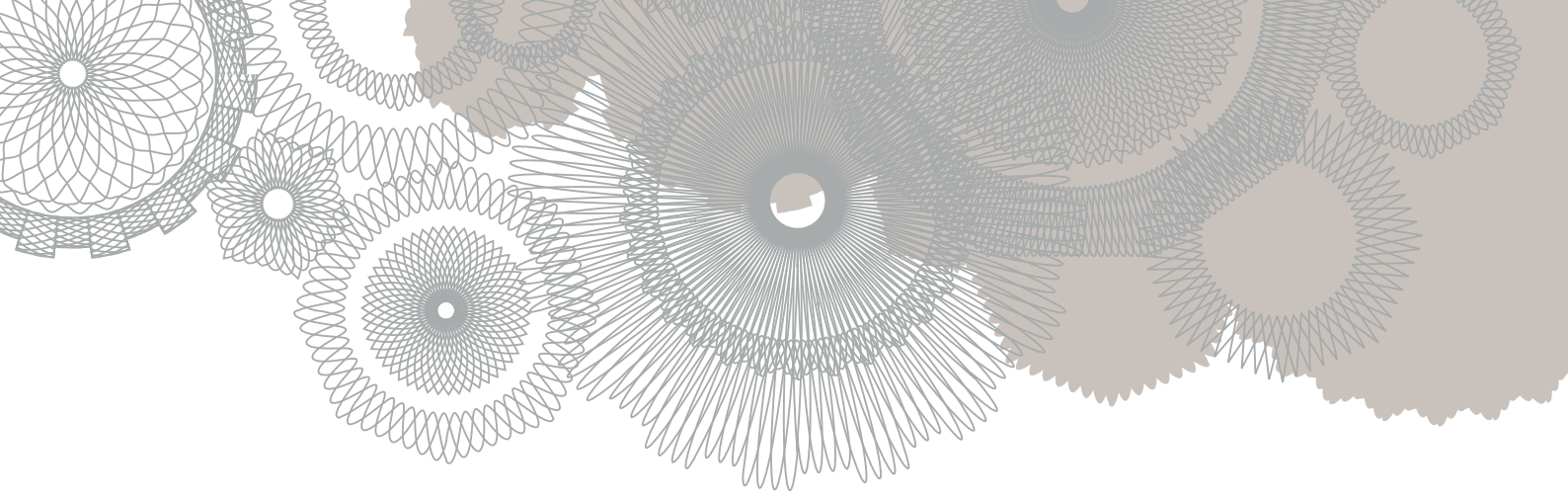
### **BETTER PROCEDURES FOR DETECTING VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**

Children and young people with disabilities, including developmentally disabled children and youth, are at particular risk of being subjected to offensive acts, violence and abuse. Better procedures are to be developed to detect and follow up on such cases, including abuse by service providers. These procedures will be communicated to all relevant services and assistance programmes.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services

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# 3

## CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

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### UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 12 • TO SPEAK UP AND BE HEARD

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

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As children grow older, life outside the family becomes more important to them. In order for children and youth to enjoy their right of participation, they must have the opportunity and experience of putting forward their own opinions early in life.

Children have the right to be children. Children and young people should not be held accountable for the actions of adults, and are entitled to protection. Their school, their circle of friends and their activities must be safe and free of bullying and other abusive behaviour.

The right of children to express their opinion and be heard is a fundamental principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and young people are important agents of change, and their viewpoints must be used actively in the formulation of policies and services. To ensure that children and youth can participate in a positive way, they must have access to accurate information suited to their particular needs.

#### **Listening to children in high-conflict situations**

One goal of the family counselling service is to ensure that children are properly heard in connection with mediation after a relationship breakdown. Parents should be aware of the harm that parental conflicts can cause to a child's development, health and quality of life.

The family counselling service will strengthen its services for children and parents in families with a high

level of conflict. The aim is to help lower the conflict level so parents can arrive at good, lasting residential and contact arrangements after they split up.

Experience gained from the counselling service's projects involving child consultation and high-conflict situations will be used in the development of effective methodologies for mediation, parental guidance and talking with children. This should contribute to making childhood more secure and limiting the harmful effects of parental conflict.

### **CHILDREN'S HEALTH, ON CHILDREN'S TERMS**

In a 2013 report titled *Helse på barns premisser (Health on children's terms)*, the Ombudsman for Children took a hard look at selected health care services for children. Based on the experiences of the ombudsman, of specialists and of children themselves, a number of recommendations have been prepared for children's health services. Several of the ombudsman's recommendations are followed up in this action plan. One of the recommendations is to ensure that children's experiences and wishes are borne in mind when the authorities organise and design services for children who have experienced violence or sexual abuse.

## IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO STRENGTHEN CHILD RIGHTS

### CHILD PARTICIPATION UNDER THE CHILD WELFARE ACT, AND THE RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE FROM A TRUSTED PERSON

To give help that is in the best interests of the child, the child welfare service must make provisions for consulting with the child and listening to what the child says. Participation strengthens the child's position in child welfare cases and helps ensure the child's legal protections. The child has a right, but not an obligation, to express his or her views.

The Child Welfare Act grants children the right to express their views before child welfare cases are decided. It also regulates when a child may act as a formal party in the case.

A new general provision on child participation entered into force as part of the Child Welfare Act on 1 June 2014. The child must be given an opportunity to exert influence, and conversations with the child are to be facilitated. The provision clarifies both the obligation and the importance of providing children and young people in public care with high-quality information and the opportunity to participate during all case proceedings in the child welfare service.

