

How's Life in Norway?

Relative to other OECD countries, Norway performs very well across the OECD's different well-being indicators and dimensions. **Job strain** and **long-term unemployment** are among the lowest in the OECD, while **average earnings** and the **employment rate** are in the top third of the OECD countries. Only around 3% of employees regularly **worked long hours** in 2016, well below the OECD average of 13%, and full-time employees report having more **time off** (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care) than the OECD average. In 2015, the average **household net adjusted disposable income** was among the highest in the OECD, but **household net wealth** stood below the OECD average. Housing conditions and many dimensions of quality of life are good in Norway. For example, the **homicide rate** is very low, and almost 88% of Norwegians report that they feel **safe walking alone at night**, one of the highest shares in the OECD. Meanwhile, 49% of Norwegians feel that they **have a say in what the government does**, well above the OECD average of 33%.

Norway's average level of current well-being: Comparative strengths and weaknesses














Note: This chart shows Norway's relative strengths and weaknesses in well-being when compared with other OECD countries. For both positive and negative indicators (such as homicides, marked with an "**"), longer bars always indicate better outcomes (i.e. higher well-being), whereas shorter bars always indicate worse outcomes (i.e. lower well-being). If data are missing for any given indicator, the relevant segment of the circle is shaded in white.

Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:


www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2017-country-notes-data.xlsx


Change in Norway's average well-being over the past 10 years


Dimension	Description	Change
 Income and wealth	Household net adjusted disposable income is currently 15% higher, in real terms, than in 2005. It has grown steadily since 2007, following a slight fall in 2006. Household net wealth was 16% higher in 2015 than it was in 2012 (in real terms).	↗ ↗
 Jobs and earnings	The employment rate has slightly decreased since 2006. Although real earnings have improved consistently, with a cumulative growth rate of 22% over the past decade, labour market insecurity increased sharply in 2015. Long-term unemployment has remained broadly stable, whereas the share of employees experiencing job strain fell from 20% in 2005 to 15% in 2015.	↘ ↗ ↘ ↔ ↗
 Housing conditions	The average number of rooms per person has remained stable at a relatively high level of 2.1 in 2011-2015, and the share of households lacking basic sanitation is broadly unchanged since 2005-10. The average share of household disposable income spent on housing costs has remained relatively stable.	↔ ↔ ↔
 Work-life balance	The share of employees working 50 hours or more per week has seen little change since 2005.	↔
 Health status	Life expectancy at birth has improved by 2 years since 2005, and at 82.4 in 2015, it has maintained its position at 2 years higher than the OECD average. The percentage of adults reporting to be in "good" or "very good" health has remained relatively stable in the past 10 years.	↗ ↔
 Education and skills	In line with the OECD average, the share of adults with at least an upper secondary level of education has increased from 77.2% in 2005 to 82.2% in 2016.	↗
 Social connections	Since 2005-07, there has been little change in the percentage of people who have relatives or friends whom they can count on to help in case of need.	↔
 Civic engagement	The percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote has seen little change in Norway since the start of the decade.	↔
 Environmental quality	Consistent with the OECD average trend, there has been no major change in satisfaction with local water quality since 2005. However, annual exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution has improved by 22% over the past decade.	↔ ↗
 Personal security	Feelings of safety and the homicide rate today are broadly similar to their levels 10 years ago.	↔ ↔
 Subjective well-being	Life satisfaction has remained broadly stable over the decade.	↔


Note: For each indicator in every dimension: ↗ refers to an improvement; ↔ indicates little or no change; and ↘ signals deterioration. This is based on a comparison of the start year (2005 in most cases) and the latest available year (usually 2015 or 2016). The order of the arrows shown in column three corresponds to that of the indicators mentioned in column two.

Norway's resources and risks for future well-being: Illustrative indicators

 Natural capital			
Indicator	Tier	Change	
Greenhouse gas emissions from domestic production	2	↗	2005-2015
CO ₂ emissions from domestic consumption	3	↔	2001-2011
Exposure to PM _{2.5} air pollution	1	↗	2005-2013
Forest area	1	↘	2005-2014
Renewable freshwater resources	1	..	Long-term annual avg
Freshwater abstractions	2	..	2007
Threatened birds	2	..	Latest available
Threatened mammals	2	..	Latest available
Threatened plants	1	..	Latest available

 Human capital			
Indicator	Tier	Change	
Young adult educational attainment	3	↔	2014-2016
Educational expectancy	1	..	2015
Cognitive skills at age 15	2	..	2015
Adult skills	1	..	2011/2012
Long-term unemployment	1	↔	2006-2016
Life expectancy at birth	1	↗	2005-2016
Smoking prevalence	1	↗	2005-2016
Obesity prevalence	1	↘	2005-2015

