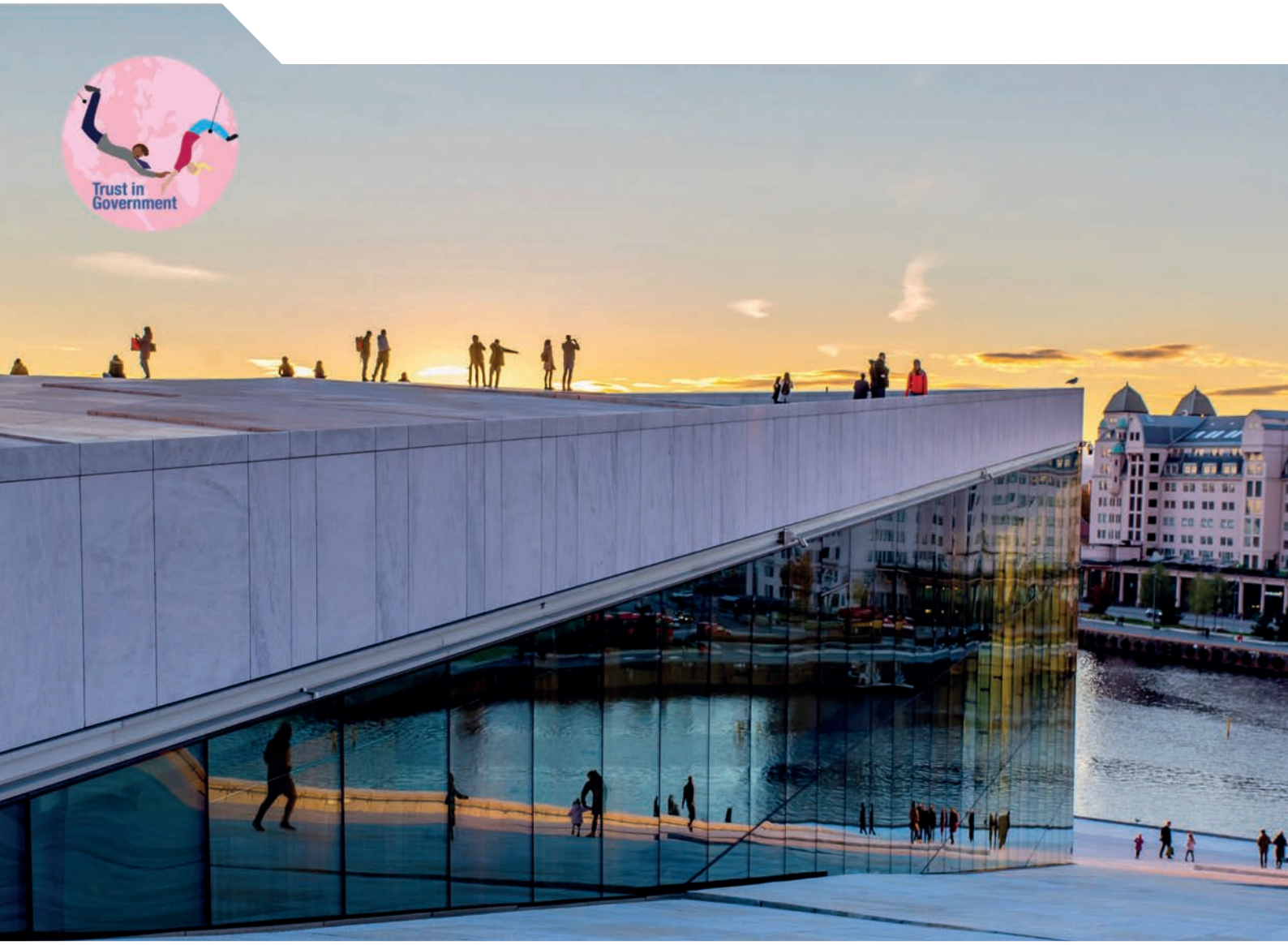
Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Norway



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Foreword

People in Norway trust their public institutions. High levels of institutional trust have helped Norway successfully navigate the COVID-19 crisis and minimise its unintended consequences. Norway faces challenges ahead, however, that will entail complex policy choices. The society is ageing, increasingly diverse, and uncertain about how to cope with climate change, the sustainability of the welfare system and other areas involving intergenerational trade-offs. This report analyses the determinants of public trust in Norway through the lens of the OECD Trust framework, which comprises five drivers of trust grouped under the two dimensions of government competence and government values.

This report is the result of close collaboration between the OECD and the Division for Governance, Organization and Leadership at the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFO). It draws on quantitative information collected through the OECD Trust survey as part the Norwegian Citizens Survey. In addition, it relies on the insights provided in more than 40 interviews with government officials, civil society representatives and academics in Norway as well as during a workshop on the preliminary findings held with peers from other Nordic countries. Following Korea in 2018 and Finland in 2020, this is the third OECD country study on the drivers of trust in public institutions and the second one carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has thus been informed and enriched by a revision of OECD analytical and measurement instruments carried out via the webinar series “Building a New Paradigm for Public Trust”, which brought together practitioners, academics and experts in the field of public trust.

Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Norway emphasises the importance of achieving more responsive public services through better co-ordination in policy and service design and provision as well as of generating space and skills for innovation. It also stresses the importance of strengthening preparedness and foresight for more reliable polices, essential for preserving and reinforcing trust. Maintaining openness and engagement are also crucial for trust. This report provides a detailed set of recommendations that will help Norway define and implement its trust reform, which seeks to improve working methods in the administration by placing greater emphasis on results and experience rather than on compliance with rules.

This study was approved and declassified by the Public Governance Committee via written procedure on February 21, 2022 and prepared for publication by the Secretariat.

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The report was drafted by Santiago González, Silke Goubin, David Nguyen and Mariana Prats. The report greatly benefitted from comments provided by Julio Bacio-Terracino, Frederic Boehm, Monica Brezzi, Emma Cantera, Felipe González-Zapata, Angela Hanson, Craig Matasick, Natalia Nolan-Flecha, Camila Saffirio and Piret Tonurist in GOV, José Enrique Garcilazo and Isabelle Chatry, from the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, regions and cities (CFE) and Philip Hemmings in the Economics Department (ECO). Meral Gedik provided editorial assistance.

John Nonseid, Marte Lund Saga, Lars-Hugo Andersen and Mette Undheim Sandstad composed the team in the Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFO) in Norway in charge of co-ordinating and supervising this study under the leadership of Liv Mari Hatlen, Director of the department for management and analysis at DFO. Written comments were received by Terje Dyrstad and Asgeir Fløtre from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

The study benefitted greatly from insights provided by experts and different stakeholders during more than 40 semi-structured interviews carried in April and November 2021 as well as the workshop on the preliminary findings of “The Drivers of Trust in Government Institutions in Finland” organised by DFO and the OECD in November 2021. The OECD would like to thank all people interviewed and all workshop participants for their inputs to this study. Finally, this study also benefited from invaluable input provided by peer officials from OECD countries, in particular Katju Holkeri (Head of the Governance Policy Unit at the Ministry of Finance in Finland) and Michael Elkjaer Pedersen (Chief Adviser International Affairs, Agency for Public Finance and Management in Denmark), who took part in the virtual workshop “The Drivers of Trust in Government Institutions in Norway”.

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Executive summary

Trust in public institutions is essential for the legitimacy and viability of democracy. Moreover, as the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated, interpersonal and institutional trust can help countries successfully navigate social and economic crises. High levels of institutional trust also improve compliance with laws and regulations and contribute to the implementation of public policies, all of which will be crucial for achieving an inclusive recovery from COVID-19 and overcoming complex multidimensional challenges in years to come.

Yet, trust is a fragile societal asset. While it takes time to establish, it can be lost quickly. Analysing what drives trust in public institutions and what actions are required to preserve it is essential for ensuring public governance systems deliver policies that improve people's lives.

This report analyses the challenges for reinforcing trust in Norway and identifies opportunities to address them. It is based on the OECD Trust Survey, which provides the citizen's perspective on government performance and public governance values. The findings of this report can assist the Norwegian authorities in designing and implementing its "Trust Reform", a new initiative to adjust the public sector management practices and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders, placing greater emphasis on the knowledge, experience and capacity of civil servants as a way to improve service provision and preserve trust between people and the public administration.

Levels of public trust in Norway are among the highest in OECD countries. In 2021, 77% of the population reported trusting the government, compared to an OECD average of 47%. Law and order institutions, such as courts and the police, are trusted by 82% of people. The parliament is trusted by 69% of the population, while 65% trust the civil service and 58%, the local government. On the low end of the spectrum, only 40% of Norwegians reported trusting the media, with no distinction among different types of providers.

Several factors explain this high institutional trust in Norway. First, a robust welfare system provides high-quality services and contributes to low levels of inequality. Fiscal space is comparatively large, stemming from high levels of taxation combined with a natural endowment of oil reserves that allows for relatively high levels of public investment. The public governance culture is rooted in a long tradition of collaboration and social dialogue among government, business and unions; high levels of public sector integrity; and accountability. Finally, Norway also enjoys a strong sense of community, high rates of political participation, low polarisation and high satisfaction with democracy.

When faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Norwegian government was able to react at scale and speed to ensure the service provision and put in place exceptional support measures, while remaining open and maintaining fluid communication with the public. As of October 2021, 68% of the population expressed confidence in control measures in place, while 69% reported confidence in the information provided by the government.

However, high levels of institutional trust should not be taken for granted. The population is both ageing and becoming more diverse. Society is also facing uncertainty in terms of how to cope with climate change and ensure the sustainability of the welfare system. According to the OECD Trust Survey, only 46% of the Norwegian population considers that public institutions are doing enough to adapt to future challenges.

There are also persistent trust gaps, in particular in rural regions and among less educated and low-income people. How Norway responds to the challenges ahead could influence trust levels for years to come.

In Norway, the preparedness of public institutions and the reliability of policies to cope with future challenges are found to be the most important determinants of trust in the national government. At the same time, there is scope for reviewing policy-making mechanisms to improve preparedness as well as strengthen co-ordination mechanisms to cope with complexity and uncertainty. Enhancing the responsiveness of services, through greater digitisation, enhanced capabilities and skills of civil servants, and more opportunities for people to engage with the public administration, will also be important for maintaining trust.

The main recommendations of this report can be grouped into six areas: 1) Continuing to measure trust in public institutions and its drivers; 2) Achieving responsive citizen-centred services through better co-ordination, innovation and skills; 3) Enhancing preparedness and foresight for more reliable policies; 4) Simplifying access to information for all and enhancing the engagement of vulnerable groups; 5) Strengthening public integrity by preventing and anticipating integrity risks; and 6) Guaranteeing equality in service provision and improving the diversity of the administration. The following table summarises the main findings and recommendations.

Main Findings	Key Recommendations
Continuing to measure trust in public institutions and its drivers	
• According to the OECD Trust Survey, trust in public institutions is high in Norway. The institutions that are trusted the most are the courts (85%) and the police (82%), followed by the national parliament (69%), the government (65%) and the public administration (65%). The least trusted institution is the media (40%).	• Repeat the Trust Survey at regular intervals to monitor improvements or declines in trust in different institutions and to evaluate the effects of policy initiatives. • Include the Trust Survey in the Norwegian Citizens Survey, which focuses on access to and satisfaction with public services, key elements driving people's trust in public institutions. Evidence from the OECD Trust Survey can provide additional guidance to improve public administration performance and benchmark to other countries.
• Lower levels of trust are found among people living in remote regions, younger and older cohorts, and those with lower levels of income and education.	• Improve representation of marginalised groups in trust surveys, including those more distrustful and that may opt out from surveys easily (e.g. people of different backgrounds, lower education, younger or older) .This could be done for example through enhanced sampling techniques, focus groups, cognitive testing of questions, or user's experience random testing.
Achieving responsive people-centred public services through better co-ordination, innovation and skills	
• Over 75% of the population is satisfied with the quality of services provided by central and local levels of government. This high level of satisfaction is an important determinant of trust in the civil service and the local government. • 65% of the population trust the public administration in the digital use of their data. However, 20% of the population finds online services difficult to use. This rises to 30% in the case of people with only a basic level of education.	• Improve the user's experience by adopting an integrated approach to service design and delivery. Enhance co-ordination across government, clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities including for innovation development and service transformation. • Develop and disseminate specific guidelines on the characteristics of people-centred services, particularly through digital channels. Running pilot projects could be a first step for building the knowledge base for informing those guidelines. • Further involve users in the adaptation of services, including population groups that find it hard to access those services. In addition to collecting data on satisfaction and other dimensions of services, standardise requirements and mechanisms for incorporating and reporting on the feedback received from users.
• More than two-thirds of the population think that innovation is not widespread in the public sector	• Adjust management practices within the administration with greater focus on results than in binding procedures. • Further promote and develop capabilities and skills of the senior management to generate room for innovation and experimentation, through legislative changes and training.