A youngster in the child welfare service's care may be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a person the child trusts. This trusted person is to be of support to the child, and may participate in meetings if the child wishes. Child participation will be strengthened in this way (see the regulations on child participation and trusted persons which came into force on 1 June 2014). The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion is working to develop guidelines for the regulation.

### STRENGTHENING CHILD RIGHTS UNDER THE CHILDREN ACT

Children's rights in parental disputes under the Children Act were strengthened by legislative amendments that took effect on 1 January 2014. Parental disputes are cases in which parents disagree over parental responsibility, residential arrangements or contact arrangements.

Children under seven years of age who are able to form their own opinions must be given the opportunity to speak out before decisions are made about them (including on residential and contact arrangements). The child's opinion must be given weight corresponding to the child's age and maturity. The child must therefore receive sufficient and relevant information about the case, and must be informed about the outcome of the case in court.

The court may order supervised contact when there is a need to protect the child or support the child and contact parent. The rules and arrangements for contact under supervision were strengthened and expanded. The supervisor is now required to submit a police certificate of good conduct and report on the contact. The court may stipulate other conditions for contact, such as a requirement that the parents participate in activities and measures to strengthen parental functions and parental cooperation.

In cases involving violence, substance abuse or mental health conditions that may compromise parenting functions, the court should also appoint an expert witness. Expenses for the expert in such cases are covered by the state. In cases involving violence it may also be appropriate for the court to appoint a representative for the child, to ensure that the child's interests are safeguarded in court proceedings.

Under the Children Act, employees in the child welfare service are exempted from confidentiality obligations in order to testify in parental disputes before a court.

### THE CHILD WELFARE ACT TO BE REVIEWED

The Government is currently establishing a committee to review the Child Welfare Act. The goal is to simplify the entire act and adjust regulations to better reflect changes in society and knowledge gained since the Child Welfare Act came into force more than 20 years ago. In addition to simplification of the act, the committee will look into issues such as 1) the child welfare service's sphere of responsibility, 2) preventive efforts, 3) child welfare principles, 4) the need for a Child Welfare Act that reflects contemporary life, and 5) the rights and contact arrangements of involved parties. The Government has not taken a position on whether the Child Welfare Act should become a law conferring statutory rights, but wants the committee to study how such an enshrinement of rights could be regulated in the Child Welfare Act.



## FAMILY COURT

The Government will examine whether to establish a special court for children's and family affairs. There has been an increase in the number of child welfare cases at county social welfare boards and in the courts. The courts have also seen a rise in parental disputes related to the Children Act. In these cases it is crucial to determine the best way to safeguard the child's interests and due process rights. The study will take into account evaluation of the county boards for cases under the Child Welfare Act.

### Information for children and young people

Children and adolescents need knowledge about the body and sexuality, about physical and psychological violence, and about sexual abuse. In that way they can learn to recognise unacceptable behaviour and have the opportunity to put words to difficult experiences. The information must be easily accessible, understandable and age-appropriate. Social media play an important role. Schools and day care centres are the most important venues for reaching children and youth with information about violence and sexual abuse.

The school's preventive role has been strengthened in recent years. Subject curricula in certain years of primary and lower secondary school and the first two years of upper secondary school have competency goals pertaining to violence, abuse, violence related to sexuality and violence in close relationships. Chapter 9a of the Education Act gives all pupils the individual right to a good physical and psychosocial environment at school.

Voluntary services and organisations run programmes that give out information on violence and sexual abuse to children and adolescents, especially in day care centres and schools. The Regional Centre for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention in southern Norway (RVTS Sør) is conducting a review of these programmes in 2014, identifying them, evaluating them and issuing recommendations for future activities.

Violence and abuse against children and youth are a problem that cuts across several sectors of the social welfare system. Cooperation by the different agencies that provide information services will lead to improved quality, more uniform content and resource savings. Already, a network of directorates and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) are working on informational materials concerning forced marriage and female genital mutilation. NKVTS is developing a web portal on violence in close relationships. In 2014 the Ministry of Justice and Public Security granted funds to the National Police Directorate and the website ung.no, which is operated by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, to carry out information campaigns on the topic.

### MEASURE 22

#### USE FEEDBACK FROM CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ABUSE

a) The health authorities will ensure that the experiences of children and adolescents are used actively in the design of services for youth who have been subjected to violence or sexual abuse.

b) A delimited survey of children and young people will be conducted to obtain feedback on how they regard their contact with health personnel after experiencing violence or sexual abuse. Practical advice for health personnel will be prepared on the basis of the survey results and other information.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services

