



Norwegian Ministry
of Education and Research

Action Plan

Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence

2021-2024

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Foreword

The freedom to decide over one's own life is fundamental in our society. Nevertheless, we see repeated examples of how this freedom is being curtailed. There is a need for an active policy to combat attitudes and actions that impede an individual's opportunities to both succeed and live a free and safe life. Combating negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation has consequently long been a high priority for the Government. These efforts involve safeguarding fundamental rights, ensuring freedom and equality for all, combating violence and abuse, preventing social exclusion and health problems and ensuring equal public services for the entire population.

Long-term efforts have yielded results and put important questions on the agenda. Cross-sectoral collaboration has been established to meet complex challenges. The threshold for seeking help has been lowered. An increased number of victims and people at risk are being identified and receive help.

Negative social control and honour based violence are persistent challenges, and with the action plan *Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence (2021–2024)*, the Government will advance and strengthen its efforts. The plan is a follow-up of the Government's strategy *Integration through Knowledge 2019–2022*, where "The Right to Live a Free Life" is one of four priority areas. Combating negative social control and honour based violence is also seen in connection with the Government's *Strategy for strengthening the role of civil society in the field of integration (2021–2024)*.

The action plan is part of Norway's implementation of the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*. It is also seen in the context of the *Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse (2017–2021)* and the forthcoming action plans *Freedom from Violence (2021–2024)* and *Safety, diversity and openness – The Norwegian Government's action plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics 2021–2024*.

Seven ministries and their subordinate agencies are collaborating on the action plan. Voluntary organisations also play an important role locally and nationally by providing information and dialoguing with parents and young people. Many young people have themselves called for action and are actively participating in the public debate.

Many have contributed to this action plan. We have received good input from a wide range of actors in the public sector, academia, organisations and from individuals. We would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to everyone.



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Overview of measures

The Ministry of Education and Research has the overall responsibility for coordinating the action plan and is collaborating with seven ministries to implement the measures. Each measure has one ministry with primary responsibility. It is specified if other ministries are part of a collaboration. All measures are financed within the existing fiscal budget of the relevant ministries.

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	Priority Area 1: Efforts for newly arrived refugees and immigrants		17
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2	Strengthen the follow-up of newly arrived refugees and immigrants who are victims of violence and threats	KD	20
3	Obtain knowledge about dropouts from the schemes under the Integration Act	KD	21
4	Further develop dialogue groups on violence for residents of asylum reception centres	JD	21
	Priority Area 2: Knowledge and competence for comprehensive support services		23
5	Establish a national network for knowledge development and enhancement of competence	KD	24
6	Further develop the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Negative Social Control	KD	25
7	Further develop the housing and support scheme for people over 18 years of age	KD	25
8	Strengthen information about the special support services	KD	26
9	Increase competence about negative social control and honour based violence in schools	KD	28
10	Increase competence about negative social control and honour based violence in professional education programmes	KD	29
11	Assess the possibility of registration of cases with the child welfare service	BFD	30
12	Strengthen the child welfare service's work with children under 18 years of age who are subjected to threats	BFD	30
13	Continue TryggEst	KUD	31

¹ ASD: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
 BFD: Ministry of Children and Families
 HOD: Ministry of Health and Care Services
 JD: Ministry of Justice and Public Security
 KUD: Ministry of Culture and Equality
 KD: Ministry of Education and Integration
 UD: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No.	Measure	Ministry responsible	Page
14	Strengthen the knowledge and competence of the police	JD	31
15	Further develop the use of risk assessments, protection measures and dialogue work in the police service	JD	32
16	Strengthen the knowledge and competence about negative social control and honour based violence in the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)	ASD	32
17	Further develop treatment services for girls and women who are victims of female genital mutilation	HOD	33
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23	Assess whether domestic abuse and deprivation of liberty should be exempted from the requirement of double criminality	JD	40
24	Register honour based violence and develop statistics	JD	40
25	Assess whether the Social Services Act sufficiently ensures economic independence for all benefit recipients	ASD	41
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29	Obtain knowledge about women and their children who are detained or left behind abroad	KD	46
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31	Establish a Nordic network of practitioners	KD	50
32	Hold a Nordic summit	KD	50
33	Increase international cooperation	KD	50

Key terms and legislation

In this action plan, **negative social control** is understood to be pressure, supervision, threats or coercion that systematically limits someone's self-expression or repeatedly prevents them from making independent choices about their own life and future. This applies, for example, to an individual's self-determination over their own identity, body and sexuality, freedom to choose their friends, leisure activities, religion, attire, education, job, boyfriend/girlfriend and spouse, and to request health care. In assessing whether a pattern of action constitutes negative social control, the age and development of the controlled party shall be taken into account, as well as the principle of the best interests of the child.

Honour based violence is understood here as violence triggered by the family's or group's need to safeguard or restore its honour and reputation. This occurs in families and groups where the individual is expected to conform collectively, and where patriarchal norms of honour are engrained. All family members have a responsibility to ensure that the family and the group have a good reputation. Girls and women are particularly at risk because the honour of the family or group is linked to control of women's sexuality, and because undesirable behaviour can bring shame on the entire family or group.

Honour based violence can include several acts such as negative social control and forced marriage, but also other expressions of violence such as humiliation, threats, exclusion and other psychological violence, physical violence and murder.

Forced marriage is understood here as entering into marriage where one or both spouses do not have the opportunity to choose to remain unmarried without being subjected to violence, deprivation of liberty, other criminal or unjustified conduct or undue pressure. Forced marriage is a form of domestic violence and can in practice also mean that the individual does not have the opportunity to break off an engagement or end a marriage, or choose a partner at odds with the family's wishes, without being subjected to reprisals.

The prelude to forced marriages can vary. Some young people may be subjected to forced marriage after a lengthy period of time of increasing negative social control. Others experience being forcibly married without having been subjected to negative social control while growing up. Forced marriages take place both in Norway and abroad, but most forced marriages take place during holiday stays abroad. It is very difficult for the Norwegian authorities to help people at risk who are abroad.

People with developmental disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to negative social control, violence and abuse. The risk is compounded in situations where they are dependent on the help of others in everyday life and it can be difficult to oppose the wishes of others. People with developmental disabilities may have difficulty understanding what a marriage entails. In many cases, future spouses are not aware of the developmental disability. In practice, it can be a forced marriage for both parties.

Child marriage is understood here as marriage where one or both parties are under 18 years of age.

Female genital mutilation is understood here as various types of interventions that damage a woman's genitals, and which can have major physical and psychological consequences for the victim. Female genital mutilation can, among other things, lead to infections, chronic pain, sexual problems, birth complications and an increased risk of stillbirth.

Female genital mutilation is particularly prevalent in some African countries and in some countries in the Middle East. The practice is a social norm based on a number of cultural and social perceptions about, e.g., sexuality, affiliation, aesthetics, gender and religion.

There are no reliable figures on the prevalence of female genital mutilation among residents of Norway, but a percentage of girls and women who have immigrated from Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Sudan and Somalia have been genitally mutilated before moving to Norway. There is reason to believe that female genital mutilation of children and young people can also occur in connection with travel abroad, but there is little knowledge about this.

Legislation

Section 253 of the Penal Code. Forced marriage

Any person who by violence, deprivation of liberty, other criminal or wrongful conduct or improper pressure forces a person to enter into marriage shall be subject to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years. The same penalty shall be applied to any person who by deceit or other means contributes to another person travelling to a country other than that person's country of residence with the intent that the person will there be subjected to an act as specified in the first paragraph. Extrajudicial child marriages (Section 262 second paragraph) are also punishable.

Extrajudicial marriages are not valid in Norway

From 1 April 2021, the Penal Code's prohibition against forced marriage (Section 253) also covers extrajudicial forced marriages, which can be punished by imprisonment for up to 6 years.

The prohibition against child marriage is laid down in Section 262

Any person who enters into marriage with a person who is under 16 years of age shall be subject to a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years. Any person who was ignorant of the fact that the aggrieved person was under 16 years of age may nonetheless be punished if he/she may be held to blame in any way for such ignorance. The penalty may be waived if the spouses are approximately equal in age and development.

Section 284 of the Penal Code. Genital mutilation

A penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years shall be applied to any person who performs a procedure on the genitalia of a woman that damages the genitalia or permanently modifies them. Reestablishment of genital mutilation is subject to the same penalty. Consent does not exempt from a penalty.

Section 285 of the Penal Code. Aggravated genital mutilation

The penalty for aggravated genital mutilation is imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 years. In determining whether the genital mutilation is aggravated, particular weight shall be given to whether the procedure resulted in a) illness or work incapacity of some duration; see Section 274, b) an incurable defect, flaw or injury, or c) death or considerable harm to someone's body or health.

Introduction

A knowledge-based and long-term effort

All people have the right to live their lives in freedom from negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. This right is reflected both in our national legislation and in international conventions to which Norway has committed itself.

The efforts against forced marriage and female genital mutilation has been an important part of Norwegian integration policy since the end of the 1990s. Regulations and targeted measures have been developed. Evaluations and a number of individual research projects have contributed to new knowledge.

Female genital mutilation was banned in 1995. The first action plan against forced marriage was introduced in 1998, and the first action plan against female genital mutilation was introduced in 2000. Both were followed up with new action plans. In 2003, Norway also became the first country in Europe to enact a separate penal provision against forced marriage.