	• Ensure that the balance between mission-related and reporting tasks leads ample room to front line workers for working on core tasks. Allow space for front line workers to find and apply innovative solutions better suited for the reality of the field, based on knowledge and experience. Explore mechanisms for scaling up some of these solutions that may be replicable.
Enhancing preparedness and foresight for more reliable policies	
• Preparedness to handle complex uncertain challenges is the factor that has the highest influence on the level of trust in Norwegian government. At the same time, less than half of the population considers that public institutions are doing enough for adapting to future challenges. • The perception that the welfare system is sustainable in the long-term is strongly associated to trust in government and civil service.	• Ensure that complex topics entailing intergenerational choices such as fighting climate change, safeguarding the welfare system and ensuring social cohesion are key policy priorities, including through budgetary planning and allocations. Make sure that these issues are salient in crisis recovery strategies. • Reinforce a systemic and unified approach that focuses in long-term scenarios, including actions required to safeguard the welfare system. Incorporate anticipatory innovation tools by leaving room to design scenarios, experiment with some choices, at small scale, and continuously learn.
Simplifying access to information for all and enhancing the engagement of vulnerable groups	
• Norway has been a pioneer in transparency policies, 72% of Norwegians think that decisions are transparent. However, information is still often presented in hard-to-understand bureaucratic language, a challenge to actual openness for some social groups • Transparency, access to information and open communication were central to the government strategy for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. By October of 2021, 69% of the population reported having confidence in the information provided by the government. It was, however, difficult to reach out to some groups, particularly those with a migrant background.	• Enhance the administration's efforts to use plain language, and identify the best communication channels to reach and get feedback from different groups.
• The capacity to influence policies is a key determinant for both trust in local and national government. Norwegians show record political participation figures: two-thirds of population think they have a say in what the government does and 55% have confidence in their own ability to participate in politics.	• Continue investing in initiatives related to political socialisation and opportunities to pursue different strategies for reaching out to different population groups, by for instance regularly collecting people's feedback through surveys, and promoting significant engagement opportunities through social dialogue. • Develop initiatives on transparency and good governance within organisations, such as promoting the accountability of leaders and democratic candidate selection procedures, as well as participative decision-making processes.
Strengthening public integrity by preventing and anticipating integrity risks	
• Norway is among the countries with the lowest levels of perceived corruption in the world: 74% of the population partially or totally agrees that the public sector abides by laws and regulations. However, unlike other countries with similar features, integrity is one of the most significant factors influencing public trust in Norway. Whilst there is an uneven distribution of perceptions on risks of undue influence, there is no specific anticorruption agency, policy or strategy on integrity.	• Improve co-ordination and centralise efforts, for instance by the proactive institutionalisation of regular events to exchange information and harmonise initiatives at different public agencies and levels of government.
• Success of prevention and values-based integrity systems rely on the fact that every public official incorporates core values of public service. These values should guide them when facing ethical dilemmas.	• Provide further training to clearly identify daily ethical dilemmas and better equip public officials on how to face and tackle them.
• 36% of Norwegians think that various forms of corruption including bribes or greasing hands are quite common or very common at the municipal level. Close-knit networks, especially at the local level, may present corruption challenges, such as conflicts of interests.	• Develop clear stipulations to regulate how the private sector is involved in policy making. Norway could consider opening discussions on how to further transparency on the many forms and actors who influence policies, by for example, developing lobbying regulations if needed.

Guaranteeing equality in service provision and improving the diversity of the administration	
• 60% of Norwegians believe that if they approach the authorities their application will be treated fairly. This perception of fair treatment is the most important determinant of trust in the civil service. However, only 40% of Norwegians consider likely that everyone would be treated equally in contacts with public sector employees.	• Improve the diversity of the public administration and public institutions, particularly in the senior management and at the political level to ensure that different perspectives are included in service provision, by for instance actively pursuing the inclusion of people with a migrant background as part of the civil service.
• Over two-thirds of Norwegians with higher household incomes and higher education attainment think that institutions are fair, whilst less than half of people with lower income and lower levels of education agree with the statement that institutions treat everyone in a similar way. • Norwegians living in areas further away from the wider Oslo area trust institutions less, are less satisfied with services and do not feel their voices count as much in decision making.	• Further include citizens in decision making through new technologies, processes and tools including enhanced surveys. In turn, traditional social dialogue between civil society and the public institutions should continue, but could be complemented with, for instance, deliberative techniques.

1 Trust and public governance in Norway

This chapter explores the theoretical and practical relevance of trust in public institutions by providing a critical review of the literature on institutional trust in Norway. This chapter also discusses the role that high levels of public trust have played in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Norway and designing the response to the crisis, both for achieving high levels of compliance and minimising the unintended socio-economic consequences. Finally, it presents the OECD framework and measurement methodology constituting the basis of this report. Pursuant to the political science and public management literatures, it introduces the concepts of competence and values as the main drivers of institutional trust.

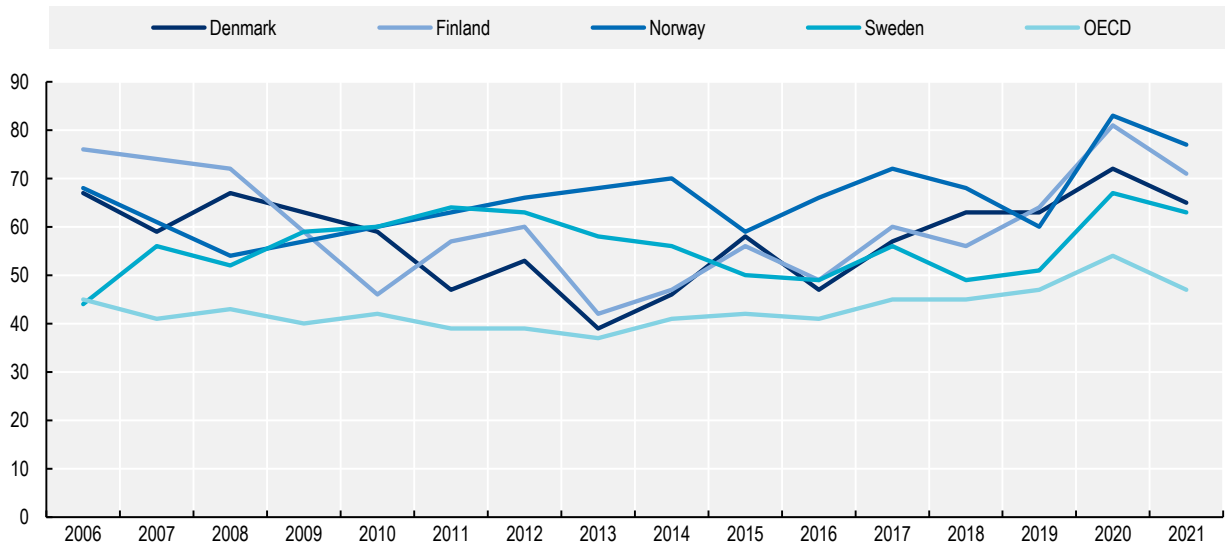
Trust is crucial for good public governance in Norway and for tackling future challenges

The current debate on public management in Norway recognises that trust will be a key element for reconsidering ways of working in the public administration, which include greater autonomy and focus on mission-related tasks rather than on reporting and performance measurement. As such, the political statement of the recently formed government includes the pursuit of a "trust reform" as one of the objectives to be achieved in coming years. The reform doesn't focus on public trust, but on trust within the public sector. Still, the ultimate aim to achieve better public services, that could positively impact people's trust in the administration. Through a combination of an original population survey and interviews with a large number of stakeholders, this study is a key input for understanding what drives trust in public institutions in Norway and for informing efforts to adapt the work of the public administration around the notion of trust.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that governments rely on trust to handle crises without the need of resorting to coercion. In turn, public trust is the long-standing foundation of democratic systems, and is crucial for ensuring their legitimacy and sustainability. Understanding what drives institutional trust, and what may cause trust in institutions to change, consequently, contributes to sustaining the quality and effectiveness of the political and administrative systems in Norway, other OECD countries and beyond.

Trust in government in Norway is high compared to OECD and Scandinavian countries, in 2021 trust in government in Norway reached 77% compared to 47% in OECD (Figure 1.1). Norwegians consider their public institutions to be trustworthy (OECD, 2021[1]; Listhaug and Aardal, 2011[2]) and Norway has enjoyed continuously high levels of institutional trust since the 1960s (Miller and Listhaug, 1998[3]).

Figure 1.1. Trust in Government in Scandinavia and the OECD in general



Note: Lines represent the percentage of citizens having trust in their national government. 2020 data were collected between 24 March and 4 May 2020 through landlines or mobile phone. It therefore corresponds to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and could be reflecting a "Rallying around the flag effect", indeed, there is an observed increase in trust during sudden crises (e.g. natural disasters, terrorist attacks, epidemics) in which citizens get behind their leaders and pay less attention to other policy issues for a brief period.
Source: OECD calculations based on Gallup World Poll database.

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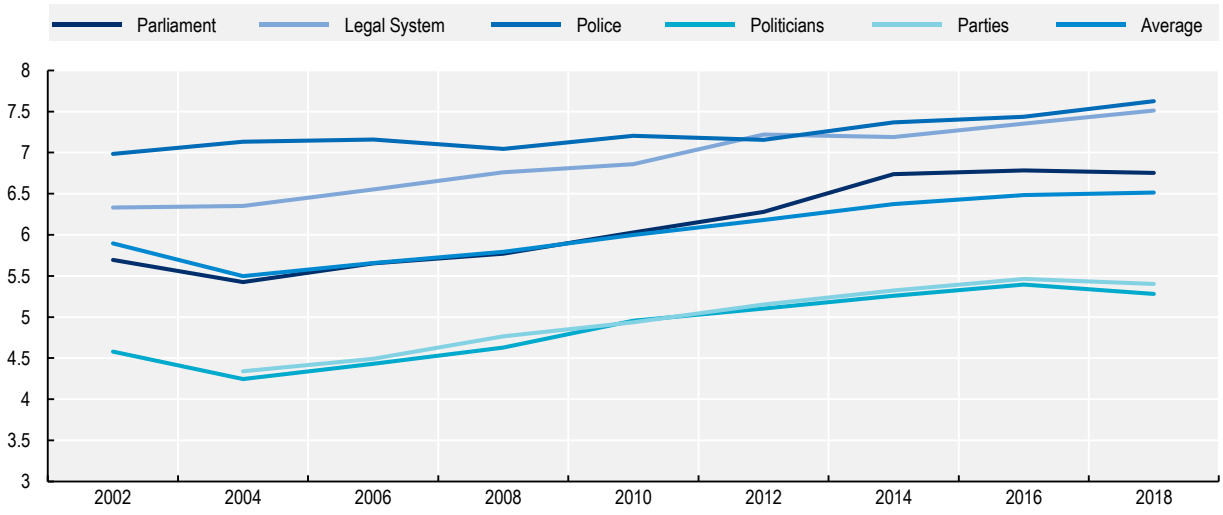
Trust in Norway is a key element of the political-administrative culture and remains high over time in a number of institutions, such as the police, the legal system, and the parliament. Trust in politicians and political parties has grown since 2002; however, these are the least trusted institutions among the ones included in the European Social Survey (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Trust in Public Institutions in Norway

Scale from 0-10



Note: Trust questions have a scale from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust).
Source: OECD calculations based on the European Social Survey, cumulative dataset for Norway (rounds 1-9).

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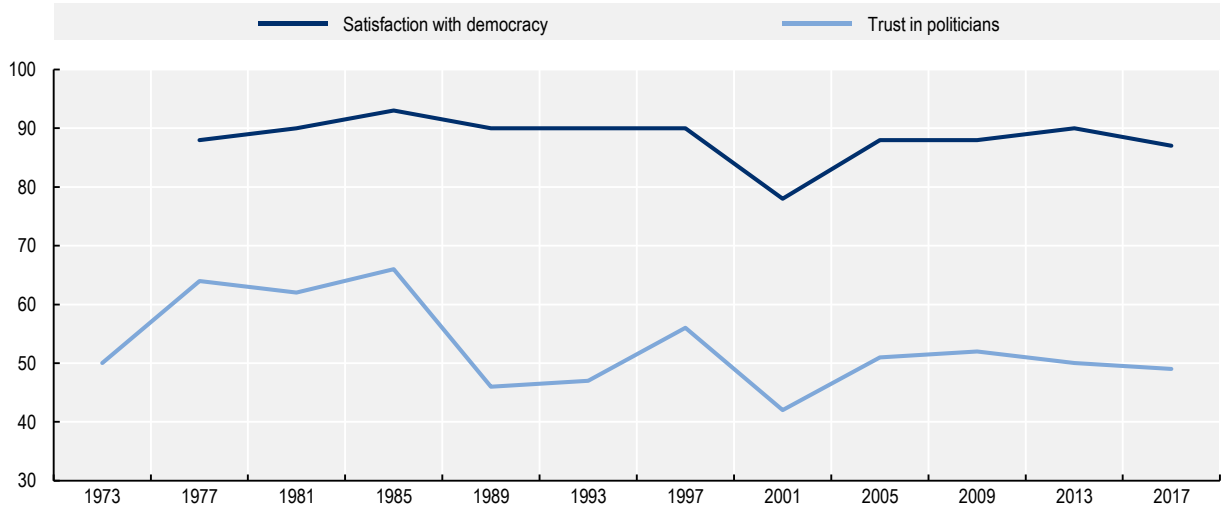
Citizens' trust in their political and administrative institutions is an important indicator of how well a democratic society is governed (Easton, 1965[4]; Hetherington, 2018[5]). Institutional trust influences how effectively governments can implement policies and reforms, since citizens are more likely to comply with policies and regulations in a high trust environment (Schmelz, 2021[6]). For the purpose of this study, trust is defined as a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectations of positive behaviour (OECD, 2017[7]).

While institutional trust in in Norway is high, Norwegians approach trust in government "critically". Trust levels can change as a result of economic downturns or shocks such as pandemics or terrorist attacks, but also following changes in the quality of public governance and the performance of public administrations (Wu and Wilkes, 2018[8]) (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[9]). Accordingly, public management reforms could affect trust levels. For example, academic sources discuss that the wave of changes introduced in the late 1990s and early 2000s aimed to increase efficiency in the provision of services through, amongst others, a diversification of delivery modes and a re-organisation of public employment in agencies, may have resulted in loss of institutional trust (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005[10]). A "trust reform for the public sector" proposal, adopted during the campaign by the parties forming the current government, aims to enhance learning and innovation in the public sector and redesign governance to foster the participation of institutional and civil society stakeholders. While the reform focuses predominantly in trust within the administration it is expected to improve the quality of public services and ultimately enhance people's institutional trust.

The crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the role of public trust as the long-standing foundation of democratic systems. Understanding the main determinants of public trust and what may cause change in trust in institutions can contribute to sustaining the quality and effectiveness of the political and administrative systems in Norway.