### MEASURE 23

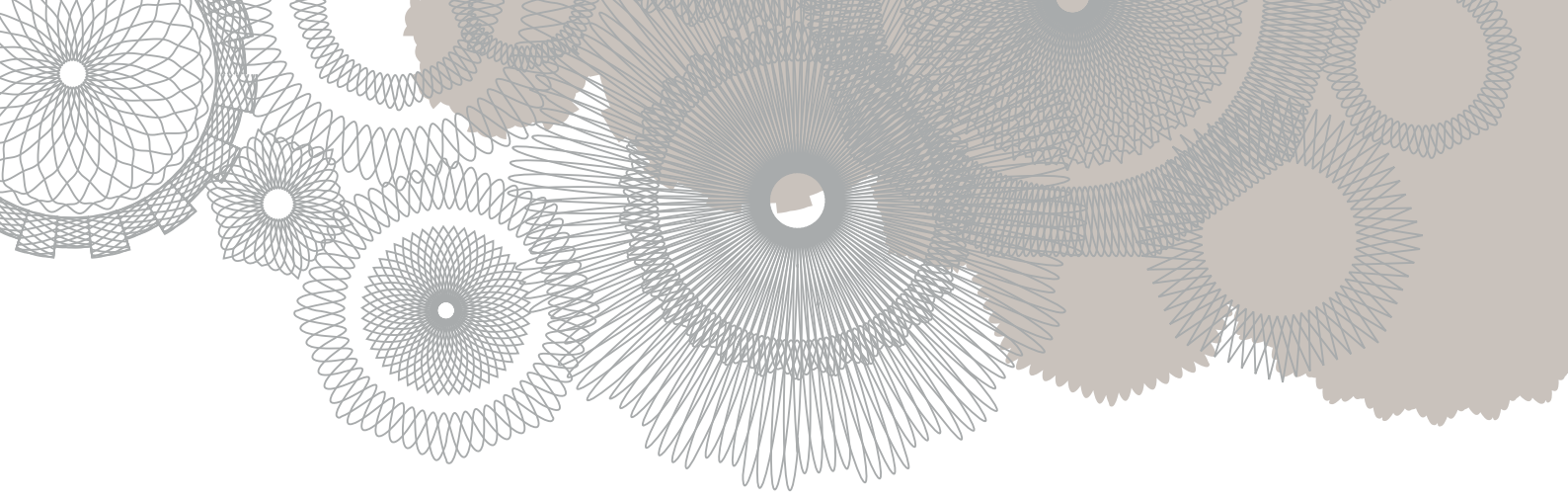
#### INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

a) Quality assurance of the information provided to children and adolescents will be based on a review of informational and course activities in day care centres and schools.

b) A cross-sectoral plan of information for children and adolescents is to be prepared. The plan will cover bullying, sexual harassment, violence and sexual abuse, honour-related violence and cyberbullying. The information will be disseminated digitally and viewed in conjunction with existing informational services to children and youth.

*Competent ministry:* The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Education and Research.





# 4 CROSS-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

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## UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 3 • WHAT'S BEST FOR THE CHILD

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

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Being subjected to violence affects children and young people in many ways. Those who are exposed or at risk often need help from several services, such as day care, school, child welfare, health, caregiving, crisis centre and the police as well as services run by voluntary or voluntary organisations. To provide effective prevention and comprehensive forms of assistance and treatment, services have to work well across professional and organisational boundaries. Employees must have up-to-date knowledge about their own field and be familiar with the roles and services of other providers. The measures enumerated in this plan will help strengthen cross-professional collaboration and coordination of activities between service providers.

Voluntary organisations play a key role in helping children and youth exposed to violence, providing services that seek in part to improve their quality of life and everyday coping skills. Norway's Centres Against Incest and Sexual Assault are important advocates for those at risk, and several of the centres now offer programmes for children and youth. It is important that the public sector facilitates good cooperation with voluntary services, and that their expertise in combating violence and sexual abuse against children and youth is put to optimal use.

### MEASURE 24

#### SERVICES FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE – NEW FUNDING SCHEME

A new grant programme will be created to provide support for the establishment and operation of measures to improve quality of life for children who have been exposed to violence. Potential grant recipients include foundations, voluntary organisations and other actors.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## CHILDREN AT CRISIS CENTRES AND CENTRES AGAINST INCEST AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Norway's municipalities have a statutory obligation to provide comprehensive crisis centre services for women, men and children exposed to violence in close relationships (see the Crisis Centre Act). There are 46 crisis centres in Norway, and children are a large user group. In 2013, 1,746 children lived at crisis centres accompanied by parents/guardians. More than half of the children were under five years of age. Thirty-nine centres had employees who worked especially with children. At most of the centres, the services include dialogue with children, both to document their situation and to convey information on what a shelter is and why the child is there. A variant of the International Child Development Programme parental guidance system, which targets parents at crisis centres, is under development in 2014.

Crisis centre service employees have a duty, on their own initiative, to provide information to the child welfare service when a child is being mistreated at home, when other forms of serious neglect are evident, or when a child has displayed persistent severe behavioural difficulties. The duty to inform comes into effect when a child moves back to a perpetrator of violence after having stayed in shelter services and there is a risk that the child will be subjected to violence or witness violence between parents.

The Centres Against Incest and Sexual Assault provide a low-threshold service of advice, support and guidance for people who have been exposed to sexual abuse and for their families. There are 22 such centres. In 2013 they had a total of 206 registered users below the age of 18. Most of the centres have programmes designed especially for children and youth, such as conversation groups and social activities. Eight centres have staff members who work particularly with children and youth.

## MEASURE 25

### A TEAM AROUND THE TEACHER – MULTIDISCIPLINARY COMPETENCE AT SCHOOL

In schools, the active use of employees with different occupational backgrounds can provide added value by allowing teachers to concentrate on teaching. This could be a response to the teachers' stated need for more time and opportunity to focus on educational tasks. It could also enhance schools' ability to identify children and adolescents who have been exposed to violence and sexual abuse.

The Ministry of Education and Research has initiated a project titled *Et lag rundt læreren* (A team around the teacher), which could contribute to improved follow-up of vulnerable children and youth at school. Multidisciplinary competence can improve the learning environment in schools. In addition, it can promote a useful linkage between health and education while improving the identification of at-risk or vulnerable pupils.