Voluntary organisations played an important role as drivers and contributed both information efforts and assistance on how to prevent and remedy abuses such as forced marriage and honour based violence. In order to bolster the public support services, a broad initiative was implemented in 2008 with new action plans against forced marriage and female genital mutilation, respectively. Several special support services with expert knowledge about how to prevent, detect and follow up persons subjected to forced marriage and female genital mutilation were established to contribute to equal provision of public services for all victims of violence. The transfer of competence to other public services was an important part of the mandates. Key measures included establishing services with minority counsellors at selected schools and integration counsellors at selected foreign service missions and strengthening the national Expert Team against Forced Marriage. In addition, priority was given to developing new knowledge, further developing housing and support services for people under and over the age of 18 and supporting voluntary organisations.

With several low-threshold services in place, arrangements were made to identify victims and people at risk at an early stage and prevent serious cases. An important part of these efforts consisted of making young people and parents aware of their rights and choices, and to change attitudes. Experiences from this work showed that young people can experience various forms of authoritarian upbringing and control of girls' sexuality in particular as a prelude to actions such as forced marriage, honour based violence and involuntary stays abroad. This was referred to by the support services as "extreme control". It became apparent that boys are also at risk, and that they may have a higher threshold for seeking help. In addition, boys, to a greater extent than girls, can both experience pressure to exercise control and violence against a family member, and at the same time be subjected to this themselves. It emerged that the reasons for extreme control are complex, and that it applied to both children and adults. In many cases, it was about having to adapt to the extended family or an environment, but also about generational conflicts and migration-related issues such as loss of status, identity and community, mental health problems, abuse and the challenges of living in a new country.

While working on individual cases, the support services found that most forced marriages were carried out during stays abroad. Only a few of the cases concerned fear of female genital mutilation, and in that case in connection with travel abroad. In the case of women who sought health care for problems after female genital mutilation, the procedure had taken place before they came to Norway. It thus became clear that the efforts against forced marriage and female genital mutilation must take into account transnational dimensions and family connections across national borders. It reinforced the understanding of forced marriage and honour based violence as migration-related integration challenges.

The *Action Plan against Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Severe Restrictions on Young People's Freedom (2013–2016)* made challenges with various forms of control, threats and violence, and involuntary stays abroad more visible. The plan continued prevention measures in the form of low-threshold services that support young people in making independent choices, cooperation with voluntary organisations and strengthening public services. Increased coordination with other efforts against domestic violence was emphasised.

Various terms have been used to describe the control and restrictions on freedom that people experience. The term "negative social control" was introduced in *The Right to Decide about One's Own Life. An Action Plan to Combat Negative Social Control, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (2017–2020)*. This term had already been adopted by young women with a multi-cultural background who took a public stand against concepts about shame and honour as mechanisms for control. The Government's strategy *Integration through Knowledge 2019–2022* also highlights "The Right to Live a Free Life" as one of four priority areas in the integration policy.

Measures have been implemented to strengthen actors in civil society and their role as agents of change, and a mentoring scheme has been established to support those who sever ties with their family. Certain laws have been reviewed to increase legal protections, and a legal study has looked more closely at the legal understanding of the concept of negative social control. Challenges with involuntary stays abroad have also received greater attention, and new knowledge has been acquired to further develop the efforts.

Special support services have been strengthened, including a doubling of the number of minority counsellors at selected schools since 2018. This has contributed to more people seeking help, and the services report an increase in the number of cases of negative social control, threats and violence, and involuntary stays abroad. Some cases are very complicated and have a high threat level.

There is a growing awareness that persons subjected to negative social control and honour based violence may also experience racism and other discrimination on the basis of gender, socio-economic background, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or functional ability. This is referred to as intersectionality or multiple discrimination. It is even more stressful when several factors such as control, violence and discrimination conjoin. This can lead to an experience of social exclusion and isolation, and it can raise the threshold for contacting the support services.

In recent years, the focus has been on the fact that negative social control can occur in different environments and population groups. Among other things, people in religious and life stance communities characterised by a high level of internal cohesion and little contact with society in general can experience various forms of control and pressure. It can limit their self-expression or prevent them from making independent choices about their own lives and future.

Consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic

The strict infection control measures in 2020 had an impact on at-risk children and young people. Minority counsellors were contacted by pupils who experienced stronger negative social control when the schools closed.

The minority counsellors' physical presence at schools is important in order to be able to follow up pupils who are subjected to negative social control and honour based violence. During the pandemic, there was a greater need for them to be available for advice and guidance on digital platforms. More children and young people at risk can receive help through both physical and digital presence.

Although there has been less travel activity out of Norway during the pandemic, the number of cases handled by the integration counsellors has remained stable. In some countries, several people have contacted the Norwegian embassies to renew passports and expired residence permits or obtain national identity numbers for children born abroad because they wanted to travel to Norway during the pandemic. In this connection, integration counsellors discovered children, young people and women who were held back against their will, domestic violence, child neglect and fear of forced marriage.

Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence

The action plan *Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence (2021–2024)* is based on long experience and research-based knowledge. It also includes forced marriage and female genital mutilation, which are prohibited by Norwegian law. Both forced marriage and female genital mutilation can be part of a complex challenge, but can also occur without prior negative social control or honour based violence.

The knowledge base will be further developed. In 2019, research on negative social control, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation was incorporated into the *Research Programme on Domestic Violence (Violence Research Programme)* at NOVA – OsloMet and the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS). Support for the period 2020–2024 has been continued. In addition, individual reports and studies will be carried out, and several are included as measures in this plan.

There is reason to believe that far more than those who contact the support services experience negative social control and honour based violence. There is still a way to go. The following priority areas will facilitate an intensified effort:

- Efforts for newly arrived refugees and immigrants
- Knowledge and competence for comprehensive support services
- Strengthened legal protection
- Preventing involuntary stays abroad
- International cooperation

Newly arrived refugees and immigrants may have little knowledge of Norwegian society, legislation and support services, and many come from countries where equality and rights for children are not guaranteed. Traditions, religion and cultural affiliation are important for family formation and parenting strategies. Some families may find that establishing themselves in a new country gives rise to conflicts about gender roles, child-rearing and their children's choice of boyfriend/girlfriend, education and career path. The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Negative Social Control (the Expert Team) has received an increasing number of enquiries about people with a relatively short period of residence in Norway. The cases concern negative social control, threats and violence against children or spouse and child marriage. Prevention must start early and take place in several settings.

Children and young people who grow up belonging to two or more cultures can experience a cross-pressure of expectations about their behaviour and life choices from, on the one hand, family and parents and, on the other hand, friends, school and society at large. This can be about everything from courtesy codes and schooling to questions about career and marriage. Young people who may experience a conflict of loyalty and find it difficult to choose one option over the other can be said to have a cross-cultural upbringing.

Adults who have immigrated to Norway may find it challenging to raise their children in a context different from what they experienced, and may experience a similar cross-pressure. They may experience that their religion, identity and culture are under pressure from society at large, but also pressure and expectations from their own environment in Norway or from family and networks abroad. Some may have difficult living conditions such as unstable finances, an unstable housing situation and physical and mental health challenges. Some may also worry about family in their country of origin or who are refugees, and have little faith in public authorities. These are factors that affect how parenting and generational conflicts play out.

Gay people with an immigrant background are in a particularly vulnerable situation because they may violate norms for sexual orientation and gender identity. This can lead to control and violence by their family or community. At the same time, they may experience racism and discrimination in the gay community, adding to their stress.

A comprehensive range of support services means that services collaborate across disciplines and sectors. People who are subjected to negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation may need help and follow-up from various agencies. Minority counsellors and voluntary organisations are in many situations important bridge-builders to other support services. They have experienced that it often takes a long time for people who contact them to trust them and talk about their situation. At the same time as they want a different life, many young people are worried about being disloyal and betraying their family, and they often belatedly seek help.

Female genital mutilation is a particularly sensitive topic, and it is important to treat parents and girls from the country in question with respect and understanding. Girls and women who are victims of genital mutilation may need somatic health care, mental health care and sexual counselling. Information about the ban on female genital mutilation, health consequences and health care must be communicated in an appropriate manner.

Cases of negative social control and honour based violence can take place over a longer period of time with a variable need for follow-up. Despite an expanded range of services with special expertise in negative social control and honour based violence, sporadic and unsystematic contact between ordinary and special support services remains a challenge. Online resources are also difficult to navigate. Better coordination and interdisciplinary cooperation around victims and people at risk are sought.

Religious and life stance communities have an important role to play in preventing negative social control. A separate subchapter in this plan discusses the challenges in religious and life stance communities. Among other things, it contains measures to increase the knowledge base about negative social control in religious and life stance communities characterised by a high level of internal cohesion and with little contact with society in general.

Legal protection against negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation means that practitioners can be held accountable through criminal prosecution. Legislation and information are important measures for promoting changes in attitudes. Insight into rights and legislation can support both young people and parents in making choices that are not in line with expectations from the family or the environment, even when they are abroad.

The right to freedom from negative social control and honour based violence is enshrined in the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)* of 2011, which entered into force in Norway on 1 November 2017. The Convention provides rules on the civil law consequences of forced marriage, and it also establishes that culture, tradition, religion and honour do not provide grounds for impunity. The Convention obliges Norway to eliminate domestic violence against women, and to combat various forms of violence. It includes serious stalking, sexual harassment and violence, physical and mental abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The Convention requires the parties to criminalise these acts.

Norway was one of the first countries to criminalise female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and in recent years several legislative amendments have been enacted to strengthen legal protections. However, the Penal Code does not have its own penalties for honour based violence, psychological violence or negative social control. Cases of involuntary stays abroad also raise a number of legal issues.

Involuntary stays abroad are an ongoing challenge. Family life across national borders is for most a resource in the form of a social network and multicultural belonging. At the same time, some may experience expectations and pressure from relatives abroad.