Figure 1.3. Trust in politicians and satisfaction with democracy over time

Expressed as a percentage of the population



Source: Norwegian Election Study (1973-2017), calculations based on Aardal (2021[11]).

StatLink https://stat.link/dzvitu

Satisfaction with democracy in Norway is very high: over the last five decades, the percentage of people reporting being satisfied with democracy was always above 80% (Figure 1.3). Satisfaction with democracy captures to what extent citizens believe that democracy is the best political system for their country, and that in general, it is functioning well (Norris, 2011[12]). It goes beyond what public institutions are doing to indicate whether citizens agree with the fundamental norms and rules that operate their society. Over the same period, trust in politicians was substantially lower than satisfaction with democracy, between 40 and 70%. The difference in levels and trends between these two indicators also points to the importance of distinguishing between actors and types of trust. Norwegian residents are satisfied with the quality of their democracy over time, but not necessarily with all elements currently associated with a democratic system. According to the IDEA voter turnout dataset, since 1945, voter turnout at the national level has been consistently above 75%. Trust in institutions and satisfaction with democracy are found to be positively correlated with measures of political efficacy (González, 2020[13]). Indeed, amounting to 60% of the population in 2018, Norwegians report the highest level of “ability to participate in politics” (internal political efficacy) among OECD countries. Some 69% of Norwegians consider having a say in what the government does (external political efficacy), which is the third highest values in OECD countries (OECD, 2021[1]).

In the case of institutional trust in Norway, research has highlighted several cultural, political and economic contextual factors, in combination with some individual characteristics as causes of high trust levels and its relative consistency over time (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[9]).

The literature on institutional trust has long argued that strong performance of public institutions leads to trust (Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003[14]). Examples of such a performance include ensuring good economic conditions, strong public services, and high integrity levels (Zmerli and Hooghe, 2011[15]). On the basis of a series of qualitative interviews with stakeholders, as well as a literature review, a number of these contextual features were underscored as being essential in explaining high levels of trust in Norway (see Box 1.1). Norway has a strong welfare state, inclusive public services and political decision-making procedures, as well as high levels of public sector integrity. Its economy is prosperous, and can rely on a Sovereign Wealth Fund that will support the sustainability of public finances in the longer run. Citizens also have faith in the capacity of their civil servants to use public resources and implement qualitative policies (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[9]). High levels of trust have been a linchpin to establish and reform Norway's public services, such as the Norwegian welfare state (Bergh and Bjørnskov, 2011[16]; 2014[17]; Kumlin, 2021[18]). Widespread access to services and social benefits plays an equalising role and contributes to maintaining high levels of social cohesion, which in turn influences social and institutional trust (Martela et al., 2020[19]).

Box 1.1. Trust and performance are hallmarks of Norwegian society

Already before its independence, the Norwegian constitution enacted in 1814, during the transition from Danish to Swedish rule, could be considered the foundational moment of Norwegian democracy. The 1814 constitution granted limited voting rights and recognised the separation of powers with an independent judiciary and a parliament (the Storting) chosen by the people. In many critical moments of Norway's history, including the path towards independence and both World Wars, Norwegian institutions and particularly the Storting played a key role in 1) unifying authorities, 2) preserving the country's cultural and political identity, and 3) building institutional trust (Yillek, 2018[20]).

In turn, the fact that Norway is a high-trusting society can be explained by its institutional setup and high levels of social cohesion, underpinned by protestant Lutheran values, the early development of literacy, local welfare institutions and involvement of peasants in local administrations and political parties. Since its independence from Sweden in 1905, Norway slowly but steadily consolidated an inclusive democracy, with strong state institutions, civil society and a welfare state. As in other Scandinavian countries, it displays several elements that lead to strong social capital and high levels of trust in public institutions (Nedergaard and Wivel, 2018[21]).

Stable democratic systems have been in place for over a century, with regular elections, a wide set of political parties competing during the elections, a tradition of reaching agreements (e.g. minority governments), and continued levels of high voter turnout. Norway's democracy is a consensual system, where most relevant parties (from the civil society, political parties, private sector, etc.) engage in joint decision making (Fonnesbæk Andersen and Thisted Dinesen, 2018[22]).

In turn, the civil service is professional and meritocratic. The degree of perceived autonomy of central agencies is higher and the degree of politicisation is lower among top civil servants in Norway than in many other European countries (Greve, Laegreid and Rykkja, 2016[23]).

Norway is wealthy society, with a mixed economy, and combines strong public sector services with an open market. In 2020, about 58.4% of GDP went to public expenditure compared to 51.5% in 2019 (OECD, 2021[1]). The discovery of oil and gas in the 1960s, moreover, gave a strong boost to economic development and modernisation. It is one of the richest OECD member states (and has a higher GDP per capita than countries such as Germany, the USA, France, Canada, or Sweden). This strong economic track record is one factor contributing to explain why Norwegians are trusting of their public institutions (OECD, 2021[24]; OECD, 2021[25]).

This high level of economic prosperity also leads to solidarity: the welfare state in Norway is comprehensive, and aims to take care of its citizens "from the cradle to the grave". Despite the large territorial size of Norway, the goal of the Norwegian state is to have public services available for all citizens, wherever they may choose to live. The state is the most active provider of education (which is mainly free), and the state-led health sector is one of the biggest employers in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2020). A percentage of Norway's oil and gas revenues is invested in the Government Pension Fund (its current value stands at USD 1 trillion), which should ensure that all Norwegian pensioners enjoy a comfortable retirement.

Importantly, the design of the Norwegian welfare state is universalistic: it is accessible to all citizens, regardless of needs – which counter-intuitively ensures that it is better at income redistribution (Korpi and Palme, 1998[26]; Svallfors, 1997[27]). This also makes Norway one of the most egalitarian OECD countries: levels of income inequality and poverty rates are very low, and gender equality is high (OECD, 2021[1]).

Low levels of inequality also go hand in hand with high social cohesion: Norwegians have trust in each other, and are more active in civil society than citizens of most other OECD citizens. This active associational life has historical roots: peasant and labour movements in the 19th century sparked large associational networks, and corporatism remains an important aspect of Norway's civil society (Fonnesbæk Andersen and Thisted Dinesen, 2018[22]). Norwegians also feel rather satisfied with their lives (only 4% indicate to be dissatisfied with the lives they lead) (OECD, 2020[28]). These high levels of social cohesion are further exemplified by the low crime rates in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2020), as well as the absence of blatant corruption (Transparency International, 2021[29]).

Source: Authors.

Individual characteristics also lead to high trust levels. Norway has a small, highly educated, and relatively homogeneous population, which contributes to high levels of interpersonal trust that has also been recognised as a mediating factor of public trust (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017[30]).

However, there are several risks with the potential of affecting trust levels in the future. Such challenges stem from both contextual and individual features. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak (whose effects will be discussed later in this chapter), there were challenges to the Norwegian model some of which will persist into the future. These challenges include decreasing labour force participation (OECD, 2019[31]). The power of collective bargaining is weakening. Rural poverty, although low, is persistent (Ivarsflaten and Strømsnes, 2013[32]). Real incomes fell between 2015 and 2018 (in reaction to higher levels of unemployment, lower oil prices, more migration and inflation) (Statistics Norway, 2020[33]). Lastly, the affordability of housing and living is a challenge, especially in the cities (OECD, forthcoming[34]). Moreover, even though Norway is a relatively equal society, trust levels fluctuate based on class divides and have remained stable. Citizens who have fewer economic resources, or have a lower educational background, record lower levels of trust in public institutions (Haugsgjerd and Kumlin, 2019[35]). In addition, Norwegian society is becoming more diverse, which means that an increasingly large part of the country's inhabitants may not be fully integrated into Norway's social networks (Ivarsflaten and Strømsnes, 2013[32]).

Another potential challenge to trust stems from the size and geography of Norway. The territory of the country covers a large area despite having a comparatively small population (around 5 million inhabitants). As a result, population density in many areas is very low, because 80% of Norwegians live in urban areas (Statistics Norway, 2020[33]). The contrast between densely populated cities versus the smaller communities scattered around Norway's countryside, has made Centre-Periphery relations a defining aspect of Norway's political system and it has profound implications for disparities in trust (Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019[36]).

In order to tackle these challenges, Norway's public institutions will need to have responsive services towards citizens' policy demands, as well as policies that tackle future challenges (climate change, rising inequality, the ageing of the Norwegian population, immigration, etc.) and ensure sustainability. It is also important for public institutions to remain transparent, open and accountable, and that opportunities are provided to all segments of the population. Preserving democratic values should be at the heart of the Norwegian strategy for preserving public trust. Accordingly, this study both presents metrics on average levels of trust in government and explores the trust differences across population groups as well as the determinants of trust in different institutions. Its overarching goals is to shed new light on how to address these challenges. The evidence and recommendations put forward by this case study will inform possible policy actions for preserving public trust.

The next section presents the evolution of trust indicators during the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses the importance of trust for tackling crisis such as the current pandemic.

Trust and COVID-19, fighting and recovering from the pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has brought the issue of trust between citizens and public institutions to the forefront of the public debate (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020[37]; OECD, 2021[1]). Mitigating the effects of the pandemic and finally surmounting it requires a rapid adoption of far-reaching policy measures, and high levels of compliance depend on the degree to which citizens have trust in their government institutions and the course of action being set. Trust matters particularly in times of crisis, as uncertainty tends to be high, decision-making processes are accelerated, and public scrutiny can be reduced. In addition, policy measures often drastically restrict personal freedoms to keep the community safe, which requires trust that governments do not abuse their new powers (OECD, 2021[1]; Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020[37]; Christensen and Lægreid, 2020[38]; Schraff, 2020[39]). It therefore remains crucial to maintain high levels of public trust, as well as monitor trust dynamics across different groups and places, while paying extra attention to regions where trust is low or decreasing. This section relies on evidence from the Norwegian Corona Monitor, which is operated by Opinion (a market research company) and collects monthly data on the social effects and consequences of COVID-19 in Norwegian society (see Box 1.2).

The Norwegian government was effective in halting the spread of the virus (for an overview of key policy measures see Box 1.4). By the end of the summer of 2021, just 157 034 cases were declared in the country, which is about 2 925.6 cases per 100 000 people. This is similar to infection rates in neighbouring Finland, but is lower than in countries such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden or the UK, which all had over 9 900 confirmed cases per 100 000 citizens, or even Germany and Denmark (over 4 500 cases per 100 000 inhabitants). In turn, preliminary reports showed that 814 people in Norway died due to the consequences of COVID-19, a lower figure than in Sweden (14 685), Denmark (2 580), or Finland (1 024) (WHO, 31 August 2021).

Norway participated in the EU vaccination initiative but vaccination started slowly due to a lack of vaccines. By 1 September 2021, for instance, only about 55% of the Norwegian population was fully vaccinated, which was a lower vaccination rate than most other OECD member countries (WHO, 31st of August 2021). However, by November 2021, about 70% of its population was fully vaccinated, which is comparable to the vaccination rates of most OECD members (WHO, 8 November 2021). While most Norwegians are willing to be vaccinated some hesitancy has been identified, particularly across certain groups such as men, rural residents, people with children under 18 years of age and men. Exposure to unmonitored media platforms also leads to less willingness to accept the COVID-19 vaccine (Ebrahimi et al., 2021[40]).

Box 1.2. The Norwegian Corona Monitor

The Norwegian Corona Monitor was established by the polling company Opinion to assess how Norwegians handled the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the Monitor's objectives are the following.

- Assess the reaction and compliance of the general population to measures imposed to cope with COVID-19
- Assess the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the information given from health authorities as well as politicians
- Assess the management of the crisis in terms of health measures and financial support.

The data collection is conducted with a representative sample of the Norwegian population of 15 years of age or more. It is a random sample drawn from Norway's most comprehensive phone register and stratified according to socioeconomic characteristics. Data were collected through Interactive Voice Response (IVR). Between March 2020 and November 2021, about 140 000 Norwegians were interviewed. The Monitor has maintained a core set of questions allowing comparability over time but has also included new questions that could shed light on specific moments of the pandemic. Results are weighted to population sizes on gender, age and education.

Source: Koronamonitor - Opinion.

At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, trust in Norway was high, although the share of people who said that they trust the national government had been decreasing after 2017 when it recorded a peak at 72% to around 60% in 2019 (see Figure 1.1). Yet, during the initial weeks and months of 2020, public trust increased sharply by almost 25 percentage points to reach 85% by April 2020.[1] This phenomenon is also referred to as the 'rally-round-the-flag' effect. It is well-documented in times of crisis that people gather or 'rally' behind their institutions and national leaders, when the country as a whole is perceived to be under threat (Mueller, 1970[41]).

Studies show that people with higher confidence in their government institutions are less likely to break rules (Marien and Hooghe, 2011[42]) and more likely to comply with public health measures and restrictions to curb the spread of viruses (Vinck et al., 2019[43]; Dhillon and Kelly, 2015[44]). An increasing number of studies highlight the importance of trust in government institutions to ensure a fast and wide adoption of mask wearing, reduction of mobility and social interactions, reporting of symptoms, adherence to self-isolation requirements, and uptake of medical testing and vaccines (Brodeur, Grigoryeva and Kattan, 2021[45]; Bavel et al., 2020[46]; Devine et al., 2020[47]; OECD, 2021[48]).