An informational overview was prepared in 2014, and by the summer of 2015 various collaborative models are to be developed and tested. Proposals will be drawn up of models for multidisciplinary competence in schools and of practical research designs that could make it possible to document the effects of a systematic commitment to multidisciplinary competence. The models will be tested in Years 5 through 7.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Education and Research

## MEASURE 26

### CLOSER COLLABORATION BETWEEN PUBLIC HEALTH CLINICS AND THE FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICE

Research findings have shown that intimate partnership conflicts can contribute to depression in pregnant women and new mothers. A good relationship means a lot for the quality of life that parents experience, and has a very significant impact on their children's development. Most children receive check-ups at public health clinics during the first years of life, making the clinics a good place to identify children and families at risk.

In a three-year trial project, the family counselling services in five municipalities will cooperate systematically with public health clinics. This cooperation is to be formalised in a binding agreement between the clinics and the counselling services, an agreement anchored by municipal management.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services

## EMERGENCY CHILD WELFARE UNITS AND THE EMERGENCY HELPLINE

Many of the country's largest municipalities have a municipal or an inter-municipal emergency child welfare unit. These units handle acute child welfare cases outside the child welfare service's ordinary office hours.

The helpline for children and adolescents is a free nationwide service that children and others may contact regarding neglect, abuse and violence. The telephone line is open every day of the year when the child welfare service is closed.

### Children's Houses and judicial interviews

Children's House child advocacy centres (Barnehus) have been established to strengthen the due process rights of and improve care for children under 16 and for developmentally disabled persons who, it is suspected, may have been exposed to violence or sexual abuse. Judicial interviews, forensic examinations, counselling and treatment are all carried out at Children's Houses. The Children's House experience has been positive, and a total of 10 Children's Houses have now been established around the country.

In 2013, judges conducted 2,662 interviews of children. Long waiting times for such judicial interviews are a problem. On 16 June 2014 the Storting adopted a number of decisions affecting judicial interviews and the Children's House model. In addition, a working group appointed by the National Police Directorate has made recommendations for operational guidelines and oversight of Children's Houses.

Both the police and the child welfare service conduct child interviews in which the topic is, or becomes, violence and sexual abuse. Several standardised dialogue tools have been developed by the health and welfare services and the police. Non-standardised conversations are conducted as well. The use of such conversations with children must be seen in an overall context, and they must be carried out in the best interests of the child.

### Police work

The main task of the police is to provide security and enforce the rule of law in everyday life. One goal of the new police reform is to organise the force to ensure that all core tasks, including investigation and prosecution, are carried out in a satisfactory way and as efficiently as possible. Police efforts are crucial to the success of initiatives to combat violence and sexual

## MEASURE 27

### REVIEW SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AT CRISIS CENTRES AND THE CENTRES AGAINST INCEST AND SEXUAL ABUSE

a) An evaluation of municipalities' implementation of the Crisis Centre Act will be presented at the start of 2015. As a follow-up to this evaluation, services provided to children in the crisis centres will be examined more closely, along with the children's right to assistance from other services.

b) A growing number of children and young people have been contacting the Centres Against Incest and Sexual Assault. The services provided by the centres will be reviewed.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

## MEASURE 28

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE SYSTEM

a) The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is preparing a proposition (draft resolution) to the Storting to amend the Criminal Procedure Act in regard to the examination of especially vulnerable persons in criminal cases, and on new regulations dealing with the same issue. The amendments and new regulations will come into force in 2015. The issues of obligatory use of Children's Houses and who should be responsible for the examinations will be taken up in the bill.

b) The Police Directorate will ensure that judicial examinations are carried out within the legal deadline. As an intermediate goal, the average processing time by the end of 2014 is not to exceed 40 days.

c) The Police Directorate will follow up recommendations of the working group that has assessed the operation and oversight of Children's Houses. The goal is improved follow-up and more uniform operation.

d) With the best interests of the children in mind, a review is to be conducted of the approaches used by the health and welfare agencies and the police in conversing with children.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Measures 28c and 28d are to be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Health and Care Services.



abuse against children and adolescents. Many challenges arise when handling such cases. A 2012 evaluation of police work in domestic violence cases shows how trying they can be. The evaluation explores, among other things, how police officers deal with people exposed to domestic violence and their children and how the police collaborate with agencies like the child welfare service and emergency child welfare units. Cooperative procedures within the police and with other actors are crucial to the effective resolution of such cases.

A new police tool for cases involving violence in close relationships is the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA), which is now used in every police district in Norway. SARA contains a checklist of 15 risk factors for intimate partner violence designed to help assess the danger of such violence recurring in cases where a violent act has already been committed. The use of SARA helps prevent intimate partner violence, and enables police to introduce protective measures at an earlier stage and in a more targeted way. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security gave funds to the Crisis Centre in Vestfold to develop and test SARA with children as the target group. Using the SARA guide for adults as its departure point, the project will identify vulnerability factors for children. The project will strengthen the crisis centre's practical work for and with children exposed to violence, and is expected to have transfer value for other crisis centres and the police.

