



WORK STRATEGY  
**READY TO**  
YOUNG PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

**WORK**



Gateway to  
employment



Young, positive and motivated people are welcomed by most employers.  
Young people with disabilities, however, are not so desirable. This must change.

We want people of all abilities to find a place in the labour market. The most important step in this respect is giving young people with disabilities a chance. NAV has developed a number of tools designed to encourage employers like yourself to give people with disabilities an opportunity to prove themselves. We all need a gateway to employment.



A source for  
high-quality  
labour

*Photo: Snøball Film*

Young people with disabilities represent a considerable resource. Many have good qualifications, drive and dedication, as well as a diversity of backgrounds and experiences that can be an invaluable asset to your company.

For various reasons, many young people with disabilities struggle to find a job. Some lack work experience; others may have been unable to complete their education or may have physical or mental disabilities that have prevented them from showing what they can do. In some cases, employers ignore the potential these young people represent, fearing that hiring them will entail too many responsibilities.

## A win-win situation

As an employer, you have the opportunity to recruit someone who can make a positive contribution to the work environment and at the same time improve the social profile of your company. With just a little bit of effort in the beginning, these young people can prove to be a valuable resource for your company over time.

At the same time, you will be providing a young man or woman with an opportunity to enter the labour market, put their skills to good use and develop as an individual.





## What's the problem?

**Undoubtedly, there are many people out there with preconceived ideas about hiring a person with physical or mental disabilities, but much of the time these ideas come from a lack of knowledge. These are some of the most common reservations:**

## **”We don’t have the resources to follow up”**

Your local NAV Inclusive Workplace Support Centre has a workplace support coach and IA consultant (for IA enterprises) ready to provide the practical help you need to be able to give a young disabled person a job. The NAV office will take on the task of following up the employee. You will be assigned a dedicated NAV contact, and the Tilretteleggingsgaranti (facilitation guarantee) will ensure close follow-up and assistance in the facilitation process, as well as through the employment termination process if things don’t work out.

## **”Our costs will increase”**

Workplace adaptations for a person with disabilities may involve additional costs for a limited time. NAV can help you in this process, both financially and practically, so that your company does not have to suffer any unnecessary costs.

### **”It will harm our reputation”**

Experience shows that the opposite is true. Customers and business partners alike appreciate a company that takes social responsibility and thinks outside the box. Social awareness and commitment are good for a company’s reputation.

### **”It will negatively affect our productivity”**

Many young people with disabilities are highly motivated and can be just as productive as anybody else. Of course, there will always be some with reduced productive capacity or whose output is variable. If investments or additional follow-up are necessary in the start-up phase, NAV can help compensate for this through wage subsidies, follow-up or other means.



Tablets are useful tools for people with visual disabilities.

# Three stories



## **”NAV does most of the work. We provide them with a place to do it.”**

”2500 people work at Sandvika Storsenter. When NAV contacted us, we immediately thought that some of our shops would be able to help young people with disabilities gain employment,” says Shopping Centre Director Carl ”Nico” Nicolai L. Vold.

”55 shops have signed up for the project, but it’s not always easy finding good candidates for all of them. Some people are great for retail work, but it’s not for everybody. NAV has put in a lot of effort to find the right person for the right shop.”

”20 shops have had trainees, and so far, two candidates have been offered permanent employment. Some have been offered jobs elsewhere after training here, and some have been offered traineeships where they are.”

”We are a major shopping centre, and we have to be aware of our social responsibility. If we can help someone get back into work, it is our responsibility to do so.”



## ”I like knowing what my day is going to be like”

Eirik is one of the people who found a job through the collaborative project between NAV and Sandvika Storsenter, and is one of 94 employees at the home electronics store Lefdal. ”I immediately thought that this was something we wanted to be part of,” says Store Director Tore Lunde, ”but we didn’t have the resources to do charting or work assessment.”

”We had to have candidates who had already passed a screening process, and whom we felt would do well working with us. The process was conducted as a collaboration between NAV and Reaktor-skolen, who screened candidates and assessed their needs and capabilities.”

Eirik works in the support centre, helping customers who have problems with the software on their computers or who are unable to set



up computers on their own. "He is very good at his job, and he is a popular guy among his co-workers," says Tore.

Eirik has Asperger syndrome and requires predictability and a regular routine. The only concession Lefdal made was exempting him from working shifts. "I need a fixed routine in my day, working 8 to 4, and I prefer not having a lot of different people to deal with. For me, 4 colleagues is a good number to work with."

"NAV offers various financial incentives, but we have not taken advantage of these," Tore says. "For us, it's incentive enough that we are able to help young people with disabilities find a job. It's important to find the right candidate in advance, and we leave that up to NAV."



Good work aids give more opportunities. This polar bear converts sound to light.



## **”A multilingual work environment is very exciting!”**

Ingunn has worked as an archivist with the Customs Region, Oslo and Akershus, since 2007. Norwegian Customs has had an inclusive workplace strategy for a long time. Anyone with a disability can apply for jobs here, without discrimination. Ingunn was born deaf, and found it rather challenging when it came to finding a job.