Some children and young people are taken abroad against their will. The motives behind such stays vary and may include a desire to strengthen the children's affiliation with the parents' culture and that they should go to school abroad. It can also be about preventing "Norwegianisation", or getting a young person out of a bad environment fraught with drug use and crime. A challenge with such stays is that children and young people can lose their connection to Norway, Norwegian skills and schooling. Some also experience being subjected to violence, deprivation of liberty and forced marriage, and some fear female genital mutilation.

A stay abroad can be an act to restore the family's honour after an event that has put the family to shame, and in some cases forced marriage is the tool. Other explanations can be a difficult life situation in Norway and a lack of trust in public institutions and the support services.

Involuntary stays abroad can involve adults, including women who come to Norway through family immigration. Many have a short period of residence in Norway and little knowledge of their rights and the possibilities for help.

An individual's experiences and need for help vary, and a broad approach to preventive work is necessary. More competence in the services contributes to the identification of more cases although dark figures are likely.

International cooperation to combat negative social control and honour based violence includes the sharing of experiences to highlight how Norway is following up its international obligations in the area and advancing its efforts.

The action plan will contribute to Norway's implementation of the *Istanbul Convention*. Norway has also committed itself to the *UN Sustainable Development Goals (the 2030 Agenda)*. The goals replace the UN Millennium Development Goals from 2000, and provide a direction for global, sustainable development cooperation going forward to 2030. The 2030 Agenda is based on international human rights obligations.

Important targets are:

- Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations





Efforts for newly arrived refugees and immigrants

The Government wants the efforts towards newly arrived refugees and immigrants to be strengthened. They must receive up-to-date and consistent information soon after arrival. Persons who receive a residence permit must have knowledge of their rights, the laws and rules that apply and be informed about the various support services. More knowledge will be acquired to strengthen the competence of employees in the services that deal with new arrivals and to further develop existing measures.

The Government is implementing an integration reform with the aim of strengthening the instruments for qualifying newly arrived refugees and immigrants for the labour market. Key parts of the reform include the introduction of a new Integration Act and standardised elements for use in the introduction programme. The elements will help to make it easier for the municipalities to offer individually adapted qualification tracks with good quality for the participants. Under the Integration Act, it has become compulsory for all participants in the introduction programme to participate in a life skills course. The course will strengthen the participant's motivation and ability to handle new expectations and a new society. It has also become compulsory to participate in parental guidance courses for participants who have or are expecting children. Information about negative social control and honour based violence is included in the teaching of both courses.

The new Integration Act also entails changes for Norwegian and social studies classes for adults. Among other things, the number of hours of social studies classes increases from 50 to 75 hours, and topics from the *Norwegian culture and values for asylum seekers* teaching programme will be included in the classes. Asylum seekers will be obliged to complete 25 of the hours in social studies and 175 hours of Norwegian language training while they reside in a reception centre. The revised curriculum in Norwegian and social studies for adult immigrants enters into force on 1 August 2021 and becomes a regulation to the Integration Act. A specified goal is that the participants shall be able to talk about what negative social control, domestic violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are, and about the legal and personal consequences of them.

Overall, the integration reform will contribute to more refugees and immigrants quickly becoming part of Norwegian society, gaining good Norwegian skills and a lasting connection to working life. It is known that some persons in the target groups for classes taught in reception centres, instruction in Norwegian and social studies and in the introduction programme, do not participate. It is important to provide information via several channels to ensure that those who do not participate in the programmes are also reached.

Furthermore, there is a need for more knowledge about how many do not participate or complete the programmes and why. This will be necessary in order to develop targeted measures to enable the participation of as many of the target groups as possible in the programmes.

Furthermore, there is a need for more knowledge about the needs of new arrivals who are victims of negative social control and honour based violence. It is also necessary to raise competencies in adult education and in other services that deal with newly arrived refugees and immigrants.

Under the Crisis Centre Act, all municipalities have a duty to provide crisis centre services for women, men and children who are subjected to violence or threats of domestic violence. The crisis centre provision must be a safe, temporary and free offer of housing. Approximately one in ten residents of a crisis centre states that they have experienced honour based violence or forced marriage. Both women and men are at risk.

In some cases, it is necessary for newly arrived refugees and immigrants who have been victims of violence and threats to move from the municipality in which they live. However, experience shows that it is difficult to reach agreements on relocation between municipalities in such cases. If re-establishment in a new municipality is not possible as a safety measure, the victim may be left without safe alternatives after a stay at a crisis centre.

Responsibility of public bodies to use interpreters (the Interpreting Act)

The Storting passed the Act concerning the Responsibility of Public Bodies to Use Interpreters, etc. (the Interpreting Act) in June 2021. The public sector currently uses too few interpreters, the quality requirements for interpreters are not high enough, there are too few qualified interpreters and there is a lack of good routines for placing orders for interpreters among users of interpreters. Extensive use of unqualified interpreters and the fact that the requirements for impartiality and duty of confidentiality are not complied with well enough have given rise to low confidence in the use of interpreters in the public sector.

The main goal of the new Interpreting Act is to clarify the responsibility of public bodies for using interpreters and to contribute to a quality reform in the field of interpreting. Among other things, the Act requires public agencies to use interpreters. Furthermore, the Act contains a requirement to use a qualified interpreter when the use of an interpreter is necessary to safeguard the rule of law or to provide proper assistance and service. The Act also sets requirements for interpreters, such as good interpreting practice, impartiality and duty of confidentiality. Good quality interpreting contributes to efficient public services and correct decisions and will increase confidence in interpreting services.

Digital professional resource for the introduction programme

Professional resource for the introduction programme is an online resource for those who plan and carry out introduction programmes for newly arrived immigrants. The website gathers professional recommendations, information about compulsory and work- and education-oriented content in the programme, tools and information about selected topics. Examples include the standardised elements of life skills in a new country and parental guidance, as well as the learning resource The Right to Decide about One's Own Life about negative social control, domestic violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The learning resource is used especially for teaching Norwegian and social studies.

Target groups for introduction programme and Norwegian and social studies classes

Persons between the ages of 18 and 55 have the right and duty to participate in an introduction programme if they reside in the municipality by agreement with the integration authorities and have been granted a residence permit as described in Section 9 of the Integration Act:

- a. residence permit as a refugee
- b. residence permit as a resettlement refugee
- c. renewable residence permit due to strong humanitarian considerations
- d. limited residence permit as a member of a family with children
- e. residence permit on the basis of collective protection
- f. residence permit as a family member of persons described in a to e, provided that the reference person has resided in a municipality for less than five years before applying for family reunification
- g. renewable residence permit after the breakdown of a relationship due to abuse

Persons between the ages of 18 and 67 who have a residence permit described above have the right and duty to participate in Norwegian and social studies classes. The same applies to persons who have a different type of residence permit that forms the basis for a permanent residence permit, with the exception of migrant workers outside the EEA/EFTA and their reunited family members, who are only obliged to take Norwegian and social studies classes.

Asylum seekers who live in reception centres have a duty to take Norwegian and social studies classes according to separate rules.

EEA citizens in Norway, who are mainly migrant workers and their family members, are not covered by the schemes of the Integration Act.

Measure 1

Develop a strategy to raise the competence of the services that come in contact with newly arrived refugees and immigrants

There is a need to survey the competence about negative social control and honour based violence, as well as LGBTIQ², in services that come in contact with newly arrived refugees and immigrants. For example, there may be employees in adult education, the introduction programme and other services that follow up newly arrived refugees and immigrants. The survey will include all levels in the relevant services.

On the basis of the survey, a strategy will be drawn up for enhancing competence about negative social control and honour based violence, as well as how LGBTIQ persons with an immigrant background may be in a particularly vulnerable situation.

IMDi and Skills Norge will collaborate on the measure.

The measure is also part of *Safety, diversity and openness – The Norwegian Government's action plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics (2021–2024)*.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 2

Strengthen the follow-up of newly arrived refugees and immigrants who are victims of violence and threats

Newly arrived refugees and immigrants who are victims of violence and threats constitute vulnerable groups with special follow-up needs. They include asylum seekers and participants in the introduction programme who are victims of negative social control, honour based violence and other domestic violence and who are staying in a crisis centre. Their need for protection and crisis centre services will be mapped. How to facilitate opportunities for secondary settlement for victims of violence will also be mapped. New knowledge will help to strengthen the follow-up of newly arrived refugees and immigrants who are victims of violence and threats.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with BFD

² LGBTIQ is an abbreviation for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender persons, persons born with atypical sex characteristics/intersex persons and queer persons.

Measure 3

Obtain knowledge about dropouts from the schemes under the Integration Act

The introduction programme and Norwegian and social studies classes are the authorities' key instruments for enabling newly arrived refugees and immigrants to gain good knowledge of Norwegian, knowledge of Norwegian society, formal qualifications and a lasting connection to working life. It is therefore important that as many people as possible in the target groups for the schemes take part in and complete the programme or classes. The reasons for non-participation or completion are probably complex; e.g. being a victim of negative social control, honour based violence or other domestic violence can make it difficult to make use of the programmes. There is a need for more knowledge, and a research project will examine the scope of and reasons for dropping out of the schemes under the Integration Act. The study will contribute to the development of new policies and measures to reduce barriers to participation in the qualification schemes.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 4

Further develop dialogue groups on violence for residents of asylum reception centres

Current offers of dialogue groups on violence for men living in asylum reception centres is a measure to prevent violence inside and outside reception centres. It can also help to strengthen integration efforts. Today, participants are given instruction about the different roles they will play in Norwegian society. Topics such as negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and support services are included in the classes. The programme will be continued and its expansion can be assessed to include more target groups.

Ministry responsible: JD





Knowledge and competence for comprehensive support services

The Government will raise the knowledge and competence in the support services, facilitate the coordination of work and develop resources and new knowledge. Networking between national and regional actors will be further developed. The special support services will be made more known to employees in the front line and in the population.