 Economic capital			
Indicator	Tier	Change	
Produced fixed assets	1	↗	2012-2014
Gross fixed capital formation	2	↘	2005-2016
Financial net worth of total economy	1	↗	2005-2016
Intellectual property assets	1	↗	2012-2014
Investment in R&D	2	↗	2005-2014
Household debt	3	↘	2005-2016
Household net wealth	2	↗	2012-2015
Financial net worth of government	1	↗	2005-2016
Banking sector leverage	2	↗	2005-2016

 Social capital			
Indicator	Tier	Change	
Trust in others	1	..	2013
Trust in the police	1	..	2013
Trust in the national government	1	↘	2005-2016
Voter turnout	1	↔	2005-2013
Government stakeholder engagement	2	..	2014
Volunteering through organisations	1	..	2011/2012

1	Top-performing OECD tier, latest available year
2	Middle-performing OECD tier, latest available year
3	Bottom-performing OECD tier, latest available year

↗	Improving over time
↘	Worsening over time
↔	No change
..	No data available

HOW LARGE ARE WELL-BEING INEQUALITIES IN NORWAY?

What is inequality and how is it measured? Measuring inequality means trying to describe **how unevenly distributed** outcomes are in society. *How's Life? 2017* adopts several different approaches:

- Measures of “**vertical**” inequalities address how unevenly outcomes are spread across all people in society – for example, by looking at the size of the gap between people at the bottom of the distribution and people at the top
- Measures of “**horizontal**” inequalities focus on the gap between population groups defined by specific characteristics (such as men and women, young and old, people with higher and lower levels of education).
- Measures of “**deprivation**” report the share of people who live below a certain level of well-being (such as those who face income poverty or live in an overcrowded household).

Compared to most OECD countries, Norway has low levels of **vertical inequality** in income, wealth, feelings of political efficacy (i.e. having a say in what the government does), and life satisfaction.

Differences in well-being outcomes between **women** and **men** are often comparatively small in Norway, relative to other OECD countries – and sometimes the gender divide favours women. For example, Norwegian women are less likely than men to be unemployed, less likely to work long hours, devote on average 30% more time than men to social activities, and are more likely to feel they have a say in what the government does. Nevertheless, men have a larger than OECD average advantage relative to women on earnings, adult skills, and cognitive skills at age 15.

Norway shows mixed outcomes regarding the divide between **young** and **middle-aged** adults. For instance, in all OECD countries, younger adults have lower levels of income, wealth, and earnings. In Norway the age-related income gap is narrower than for the OECD on average, yet the wealth divide is among the highest in the OECD. In well-being dimensions where the age gap typically favours the young (e.g. health status, social support, and time spent socialising), the advantages of Norwegian young people are typically smaller than those in the OECD on average.

In most OECD countries, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes. In Norway, this gap is often comparatively small. In particular, gaps in earnings, wealth, personal security and life satisfaction are narrower than for the OECD on average.

The large majority of **deprivation** indicators for Norway are ranked among the top third (i.e. least deprived) of OECD countries. Only housing affordability, long working hours and educational attainment register moderate levels of deprivation in Norway.

Well-being inequalities in Norway

	Vertical inequality	Horizontal inequality by			Deprivation
		Gender	Age	Education	
		Women relative to men	Young relative to middle-aged	Secondary relative to tertiary	
Household income	●		●		●
Household net wealth	●		●	●	●
Earnings	●	●	●	●	
Low pay		●			●
Employment		●	●	●	
Unemployment		●	●	●	●
Housing affordability					●
Rooms per person					●
Life expectancy	●				
Perceived health		●	●	●	●
Working hours	●	●	●	●	●
Time off		●	●		
Educational attainment		●	●		●
Cognitive skills at 15	●	●		●	●
Adult skills	●	●	●	●	●
Time spent socialising		●	●		
Social support		●	●	●	●
Voter turnout		●	●	●	●
Having a say in government	●	●	●	●	●
Air quality					●
Water quality		●	●	●	●
Homicides		●			●
Feeling safe at night		●	●	●	●
Life satisfaction	●	●	●	●	●
Negative affect balance					●

Legend:

- top third of OECD countries
- middle third of OECD countries
- bottom third of OECD countries
- data gaps
- no measures