Many public services in the fight against violence are provided at the municipal level. Police councils are a form of cooperation between local police districts and municipal authorities that aims to prevent crime and enhance security in the community. Police councils have been established in almost every municipality. In addition, nearly 200 municipalities have organised their crime and substance abuse prevention efforts targeting children and youth in accordance with a model that strengthens inter-agency collaboration. The model is known as SLT in Norwegian, for *Samordning av lokale rus og kriminalitetsforebyggende tiltak*. Municipalities that have set up both SLT procedures and police councils have had greater success in their collaborative efforts.

## MEASURE 29

### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN ON POLICE CALL-OUTS

a) On the basis of experience from the police districts, the Police Directorate will develop and disseminate police procedures on dealing with children when called out to domestic violence cases.

b) The Police Directorate and the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs will jointly establish procedures on cooperation between the police and the child welfare services (including child welfare emergency units) in cases involving domestic violence.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Justice and Public Security in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## MEASURE 30

### BROADER USE OF THE SARA FOR CHILDREN RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Lessons learned from the SARA test project for children in Vestfold County will be evaluated; use of the guide in the rest of the country will be considered.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Justice and Public Security

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## MEASURE 31

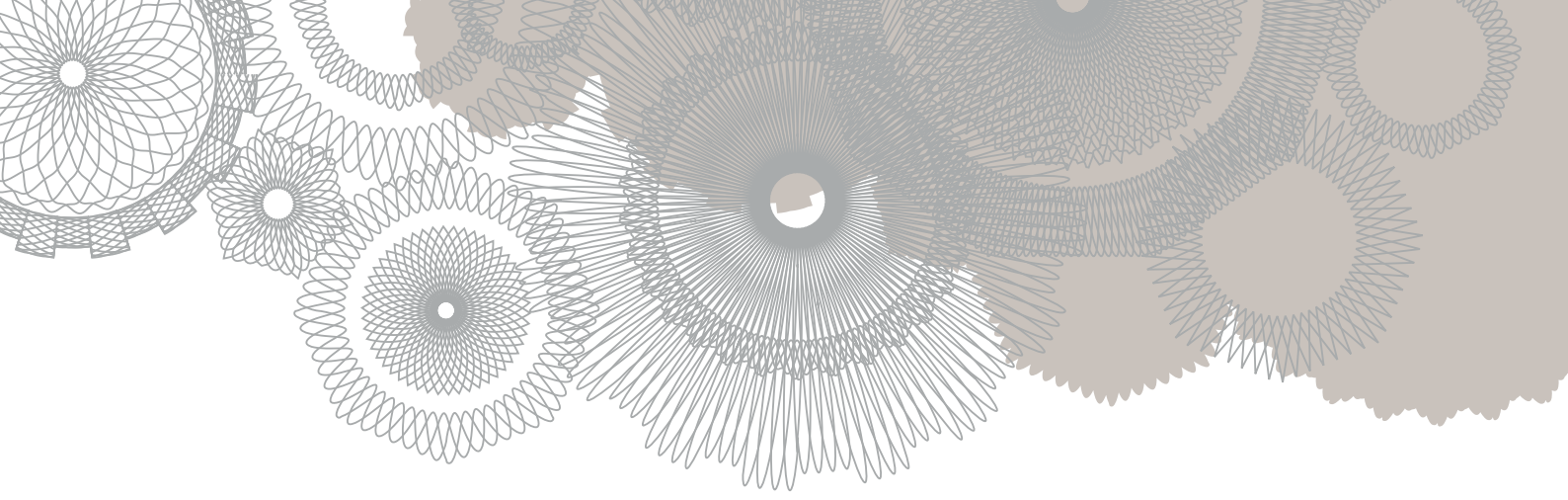
### COOPERATION THROUGH POLICE COUNCILS AND SLT

Through local police councils, the police will initiate collaboration to prevent violence and abuse against children and young people. Coordination of local substance abuse and crime prevention measures (SLT) will help put violence and abuse against children and young people on the local agenda.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Justice and Public Security







# 5 THE RIGHT HELP AND TREATMENT AT THE RIGHT TIME

## UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 39 • REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Children and adolescents exposed to violence and sexual abuse must be ensured of equal services and forms of assistance and treatment tailored to their individual needs. The health consequences of violence and sexual abuse can be extensive, severe and potentially life-threatening. Many vulnerable children and youth receive the proper kind of help at the right time, but challenges remain. Not all youngsters get the help they require.

A number of public agencies are tasked with helping children and young people who have been subjected to maltreatment, violence and sexual abuse. Health and care service providers at all administrative levels have a major responsibility to prevent, detect and follow up harm caused by violence and sexual abuse. Services for children and youth in the health and care sector must therefore be strengthened.

The family counselling service will also develop improved treatment services for families and children who live with violence. As a preventive measure, young perpetrators of violence must also receive assistance. Aid and treatment services for young violent offenders have been strengthened in recent years.

### MEASURE 32

#### STRENGTHEN MUNICIPAL HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ABUSE

- a) A new guide on violence in close relationships is to be developed for the health service.
- b) The guide for providing psychosocial support measures in case of crisis, accident or disaster will be revised to better address the problem of violence.
- c) The initiative on municipal psychologists aims to improve municipal efforts to strengthen child and adolescent mental health. From 2015, issues relating to violence and sexual abuse will be emphasised.
- d) General practitioners' expertise on violence in close relationships will be strengthened. Patients consult their regular GPs about a wide variety of ailments and problems that may be related to violence. An e-learning course will be developed and offered to GPs to strengthen their expertise in the prevention, detection and follow-up of both persons subjected to violence in close relationships and the perpetrators of such violence.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services

**MEASURE 33****IMPROVED SPECIALIST HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE**

a) The regional health authorities will review their services and ensure that sufficient capacity and expertise, including socio-paediatric expertise, is available.

b) The South-Eastern Norway Regional Health Authority (Helse Sør-Øst RHF) has established a regional centre for guidance and information on violence and sexual abuse against children and adolescents. The establishment of regional sexual assault referral centres or regional guidance and information services will also be considered in Norway's other health service regions.

c) From 2015, skills and treatment services will be strengthened by way of training in the use of trauma therapy (trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy, or TF-CBT).