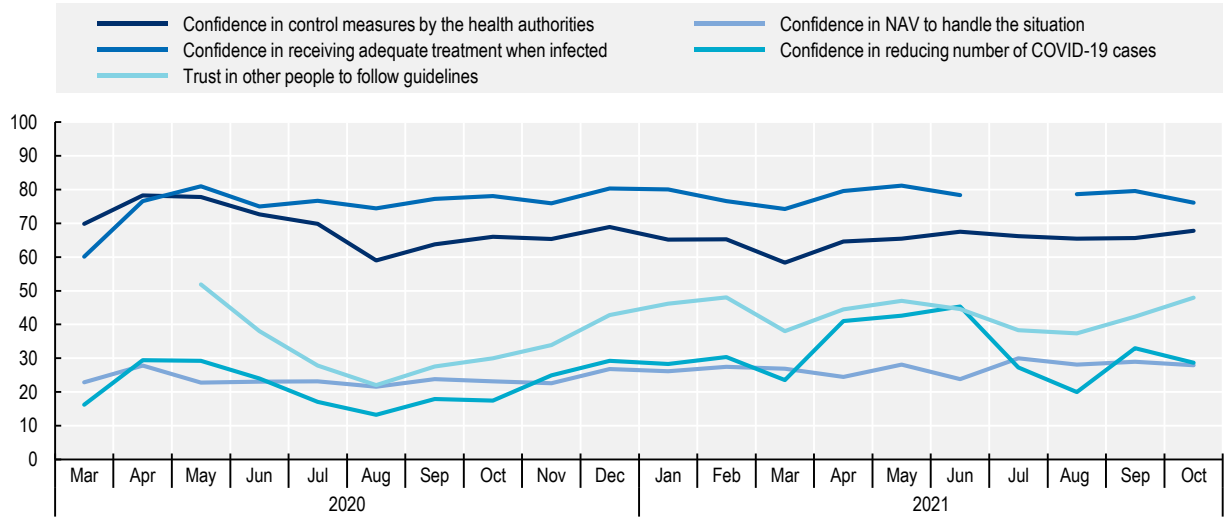
Norwegians' confidence in the ability of their institutions to cope with the crisis varies across institutions (see Figure 1.4). People have, in general, high trust in the measures put in place by their health institutions, as well as in the capacity of the health system to provide adequate treatment. However, confidence in both of these measures followed different trends. The share of people reporting confidence in control measures by health authorities increased from 70% in March to 78% in April and then decreased to less than 60% in August 2020 and March 2021 as new containment measures were put in place, and fatigue with the COVID-19 situation was more acute (see Box 1.3). On the contrary, confidence in receiving adequate treatment in case of infection was initially lower at 60% in March, but jumped to 81% in May and has remained above 74% ever since. Hence, overall, public opinion seems to reflect the fact that the Norwegian health system has been successful in absorbing the COVID-19 emergency. The relatively high number of doctors and nurses in Norway, and local infrastructures, have resulted in a higher capacity to cope with the health crisis (OECD, 2020[49]).

The Norwegian public has been sceptical about whether the number of COVID-19 cases will diminish. In March 2020, only 16% of the population considered that the number of cases would be reduced, this increased somewhat in April-May 2020 (to 29%) following the success of containment measures including the first lockdown but dropped to a low point in August 2020 (13%) as the second wave was imminent. By June 2021, 45% of Norwegians considered that there would be fewer cases in the future, indicating that the widespread availability of vaccines led to a clear change in public opinion. However, this optimism was short-lived, as in the wake of the 4th wave of COVID-19 infections in the fall of 2021, confidence in reducing the number of cases has dropped again, despite the high vaccination rate.

Confidence in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare administration (NAV), which is in charge of managing unemployment applications and income compensation schemes, has been consistently low. Only about one-quarter of the population reports trusting them. Throughout the interviews carried out for this study, it was signalled that many of their processes were cumbersome, and that it was difficult for citizens to obtain information and interact with NAV. The agency could also be suffering from reputational damage resulting from the NAV scandal[2] that unfolded in 2019, as the agency unduly denied benefits to people who were entitled to them.

Norwegians' perception of the compliance of other people with restrictions also varies substantially. Recent research suggests that the level of compliance can be facilitated by Norwegians' trust in their authorities, and each other (Helsingen et al., 2020[50]). In May 2020, slightly more than half of the population indeed expressed trust in other people's compliance with COVID-19 regulations. However, this figure decreased steeply to less than one-quarter in August 2020, when the number of cases were dropping over the course of the summer. Confidence levels afterwards gradually bounced back to 48% by October 2021, in the wake of rising cases.

Figure 1.4. Confidence in public institutions and COVID-19 measures in Norway, 2020-21

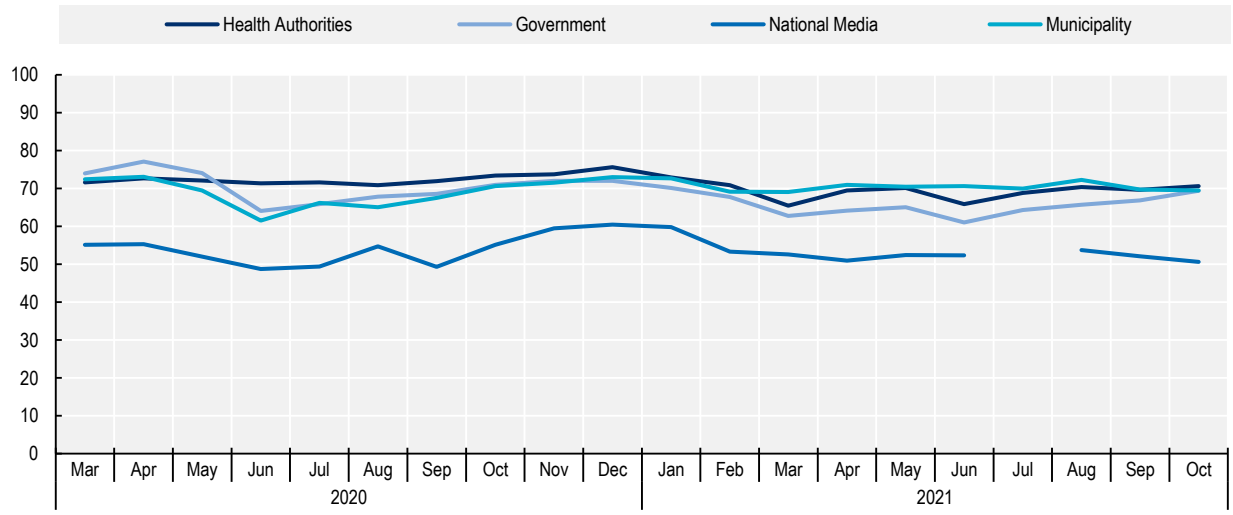


Note: "Confidence" calculated as share of respondents choosing 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 indicates "a lot of trust". "Trust in other people" calculated as share of people replying "Yes" to question "Do you trust that most people in Norway follow advice and guidelines to avoid infection?". Confidence in reducing numbers is the percentage of respondents who believe that the number of cases will decrease. Questions originally in Norwegian.
Source: OECD calculations based on Opinion Koronamonitor data.

StatLink https://stat.link/peal5o

Clear and effective communication is crucial to get the buy-in and compliance of citizens. Throughout the pandemic, people had relatively high and stable trust (never falling below 60% for all institutions) in institutional information coming from government, health authorities and their municipality. Nevertheless, trust in information from the national and municipal government declined somewhat between March and June 2020 (74% to 64%, and 72% to 62%), which coincides with the trend of declining confidence in the health authorities' measures, as shown in Figure 1.4. Trust in information provided by the government recovered over the course of 2020, but the gap between information provided by the national and local governments diverged from 2021, reaching 10 percentage points in favour of the municipal government by June 2021 and then shrank again by the fall of 2021 (see Figure 1.5). As the situation improves and restrictions are eased, addressing local sources could provide more accurate information on the restrictions that remain in place. When COVID-19 cases started rising again in the fall of 2021, the gap between trust in local and national governments narrowed considerably. Trust in information provided by the health authorities has been stable and high throughout the pandemic.

Figure 1.5. Trust in information from government, health authorities, municipality and national media in Norway, 2020-21



Note: "Trust" calculated as the share of respondents choosing 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 indicates "a lot of trust".
Source: OECD calculations based on Opinion Koronamonitor data.

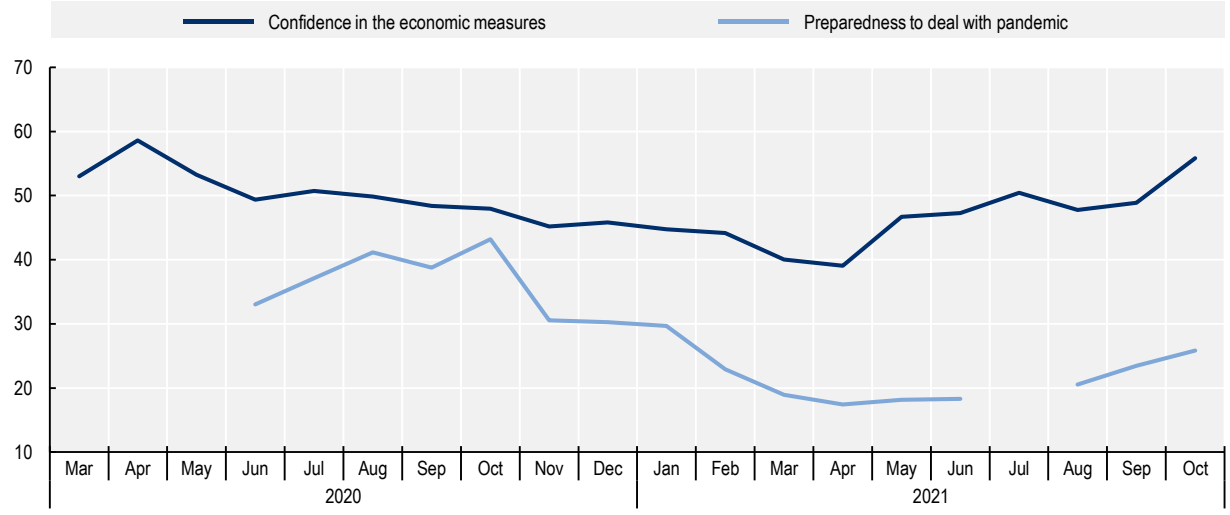
StatLink https://stat.link/4cri97

The Norwegian government has put in place important measures to secure jobs, help businesses and people, and strengthen health services. Such measures include income protection schemes, budget allocation aimed at temporarily supporting businesses and industries, postponed tax payment for businesses, as well as new guarantee and loan schemes. Public confidence in the economic measures put in place in Norway has decreased over the course of the pandemic. While almost 60% of people in Norway had confidence in the measures in April 2020, this dropped to less than 40% twelve months later, recovering to 56% by October 2021 (see Figure 1.6). In tandem, the share of people stating that Norway was well prepared to deal with a pandemic such as COVID-19 first increased to reach almost 45% in October 2020, but fell sharply in subsequent months to 26% in October 2021. Such a steep decrease indicates that people are critical of the government's capacity to address the crisis, and to anticipate change and challenges to keep citizens safe. Stated differently, Norwegians are sceptical of the reliability of public institutions.

Government preparedness to deal with systemic shocks has been further investigated by an Independent Coronavirus Commission. This Commission, established by the Norwegian parliament, investigated the handling of the pandemic by Norwegian authorities and the consequences of the virus, and issued its final report in April 2021. The report highlighted that Norway was not sufficiently prepared to deal with the COVID-19 crisis (in terms of crisis planning, equipment, co-ordination structures, etc.), which seems to be reflected in the public opinion assessment.

Moreover, the declining confidence in economic measures taken by public institutions in Norway could indicate economic scarring effects, particularly among some groups, as well as concerns about the duration of support plans and transitioning towards a normal business environment. In turn, personal economic and financial conditions have been recognised as influencing levels of public trust (Anayev and Guriev, 2019[51]). Monitoring this trend could shed light on the long-term effects of the pandemic. The Coronavirus Commission Report (2021) highlights, amongst other insights, that employees, in particular, with a low level of education, or lower wages that lost their jobs during the pandemic, and may continue to struggle economically in the longer run. The report also noted that the pandemic increased societal cleavages in health. Higher infection and mortality rates were noted in poorer residential areas in cities, among residents with a migrant background, and some occupational groups (such as bartenders or drivers). Such cleavages, moreover, tend to be overlapping: vulnerable groups that were more likely to become ill, also were more likely to be punished economically by the crisis.

Figure 1.6. Confidence in economic measures and perceived preparedness for COVID-19 in Norway, 2020-21



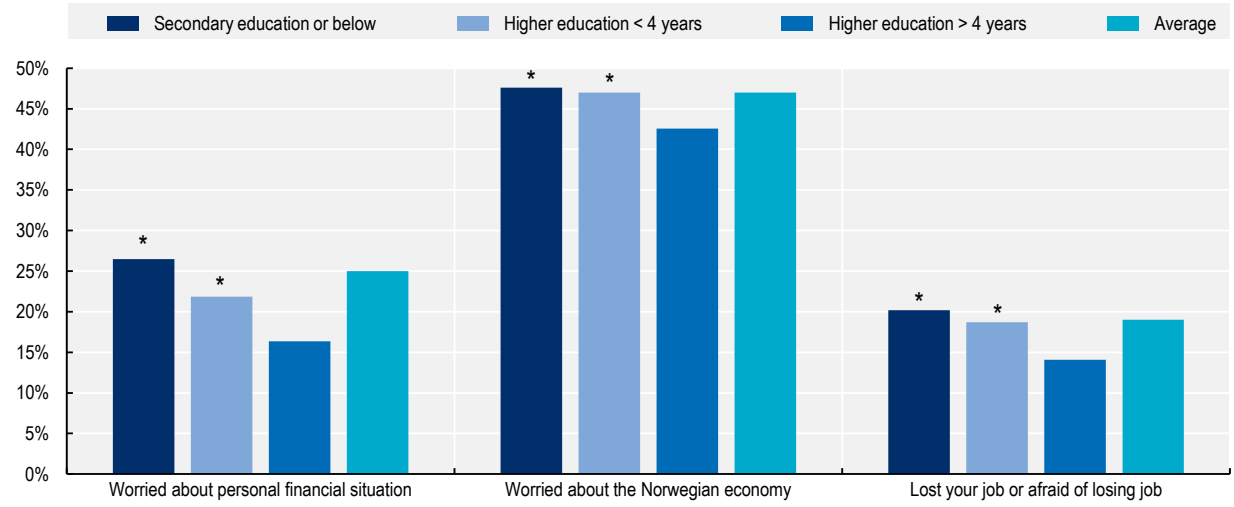
Note: "Preparedness" was measured as the share of people replying "Yes" to question "Do you think that Norway was adequately prepared to deal with a pandemic such as COVID-19?". "Confidence in economic measures" was calculated as the share of respondents choosing 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 indicates "a lot of trust".
Source: OECD calculations based on Opinion Koronamonitor data.