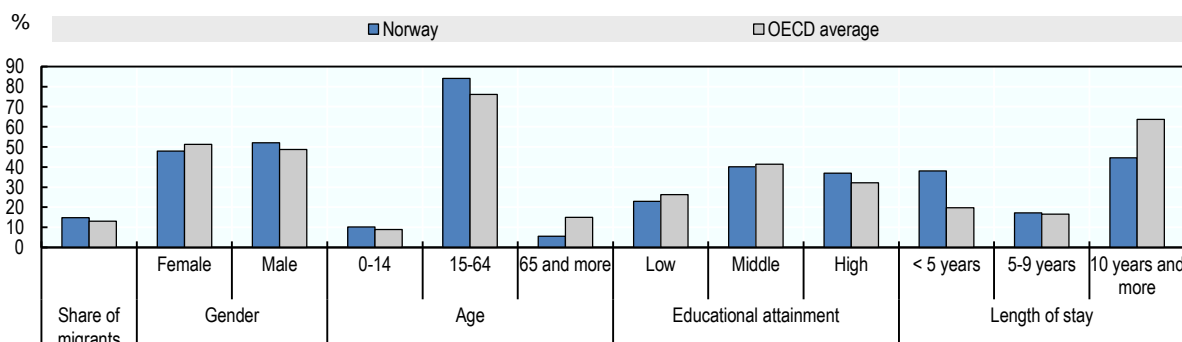
HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN NORWAY?

Migrants (defined as people living in a different country from the one in which they were born) represent an important share of the population in most OECD countries. Capturing information about their well-being is critical for gaining a fuller picture of how life is going, and whether it is going equally well for all members of society.

Who are the migrants in Norway and OECD?

More than one in seven people living in Norway (15%) were born elsewhere, just above the OECD average (13%), and 48% of them are women (51% for the OECD on average). Migrants in Norway are more likely to be of working age than in the OECD on average (84% of them are aged 15 to 64, as compared to 76% across the OECD) and are more likely to have a middle or a high educational attainment than a low level. Just under half of migrants arrived in Norway ten years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics

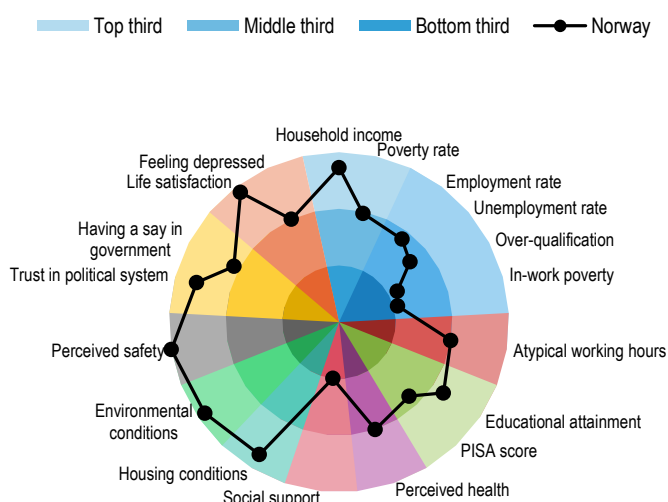


How is migrants' well-being in Norway?

Compared with the migrant populations of other OECD countries, migrants living in Norway have a relatively good situation for 11 out of 18 selected well-being indicators. Moreover, migrants settled in Norway rank in the middle third of OECD-country migrants for poverty, employment, unemployment, over-qualification, in-work poverty and PISA performance. They are in the bottom third for social support.

As in many other OECD countries, migrants in Norway tend to experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born population: in Norway, this is the case for 8 out of 13 selected well-being indicators. However, migrants in Norway report a similar situation to the native-born population for physical health risks at work, perceived health, perceived safety, trust in the political system and life satisfaction.

Comparing well-being outcomes for migrants in Norway with the migrant populations of other OECD countries



Comparison of migrants' and native-born well-being in Norway

	Migrants have a worse situation	Same situation	Migrants have a better situation
Household income	▲		
Physical health risks at work		▲	
Atypical working hours	▲		
Literacy scores	▲		
Perceived health		▲	
Social support	▲		
Housing conditions	▲		
Environmental conditions	▲		
Perceived safety		▲	
Trust in political system		▲	
Having a say in government	▲		
Life satisfaction		▲	
Feeling depressed	▲		