It is a goal to contribute to equal public services by ensuring that the services have the knowledge and competence to detect and follow up persons who are victims of negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. This applies to employees in schools and educational institutions, the child welfare service, police, family counselling service and in the health and care services. Special support services have been established to prevent, detect and follow up persons who may be at risk. They will also help to raise competence about the topics in the ordinary support services.

Enhancing competence about negative social control and honour based violence must be seen in connection with plans and strategies for increasing competence about violence and abuse in the support services. The Government will present a cross-sectoral competence strategy on violence and abuse as a measure in Proposition to the Storting (Resolution) 12 S (2016–2017) *Escalation Plan against Violence and Abuse (2017–2021)*.

On 6 September 2017, the Ministry of Education and Research established the [National regulations relating to a common curriculum for health and social care education](#). Section 2 of the regulations on common learning outcomes states, among other things, that graduates, upon completion of their health and social care programme, must have knowledge of social and health problems including child neglect, violence, abuse, substance abuse and socio-economic problems. They should also be able to identify and follow up on people facing such challenges. Further enhancement of competence in the professional education programmes will be assessed.

On 1 January 2018, new provisions took effect in the Health and Care Services Act, the Specialist Health Services Act and the Dental Health Services Act that clarify the services' responsibility for preventing, detecting and averting violence and sexual abuse. The provisions mean that the services must pay special attention to patients and users who may be subjected to, or at risk of being subjected to, violence or sexual abuse. Those responsible

for the services have a duty to make it possible for the services to prevent, detect and avert violence and sexual abuse.

The regional health authorities are responsible for providing comprehensive and good health care and shall ensure the provision of equal treatment services for girls and women who have been genitally mutilated. It is necessary to work closely with the municipal health and care services. Several of the Norwegian Directorate of Health's guidelines and guides describe how to prevent, provide health care and follow up girls and women who are at risk or are already victims of female genital mutilation. Adapted information is available in several languages.

The five regional resource centres on violence, traumatic stress and suicide prevention (RVTS) provide training, guidance and information and networking on issues including negative social control, violence and abuse. The centres bring together professional communities in the region, including voluntary organisations. Important tasks include developing and coordinating joint competence enhancement schemes for practitioners. RVTS West has also developed a training programme with various modules and associated resources for resource persons in relevant environments, see also the website Om opplæringen – [Endringsagenter](#) (About the training – Change agents).

Measure 5

Establish a national network for knowledge development and enhancement of competence

The Government's work against negative social control and honour based violence is a cross-sectoral effort. All relevant sectors have a responsibility for knowledge development and enhancement of competence, and a number of websites, tools and other information have been developed for various users. There is a need to coordinate this work better. A network will be established to coordinate work on knowledge development and enhancement of competence.

The network will be led by IMDi and be based on the various directorates' tasks in the work against negative social control and honour based violence. The responsible ministries will prepare a joint mandate for the network. The directorates will be given some joint assignments, including the preparation of an actor map that illustrates areas of responsibility, mandate and cooperation routines in cases involving negative social control and honour based violence. The network will also provide advice to the interdepartmental coordination group that follows up the action plan.

The national network shall facilitate the exchange of information and coordinate the work between national and regional actors, including NKVTS and RVTS.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with ASD, BFD, HOD, JD and KUD.

Measure 6

Further develop the Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Negative Social Control

The Expert Team is a national inter-agency team of experts that assists the support services in cases involving negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The Expert Team is the contact point for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD) in cases involving involuntary stays abroad. Established in 2004, the team has later been expanded with more agencies and given more tasks. It has seen a large increase in the number of cases it has worked on in recent years.

The Expert Team will be evaluated. The evaluation will in part look at its mandate, organisation, areas of responsibility, division of roles, resources and cooperation with other services. User perspectives must be included.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with ASD, BFD, HOD, JD and KUD

Measure 7

Further develop the housing and support scheme for people over 18 years of age

The Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) coordinates the national housing and support scheme for persons over the age of 18 who are the victims of forced marriage and honour based violence. The housing scheme consists of a total of 24 places in five municipalities. The maximum period of residence is nine months. After moving out, former residents are offered follow-up by support staff in voluntary organisations.

An up-to-date knowledge base is important for adapting the scheme to the users' needs. Studies have previously been carried out on environmental therapy follow-up as well as on safety and family work for residents of the housing scheme. There is a need for more knowledge about how people who have used the scheme are faring, and a research project will therefore be launched. The report will form the basis for further development of the scheme.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 8

Strengthen information about the special support services

Both people subjected to negative social control and honour based violence and employees in the support services are users of the special support services, such as the Expert Team, IMDi's team of experts for the prevention of negative social control and honour based violence, integration counsellors at foreign service missions and minority counsellors at selected schools. However, awareness of the special support services is lacking.

Information measures must be implemented to make the special support services better known.

Ministry responsible: KD

Special support services

The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Negative Social Control

The Expert Team is a national inter-agency team of experts that assists the support services in cases involving negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The team receives enquiries from employees at a number of entities such as the police, kindergartens, schools, asylum reception centres, child health clinics, child welfare service, crisis centres, Norwegian foreign service missions and UDI. People at risk can also contact the team directly for help. In 2020, the team provided advice and guidance in 649 cases. The Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) coordinates the team that also consists of representatives from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi), Directorate of Immigration (UDI), National Police Directorate (POD), Directorate of Labour and Welfare (AVdir) and the Directorate of Health (Hdir).

Integration counsellors

Special envoys for integration issues (integration counsellors) are located at the foreign service missions in Ankara, Amman, Islamabad and Nairobi. They provide consular assistance to people who are victims of negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. They also contribute to raising the competence about these issues in the foreign service and in the support services in Norway by providing advice and guidance in individual cases and through competence enhancement measures.

Team of experts for the prevention of negative social control and honour based violence

IMDi's team of experts contributes to enhancing competence about negative social control and honour based violence in schools that do not have minority counsellors, in refugee services, NAV, adult education programmes and other support services. In addition, the team of experts helps to make other special support services better known.

Minority counsellors

Fifty-nine minority counsellors have been placed at selected lower and upper secondary schools in all counties in the country, in addition to selected adult education programmes. Minority counsellors provide advice and guidance to individuals, conduct preventive group measures to make students aware of their rights and choices, and help raise the competence of employees in various support services.

The minority counsellor service has been placed with IMDi, which is the national competent authority for integration. Such an organisation will ensure comprehensive professional and competence development and the further development of the scheme in connection with other special assistance services.

Mentoring scheme for young people subjected to negative social control, honour based violence and forced marriage

A mentoring scheme has been established consisting of "Mentor Family" under the direction of Oslo Red Cross, the user network "Sammen" (Together) under the direction of the Oslo Crisis Centre, grants for mentoring projects managed by IMDi and a network for organisations that have mentoring projects under the direction of Bufdir. "Mentor Family" is established in Oslo, Tromsø, Trondheim, Bergen and Kristiansand. Fafo is conducting a real-time evaluation of the mentoring scheme.

Nora

Nora is a web portal about negative social control aimed primarily at young people. The portal shares real-life stories about young people living under pressure and provides information about rights and who to contact for help. The web portal also provides guidance material and teaching resources for employees in the support services.

Measure 9

Increase competence about negative social control and honour based violence in schools

9 a) Develop support resources for employees in primary and secondary education and SFO

There is a need to increase knowledge about negative social control and honour based violence among employees in schools and the before- and after-school programme (SFO). There is also a need for more competence about at-risk groups, prevention of multiple discrimination, detection and follow-up of cases. Knowledge of the support services will be part of this.

As a follow-up to the white paper Meld. St. 21 (2016–2017) *Desire to Learn – early intervention and quality in schools*, KD introduced a decentralised scheme for competence development in schools. The scheme means that state funds for competence development must be better adapted to local needs. All counties have established a cooperation forum for competence development in which municipalities, the county authorities, universities, university colleges and county governors participate. Together, they will agree on which competence development is to be prioritised to meet the schools' competence needs and how the state funds are to be spent.

With the current mechanism for competence development, national authorities contribute funds to local competence development rather than initiating national initiatives. National authorities can also act as an intermediary by making available and possibly developing resources, which the schools can make use of in their local development of competence.

The Directorate of Education (Udir), IMDi and Bufdir will collaborate to create support resources for school staff and the before and after-school programme (SFO) on negative social control and honour based violence, as well as related topics such as multiple discrimination, gender, body and sexuality, including gender and sexuality diversity. It is the school owners who assess the need to use the support resources locally.

Ministry responsible: KD

9 b) Contribute to sound education about violence, our bodies, gender, sexuality and sexual boundaries

In the autumn of 2020, the new curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK20 and LK20 Sami) came into force for years 1–9 in primary and lower secondary school and year 1 in upper secondary education. Year 10 in primary and lower secondary school and year 2 in upper secondary education will follow after the autumn of 2021 and year 3 in upper secondary education in the autumn of 2022. LK20 and LK20-Sami comprise curricula with competence goals in the individual subjects, an overarching part and cross-cutting topics that will be included in all relevant subjects. Public health and life skills are an example of a cross-cutting topic.

Udir develops online support resources for the new curriculum to support the schools' teaching about violence, our bodies, gender and sexuality, including gender and sexuality diversity and sexual boundaries, in collaboration with Bufdir, IMDi and Hdir, among others. Negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation will also be addressed.

Ministry responsible: KD

The digital learning resource Jég Vet (I Know) will contribute to age-appropriate teaching about bullying, violence and abuse for children and young people. Jég Vet can be used in kindergartens and schools and is adapted to the national curriculum. The topics of negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation are included in the teaching plans.