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services

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**MEASURE 34****STRENGTHEN FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE AND FOR YOUNG VIOLENT OFFENDERS**

Family counselling services for children who have been exposed to violence and for young perpetrators of violence will be strengthened. A therapeutic service will be developed for families and children who live with violence as well as for young violent offenders.

Selected family counselling offices will build up a high degree of expertise on violence. These offices will assist other family counselling offices. This work will be done in collaboration with Alternative to Violence (ATV).

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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**MEASURE 35****REVIEW TREATMENT SERVICES FOR YOUTH AT RISK OF VIOLENCE AND FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS**

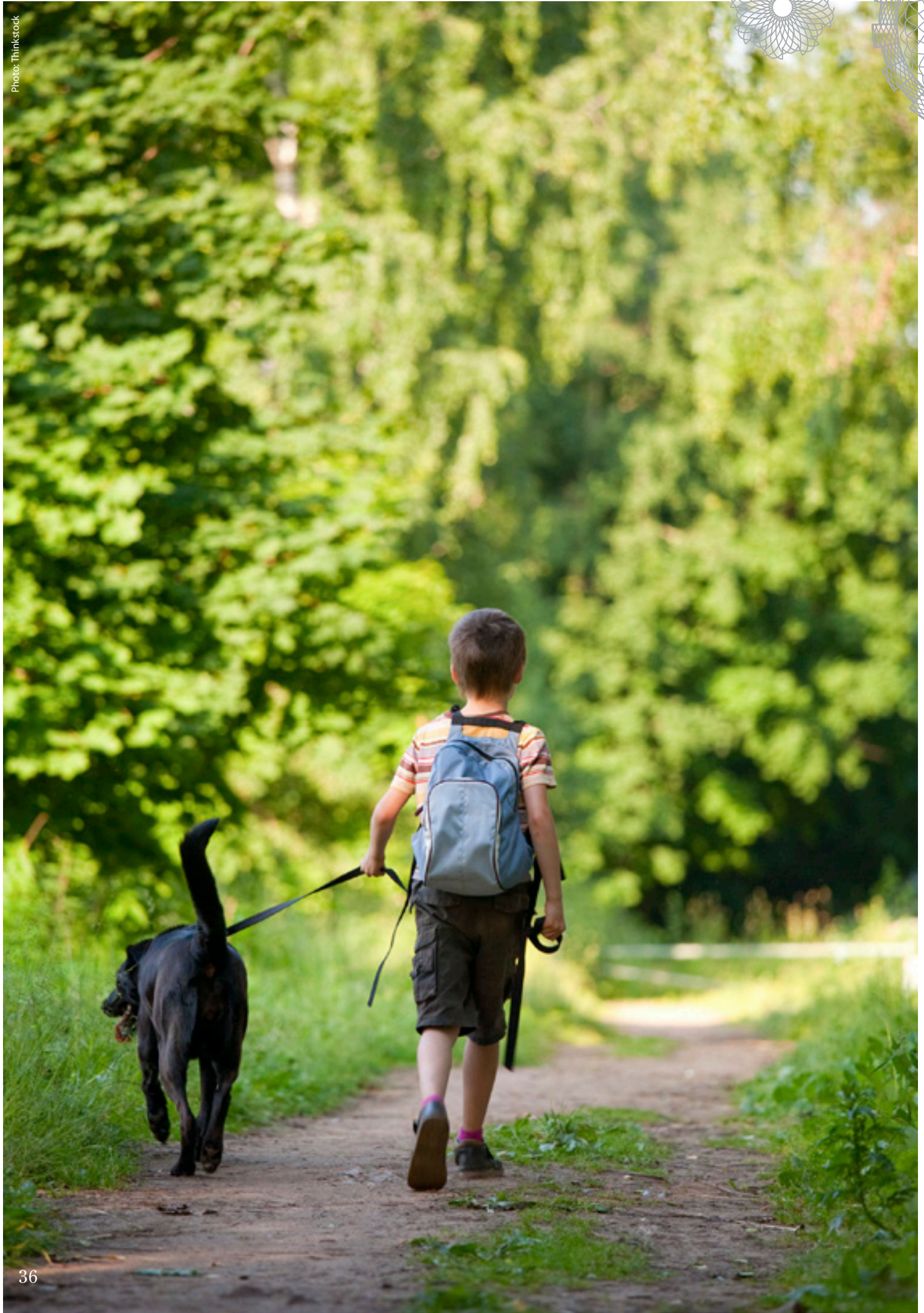
The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) has been commissioned to produce an overview, including an appraisal, of treatment programmes for children and adolescents who have experienced violence and sexual abuse, as well as for young perpetrators of violence and abuse.

Based on this overview, the authorities will undertake an assessment of current treatment programmes for vulnerable children and young people and for young abusers. This assessment will look specifically at the need for improvements in the treatment of young abusers. (Treatment of victims will be strengthened through Measure 33.)