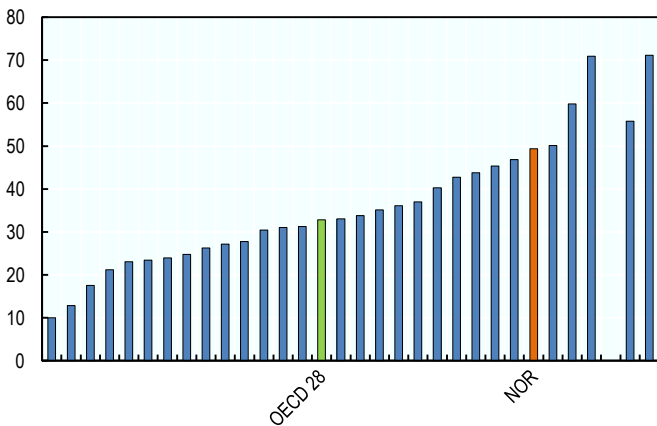
GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN NORWAY

Public institutions play an important role in well-being, both by guaranteeing that people's fundamental rights are protected, and by ensuring the provision of goods and services necessary for people to thrive and prosper. How people experience and engage with public institutions also matters: people's political voice, agency and representation are outcomes of value in their own right.

In Norway, just over 49% of the population feels that they have a say in which they government does, which is higher than the OECD average of 33%. In recent years, voter turnout has largely remained steady, with 78% of registered voters casting a ballot in the 2013 parliamentary elections, compared to 77% in 2005. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 29% of Norwegians answered "yes", as compared to an OECD average of 56%. Since around 2006, the share of people in the OECD who report that they have confidence in their national government has fallen from 42% to 38%.

Having a say in what the government does

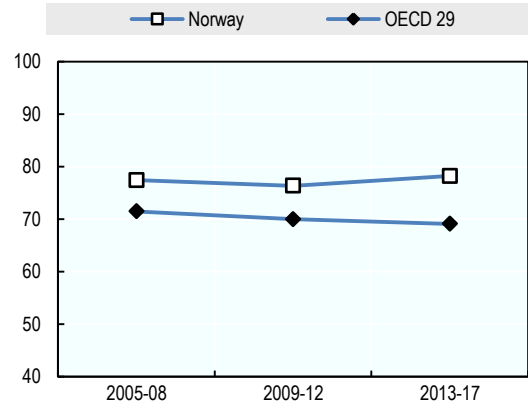
Percentage of people aged 16-65 who feel that they have a say in what the government does, around 2012



Source: OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC database)

Voter turnout

Percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote



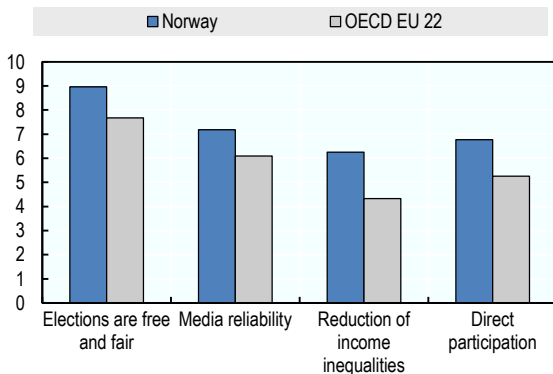
Note: Data refers to parliamentary elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

Overall, Norwegian's satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country is consistently above the OECD European average. People in Norway tend to feel relatively satisfied with the freedom and fairness of their elections (9.0 on a 0-10 scale), but less so with policies that aim to reduce income inequalities (6.3) and the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (6.8). Europeans' satisfaction with public services varies according to whether people have used those services in the last year. For example, satisfaction with education is higher among those with direct recent experience (6.6 vs 6.2 on average), and this is also true of the health system (6.4 vs 6.2 on average). These data relate to 19 European countries only, and unfortunately no comparable data are available for Norway.

People's satisfaction with different elements of democracy

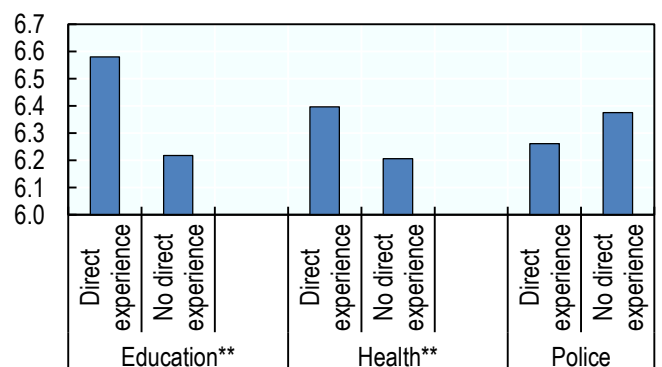
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



Source: OECD calculations based on wave 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS), special rotating module on citizens' valuations of different elements of democracy

OECD EU average satisfaction with public services

Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2013



Note: ** Difference is statistically significant at 95%

Source: OECD calculations based on the EU Quality of Government (QoG) for 19 European OECD countries.