Measure 10

Increase competence about negative social control and honour based violence in professional education programmes

10 a) Assess competence enhancement about negative social control and honour based violence in professional education programmes

It is desirable to elevate the learning outcome about negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation for students in teacher education, health and social care programmes as well as special education programmes. The Ministry of Education and Research shall, in consultation with the higher education sector, assess measures that realise and operationalise the learning outcomes described in the programmes' national curriculum and guidelines.

Relevant measures may include developing teaching plans, materials and/or teaching aids, preferably interdisciplinary and interprofessional, which are integrated into local programme descriptions. Other related topics such as violence and sexual abuse, diversity in gender and sexuality, migration health and cultural understanding, adapted health information, health competence and communication via an interpreter may be included. Cooperation is encouraged across institutions/relevant actors and professions in development and competence enhancement efforts. Competence enhancement measures that are developed can also be made available to continuing and further education for professionals from the relevant programmes. Measures must be shared and made available to all educational institutions.

Ministry responsible: KD

10 b) Include relevant learning outcome descriptors in the public health nurse and midwifery programmes

It is desirable to include learning outcome descriptors that deal with sexuality, negative social control and honour based violence in national guidelines for the public health nurse and midwifery programmes.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with HOD

Measure 11

Assess the possibility of registration of cases with the child welfare service

The extent of cases in the child welfare service concerning persons who are victims of negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation is not known. The Expert Team's figures show that approximately 15 per cent of the enquiries in 2019 came from employees in the municipal child welfare service. The possibility of registering this type of case with the child welfare service will be given further consideration.

Ministry responsible: BFD

Measure 12

Strengthen the child welfare service's work with children under 18 years of age who are subjected to threats

An evaluation of child welfare housing for young people under 18 who are victims of negative social control, honour based violence and forced marriage (Bufdir 2019) shows that little remains of the original housing scheme that was built up in the regions, and that the model with specialised family homes was not efficient in terms of resources or capacity. It is also challenging to ensure the user group sufficient services within the ordinary system. This applies in particular to children and young people in need of protective measures due to threats. The child welfare service does not have sufficient guidance material for safety-related work in placement cases. Lack of routines, tools and guidance materials make already challenging cases more difficult.

Targeted measures will be implemented for the child welfare service's handling of children and young people in need of protection due to threats of forced marriage and honour based violence. The work includes enhancement of competence, the establishment of routines for placing children who are subjected to threats and the development of guidance material for the child welfare service's safety work. It will also be assessed whether *Patriarch*, the police service's risk assessment tool for cases involving honour based violence, is suitable in the child welfare service's safety work.

Ministry responsible: BFD

Measure 13

Continue TryggEst

People with disabilities or developmental disabilities are particularly at risk of violence, abuse and negative social control. A high percentage of people with disabilities are dependent on public services, assistance or care. Such dependence implies a relational power difference and thus increased vulnerability.

TryggEst is a system that will help to detect and prevent violence and abuse against adults who are largely or completely able to protect themselves. The system has been tested in twelve municipalities and districts in the period 2018 to 2020. Bufdir runs the project, which is funded by KUD. In 2021, NOK 5 million has been set aside for TryggEst so that more municipalities can receive training and knowledge in the work of detecting, identifying and providing help to at-risk adults. Bufdir is in the process of developing digital learning tools that can help spread knowledge and competence about TryggEst.

Ministry responsible: KUD

Measure 14

Strengthen the knowledge and competence of the police

Negative social control and honour based violence have received increasing attention in the police service in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a need for more knowledge and competence in various parts of the police service's activities. The police must have a clear focus on diversity, dialogue and trust-building work. These are important topics in the police service's new preventive strategy: *Staying ahead of crime – Prevention as the police service's main strategy (2021–2025)*. Good knowledge of phenomena is important to enable the police and cooperating actors to detect, prevent and investigate negative social control and honour based violence.

The National Police Directorate shall facilitate increased competence enhancement, in part through the use of the police service's competence sharing portal, and by honour based violence becoming a subject in *Mandatory annual training for investigators and police prosecutors* in 2021.

Ministry responsible: JD

Measure 15

Further develop the use of risk assessments, protection measures and dialogue work in the police service

People subjected to honour based violence often need protection. The risk assessments can be very challenging and extensive, with many potential perpetrators of threats spread over large geographical distances in Norway and with branches extending abroad. The police must have good competence to prepare risk assessments and implement appropriate measures. It should be considered whether there is a need for increased focus on effective collaboration between relevant agencies, both at the overall level and in the front line, when implementing measures.

Safety work and protection measures are important in cases involving honour based violence. At the same time, it is difficult for the victim to live under strict protective measures, and it is important to consider other suitable measures. The collaborative project between the Enerhaugen Family Counselling Service and Stovner police station has provided valuable lessons about dialogue work in practice.

The police should routinely consider conducting interviews with the families of the young people who seek the protection of the police. How learning points from the collaborative project between the Enerhaugen Family Counselling Service and Stovner police station can be used is being assessed. The police will further develop their competence in the use of risk assessment tools.

Ministry responsible: JD

Measure 16

Strengthen the knowledge and competence about negative social control and honour based violence in the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

NAV plans to establish a national resource centre that will be tasked with developing professionally based methods for work-oriented follow-up of victims of violence. The centre will develop learning tools on the topic, which will include understanding of the phenomenon and knowledge of the guidance interview. It will also serve as a call centre for local NAV offices that need guidance and advice in individual cases. Such a resource centre could also include the development of expertise on negative social control and honour based violence.

The Directorate of Labour and Welfare has also prepared a guide for following up users who may have been subjected to domestic violence, negative social control, honour based violence or who are victims of human trafficking. It is called *Vold i nære relasjoner og menneskehandel* (Domestic violence and human trafficking) and is available on NAV's website. The guide is aimed at everyone who works as a supervisor and those who need services. The guide is constantly updated with new knowledge. Employees are also offered training. In order to clarify NAV's responsibilities in such cases, consideration will also be given to the incorporation of some of this guidance in circulars.

The measure is also discussed in the action plan *Freedom from violence (2021–2024)*.

Ministry responsible: ASD

Measure 17

Further develop treatment services for girls and women who are victims of female genital mutilation

Women and girls who have been subjected to genital mutilation must be met with compassion, knowledge and respect in the health and care services. An important prerequisite for equal provision is good competence in the services about negative social control, domestic violence and specific competence about female genital mutilation. The regional health authorities shall ensure equal and knowledge-based treatment for victims of female genital mutilation. NKVTS is now conducting a study on the treatment offered to victims of female genital mutilation. Some findings have been published, and more will be published during the project. A diagnosis code for female genital mutilation has also been introduced in recent years by the World Health Organization (WHO). In the long run, it will provide better statistics on the number of genitally mutilated persons who receive health care in Norway and knowledge to further develop the services for this group of patients.

Consideration shall be given to mapping the content and quality of the treatment offered to victims of female genital mutilation, including collaboration between the specialist health service and municipal health and care services for this group of patients.

Ministry responsible: HOD

Negative social control in religious and life stance communities

Negative social control can occur regardless of gender, religion and beliefs and in different population groups. In recent years, the Expert Team has received enquiries about negative social control of and violence against people who do not have an immigrant background. They are members of religious and life stance communities characterised by a high level of internal cohesion, and who have little contact with the local community in general.

Everyone who experiences negative social control must be seen and get help from the support services when they need it. Religious and life stance communities have an important role to play in preventing negative social control, and a better knowledge base is needed to develop effective measures. This also applies to knowledge about how persons without an immigrant background experience negative social control in religious and life stance communities.

Measure 18

Develop the knowledge base about people at risk in religious and life stance communities

More knowledge is needed about negative social control in religious and life stance communities and environments, and about how young people and adults experience such control. It includes knowledge about why people subjected to negative social control do not seek help outside their community, how the support services can identify and assist them, the violations of children's and young people's rights that some experience, and how the authorities can help prevent such violations. The knowledge base will contribute to developing more precise measures.

Ministry responsible: BFD

Measure 19

Develop training measures about negative social control in religious and life stance communities

There is a need to strengthen competence about negative social control internally in religious and life stance communities. There is also a need to strengthen the competence of the public support services regarding negative social control that occurs in religious and life stance communities. Training measures shall be developed to meet these needs in a collaboration between faith organisations and relevant public agencies and support services. The measure will also contribute to the exchange of experience between these actors about negative social control in religious and life stance communities.

Ministry responsible: BFD, in collaboration with HOD and KD

Measure 20

Include the topics of negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation in a new guide for religious and life stance communities

The new Act relating to religious and life stance communities (the Religious and Life Stance Communities Act) entered into force on 1 January 2021. Negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, or incitement to such violations, could be grounds for refusing grants to religious and life stance communities. A new guide for religious and life stance communities will be prepared. The new guide will contain updated information about negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Ministry responsible: BFD





Strengthened legal protection

The Government will continue the work of strengthening the legal protection of people subjected to negative social control and honour based violence.

The right to live a life free from negative social control and honour based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation is reflected in national legislation. Norway also has obligations under international conventions.

There is a need to explore whether negative social control and honour based violence are sufficiently regulated in Norwegian law, and whether Norway sufficiently fulfils its human rights obligations in this area. It should also be considered whether legislative changes are necessary to facilitate better coordination and more effective cooperation across agencies and services.

The Penal Code does not have a separate provision that explicitly prohibits psychological violence. Psychological violence can fall in part under Section 253 of the Penal Code on forced marriage and Section 282 of the Penal Code on violence in close relationships. There is a need to explore whether persons affected by psychological violence have adequate legal protection, and whether Norway fulfils the *Istanbul Convention's* obligation to criminalise psychological violence.