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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# 6

## RESEARCH AND EXPERTISE

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### UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD. ARTICLE 42 • MAKE THE CONVENTION KNOWN

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

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Access to the latest expertise is necessary when developing goal-oriented policies and accurately targeted measures. The measures in this action plan will add to the knowledge and skills base of service providers and to the quality of their services. It is important to research the causes, extent and consequences of violence and sexual abuse. It is also crucial to include violence and sexual abuse in professional study programmes. Information about the harmful effects of violence and sexual abuse must be readily accessible to the general population.

#### Competence in the service agencies

Knowledge about prevention and early intervention should be strengthened in all relevant programmes of study. The expertise acquired must cover all forms of violence, including not only sexual abuse but also forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Ensuring that service agencies are proficient in dealing with violence and sexual abuse against children and youth will require including the subject in basic, further and continuing education for all the relevant professional groups that come into contact with children and adolescents.

Possessing sufficient competence to intervene and take action is the key factor. Employees of public service agencies should know how to handle suspicions of violence or sexual abuse against children and adolescents. They must know how to avert violence before incidents of that nature occur.

#### Research and knowledge base

Obtaining sufficient high-quality information about the causes, extent and consequences of violence and sexual abuse against children and young people is a challenge. Incomplete statistics and knowledge about the scope of the problem can contribute to making violence and sexual abuse less visible.

#### MEASURE 36

##### FOCUS ON VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE IN PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

- a) Ensure that the subject of violence and sexual abuse is included in health and social care studies. See the White Paper from the Ministry of Education and Research on education for welfare (Meld. St. 13 (2011–2012))
- b) Ensure that the subject of violence and sexual abuse is included and assigned due weight in day care and primary and lower secondary school teacher training.
- c) Further education and continuing education programmes on violence and sexual abuse will be identified and catalogued. The purpose is to increase the availability of such studies and encourage student participation and, if appropriate, to improve the academic content.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Education and Research in collaboration with the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Health and Care Services

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#### MEASURE 37

##### EXPERTISE ON VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE WILL BE STRENGTHENED IN THE HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES

- a) Expertise on violence and abuse will be incorporated into the specialist training for general practitioners; mandatory courses for GPs and paediatricians are being considered.
- b) Also under consideration is a requirement that everyone participating in the emergency medical services receive training in violence and abuse.

The Government has given a major boost to research into violence in close relationships. A total of NOK 50 million has been allocated for this purpose over a five-year period. This is a historic investment that will reverberate through all Norwegian efforts to counter violence in close relationships.

The research findings will contribute to an understanding of developments over time and provide a basis for implementing measures to prevent and combat violence in close relationships. Two research centres have been commissioned to implement the programme: the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA).

NOVA's programme will include studies of intimate partner violence and other violence in relationships. An important part of the programme will focus on the vulnerability of children and youth. Some of the research funding will be used for a follow-up survey to UngVold 2007, a major survey of youth on the subject of violence and abuse. NKVTS for its part will conduct research on topics that include violence and abuse in close relationships in a life-long and generational perspective, prevention and protection services for vulnerable persons and treatment services for vulnerable persons and violent offenders.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security, moreover, has initiated a three-year research project on intimate partner homicide aimed at identifying risk factors and developing more effective preventive measures. This research project will be completed in 2015.

A large-scale survey on violence and sexual abuse among children and adolescents would be useful. First it will be necessary to study sound, ethical approaches for directly involving children in research on violence and sexual abuse. The extent of any regulations limiting how information is obtained directly from minors must also be studied.

c) Health personnel are to be given more information on improved procedures for securing evidence of abuse. Certification of health personnel who carry out clinical forensic examinations and accreditation of the units where such examinations take place will be considered.

d) Networks of expertise on clinical forensic medicine will be established in cooperation with the institutions which currently have oversight of forensic pathology and clinical forensic medicine.

e) Trauma training measures will be introduced for the school and student health services.

The Regional Centres for Child and Youth Mental Health (RBUP) and the Regional Centres for Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Welfare (RKBU) will implement measures in cooperation with the Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) to increase expertise on child and youth trauma in the school and student health service. The service's psychosocial work related to traumatised pupils and students is to be a focus of the measure, which will be coordinated by the RVTS.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services

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#### **MEASURE 38**

##### **STRENGTHEN MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' SKILLS IN TALKING WITH CHILDREN**

County governors organise and administer courses on how to talk to children about violence and sexual assault. Such courses are provided for relevant professional groups in the municipalities. The RVTS has been commissioned to prepare the teaching plan. Continuation of the training programme has been proposed for 2015.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Care Services

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#### **MEASURE 39**

##### **TRAIN MINORITY ADVISERS IN SCHOOLS TO TALK WITH YOUNGSTERS ABOUT VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE**

Minority advisers in schools will be encouraged to take part in training programmes on conversing with children and youth about violence and sexual abuse. The county governor currently administers training programmes for various professional groups in the municipalities.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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## GUIDE FOR THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICE REGARDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has been tasked with preparing a guide to increase the child welfare service's expertise on children with disabilities. The purpose of the guide is to improve the child welfare service's understanding of the problems of individual children, thereby helping to ensure that children who have been subjected to sexual abuse are not misdiagnosed. The guide is scheduled to be available at the end of 2014/start of 2015.

