



Nordic Welfare
Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

NORDIC WELFARE CENTRE



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Word from the Director



Eva Franzén, Director, Nordic Welfare Centre

"The focus has been on identifying solutions that prepare our welfare systems for the future and ensure that they can continue to meet the demands of a changing society."

The past year has been marked by significant global challenges that have affected developments throughout the Nordic region. Geopolitical instability, climate change and growing economic disparities have placed high demands on our societies' ability to adapt and remain strong in uncertain times. In this rapidly changing world, the Nordic welfare model, which has long been a cornerstone of stability, trust and social sustainability, is facing challenges.

Despite these challenges, the Nordic region remains strong. Our shared values – equality, inclusion, social security and access to universal welfare services – contribute to our ability to act and enable us to meet current and future needs. Through cross-border co-operation and a continuous exchange of knowledge, experience and innovation, we are strengthening our ability to develop our welfare.

During the year, the Nordic Welfare Centre, together with the member countries, has provided expertise and analysis through conferences, seminars, working groups, workshops, networks and publications. The focus has been on identifying solutions that prepare our welfare systems for the future and ensure that they can continue to meet the demands of a changing society. Crisis

preparedness has been one of our areas of priority.

One important accomplishment during the year was the completion of our four-year project Nordic co-operation on children's and young people's opportunities for participation and development after the COVID-19 pandemic. The project clearly shows that children and young people's rights and participation need to be integrated into our structures to ensure that they are heard and involved when new policies are formulated and implemented. The knowledge and tools developed within the project will now be used in the design of future contingency plans and in broader welfare work in the Nordic region.

We have also continued to strengthen our participation in public debate. During the year, we took part in all the Nordic democracy festivals – Almedalsveckan, Arendalsuka, Folkemødet, Järvaveckan and SuomiAreena. Our events on safer digital democracy, children in low-income families and migrant mothers' opportunities to enter the labour market attracted great interest and generated valuable debate. Through these efforts, we highlight key welfare issues and contribute to a broader understanding among decision-makers, researchers, civil society and the public.

Internally, we have taken important steps in developing long-term plans and strengthening our strategic governance. Together with Nordic expert networks, we have intensified our efforts to link our initiatives to the Nordic Co-operation Programme for Health and Social Affairs 2025–2030. This has led to improved internal governance, clearly defined priorities and increased transparency towards our target groups.

Another key priority has been to strengthen co-operation with other Nordic institutions to identify synergies and improve our administrative processes. During the year, our Finnish office moved to new premises, where we are now co-located with Nordic Culture Point and NIVA. The aim is to make better use of resources and strengthen our capacity to fulfil our assignments. In Sweden, a similar collaboration is ongoing between Nordregio and the Nordic Welfare Centre, which strengthens our organisational platform even further.

The work environment at the Nordic Welfare Centre remains good, as confirmed by this year's employee survey. The results show a high level of commitment, a positive work culture and good conditions for employees to contribute to the organisation's goals. This is an essential foundation for our continued development.

February 2026

Key figures – results

AREAS OF OPERATIONS 6	GOALS REACHED 49/51	GOAL ACHIEVEMENT 96%
OFFICES IN 2 COUNTRIES	16 EMPLOYED AT THE OFFICE IN STOCKHOLM 	10 EMPLOYED AT THE OFFICE IN HELSINKI 
MEDIAN AGE 51,5	SICK LEAVE 2,2%	TURNOVER (MSEK) 52.8

Some examples from our 2025 knowledge sharing efforts



2025 IN BRIEF

The Nordic Welfare Centre's mission is to contribute to the development of measures in the welfare sector in the Nordic region and to serve as a platform for Nordic co-operation. To do this, we compile existing and develop new knowledge, coordinate networks and working groups, organise conferences and seminars, and disseminate our findings in different ways.

This is a summary of our annual report for 2025. A PDF version of the full report can be downloaded from our [website](#) (in Scandinavian languages).