It should be discussed whether honour motives should be included as an aggravating factor in the Penal Code. In a judgment from 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that threats based on honour motives must be taken very seriously, and that strong general preventive considerations apply. The Supreme Court further stated that honour motives are particularly important in relation to sentencing, because this underlies the seriousness of the threats, and because such threats are not situational, but persist over time.³

Relevant legislative amendments

Amendments to the Penal Code

It is not uncommon for forced marriages to be entered into through extrajudicial agreements and religious ceremonies. As of 1 April 2021, extrajudicial forced marriages are equated with civil law forced marriages in Section 253 of the Penal Code. The duty to avert a criminal offence in Section 196 of the Penal Code affects those who fail to try to prevent further specified criminal acts and the consequences thereof. From 1 January 2021, the duty to avert has been extended to also include Section 253 of the Penal Code on forced marriage. The duty applies without regard to the duty of confidentiality.

Amendments to the Passport Act

In 2019, Section 4, third paragraph of the Passport Act was amended to specify that a passport for a minor can be issued without consent if there is a risk to life or health. Documentation that the person's life or health will actually be harmed is not a requirement, it is sufficient that there is a risk of this. The child welfare service can provide information to the foreign service missions in cases where there is a question of issuing a passport without consent because the minor's life or health is at risk.

At the same time, a new provision was enacted in Section 5, third paragraph of the Passport Act that issuance of a passport for a minor may be refused if there is reason to believe that the person will be the victim of criminal offences abroad or circumstances there that may endanger their life or health. By health is meant both physical and mental health. Criminal offences mean acts that would have been punishable if they had been committed in Norway. There is thus no requirement that the matter is punishable in the country to which the minor risks being sent. Corresponding amendments have been included in Section 5, third paragraph of the Act relating to national identity cards (ID Card Act), so that issuance of a national ID card with travel rights can also be refused or revoked in these cases.

Amendments to the Immigration Act

Persons who have been subjected to abuse in a relationship, and who have had a residence permit as a spouse or cohabitant, have, upon application, the right to continued residence on an independent basis after termination of the relationship (Section 53, first paragraph (b) of the Immigration Act). In 2018, the provision was changed from only applying to abuse from the partner in the relationship to also apply to abuse from other members of the household, and from in-laws who are not part of the household. The abuse can be of both a physical and mental nature.

Amendments to the Marriage Act

In 2018, an absolute 18-year age limit was adopted for entering into marriage in Norway. Proposition to the Storting (Bill) 135 L (2020–2021) was considered by the Storting in June 2021. The main rule in the Marriage Act is that parties who married when one or both were under 18 years of age under foreign law, will not have their marriage recognised in Norway. The purpose is to protect minors who come to Norway from being considered married here and contribute to equal treatment of children. Another purpose is to signal externally and to other countries' authorities that Norway does not accept marriages entered into with minors.

At the same time, the time limit for bringing an action to have a forced marriage declared invalid will be extended from six months to one year. The purpose of the amendment is to give persons who are victims of forced marriage more time to institute proceedings about the validity of their marriage. The absolute deadline is still five years.

Measure 21

Carry out a comprehensive legal assessment

A committee will be appointed to explore legal issues in cases concerning negative social control, honour based violence, forced marriage, genital mutilation and psychological violence. Issues concerning involuntary stays abroad must be included, including how to clarify the penal provisions in cases where parents leave children abroad under indefensible conditions. The committee shall clarify current regulations and assess whether the legislation is adequate, and whether Norway sufficiently fulfils its human rights obligations in this area. The purpose is to clarify whether there is a need for legislative changes to strengthen the legal protection of individuals and facilitate better coordination and more effective cooperation across agencies and services.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with BFD, HOD, JD and KUD

Measure 22

Assess changes in the rules concerning lapse of residence permit due to involuntary stays abroad

Under the Immigration Act and the Immigration Regulations, both temporary and permanent residence permits can be revoked or their renewal refused during a stay abroad beyond a certain length. Children and adults who are detained abroad against their will and no longer have a valid residence permit must submit a new application for a residence permit due to strong humanitarian considerations pursuant to Section 38 of the Immigration Act. They must wait abroad until the application has been processed.

Exceptions may be made from the rules concerning lapse of a permanent residence permit for spouses and cohabitants if the person in question has been detained abroad against his or her will and would have been entitled to a residence permit under Section 53, first paragraph (b) of the Immigration Act if the person had resided in Norway (the abuse provision). It is also specified in the regulations that a foreigner in such cases can obtain a residence permit pursuant to Section 38 of the Immigration Act. The exceptions do not include children who are detained abroad against their will by their parents, or others who do not meet the conditions for a permit under the abuse provision.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security will assess whether there is a need for changes in the immigration regulations so that children and adults who are detained abroad against their will do not risk losing their residence permit.

Ministry responsible: JD

Measure 23

Assess whether domestic abuse and deprivation of liberty should be exempted from the requirement of double criminality

Norwegian citizens or persons domiciled in Norway may be subjected to abuse by close relatives or deprivation of liberty while staying abroad. Abuse in close relationships (Sections 282–283 of the Penal Code) and deprivation of liberty (Section 254 of the Penal Code) are currently not exempt from the requirement of double criminality. Under current law, such acts committed abroad can only be prosecuted if the acts are also punishable in the country where the offence took place, unless the offence is considered to have been initiated in Norway.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security will consider whether abuse in close relationships and deprivation of liberty should be exempted from the requirement of double criminality.

Ministry responsible: JD

Measure 24

Register honour based violence and develop statistics

Honour based violence is currently not registered in the police systems in a way that makes it possible to identify the cases, other than by manual review. Special registration of cases with an honour motive could be important during the police's handling of such cases with regard to safety, investigation and prosecution work. At the same time, special registration will provide a basis for compiling statistics on cases with an honour motive.

The National Police Directorate shall consider the possibility of separately registering cases with an honour motive in the police's case processing system.

Ministry responsible: JD

Measure 25

Assess whether the Social Services Act sufficiently ensures economic independence for all benefit recipients

Economic benefits under the Social Services Act are based on the household's total finances, and payments are currently made as a general rule to the applicant. When the benefit is to cover living expenses for more than one applicant, this can contribute to making economic independence more difficult to achieve for the others. In order to contribute to economic independence, gender equality, equalisation of power dynamics and increased assistance to enter gainful employment, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs will consider the provisions of the Social Services Act, including the main rule on the payment of economic benefits.

The measure is also discussed in the action plan *Freedom from violence (2021–2024)*.

Ministry responsible: ASD





Preventing involuntary stays abroad

The Government will strengthen its efforts against involuntary stays abroad by increasing competence and cooperation between key support services and the police. People who return to Norway from such stays shall receive good follow-up. The information for young people and parents will be more targeted.

Several measures have been implemented against involuntary stays abroad in recent years. Among other things, information and notification routines between public agencies have been reviewed and established. Efforts are still needed to prevent involuntary stays abroad and to follow up on people who are subjected to this. In 2019, the Government appointed an expert group on how to prevent children and young people from being left abroad against their will. In the expert group's report *It was not just a holiday (2020)*, the authorities are recommended to do more to ensure that young people's rights are better safeguarded. An overall recommendation is to explore the overall legal issues in cases of involuntary stays abroad. Other recommendations are to further develop the competence and strengthen the coordination of the support services.

All municipal and state services that come into contact with children and young people play an important role in identifying people at risk and following up parents who are considering sending their children abroad alone. In 2022, the child welfare reform will enter into force, and the municipalities will assume greater responsibility for the child welfare service, both professionally and economically. Among the goals of the reform is that the municipalities will strengthen early intervention efforts adapted to the needs of children and families and pursue prevention throughout the youth services sector. The child welfare reform can be seen as a youth services reform where the municipalities facilitate interdisciplinary interaction between different municipal services and levels.

Families can also seek advice from the family counselling service concerning negative social control and honour based violence. The service is a free low-threshold offering and it is available throughout the country. The family counselling service can make parents aware of regulations as well as the consequences of sending children and young people on involuntary stays abroad. The municipalities can apply for grants for parental support measures from Bufdir.

It is basically the parents' responsibility to decide where their children will live. This also applies to stays abroad. Under the Children Act, children who have reached the age of 12 must nevertheless consent to moving or lengthy stays abroad if this happens without at least one of the parents with parental responsibility being with the child. Parental responsibility entails a duty to provide good care and gradually give the child greater self-determination.

The Children Act prohibits all forms of violence during childhood and other treatment that may subject the child's physical or mental health to harm or risk. Both parents and the authorities must base decisions about children on the child's best interests.

Cooperation between relevant authorities is important in order to be able to provide good help to people at risk. If there is cause for concern, schools, health services and others who come into contact with young people must report the matter to the child welfare service. If the child is out of the country, the child welfare service has very limited means. In some cases, it will be relevant to contact the police.

Under the current Child Welfare Act, municipalities can offer parents assistance when children with normal residence in Norway reside in another state and need help. A bill with a proposal for a new Child Welfare Act has been submitted to the Storting and a new act is scheduled to enter into force from 2023. An obligation is proposed for the child welfare service to offer such assistance as well as authority to impose such assistance.

There is a need for enhancing competence about involuntary stays abroad in schools, the health services, the police, NAV and the child welfare service. There is also a need to strengthen coordination and cooperation between actors in the field in these matters. This is followed up under Priority Area 2 *Knowledge and competence for comprehensive support services*.

Assessment of regulatory changes regarding involuntary stays abroad is followed up under Priority Area 3 *Strengthened legal protection*.

Involuntary stays abroad are also an important issue in Nordic cooperation. This is followed up under Priority Area 5 *International cooperation*.