StatLink https://stat.link/46tu1a

The percentage of the Norwegian population reporting to be worried about their financial situation, losing their job or about the Norwegian economy are 25%, 19% and 47% respectively (Figure 1.7 and Figure 1.8). In turn, the level of education as an indicator of social stratification shows important differences (Bovens and Wille, 2017[52]). Altogether, citizens who did not have a higher education degree, were more likely to have lost their job, or be worried about their own financial situation (Figure 1.7). They are also less likely to believe that their fellow Norwegians are adhering to infection control measures, they expressed less confidence in getting adequate treatment, or in the government's control measures. In addition, a centre-

periphery dynamic is at play too: residents of urban areas are more likely to have confidence in the pandemic management (Figure 1.8). While confidence levels are overall relatively high, the impacts of the pandemic have been felt more acutely depending on one's social background and place of residence.

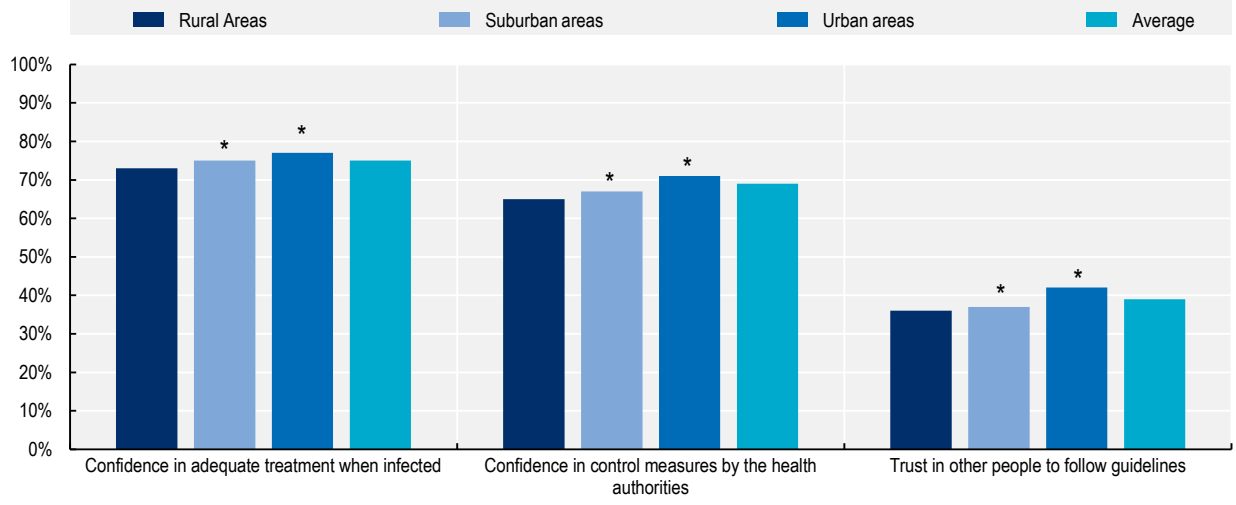
Figure 1.7. Economic risk perceptions for COVID-19 in Norway, by level of education, 2020-21



Note: "Economic risk perceptions" was calculated as the share of respondents choosing a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, where 5 was 'strongly agreed'. Average values per group over the period March 2020 - October 2021. The asterisk means that differences are statistically significant at 95% confidence) in relation to the higher educated group (>4 years of higher education).
Source: OECD calculations based on Opinion Koronamonitor data.

StatLink https://stat.link/1ln5kb

Figure 1.8. Confidence in public institutions and COVID-19 measures in Norway by place of residence, 2020-21



Note: "Confidence" was calculated as the share of respondents choosing a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 indicates "a lot of trust". "Trust in other people" was calculated as the share of people replying "Yes" to the question "Do you trust that most people in Norway follow advice and guidelines to avoid infection?". Questions originally in Norwegian. The asterisk means that differences are statistically significant at 95% confidence in relation to the rural group. Average values per group over period March 2020 - October 2021.
Source: OECD calculations based on Opinion Koronamonitor data.

StatLink https://stat.link/tjklqr

A number of factors were identified as contributing to the initial increase in public trust. Clear, regular and transparent communication from political leaders and health authorities, confidence in a qualitative medical sector and scientific support for policy decisions (Christensen and Lægreid, 2020[38]); (OECD Interviews), as well as a range of social measures to protect people and economic measures to help businesses and workers (see Box 1.3). In terms of decision-making structures, the Norwegian Government worked closely with the Norwegian Directorate of Health (NDH), the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH), and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (co-ordinating role) as the leading authorities in managing the crisis, but also Norway's civil society was, to a large extent, involved and consulted.

A consensual and transparent political decision-making approach contributed to the mostly successful management of the pandemic. However, the depth and systemic nature of the crisis also created challenges in terms of government preparedness, institutional co-ordination across departments and agencies, as well as the appropriateness of the different policy responses in different moments and territories. Building on the lessons learned will be important for Norway's capacity of dealing with future crises.

Box 1.3. COVID-19 related measures implemented in Norway

February-March 2020. Norway's first COVID-19 case was found on 26 February 2020. Local infection spread rapidly to over 400 cases within three weeks. A national lockdown was announced on 12 March. National borders were closed for tourism and non-residents on 16 March. Later, restrictions on staying at second homes and cabins were introduced as well. In order to accelerate policy making, Norway's government introduced the Power of Attorney Act (or the so-called Emergency Powers Bill) to the Storting on 18 March.

Various economic measures were taken to support businesses. Government provided state guarantee loans to small and medium sized enterprises that were suffering from the consequences of the pandemic. A Government Bond Fund bought up bonds from Norwegian companies (a similar approach was taken during the 2008 Financial and Economic Crisis). Generous furlough schemes were introduced for employees who temporarily lost their jobs (with faster access to unemployment benefits, and a higher percentage of state financing). More targeted sector approaches (e.g. to compensate the economic losses in the cultural and air transport sector) were taken. The National Bank cut lending rates, which dropped to the historical low of 0% in May 2020.

April-June 2020. The virus' spread was quickly brought under control. By May 2020, all schools were open again, limited public gatherings were permitted, and services (e.g. restaurants, sports facilities, etc.) were gradually allowed to open.

July-August 2020. On 15 July, EEA/Schengen residents were welcome again to visit Norway for tourism and business purposes (with quarantine requirements for people coming from red/orange zones).

September-November 2020. The spread of the virus increased, especially in cities. By the last week of October 2020, a new lockdown was announced. In communities with a high infection rate, stricter measures came into force. In October 2020, wearing a mask also became obligatory in closed public spaces.

December 2020. Norway started inoculating its residents with COVID-19 vaccines by the end of December 2020. It also launched the new version of its Smittestopp App (i.e. an app alerting people that they have been in touch with an infected person), and an online platform to register travelling from and entries in Norway.

In January 2021, further restrictions were implemented, given the consequences of the alpha and beta variants of COVID-19, such as the closure of non-essential shops, and the prohibition of most public

events. Targeted stricter lockdowns were implemented where necessary (e.g. in the area of Bergen). New support measures were included, including additional financing for hard-hit sectors (tourism and travel, culture), the psychological well-being of children and youth, compensation schemes for affected businesses, etc.

March 2021. The decision was taken to not vaccinate with the Astra Zeneca vaccine, after one person in Norway died from a blood clot. The pace of the vaccination campaign initially took off more slowly than in other EEA member states because of this decision, which also meant that the relaxation of rules was postponed.

April-May 2021. A gradual relaxation of restrictions was implemented, in keeping with a phased reopening plan of the government. These include the relaxation of rules for fully vaccinated people, an increase in the number of people one is allowed to see, extending the openings hours of bars and restaurants, allowing again the serving of alcohol, etc.

June 2021. In line with the EU's Green Certificate, Norway launched a "corona certificate". It also relaxed quarantine rules: people arriving in Norway who are fully vaccinated, received a first dose, tested positive for COVID-19 less than 6 months previously, or come from "green" EEA/Schengen or UK area, can forgo the quarantining rule.

By this point, over NOK 12 billion was invested in support measures to the business community. These support schemes seem to have attenuated the negative economic effects of the pandemic, as most supported businesses remained profitable over the course of the pandemic.

July-August 2021. Norway continued to observe a further reduction in the number of restrictions. The vaccination campaign accelerated. Where only 1.5 million Norwegians were fully vaccinated in the beginning of July, this doubled to 3 million by the end of August. All adults were able to receive at least a first shot by the end of the summer, thereby allowing older adolescents (16-17 years old) to also become eligible for a shot.

Fall 2021. Schools fully opened again (depending on local assessments of the virus situation), and Norway announced that life would return to normal again, with "increased emergency preparedness". Vaccination started for 12-15 year olds. About 90% of all Norwegian adults were fully vaccinated by November 2021. The rapid spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant resulted in new challenges to the Norwegian society and administration. In December 2021, teleworking was made mandatory, closure of gyms and swimming pools was announced, the sale of alcohol in bars and restaurants was banned, and a new strategy including the deployment of the armed forces and support from pharmacies for accelerating the application of booster shots was adopted.

Source: Authors.

The OECD approach to public trust: framework and measurement strategy

Trust gives us confidence that others, individuals or institutions, will act as we might expect, either in a particular action or in a set of actions. While trust may be based on experience, it is often a subjective phenomenon, based as much on interpretation or perception as on facts (OECD, 2017[7]). Trust is a fragile societal asset, while it takes time to establish, it can be lost quickly. All these reasons make trust in public institutions one of the key outputs of good public governance (OECD, 2021[1]).

The fundamental question of this study is what drives trust in public institutions and what actions are required to preserve it. A first theory emphasises the role of culture and argues that individuals learn to trust or distrust based on early socialisation and interpersonal networks which, in turn, influence their trust in institutions (Tabellini, 2008[53]). In turn, as signalled previously, institutional theories focus on the performance and reputation of institutions, both in terms of processes and outcomes, as the key determinants explaining levels of institutional trust (Van de Walle and Migchelbrink, 2020[54]).

This case study acknowledges the importance of culture in defining the stock of trust in a given society. However, it places greater emphasis on the role of public governance as a determinant that could influence levels of institutional trust over time. It recognises that institutional trust results from the interaction between people and government and is generated when people believe public institutions and/or the government will keep their promises and be efficient, fair and honest (Blind, 2007[55]).

Another important theoretical differentiation should be made between the concepts of mistrust and distrust as opposed to a trusting relationship. Mistrust implies that vigilant and well-informed people base their evaluations on what public institutions deliver (Devine et al., 2020[47]). In turn, distrust is associated with a heuristic response based on intrinsic beliefs or biases, which are not associated with actual performance but often with endemic cynicism and expectations of betrayal (Thomson and Brandenburg, 2019[56]). While mistrust relates to the constructive scrutiny and control role that informed people are expected to exercise in a mature democracy, distrust often involves implicit biases, so-called echo chamber effects and emotional aspects that may require differentiated policies and government actions.

The complexity of trust relationships is illustrated in Table 1.1. This study focuses predominantly on institutional trust or people's expectations of positive behaviour by public institutions, which could also be called their trustworthiness. Nevertheless, even when limited to people's trust in public institutions the scope of this study remains very broad as it encompasses a political and administrative dimension. 'Political trust' refers to an assessment of *elected leaders*, while 'administrative trust' refers to the *institutions* that form the core of public administration. These institutions include those entities that are in charge of policy design and service delivery, such as the civil service. A key challenge for addressing institutional trust is that these dimensions (i.e. institutional and political trust) could be influenced by similar factors (OECD/KDI, 2018[57]). Academic evidence shows that the performance of public institutions could influence political trust (Khan, 2016[58]), while political corruption could have an effect on administrative trust in systems where the accountability mechanisms of civil servants are associated with their political affiliation (Dahlstrom and Lapuente, 2017[59]).

Table 1.1. Different trust relationships

By whom/on whom	People	Institutions	Leaders
People	Interpersonal	**Institutional trust**	Political trust
Institutions	Civic	Inter institutional trust	Political-administrative trust
Leaders	Political trust	Political-administrative trust	Multi-lateral trust

Source: González and Smith (2017[60]), "The accuracy of measures of institutional trust in household surveys: Evidence from the OECD trust database", *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, No. 2017/11, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/d839bd50-en.

This case study builds on previous OECD research showing that survey respondents are able to differentiate between at least three different underlying concepts related to institutional trust: a) trust in political-administrative institutions; b) law and order institutions and c) trust in non-governmental institutions (González and Smith, 2017[60]; OECD, 2017[7]).

As will be explained later, this study relies on the measurement of the determinants of trust through a population survey. Accordingly, it measures trust levels in Norway in the institutions displayed in Table 1.2[3] covering the three aforementioned dimensions (see Table 1.2). Even within the category of political administrative institutions, research has shown that while some overlap exists, levels of trust in each of them responds to different determinants (OECD, 2021[48]; OECD/KDI, 2018[57]; Murtin et al., 2018[61]).