”Of course I was excited about the job, but I was wondering how my colleagues and I would communicate. I also thought there would be problems in connection with things like meetings and performance assessment interviews, as nobody knew sign language.”

Ingunn needn't have been concerned. ”Whenever there are special events, such as courses and major meetings, we bring in an interpreter from NAV,” says Trond-Eirik Hansen, Ingunn's immediate superior.



”When Ingunn first came to work for us, everything was a bit new to us, too, but NAV worked hard to ensure a smooth transition. All employees got to attend a one-day course in sign language, so we could learn the basic signs you use every day. One employee was assigned as Ingunn’s mentor and she received additional sign language training.”

”I found it a bit hard in the beginning,” Ingunn says with a smile, ”but now I love my job! It’s important to be able to communicate with your colleagues, and take part in social activities, and that’s not a problem. We do a bit of sign language, use a bit of body language and write a few things on notes. People communicate in different ways, and that’s very nice.”

Ingunn uses some advanced technology aids, such as a textphone, which converts speech to text, and a computer with voice-to-text software. NAV covers the cost of these.

Ingunn emphasises that deaf people can be just as productive as hearing people. "It's important to focus on the possibilities instead of the obstacles. And it's important to be open about the situation. If we can achieve that, then there's nothing to stop me doing a good job."





ASK

- vi forsyner Nord



**“It’s good to have a manager you can talk to. When they understand you and respect you, everything is so much easier.”**

Stian works at ASKO’s warehouse packing goods for shipment to retail outlets. He’s been working there for 9 years and likes his job. He suffers from a chronic mental disorder, which means he has problems from time to time. But with a few simple adjustments, he performs well in a full-time job.

“I’m a ‘picker’ and we have quotas to fill,” says Stian. “But if I’m having a hard time and need to take things easy my manager always cuts me some slack. And if I’ve had a bad night, it’s OK for me to come in a bit late.”





ASKO's warehouse is busy environment.

"It's better that Stian comes in and does what he can that day," says Inger Ødegård, ASKO's HR consultant responsible for inclusion, work presence and absence. "Part of the reason this works so well, is that he has been open about his problems. Because he's been so open it's made my job a lot easier. Being open really is the key."

"If you have a good manager, who you respect, and who really cares about you, it's easier to be open, too," says Stian. "My manager always has time for me, and we talk almost every day. Not always about this, of course! There are many people working here, and if I'm having a bad day, I guess there are always some that talk about me."

"Stian's diagnosis is his business," says Inger, "no one else's. Our supervisors don't have more subordinates reporting to them than they can handle. They have time to see each individual and follow up on everyone in the team. It's important to be seen; nobody should be able to hide. In addition, we are always working on reinforcing the maxim that it is our responsibility to be good colleagues. We are each other's working environment."



"We have to team up with employers to help more young people with disabilities find a job."

*Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt*

Get help  
to take  
responsibility

The Government launched the Job Strategy for People with Disabilities in 2011, and through this initiative, NAV has even more tools and measures at its disposal to reduce the thresholds for employers to hire young people with disabilities or to give them a chance.

For example, there are now workplace coaches at NAV Inclusive Workplace Support Centres in every county. Together with local NAV offices and NAV Assistive Technology, they will assist companies looking to recruit individuals with various disabilities.





This is what  
the workplace  
coach can help  
you with:

- Guide employers in the process of introducing young people to the workplace
- Inform employers about what they should keep in mind during the recruitment process
- Inform employers about how NAV can help them find the right candidates
- Inform employers about various support schemes and work aids NAV can provide
- Inform employers about how to make adjustments for people with disabilities
- Inform employers about NAV's Tilrettelegingsgaranti (facilitation guarantee), through which they are assigned a permanent NAV contact and will receive coordinated assistance as needed
- Support and guide employers in challenging cases
- Give employers the knowledge and competence they need in order to become an inclusive workplace

## Six tips to bear in mind when you are trying out or hiring a person with disabilities:

- Arrange a preliminary meeting to enable the new employee can familiarise him/herself with the workplace.
- Assign the new employee a mentor; someone who can take the new employee under his/her wing in the beginning.
- Make sure all practical and organisational adjustments are implemented well in advance.
- Provide clear and positive feedback when you think something is going well, and offer constructive criticism when something needs to change.
- Complete brief and regular assessment interviews and gradually give the new employee more responsibilities and tasks.
- Assess and settle expectations among other employees in advance.



Find more  
information  
here:

- Your local NAV office
- The workplace coach and IA consultant\*  
at the NAV Inclusive Workplace Support Centre  
in your county

Search for relevant candidates and register vacancies here:

- [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no)
- [www.jobbressurs.no](http://www.jobbressurs.no)

If you want to read about other companies that have hired people  
with disabilities, go to [www.idebanken.org](http://www.idebanken.org)

*\*for IA enterprises*



Jobs Strategy for People with Disabilities | [www.nav.no/jobstrategi](http://www.nav.no/jobstrategi)