Consular assistance for involuntary stays abroad

If Norwegian citizens abroad are subjected to or fear forced marriage, female genital mutilation or other forms of restriction of liberty, this is handled within the framework for consular assistance. The foreign service has the main responsibility for providing assistance to Norwegians abroad. The framework for consular assistance follows from the Foreign Service Act and the white paper Meld. St. 12 (2010–2011) Assistance to Norwegians abroad. The foreign service must also comply with the framework of international law and the host country's regulations and cannot assist provide assistance in contravention of this. Priority is given to cases involving minors, emergency and serious cases where life and health are at stake, as well as cases that may involve human rights violations. The foreign service can provide consular assistance to Norwegian citizens, as well as refugees and stateless persons residing in Norway and travelling on a Norwegian travel document or immigrant passport. In cases of negative social control and honour based violence, the foreign service provides consular assistance in consultation with the Section for Consular Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in collaboration with special envoys at four foreign missions that have integration as their area of responsibility. Integration counsellors provide advice and guidance in cases involving persons detained abroad against their will, other family-related cases, threats, violence and fear of forced marriage.

International cooperation via the central authority of the Hague Convention

Norway's accession to the Convention of 19 October 1996 on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children (The 1996 Hague Convention) strengthens cooperation with other states in parental conflicts and child welfare across national borders. The central authorities of the states play a key role in the ongoing cooperation on individual cases under the Convention. Bufdir is the central authority for the Convention in Norway.

If the child welfare service has a case where a child has been involuntarily left abroad, it must be considered whether it is possible to establish cooperation with the authorities in the relevant country concerning follow-up of the child. If the child is in a country with which Norway does not have cooperation under the Hague Convention, any possible cooperation will be more complicated.

Measure 26

Raise the competence in the child welfare services concerning involuntary stays abroad

When the child welfare service is aware that children under the age of 18 come to Norway after an involuntary stay abroad, it must investigate the case in the usual way and take steps if necessary. It should also be ascertained whether there is a need for health care and other necessary assistance.

The competence in child welfare services should be strengthened. This applies in particular to the legal scope for action before, during and after involuntary stays abroad. How competence enhancement measures can best be designed will be assessed on an ongoing basis.

Ministry responsible: BFD

Measure 27

Strengthen information about rights, support services and alternative courses of action in connection with involuntary stays abroad

Providing people at risk with knowledge about rights, support services and alternative courses of action is important to prevent involuntary stays abroad. Both young people and adults are subjected to this, and information and guidance must be adapted to different groups who are concerned about an impending stay abroad. There are already a number of resources, which will be reviewed, updated and made more accessible.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with BFD

Measure 28

Strengthen the follow-up of persons subjected to involuntary stays abroad

There is a need for more knowledge about the extent of involuntary stays abroad, how the coordination and latitude for follow-up can be strengthened and how to ensure that people subjected to this are protected upon return. Both young people and adults are at risk. Integration counsellors at four foreign missions provide consular assistance to people who are abroad and report on developments in the cases they handle. In order to prevent involuntary stays abroad, they provide enhanced competence to the service apparatus in Norway, both through advice and guidance in individual cases and communication of development trends in relevant countries.

A study will be initiated on how to strengthen the follow-up of victims of involuntary stays abroad, which will also include an assessment of the need to strengthen or adjust the integration counsellor service.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with UD

Measure 29

Obtain knowledge about women and their children who are detained or left behind abroad

Some women and their children are detained or left abroad against their will. The extent is unknown and the causes are complex. It can be about negative social control, honour based violence, polygamy or preparation for forced marriage. The women have often had a short period of residence in Norway, are not aware of their rights and the possibility of consular assistance, and they do not speak Norwegian well enough to obtain the necessary help. A research project will be launched on the reasons for, and consequences of, women and children being detained and left behind. The project will propose preventive measures.

Ministry responsible: KD, in collaboration with UD

Primary and lower secondary school and upper secondary education after a stay abroad

The right and obligation to attend primary and lower secondary education and the right to upper secondary education follow from Sections 2-1 and 3-1 of the Education Act.

All children in Norway have the right and obligation to attend primary and lower secondary education. The right to primary and lower secondary education applies when it is probable that the child will be in Norway for more than three months, and the right does not lapse during short-term stays abroad. If a student is away from compulsory education and the parents are to blame for the absence through negligence or intent, the parents can be punished with fines. The obligation to attend primary and lower secondary education ceases if the pupil stays outside the country for more than three months. Children who return have the right and obligation to return to primary and lower secondary education.

Young people who have completed primary and lower secondary school are entitled to three years of full-time upper secondary education. The right applies until the school year the student turns 24 years of age. Young people who return to Norway after a stay abroad will retain their right to upper secondary education. However, it can be shortened corresponding to the education the youth has already received before he/she left the country.

Pupils with a mother tongue other than Norwegian and Sami who do not speak Norwegian well enough to follow the ordinary teaching in school are entitled to special language instruction. This applies both in primary and lower secondary education, and follows from Sections 2-8 and 3-12 of the Education Act. The right will also apply to young people who do not have the necessary Norwegian skills as a result of a stay abroad, and who for that reason cannot follow ordinary instruction.





International cooperation

The Government will strengthen international cooperation with more exchange of experience. This applies in particular to the cooperation between the Nordic countries.

Through its accession to international human rights conventions and through its participation in the UN, the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council of Ministers and other international bodies, Norway has committed itself to preventing and combating domestic violence, honour based violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and violence and sexual abuse of children.

In 2019, a *Nordic network to combat negative social control and honour based violence* was established at the ministry level. Headed by Norway, the network serves as a good platform for strengthening Nordic cooperation. The purpose of the network is to exchange information about development trends, strategic approaches and measures.

The report *Strategies and initiatives for the prevention of negative social control and honour based violence in the Nordic countries* was prepared for the Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) by Rambøll Management Consulting (2020). It provides an overview of the countries' strategies, legislation and organisation in the field and is a knowledge base for future cooperation between the Nordic countries.

Measure 30

Strengthen Nordic cooperation

The Nordic network for combating negative social control and honour based violence shall undergo further development. One of the aims of the network is to contribute to strengthening Nordic and international cooperation on transnational challenges. Cooperation between the network and other countries, or international organisations and initiatives, shall be considered if the network deems it suitable.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 31

Establish a Nordic network of practitioners

It is desirable to have more cooperation and exchange of information between practitioners who follow up cases in the Nordic countries. IMDi will take the initiative to establish a network for the exchange of experience and knowledge sharing between actors in the support services in the Nordic countries. Regular meetings between relevant Nordic actors will be facilitated for joint development of the cooperation. In Norway, this work must be anchored in the national network to coordinate work on knowledge development and enhancement of competence, cf. Measure 5 in this plan.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 32

Hold a Nordic summit

A Nordic summit will be held at the ministerial level in 2022. The purpose is to increase political support and give visibility to the Nordic work against negative social control and honour based violence. In 2022, Norway will hold the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The above work can be linked to the Nordic *Vision 2030* and the strategic priority *A socially sustainable Nordic region*.

Ministry responsible: KD

Measure 33

Increase international cooperation

International exchange of information and experience on work against negative social control and honour based violence is important for developing knowledge about trends, methods of prevention and targeted measures. Norway will strengthen both international and bilateral cooperation with countries that have similar challenges, relevant experiences and up-to-date knowledge.

Ministry responsible: KD

Norway's international efforts against harmful practices and combating modern slavery

Harmful practices are a widespread global problem. These practices, which affect girls disproportionately, impact their health and rob them of educational opportunities, making it more difficult for them to take part in society and working life. Today, more than 200 million girls and women are living with the consequences of female genital mutilation. Every day, 33,000 girls are married as child brides. In addition, the global deficit of women is estimated to be around 126 million. The UN has furthermore estimated that Covid-19 will lead to 13 million more child marriages and two million more cases of genital mutilation than would otherwise be the case by 2030.

Through the UN's sustainability goals, the world community has committed itself to eliminating harmful practices by 2030. Norway's international Strategy to Eliminate Harmful Practices (2019–2023) strengthens Norwegian efforts against female genital mutilation, child marriage and preference for sons. Efforts will be strengthened through targeted measures and as part of development cooperation activities relating to education, health care, gender equality and human rights. Norway's driving role in normative processes will also be strengthened. Norway has made a commitment to invest approximately NOK 760 million in development assistance for the period 2020–2023 to eliminate harmful practices.

The Government has also strengthened its efforts against modern slavery and established a separate development assistance programme (2020). Modern slavery is an umbrella term that includes human trafficking, forced labour, bonded labour, forced marriage and the worst forms of child labour. The effort is part of achieving SDG Target 8.7 to end modern slavery and human trafficking.

Implementation of the action plan

The Ministry of Education and Research has the national responsibility for coordination and heads an inter-ministerial group that will follow up the action plan. The directorates are largely responsible for implementing the measures. Some measures are implemented at ministry level. The Ministry of Education and Research shall ensure that the status of the measures is published regularly.

IMDi will head a national network to coordinate work on knowledge and enhancement of competence. The network shall provide advice to the ministry group that will follow up the action plan (cf. Measure 5).

IMDi will also establish a reference group for the work on the plan in collaboration with the relevant directorates. This will be broadly composed of representatives of civil society.

A State Secretary Committee (SSU) has been established for *Integration through knowledge. The Government's integration strategy for 2019–2022*, which will also follow up this action plan and have regular meetings with the reference group.

Appendix

Relevant petition resolutions

Doc. 8:137 S (2019–2020), Recommendation 269 S (2020–2021), Decision 712

The Storting asks the Government to study the penal prohibition against deprivation of liberty in situations where children will be, or have already been, sent abroad against their will, and to propose statutory amendments that ensure that forced stays abroad can be punished.

- The decision is followed up in Measure 21 in this action plan.