BETTER LIFE INDEX

The **Better Life Index** is an interactive web application that allows users to compare well-being across OECD countries and beyond on the basis of the set of well-being indicators used in *How's Life?*. Users chose what weight to give to each of the eleven dimensions shown below and then see how countries perform, based on their own personal priorities in life.

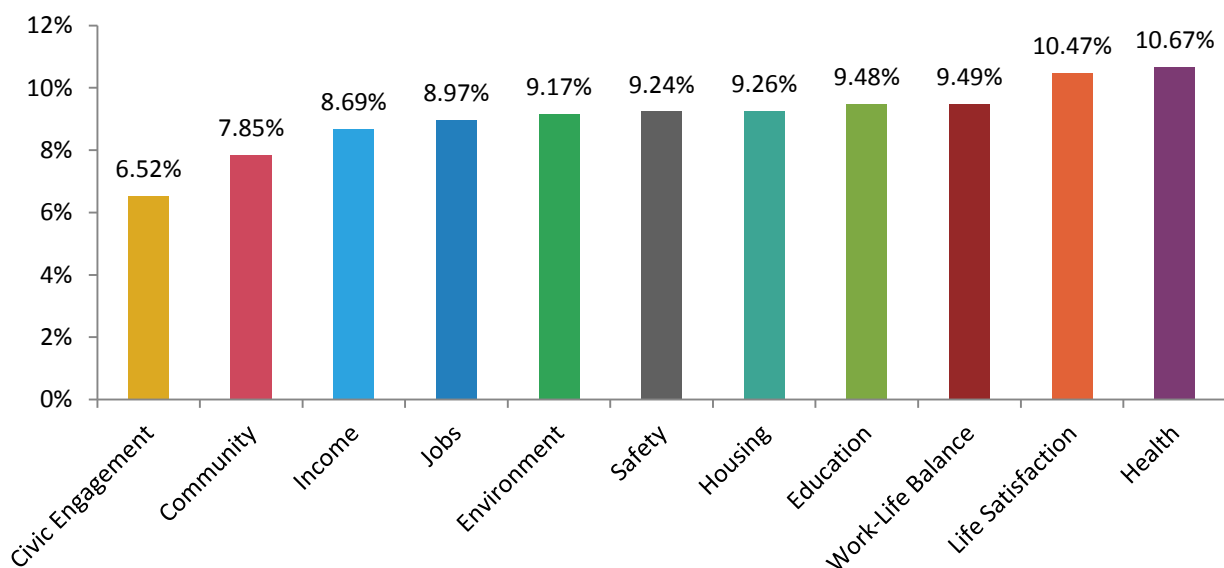


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN NORWAY?

Since its launch in May 2011, the Better Life Index has attracted **over ten million visits from just about every country on the planet** and has received over **22 million page views**. 75,700 people in Norway have visited the website making Norway the 31st country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Oslo (38% of visits), Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger and Baerum.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 1,680 website visitors in Norway. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For Norwegian users of the Better Life Index, health, life satisfaction and work-life balance are the three most important topics** (shown below).¹ Up to date information, including a breakdown of participants in each country by gender and age can be found here: www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#NOR.



¹ User information for Norway is based on shared indexes submitted between May 2011 and September 2017.

The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter the most to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's Life?* report. It also includes an interactive web application, the *Better Life Index*, and a number of *methodological and research projects* to improve the information base available to understand well-being levels, trends and their drivers.

The OECD Better Life Initiative:

- Helps to inform policy making to improve quality of life.
- Connects policies to people's lives.
- Generates support for needed policy measures.
- Improves civic engagement by encouraging the public to create their own *Better Life Index* and share their preferences about what matters most for well-being
- Empowers the public by improving their understanding of policy-making.

This note presents **selected findings for Norway from the *How's Life? 2017* report** (pages 1-6) and shows what **Norwegian users of the Better Life Index** are telling us about their **well-being priorities** (page 7).

HOW'S LIFE?



How's Life?, published every two years, provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in OECD and selected partner countries by bringing together an internationally comparable set of well-being indicators. It considers eleven dimensions of current well-being including: income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing; health status; work-life balance; education and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security; and subjective well-being. It also looks at four types of resources that help to sustain well-being over time: natural, human, economic and social capital.

The *How's Life? 2017* report presents the latest data on well-being in OECD and partner countries, including how lives have changed since 2005. It includes a special focus on inequalities, the well-being of migrants in OECD countries, and the issue of governance – particularly how people experience and engage with public institutions. To read more, visit: www.oecd.org/howslife.

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