Table 1.2. Trust in institutions in Norway being measured in this case study

Dimension	Institutions
Political Administrative institutions	The government
	The local government
	The parliament
	The political parties
	The civil service
Law and order institutions	The police
	The courts
Non-governmental institutions	The media
	The banks

Note: The question is formulated in the following way: Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions displayed. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust.
Source: OECD questions included in the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

Understanding the drivers of institutional trust

As previously mentioned, there is no single answer to the question of what elements of public governance drive institutional trust. The political science and public management literatures have been prolific in advancing theories and evidence for obtaining an answer. However, explanations are often partial and narrow and there has been a lack of an analytical framework that can help organise concepts, links and causal relations for obtaining a holistic answer. The OECD has developed a framework on the determinants of public trust that encompasses two broad categories: *competences* and *values* (OECD, 2017[62]). The framework has been recently adjusted following the COVID-19 pandemic through an open collaborative process including academics, practitioners and civil society. There is consistency in the literature regarding specific attributes that matter for trust and may be amenable to policy action, in relation to two broad components, competences and values.

- **Trust as competence:** Competence is a necessary condition for trust – an actor with good intentions but without the ability to deliver on expectations cannot be trusted. The provision of public goods and services (from security and crisis management to public health and education) is one of the principal activities exercised by government. However, citizens depend on the ability of governments to actually deliver the services they need, at the quality level they expect.
- **Trust as values.** When it comes to influencing trust, the process of policy making and its guiding motivations are just as important as actual results. Citizens expect not only effective policies to improve socio-economic conditions, but also irreproachable behaviour.

In turn, these broad categories could be disentangled into five policy dimensions that are amenable to policy action within ‘competence’: responsiveness and reliability, and within ‘values’: openness, integrity and fairness (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3. The OECD framework on the determinant of public trust

Levels of trust in different public institutions		
Trust in national government, **local government,** civil service, parliament, police, **political parties,** courts, legal systems and **intergovernmental organisations**		
Public Governance Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions		
Competencies	*Responsiveness*	• Provide efficient, quality, affordable, timely and citizen-centred public services **that are co-ordinated across levels of government and satisfy users.** • **Develop an innovative and efficient civil service that responds to user needs**.
	Reliability	• Anticipate needs and assess evolving challenges. • Minimise uncertainty in the economic, social and political environment. • **Effectively commit to future-oriented policies and co-operate with stakeholders on global challenges**.
Values	*Openness*	• Provide open and accessible information so the public better understands what government is doing. • Consult, listen, and respond to stakeholders, including through citizen participation and engagement opportunities that lead to tangible results. • **Ensure there are equal opportunities to be part of and participate in the institutions of representative democracy.**
	Integrity	• Align public institutions with ethical values, principles, and norms to safeguard the public interest. • Take decisions and use public resources ethically, promoting the public interest over private interests while combating corruption. • Ensure accountability mechanisms between public institutions at all levels of governance. • **Promote a neutral civil service whose values and standards of conduct uphold and prioritise the public interest.**
	Fairness	• Improve living conditions for all. • Provide consistent treatment of businesses and people regardless of their background and identify (e.g. gender, socio-economic status, racial/ethnic origin).
Cultural, Economic and Political Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions		
• Individual and group identities, traits, and preferences, including socio-economic status; interpersonal socialisation and networks. • Distrust of and disengagement from the system.		
Perception of government action on intergenerational and global challenges		
• Perceptions of government commitment to and effectiveness in addressing long-term challenges.		

Source: (Brezzi et al., 2021[63]).

According to this competence-values approach, citizens assess government from the perspective of how service delivery responds to people's needs and expectations, but also with respect to the efficacy and fairness of the policy-making process and its outcomes. Furthermore, the framework provides guidance on measuring trust, on its monitoring over time, and on analysing the factors that may drive it in the future. In turn, following the revision of the framework it now includes explicitly as determinants of public trust political attitudes and participation, satisfaction with public services and the evaluation of government action on long-term global challenges (Brezzi et al., 2021[63]).

Measuring the drivers or trust

Traditionally public governance measures have not been included in official household surveys although there is *a priori* no good reason why they cannot be collected with the same quality standards as other environmental or economic statistics (González, Fleischer and Mira d'Ercole, 2017[64]). Alongside the

framework, a measurement strategy on the drivers has been developed and implemented in different contexts (OECD, 2017[62]; OECD/KDI, 2018[57]; Murtin et al., 2018[61]).

The measurement approach on the drivers of institutional trust moves away from perceptions and instead focuses on specific situations. Typical behavioural questions, as used in psychology or sociology, investigate the subjective reaction expected from individuals when faced with a specific situation. However, the situational questions are not stereotypical behavioural questions: they do not focus on the individual behaviour but rather on the expected conduct from a third party, in this case a public institution, a civil servant or a political figure. As such, it provides, instead, measurement on the trustworthiness of public institutions. Unlike attitudes (passive response) and behaviours (active response), trustworthiness is based on expectations of positive behaviour in alignment with the working definition of trust. The battery of situational questions for measuring the determinants of public trust in alignment with the OECD trust framework is presented in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. Survey questions for each of the framework dimensions in Norway

Policy dimension		Questions
Competence	*Responsiveness*	a) If many people complain about the quality of a public service how likely is it that it will be improved?
		b) If a government employee has an idea that could lead to better provision of a public service, do you think that it would be adopted?
	Reliability	c) If a new contagious disease spreads in Norway, how likely is it that government institutions will be prepared to protect people's lives?
		d) If you start a business today do you think that the conditions under which you operate (taxes, regulations, etc.) will remain stable enough so that unexpected changes do not threaten your business?
		e) If you share your personal data with a public agency, how likely is it that it will be exclusively used for the purpose for which it was collected?
Values	*Integrity*	f) If a large business offered a well-paid job to a high-level politician in exchange for political favours during his/her time in office, do you think that he/she would refuse this proposal?
		g) If a member of parliament in [your country] is offered a bribe to influence the awarding of a public project (e.g. building a road), how likely is it that they will accept?
	Openness	h) If a decision affecting [your neighbourhood or the area where you live] were to be taken, how likely is that people would have an opportunity to influence this decision?
		i) If you need information about an administrative procedure, do you think that it will be easy to find?
	Fairness	j) If a civil servant interacts with the public [in your city, area where you live], how likely is it that they will treat all people equally regardless of their socioeconomic status?
		k) If you apply to a government programme, how likely is that your application will be treated fairly?

Source: OECD Trust Survey Module questions.

The OECD trust module was included in the Norwegian Citizens Survey (NCS). This is a well-established population survey on people's experience and satisfaction with public services. In addition to the trust questions referred to above, the Citizens Survey also includes questions on all other dimensions of the framework as shown in Table 1.4. The OECD module was reviewed and adapted to reflect special characteristics of the Norwegian context. The translation was reviewed by DFØ public governance specialists to ensure that the intended concepts were being captured.

In addition to the OECD module, the NCS also includes additional questions, some of which have been fielded over time. Among others, the survey investigates people's view on services in general, interpersonal trust, the state of democracy and local society. It also provides a more detailed assessment on service attributes as experienced by users and non-users. When relevant, such questions pertaining to the NCS are also discussed as part of this case study. The 2021 version of the NCS was fielded between late May and late July. The results of the survey are discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.

Box 1.4. The Norwegian Citizens Survey

In 2007, the Norwegian Strategy on Innovation recognised the need of placing greater emphasis on citizens' experiences with public services. Accordingly, the Ministry of Government Administration and Local government and the Agency for public management and e-government took the initiative of developing the Norwegian Citizens Survey (NCS). The development of the NCS was commissioned to a group of independent experts including academics and government practitioners and other government entities including Statistics Norway. Various government agencies were consulted during the design phase of the survey. The final design comprised two parts: part one on national services and part two on local services. The survey was fielded for the first time between 2009 (part one) and 2010 (part two). The survey is managed by the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFO). Key characteristics of the survey are:

- fielded every 2 years
- randomly selected respondents from a stratified sample
- sent to about 40 000 respondents and usually 8 000 answers
- half of the sample receives questions on the state level and half on the local level
- collected via online and mail questionnaires.

Source: Authors based on information provided by DFO.

Understanding the drivers of institutional trust is of greater relevance if a comparative perspective could be provided. To start, it will refine the analysis by looking at levels in relative terms. It could also shed light on best practices for building and preserving trust by identifying actions being carried out by top performers and also contribute to enhancing experience sharing. From a methodological point of view it could also help in disentangling the real weight of culture as a trust determinant by putting forward response style concerns that may explain differences across regions and countries.[4] The data on the determinants of institutional trust collected through this case study will also inform the OECD Trust Survey Initiative, a cross-country data collection effort on the determinants of public trust. Consequently, it will allow experts to compare Norway with 19 other OECD countries (see Box 1.5).

Box 1.5. The OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trut in Public Institutions

The OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions is a cross-country data collection effort on the determinants of public trust. The survey was implemented in the fall of 2021 and results are expected during the first quarter of 2022. The questionnaire is largely aligned with the OECD module fielded in the Norwegian Citizens Survey and therefore the data will be comparable. The main objectives of the survey are the following.

- Provide international benchmarks on people's perception, evaluation, and experience with the public sector.
- Differentiate levels and drivers of trust across groups of people, types of institutions and levels of government.
- Identify drivers of people's trust that are common across OECD countries.
- Provide a sound evidence base to identify governance areas for improved trust.
- Improve the measurement of outcomes of government actions and public governance.

In addition to Norway, the countries participating in the survey are the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

Source: Authors.

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Notes

[1] The Gallup World Poll survey in Norway was fielded between 24 March and May 2020.

[2] The NAV scandal refers to the agency incorrectly implementing European social security regulations and wrongly denying benefits to people who were entitled to them, and then convicting them of benefits fraud. At least 75 people were wrongly convicted for NOK 24.8 million (USD 2.7 million) in welfare provisions they were entitled to, and 36 served jail sentences – the longest incarceration was eight months. Some 2 400 other cases have or will be re-examined for faulty decisions. All the cases might lead to repayment of funding that had been illegally retracted.

[3] Finally, trust questions should not be asked immediately after items that are likely to elicit strong emotional responses or that refer to experiences with other people or institutions. Accordingly, to limit this contextual impact, questions on trust levels are asked at the beginning of the survey, immediately following the screening questions and household demographics that establish respondent eligibility to participate in the survey.

[4] One way to get around response style concerns could be to use changes in response patterns over time (including those of different population subgroups) rather than the level of responding.

2 Institutional trust and its determinants in Norway

This chapter analyses the factors that influence trust in public institutions in Norway and describes differences in trust levels across various socio-economic groups, by gender, income, education, migrant background and geographical location. Based on primary data collected for this study through the OECD Trust Survey, it presents a compound analysis on the determinants of institutional trust in Norway for the government, the local government and the civil service. It finds that the reliability of policies is the most important driver of trust in the national government, and that responsiveness of services and openness of policies are key drivers of trust in the local government while impartiality of treatment has the highest impact in trust in the civil service.

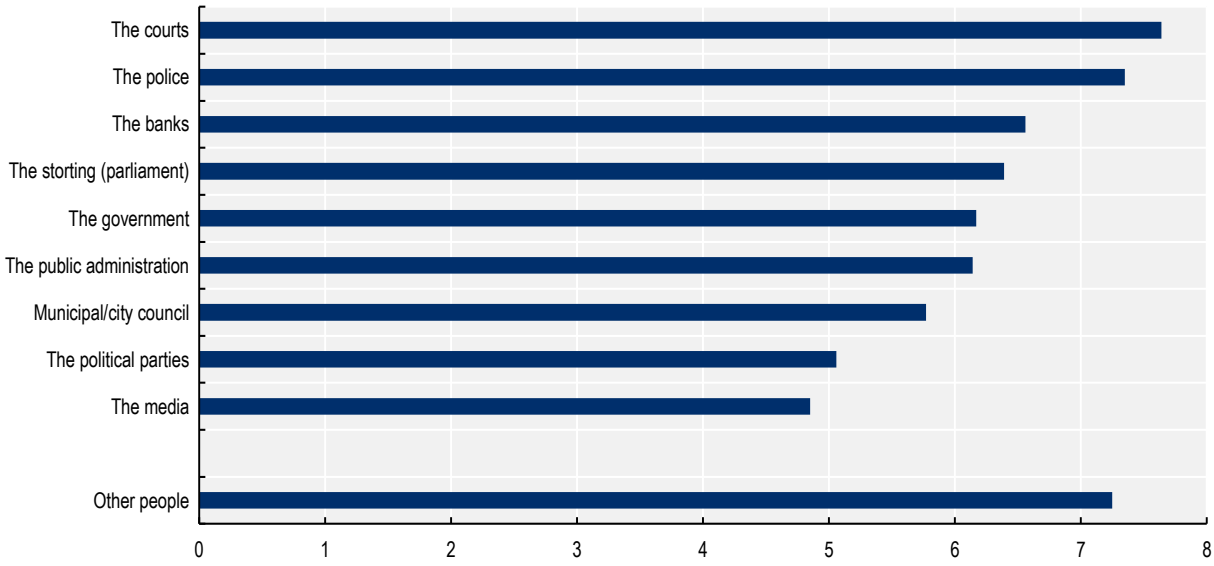
Institutional trust is high but it varies depending on the institution

This chapter provides an overview of institutional trust in Norway, highlighting differences among institutions and population groups. It also provides an analysis of the main determinants of Norwegians' trust towards the national and local governments and the public administration. Past research suggests that drivers of trust are multidimensional. Trust depends on both individual characteristics of citizens, such as their economic resources and feelings of political efficacy, as well as macro-level institutional features and public governance mechanisms. Macro-level drivers of trust include factors such as the legitimacy and credibility of policy choices, while public governance drivers refer to how decisions are made, whether citizens are involved in decision-making processes, the extent to which policies indeed address citizens' political demands, or the quality of policies implemented and services provided, as described in the OECD Framework on Drivers of Trust (Brezzi et al., 2021[1]; Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[2]).

The evidence presented in this chapter relies mainly on the OECD trust survey applied through the Norwegian Citizens Survey (see Boxes 1.4 and 1.5 in Chapter 1) that gauges Norwegians' assessment of institutional trust and its drivers.