## CENTRES OF EXPERTISE ON VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) was established in January 2004, on the initiative of five ministries. The purpose of the NKVTS is to increase knowledge of and strengthen expertise on persons who have been exposed to violence and traumatic stress. The centre's objective is to help prevent and reduce the health-related and social consequences that can follow from exposure to violence and traumatic stress.

In accordance with the basis for its establishment, the NKVTS's scope of activity covers the following:

- Violence in close relationships
- Violence and abuse against children and youth
- Refugee health and forced migration
- Stress management and collective traumatic stress, including work with UN/NATO veterans

The centre's primary functions are research and development, teaching, guidance, counselling and dissemination of knowledge in the above-mentioned areas.

Five Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) were established in 2007.

The purpose of the centres is to strengthen regional expertise in the field of violence, traumatic stress and suicide and to promote better, more coherent services. The RVTS contribute to building up expertise in public services through teaching programmes, guidance, consultancy and networking across sectors, agencies and administrative levels.

### MEASURE 40

#### SURVEY OF CHILD WELFARE MEASURES IN MINORITY FAMILIES

A survey of the help offered to minority families will be undertaken. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of which measures work, so services can be targeted in the best possible way.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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### MEASURE 41

#### HEALTH RESEARCH AND SURVEY OF SERVICES

a) Research conducted by the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) on the health consequences of violence in close relationships is to be strengthened. The centre aims to spread its knowledge to relevant agencies and services.

b) The efforts of municipal health and care services to combat violence in close relationships will be surveyed to improve the empirical basis of their approach. A limited survey will be carried out of municipal health and care service providers, including GPs, public health clinics, school health services and mental health services.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Health and Care Services

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### MEASURE 42

#### PILOT SURVEY PROJECT ON THE EXTENT OF VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH

More knowledge is needed about the extent of violence and sexual abuse among children and young people. A pilot survey project will help researchers make certain that surveys of the scope of the problem are conducted in an ethically sound way.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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### MEASURE 43

#### MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EARLY INTERVENTION AND PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFORTS

A summary of expertise on early intervention will be compiled, with particular emphasis on parental support measures. A common knowledge base for service providers can help employees detect the symptoms of children who are at risk and help them identify which methods and measures would best prevent maldevelopment and neglect.

*Competent ministry:* Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion

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# SHORT VERSION OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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## 1 • 18 YEARS OF AGE

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

## 2 • NO DISCRIMINATION

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

## 3 • WHAT'S BEST FOR THE CHILD

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

## 4 • RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

## 5 • PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

## 6 • A FULL LIFE

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

## 7 • NAME AND NATIONALITY

Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

## 8 • IDENTITY

Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

## 9 • KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

## 10 • REUNITE FAMILIES

Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

## 11 • ABDUCTION AND NON-RETURN

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

## 12 • SPEAK UP AND BE HEARD

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

## 13 • GIVE AND RECEIVE INFORMATION

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

## 14 • FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

## 15 • FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.



**16 • RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

**17 • MASS MEDIA**

Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

**18 • PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

**19 • PROTECTION FROM ABUSE**

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

**20 • CHILDREN LACKING FAMILY CARE**

If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

**21 • ADOPTION**

Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

**22 • REFUGEE CHILDREN**

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

**23 • DISABLED CHILDREN**

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

**24 • HEALTH**

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**25 • CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE**

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

**26 • SOCIAL SERVICES**

Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

**27 • LIVING STANDARDS**

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

**28 • EDUCATION**

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**29 • GOALS OF EDUCATION**

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

**30 • MINORITY AND INDIGENOUS CHILDREN**

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

**31 • PLAY AND LEISURE**

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

**32 • CHILD LABOUR**

Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

**33 • DRUGS**

Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

**34 • SEXUAL ABUSE**

Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

**35 • ABDUCTION, SALE, TRAFFICKING**

Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

**36 • OTHER EXPLOITATION**

Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

**37 • PRISON, DEATH PENALTY, CRUEL TREATMENT**

Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

**38 • CHILDREN IN WAR**

Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

**39 • REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION**

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

**40 • JUVENILE JUSTICE**

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

**41 • WHEN OTHER LAWS ARE BETTER**

If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

**42 • MAKE THE CONVENTION KNOWN**

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

*\* Summaries of Convention articles by UNICEF UK:  
[www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC\\_summary.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_summary.pdf)*

## USEFUL WEBSITES

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[www.ung.no](http://www.ung.no)  
[www.barneombudet.no](http://www.barneombudet.no)  
[www.klara-klok.no](http://www.klara-klok.no)  
[www.barnevernvakten.no](http://www.barnevernvakten.no)  
[www.krisepsyk.no](http://www.krisepsyk.no)  
[www.ungsinn.uit.no](http://www.ungsinn.uit.no)  
[www.mentalhelseungdom.no](http://www.mentalhelseungdom.no)  
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[www.minstemme.no](http://www.minstemme.no)  
[www.barnevakten.no](http://www.barnevakten.no)  
[www.smiso.no](http://www.smiso.no)  
[www.lmsno.no](http://www.lmsno.no)  
[www.fmso.no](http://www.fmso.no)  
[www.noabuse.no](http://www.noabuse.no)  
[www.incest80057000.no](http://www.incest80057000.no)  
[www.kirkens-ressurscenter.no](http://www.kirkens-ressurscenter.no)  
[www.selvmord.no](http://www.selvmord.no)  
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[www.tvangsekteskap.no](http://www.tvangsekteskap.no)  
[www.nohatespeechmovement.org](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org)  
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