Doc. 8: 132 S (2019–2020), Recommendation 89 S (2020–2021), Decision 529

The Storting asks the Government to ensure the provision of enhanced competence that provides basic knowledge about negative social control for teachers and counsellors from primary school to upper secondary school, as well as guidelines for how schools should work systematically on this issue.

- The decision is followed up in Measures 9 and 10 in this action plan.

Doc. 8: 132 S (2019–2020), Recommendation 89 S (2020–2021), Decision 530

The Storting asks the Government to initiate a study with the aim of reinforced reporting on how many children have been left abroad, and to explain how the latitude for follow-up can be strengthened.

- The decision is followed up in Measure 28 in this action plan.

Proposition No. 1 to the Storting (2020–2021) and Proposition No. 1 to the Storting Addendum 1 (2020–2021), Recommendation to the Storting 14 S (2020–2021), Decision 395

The Storting asks the Government to specifically include measures against social control in closed religious communities in the forthcoming action plan against social control.

- The decision is followed up in Measures 18, 19 and 20 in this action plan.

Proposition to the Storting (Bill) 130 L (2018–2019), Recommendation to the Storting 208 L (2019–2020), Decision 497

The Storting asks the Government in light of Recommendation to the Storting 260 S (2017–2018) to put forward a proposal for a mechanism that protects children who are at risk of being sent to or left abroad against their will under facilitated and organised indefensible conditions, which may contribute to children and young people being subjected to violence and torture, negative social control and radicalisation.

- The decision is followed up in Measures 26, 27 and 28 in this action plan.

Doc. 8:118 S (2017–2018), Recommendation 260 S (2017–2018), Decision 785

The Storting asks the Government to consider several sanction options in cases where children are left abroad against their will under indefensible conditions.

- The decision is followed up in Measure 21 in this action plan.

Doc. 8:118 S (2017–2018), Recommendation 260 S (2017–2018), Decision 788

The Storting asks the Government to propose clarification of the legal provisions in the Penal Code that hold parents responsible if children are sent on a stay abroad against their will.

- The decision is followed up in Measures 21 and 23 in this action plan.

Support services

Emergency helpline for children and young people

Telephone: 116 111

Email: alarm@116.111.no

The Expert Team for the Prevention of Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation

Telephone: 47 80 90 50

Email: kompetanseteamet@bufdir.no

IMDi's team of experts for the prevention of negative social control and honour based violence

Minority counsellors in lower secondary and upper secondary schools

Crisis centres (shelters)

The Red Cross helpline for forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Telephone: 815 55 201

Email: info.tvangsekteskap@redcross.no

Chat: www.aeresrelatertvold.no

The Red Cross helpline (rodekorstelefonen.no)

SEIF – Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees

Telephone: 22 03 48 30

seif@seif.no

Hjelpekilden provides help and support to people in problematical processes of leaving religious communities. Emergency line every Tuesday from 19.00 to 21.00: 69 28 35 10

E-mail: info@hjelpekilden.no

Online resources

[Nettportalen Nora](#) is a public information website about negative social control and honour based violence for both young people and support services employees.

[Ung.no](#) is a public information website for young people that also covers negative social control, domestic violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. It has an anonymous question and answer service.

[Tvangsekteskap.no](#) is a public information website about forced marriage and honour based violence.

[Dinutvei.no](#) is a national guide on domestic violence, rape and other sexual abuse. It has an anonymous question and answer service.

[Snakkemedbarn.no](#) a tool for practising conversations with children.

[TryggEst](#) – protection of at-risk adults

[Jegvet.no](#) a learning resource for violence prevention and life skills in kindergarten and school.

[Learning resource for use in teaching Norwegian and social studies to newly arrived immigrants](#), which includes a teaching programme in 24 languages.

[Guidelines for information and notification between public agencies in cases involving negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation in adult education](#)

[Guidelines for children left abroad](#)

[Guidelines for cases concerning persons over the age of 18 who are at risk of being subjected to involuntary stays abroad, or who stay involuntarily abroad.](#)

[E-learning course about the abuse provision](#)

[Guide concerning female genital mutilation](#) is an information website for those who work with girls and women who have been victims or are at risk of genital mutilation.

[Rettentil.no](#) is an information portal for professionals who meet young people who may be victims of negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

[Endringsagenter](#) (Change agents) is a national training programme about negative social control and honour based violence for voluntary organisations and relevant communities.

National legislation and international conventions

National laws

Act relating to children and parents (the Children Act)

Act relating to child welfare services (the Child Welfare Act)

Act relating to marriage (the Marriage Act)

Act relating to primary and secondary education and training (the Education Act)

Act relating to municipal crisis centre services (the Crisis Centre Act)

Act relating to municipal health and care services, etc. (the Health and Care Services Act)

Act relating to specialist health services, etc. (the Specialist Health Services Act)

Act relating to the dental health service (the Dental Health Services Act)

Act relating to passports (the Passport Act)

Act relating to social services in the labour and welfare administration (the Social Services Act)

Act relating to the strengthening of the status of human rights in Norwegian law (the Human Rights Act)

General Civil Penal Code (the Penal Code)

Act relating to religious and life stance communities (the Religious and Life Stance Communities Act)

Act relating to the admission of foreign nationals into the realm and their stay here (the Immigration Act)

International conventions and resolutions

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948

The European Convention on Human Rights of 1950

The UN Convention on Consent to Marriage of 1962

The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of 2011 (the Istanbul Convention)

The UN General Assembly resolution on child, early and forced marriage of 2014: Resolution 69/156. Child, early and forced marriage

The UN Human Rights Council resolution on child, early and forced marriage of 2015: Resolution 29/8. Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage

Measures in The Right to Decide about One's Own Life. Action Plan to Combat Negative Social Control, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (2017–2020)

No.	Measure	Ministry responsible ⁴	Status
Priority Area 1: Strengthened legal protection			
1	To consider stricter provisions in the Marriage Act to combat child marriage and bigamy	BFD	Completed
2	To consider extending the time limit for the annulment of forced marriage	BFD	Completed
3	To consider making non-legal and religion-based forced marriage a criminal offence	JD	Completed
4	To consider making the duty to prevent criminal acts to include forced marriage	JD	Completed
5	To expand the provision on abuse to include the extended family	JD	Completed
6	To review legislation and practices regarding plural marriages and transnational serial marriages	JD	Ongoing
7	To improve guidelines regarding children left abroad	BFD	Completed
8	To ensure follow-up dialogue with pupils due to move abroad without their parents	KD	Completed
Priority Area 2: Strengthening assistance to people who break contact with their family and network			
9	To introduce a mentoring scheme for young people subjected to negative social control, honour based violence and forced marriage	KD	Completed
10	To evaluate current child welfare housing for young people under 18 subjected to honour based violence or forced marriage, and consider new support measures	BFD	Completed
11	To establish police protection guidelines for victims of threats	JD	Completed
12	To enhance guidance for victims of violence who move to another municipality	ASD	Completed
Priority Area 3: Changing attitudes and practices in the relevant communities			
13	To update the curriculum <i>Domestic Violence</i> for adult immigrants	KD	Completed
14	To develop courses for resource persons from relevant communities	KD	Completed
15	To continue with dialogue groups against violence for residents of asylum reception centres	JD	Completed
16	To review training for religious leaders	BFD	Completed
17	To enhance courses in good parenting	BFD	Completed

4 ASD: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
 BFD: Ministry of Children and Families
 HOD: Ministry of Health and Care Services
 JD: Ministry of Justice and Public Security
 KUD: Ministry of Culture and Equality
 KD: Ministry of Education and Integration
 UD: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No.	Measure	Ministry responsible	Status
18	To strengthen information on negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation		
	a) To conduct campaigns	KD	Completed
	b) To continue networks for information exchange and guidance material	KD	Completed
	c) To systematise information on the health consequences of female genital mutilation and enhance information on the right to health care	HOD	Completed
19	To increase information to the target groups about their rights	KD	Completed
20	To ensure that relevant education is provided in schools about violence, sexuality and sexual boundaries	KD	Completed
Priority Area 4: Enhancing knowledge in the support services			
21	To increase knowledge of violence and abuse in the education of health and social care professionals	KD	Completed
22	To increase knowledge in support services about negative social control, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation		
	a) To include negative social control, forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation in competence building across sectors	BFD	Ongoing
	b) To increase knowledge in support services about developmentally disabled people as a vulnerable group	KUD	Completed
	c) To increase knowledge on negative social control, forced marriage and honour based violence among guardianship authorities, other authorities, and guardians	JD	Ongoing
23	To strengthen local and regional coordination and cooperation in combating negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation	HOD	Completed
24	To strengthen the work of the police, schools, family counselling service and Norwegian foreign missions		
	a) To use the risk assessment tool <i>Patriarch</i> in all police districts	JD	Completed
	b) To further develop the minority counsellor service in schools	KD	Completed
	c) To further develop the role of the family counselling service in combating forced marriage and honour based violence	BFD	Completed
	d) To further develop the integration counsellor service at Norwegian foreign missions	KD	Ongoing
25	To enhance treatment for victims of female genital mutilation		
	a) Equal quality of treatment for victims of female genital mutilation	HOD	Ongoing
	b) To further develop treatment options for female genital mutilation on the basis of new knowledge	HOD	Ongoing

No.	Measure	Ministry responsible	Status
Priority Area 5: Strengthening research and increase knowledge sharing			
26	To strengthen research on negative social control, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and plural marriages	KD	Completed
27	To strengthen national and international cooperation for the exchange of knowledge and experience		
	a) To increase experience and knowledge exchange between immigrant organisations, resource persons and government agencies	KD	Completed
	b) To increase the international exchange of knowledge and experience	KD	Completed
28	To develop an international strategy to combat child and forced marriage	UD	Completed

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