In general, Norwegians have high confidence in their institutions and trust each other. On a 0-to-10-point scale, with zero meaning no trust at all and ten complete trust, average trust levels are above 5 for all the institutions considered with the exception of the media (Figure 2.1). In other words, between 45% and 55% of respondents give a score of 5 or higher. The most trusted institutions are the legal system (7.64 on average), the police (7.35 on average) and the banks (6.56).

Figure 2.1. Average levels of trust in public institutions



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust/you cannot be too careful) to 10 (complete trust/most people are trustworthy). Weighted average values are reported.
Source: OECD Trust survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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Institutions of a political administrative nature, encompassing both institutions whose representatives are linked to the political cycle (e.g. the parliament) and those predominantly composed of civil servants (e.g. the public administration or the local government), tend to be less trusted when compared to law and order institutions – but still, averages remain high.[1] Of these, the national parliament is trusted the most by respondents (6.39 on average), which is closely followed by the government (6.17) and the public

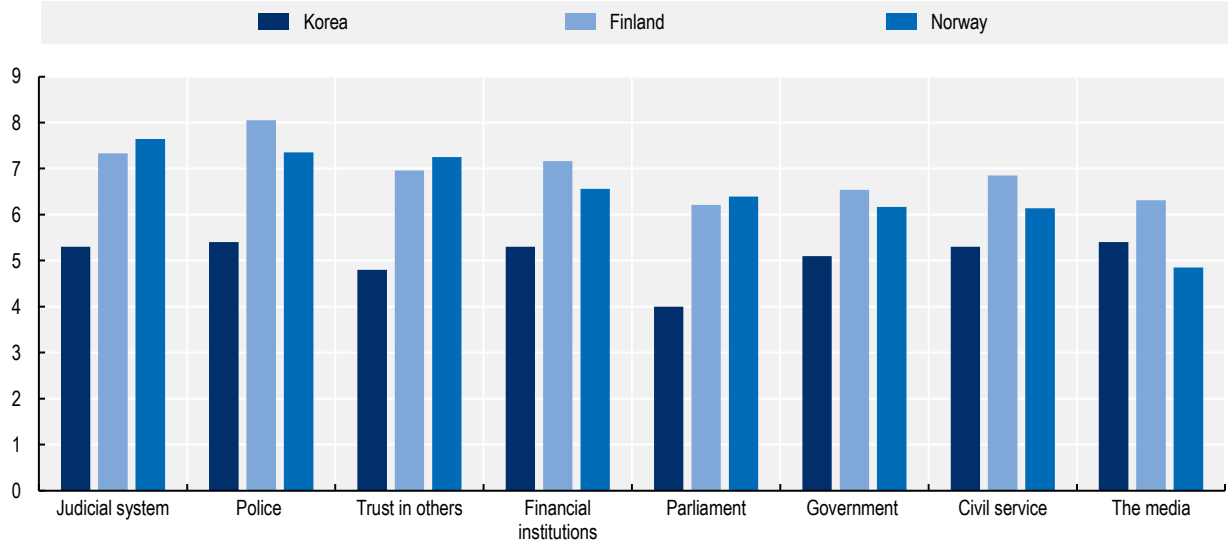
administration (6.14). Political parties, in contrast, are the least trusted institution of those of a political administrative nature. While Norwegians report strong levels of support for the *political structures* (legislative and executive branches of government as well as for their politically neutral civil service), they may not always be content with those citizens who are the actual office-holders; and this result holds over time (Norris, 2009[3]).

The least trusted public institution in Norway is "the media" (average of 4.85). Norway has a strong public broadcaster, a wide variety of (local) newspapers, and independent media outlets (Aalberg and Curran, 2012[4]). However, this is not necessarily reflected in people's self-reported trust. As currently included, the term media[2] is broad and also encompasses unedited media sources that may be associated with the spread of disinformation. Some of interviewees signalled the rise of social media, and concerns about "fake news" and political communication styles as potentially affecting trust levels in the media.

Trust in other people is comparatively high (7.25 on average). Trust in others is a crucial measuring stick of social capital. High levels of social trust indicate that citizens are positive about the moral standards in their country. It is a clear signal that citizens feel that they are part of broader societal network. In societies where trust is widespread, all sorts of monitoring and security costs are reduced, and citizens are more likely to express solidarity towards one another. Hence, when citizens feel that they can trust most other people in their country, including strangers, migrants, people with a different economic background, etc., societies usually tend to function better, because co-operation is facilitated (Holmberg and Rothstein, 2017[5]; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008[6]). Additionally, it has been said that interpersonal trust may function as a predictor of political trust (Lipset and Schneider, 1983[7]) (Newton, Stolle and Zmerli, 2017[8]). An empirical study with data from World Value Survey (WVS) finds a strong correlation between social (interpersonal) and political trust. According to the authors, trust in governmental institutions is shaped through social relationships and in this way, these relations also have an impact on institutional performance (Newton and Norris, 2000[9]).

Norway has the highest percentage of respondents trusting others (79%), the judicial system (84%) and the parliament (68%) compared to Finland and Korea (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Average trust levels in OECD countries with available information



Note: Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey, applied by Statistics Finland in August 2020. Trust in financial institutions, the judicial system and the media are based on the October 2020 collection of the Pulse Survey implemented by Statistics Finland at the request of the Prime Minister's Office. Data for Korea on the civil service are from the report Understanding the Drivers of Trust in Government Institutions and represent the situation in 2017. Trust in Norway is captured through the OECD Trust survey applied in the 2021 Citizens Survey.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey; Statistics Finland; OECD/KDI.

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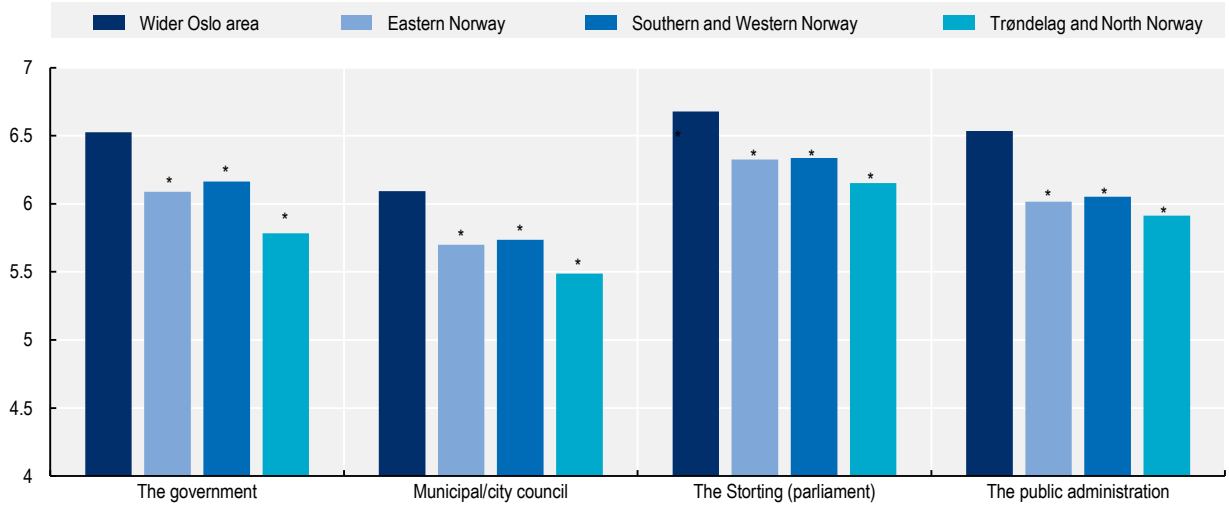
There are trust divides with the potential of affecting social cohesion

High averages of institutional trust could hide important differences between population groups. Indeed, levels of trust in governmental institutions are significantly lower for rural residents, lower-income households, and the less educated. In turn, some sources suggest that there are groups of citizens who are not convinced of the trustworthiness of their institutions (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[2]), which is consistent with the findings of the OECD Trust survey.

The main source of social divisions across the Norwegian population is associated with Norway's geographical characteristics and centre-periphery dynamics. Rural dwellers feel that national politics are dominated by the urban centres, which are more strongly connected to the global economy, are more culturally diverse, etc. Past research highlights that rural residents feel they lack influence on politics (Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019[10]). In rural areas, moreover, access to public services is often more limited, simply because public institutions are farther away from people, which could reduce access and ultimately satisfaction with public services (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005[11]; Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019[10]). Although the levels of trust in institutions remain relatively high in Norway's more peripheral regions, they are lower than those in the greater Oslo area for all four institutions surveyed (central government, local councils, parliament, public administration) (Figure 2.3). Data from a nationally representative sample carried out in the Medborgerpanel study[3] further shows that half of Norwegians strongly agree or agree with the statement that their authorities do not consider rural and non-urban Norway when making decisions (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.3. Average levels of institutional trust, by region



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95% compared to the Wider Oslo are that is considered as reference group.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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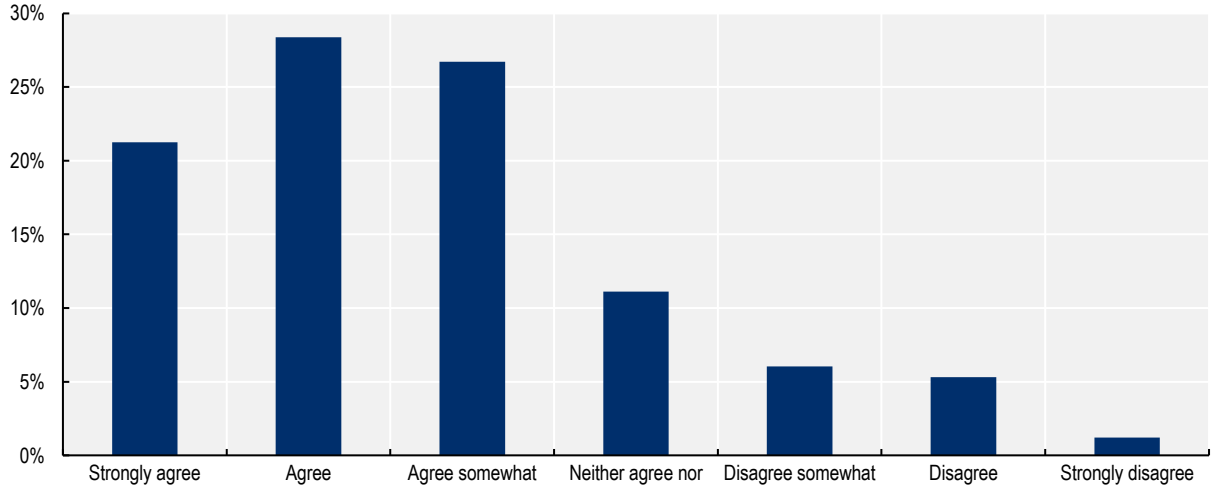
Figure 2.4. Percentage of respondents agreeing with "Government authorities' have little consideration for non-urban and rural Norway"



Note: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following assertion? Government authorities' have little consideration for non-urban/rural Norway".
Source: Medborgerpanel, round 18 (June 2020).

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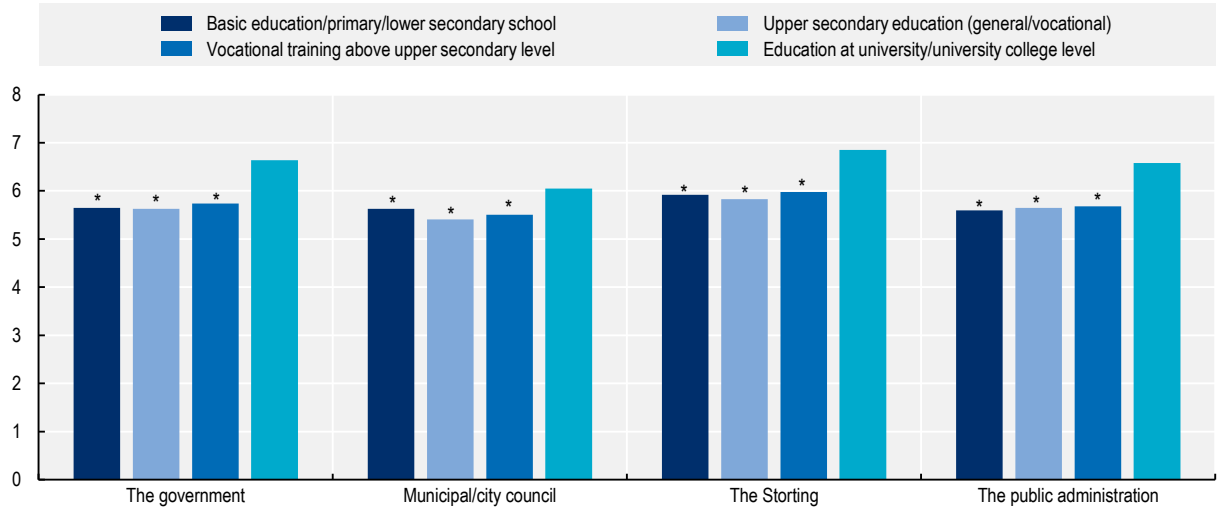
Second, there are other trust gaps when looking at other social divides in Norway. Citizens' economic resources and educational background matter. Highly educated Norwegians have, on average, higher levels of trust in various public institutions, and this difference is statistically significant in comparison with all other education groups (Figure 2.5). Cleavages are particularly pronounced in the case of the national government, parliament and the public administration, where there is an almost 1-point difference in the average level of trust among the highest educated and the other education groups. Trust divides are the smallest in the case of the local municipal or city councils. These councils seem to be more successful in representing all citizens regardless of one's educational background, which could be associated with the vicinity to leaders and proximity to the issues being discussed.