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Nordic Welfare Centre contributes to building a socially sustainable and inclusive Nordic region, the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. A Nordic region where all children and young people can have a safe upbringing, participate in society and develop their abilities and skills on equal terms. This work contributes to the countries' implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Agenda 2030. During the year, the institution has worked on projects on the consequences of the pandemic and the right to be heard, safer digital democracy for children and young people, children in low-income families and the Nordic network about the child's first 1000 days – a healthy start in life. In the autumn, the institution was commissioned a project on inclusive education for children and young people with disabilities.

Read more about the area of operation on our website

<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/children-young-people/>





PUBLIC HEALTH

The Nordic Welfare Centre works to strengthen Nordic co-operation in preventive public health work. There is a particular focus on modifiable risk factors that can lead to poor health and premature death, such as alcohol consumption, illegal drug use, tobacco and nicotine products, unhealthy eating habits, insufficient physical activity and poor mental health. Important networks in this area include the Nordic Arena for Public Health Issues, the The Nordic alcohol network and the Nordic network for physical activity. During the year, the institution has worked on projects relating to food and physical activity and young people's use of nicotine products and has developed a long-term plan for this area of operations.

Read more about the area of operation on our website

<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/public-health/>





DISABILITY ISSUES

The Nordic Welfare Centre contributes to the countries' implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Agenda 2030. Key themes during the year have been deinstitutionalisation, support in decision-making and access to AI technology. In the deafblind field focus has been on a Nordic training in mapping functional deafblindness and planning the big conference in 2026. In 2025, the Nordic Welfare Centre granted SEK 1.5 million for Nordic co-operation to disability organisations and organisations for chronic diseases. Several events have been organised, including within the framework of the Presidency.

Read more about the area of operation on our website

<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/disability-issues/>





WELFARE TECHNOLOGY

The Nordic Welfare Centre supports the countries in addressing demographic challenges at national and Nordic level and provides knowledge and concrete solutions to support the countries' work on developing and implementing welfare technology. The impact is to promote a competitive Nordic region based on innovation and digital integration. In 2025, a project on social services in rural areas was launched. Results have been disseminated from the project Integrated healthcare and care through distance-spanning solutions (iHAC). In 2025, the Nordic research network on health and welfare technology expanded to include 94 researchers.

Read more about the area of operation on our website

<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/welfare-policy/>





OLDER ADULTS

The Nordic Welfare Centre contributes to the development of sustainable age-friendly cities and communities in the Nordic region, promotes active and healthy ageing for older adults, coordinates the Nordic Dementia Network and contributes to the exchange of strategic experiences in the field of dementia. In 2025, the Nordic network for age-friendly cities and communities organised four digital network meetings, one of which was in the form of a seminar. A conference was arranged in collaboration with WHO Europe and The Centre for an age-friendly Norway. The institution has started work on future-proof, sustainable and effective elderly care. The Nordic dementia network has had two meetings and the theme networks have had a combined total of 18 meetings during the year.

Read more about the area of operation on our website

<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/olderadults/>





INTEGRATION

The Nordic Welfare Centre runs the Knowledge bank Integration Norden on the integration of migrants and refugees. The Knowledge bank serves as a resource for authorities and experts working with the integration of refugees and immigrants in the Nordic region. The Knowledge bank develops, accesses and disseminates research-based knowledge and promising examples of effective integration work, and acts as a hub for Nordic co-operation and knowledge exchange by organising events and meetings and coordinating expert networks. In 2025, Integration Norden's focus areas were social integration, participation and belonging. Three events were organised, attracting a total of around 500 participants. A new communication strategy was developed based on recommendations from the 2024 external evaluation.

Read more about the area of operation on our website
<https://nordicwelfare.org/en/integration>



Nordic added value

Nordic added value is key to the institution's areas of operations, and is achieved through close and continuous Nordic dialogue, not least through our networks which consist of 300–350 participants from across the Nordic region. Our networks and expert groups contribute to developing and sharing the knowledge we generate and to existing projects and initiatives for future projects.

The Nordic Welfare Centre's strong Nordic co-operation in the welfare field contributes to increased knowledge, strengthened policy development and better practices in the Nordic countries. The institution's areas of operations and activities are particularly important for achieving the following sub-goals in the Nordic Council of Ministers' co-operation programmes:

Nordic Co-operation Programme for Health and Social Affairs

1.1 Welfare provisions in the Nordic Region must be effective, accessible, geographically within reach, safe for both patients and care recipients and based on a preventative and health-promoting perspective that puts the user in the centre.

1.2 Welfare provisions in the Nordic Region must be sufficiently staffed and operated by professionally qualified health and social care personnel.

2.1 Everyone must be offered early, preventative, health-promoting, rehabilitating and relevant measures to reduce health inequality

2.2 Nobody should have to struggle with mental vulnerability or involuntary isolation.

2.3 No-one should be subjected to physical or psychological violence or oppression

3.1 Everyone should have equal opportunities to live good, independent lives.

3.2 All children and young people must have a place in the community and equal opportunities to grow up with security, stability and good future prospects

3.3: Everyone must have the opportunity to participate in meaningful and constructive communities



Nordic Co-operation Programme for Labour

2.1: Develop more knowledge on how to get more people into employment or training, with a special focus on groups on the margins of the labour market, such as senior citizens, persons with disabilities, women of non-European descent and young people who are neither in work nor in unemployment.

2.2: Improve the levels of equal treatment and equality on the labour market in order to enable the Nordic Region to mobilise the full range of skills in the labour force, regardless of gender, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation or age.



Regarding the criteria for Nordic added value set up by the Nordic Council of Ministers, several of the areas of operations have projects and activities that meet all the priorities, and the institution is considered to contribute to Nordic added values in all areas:

PRIORITIES			
Area of operation	1. Activities that would otherwise be run nationally, but where positive effects are achieved through joint Nordic solutions	2. Activities that manifest and develop Nordic unity	3. Activities that increase Nordic expertise and competitiveness
Children & young people	●	●	●
Public health	●	●	●
Disability issues	●	●	●

Welfare technology		●	●
Older adults			●
Integration	●		●

Below are a few examples from each area of operations.

Children and young people

Regulation of children's and young people's use of digital media is being debated in many countries. The Nordic countries are exchanging experiences in this area and drawing inspiration from each other's guidelines, regulations, initiatives and solutions. Nordic and international co-operation is key, and Nordic co-operation in this area gives the countries a stronger voice in dialogue with the EU and multinational companies.



Public health

The Nordic added value of Nordic co-operation in public health is particularly evident in the context of the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases and an ageing population. There is great potential for improving health and increasing healthy life years in the Nordic region.



Disability issues

The co-operation on disability issues helps to rationalise and support the implementation of the UNCRPD at national level. The co-operation strengthens the Nordic community and Nordic values by placing the Nordic region in an international context. Activities in the deafblind field in particular contribute to an increased knowledge base, as the population in each individual country is too small to develop its own knowledge.



Welfare technology

The focus of the activities is on collaboration, mapping and knowledge compilation regarding the implementation of welfare technology. Through these activities, the countries are supported



in meeting demographic challenges at national and Nordic level. Skills development and competitiveness are manifested in joint projects and Nordic networks, not least in the field of research.

Older adults

The work to develop sustainable cities and communities contributes to more resilient and socially sustainable societies. The activities contribute to increased competence in sustainable community development in the Nordic region, and knowledge sharing contributes to policy development that both promotes functional health and prevents chronic diseases.



Integration

Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and immigrants generates Nordic benefits through knowledge development and the exchange of experience, primarily in the areas of education and the labour market.



About the publication

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