Trust among the highly educated is significantly higher. In established democracies, the higher educated are typically more interested and engaged in politics and have higher levels of political knowledge (Bovens and Wille, 2017[12]; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012[13]). This pattern is repeated in Norway, where people with lower levels of education more commonly consider that their institutions are not responsive towards them, or may feel less capable of influencing politics themselves. As civil servants and politicians tend to be higher educated, such perceptions can, to some extent, also be seen as rational: previous cross-national research has already highlighted that policy makers tend to be more responsive towards the policy demands of the higher educated (Bovens and Wille, 2017[12]; van Elsas, 2015[14]). People with lower levels of education in Norway may also have had less exposure to topics such as governance and democracy, or opportunities for political engagement while they are students. As about 35% of the Norwegian population above the age of 16 have completed a higher education degree (Statistics Norway, 2021[15]), an important part of the adult population may feel less connected to their public institutions and could result in a feeling that public institutions govern for a few rather than for the many.

Figure 2.5. Average levels of institutional trust, per level of education



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that the differences are statistically significant at 95%, the reference group for statistical tests is the highest educated.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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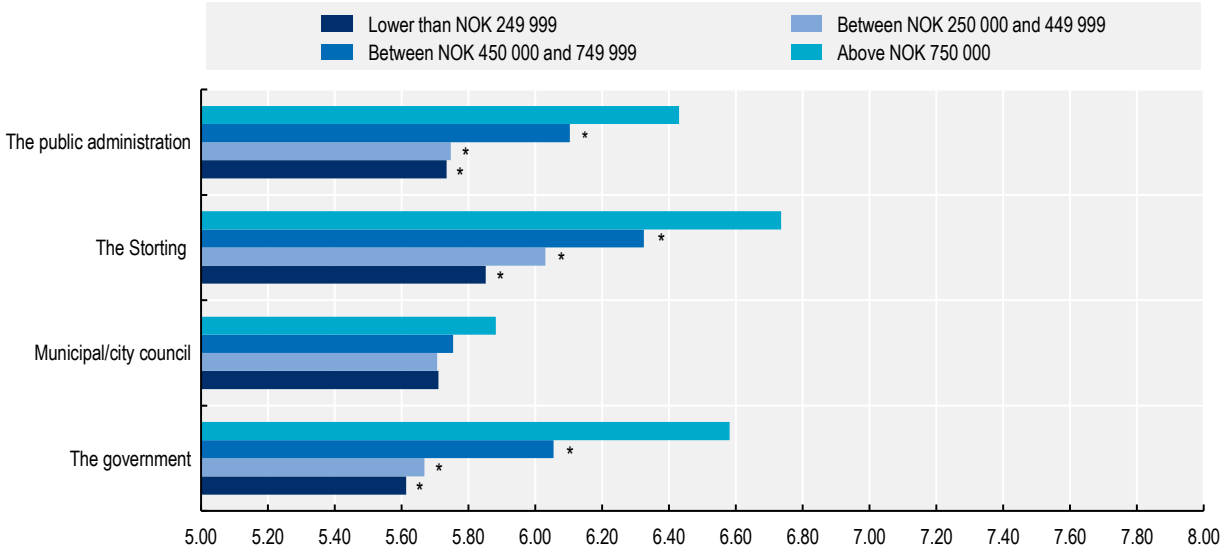
Very similar trust divides can be observed in Figure 2.6, which depicts the average levels of trust for different income groups. Respondents falling into lower income brackets have, on average, lower institutional trust, and trust gaps between the wealthier and poorer respondents amount to a 1-point difference approximately. The local councils seem to be trusted by all citizens, regardless of their income, even though the difference between the highest and lowest income bracket is still statistically significant.

Figure 2.6. Average levels of institutional trust, per household income



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. Households' total gross annual income (i.e. before taxes) reported. NOK 249 999 is equivalent to EUR 25 221. NOK 449 999 is equivalent to EUR 45 397. NOK 750 000 is equivalent to 75 663. Exchange rate calculates as of January 14 2022 when 1 EUR is equivalent to 9.91 NOK. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. The reference group for statistical test is the highest income group.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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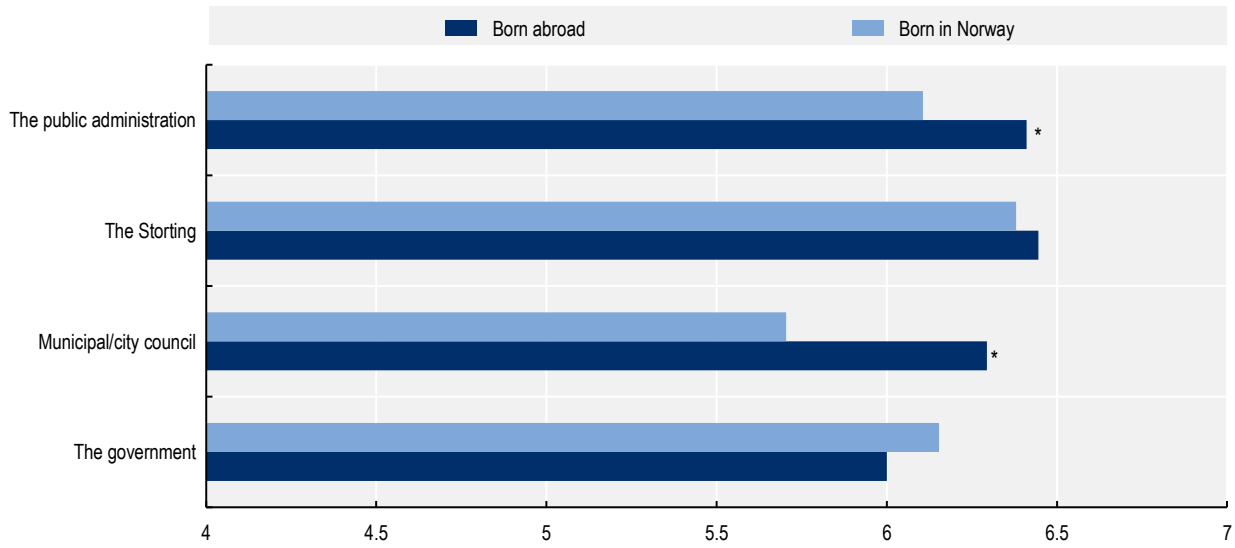
A third potential source of (dis)trust is connected to Norway's increasing diversity. In recent years, migration to the country has been the driving force of population growth. In 2019, about 20% of the population had foreign roots (either born abroad, or having both parents born abroad) (Statistics Norway, 2019). In keeping with trends from other countries (Kriesi et al., 2006[16]), this has meant that the increasing diversity of Norway's population, and the debate as to whether more or less migration is acceptable, has become a defining aspect of Norwegian politics. A divide is observed between citizens who fear that immigrants could pose a threat to the Norwegian welfare state, or the Norwegian identity, and citizens who feel that this increasing diversity is good for the Norwegian society (Ivarsflaten and Strømsnes, 2013[17]; McLaren, 2012[18]; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2014[19]). According to Grindheim (2019[20]), this increasing salience of migration as a political theme, has driven the perception amongst Norwegians that their institutions are unresponsive, and may have given rise to populist sentiments.

When comparing average levels of trust expressed by Norwegian residents who were born abroad with trust levels of respondents born in Norway, we observe that migrants actually have higher levels of trust in public institutions (Figure 2.7). The difference between the "native" population and those born abroad is the strongest (and statistically significant) in the case of the public administration and the municipal council. These institutions play an important role in the daily life of migrants, such as overseeing migration applications and offering integration programmes. Hence, it could be concluded that migrants, on average, have a positive experience with these services, which enhances their trust.

Figure 2.7. Average levels of institutional trust, by foreign origin



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. Reference group for statistical tests is born in Norway.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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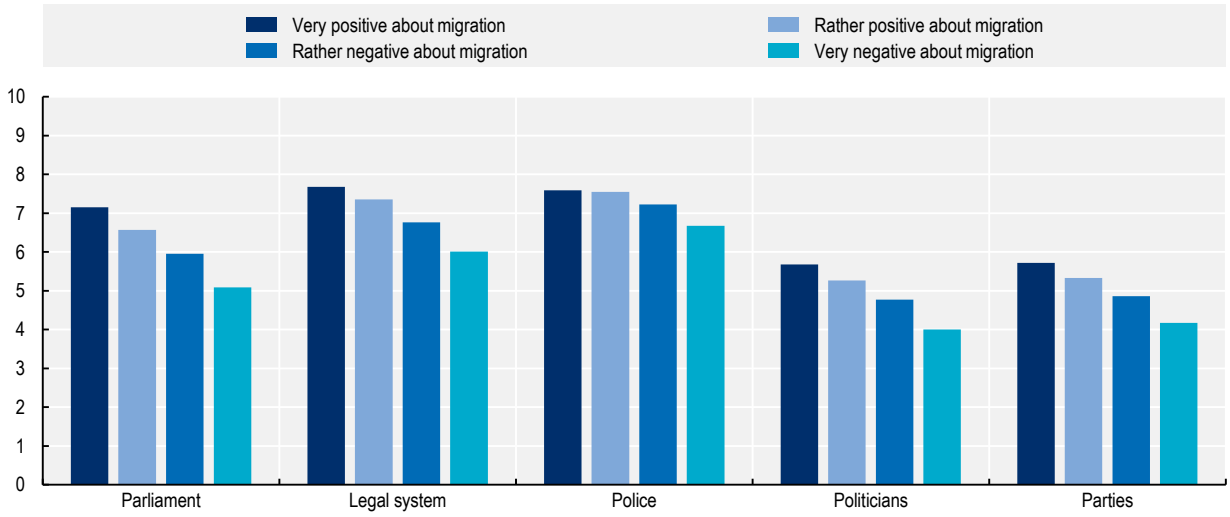
While migrants may have higher trust levels, people who are worried about migration, on the other hand, record lower levels of institutional trust. In Figure 2.8, which is calculated on the basis of European Social Survey data, it becomes immediately clear that citizens who are sceptical about migration believe that their institutions are not trustworthy. At first sight then, Norway's increasing diversity does point to a widening political divide about the issue of diversity. Nevertheless, recent research by Statistics Norway (2020) has also shown that negative views on migrants and migration are decreasing in Norway.

Figure 2.8. Migration concerns and institutional trust in Norway



Note: This figure presents average levels of institutional trust in Norway. Trust questions have a scale from 0 (no trust at all), to 10 (Complete trust). Being in favour or against migration is operationalised through a sum-score on the basis of the following questions: is it generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? The country is made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries. Respondents are divided per quartile (those in the lowest quartile are the most negative about migration, etc.).
Source: European Social Survey (rounds 1-9).

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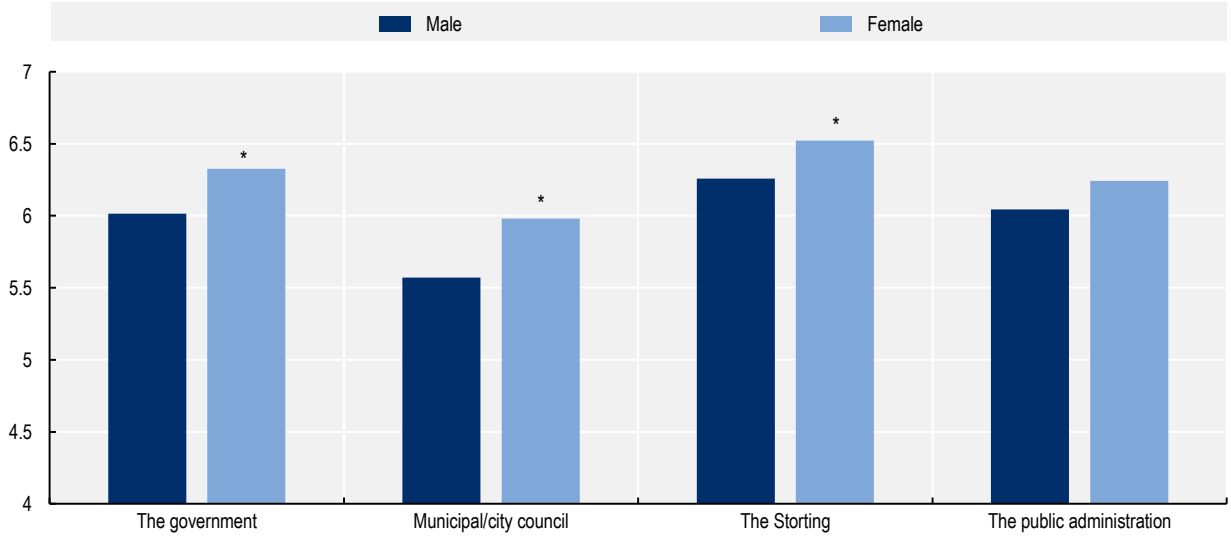
Finally, trust differs by citizens' gender (Figure 2.9). Women tend to express higher trust in institutions, and statistically significant differences are observed for all institutions with the exception of the public administration. This finding is surprising, as past research indicated that the relationship between one's gender and political trust is usually not very consistent in OECD member countries (Catterberg and Moreno, 2006[21]; McDermott and Jones, 2020[22]). It is possible to argue the opposite. As men are more often represented in parliaments, in leadership positions, etc., women should be less likely to have faith in politics. The authors have indeed shown that women seek to counter this imbalance in political power through participating in unconventional forms of political participation (e.g. political consumption) that are less dominated by men (Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier, 2010[23]). However in Norway, women are more likely to have faith in their public institutions than men, which could be an indication of the high levels of gender equality Norway achieves. The share of women in leadership positions, both in politics and the public administration, have increased the number of women parliamentarians went from 39.6% in 2017 to 44.4% in 2021. In turn, in 2020 the share of women in middle management positions is 50% while in senior management it amounts to 44% (OECD, 2021[24]). In addition, these findings could also indicate that female Norwegians are more likely to feel part of their social community, and they could be particularly positive about the country's extensive welfare institutions (McDermott and Jones, 2020[22]).

In contrast to research in other OECD member states, the influence of other demographic characteristics, (e.g. the respondents' age) or other political factors (e.g. political interest or union membership) is rather limited or even insignificant (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005[11]; Citrin and Stoker, 2018[25]; Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017[26]). The elderly are slightly more trusting, but differences are minimal.

Figure 2.9. Average levels of institutional trust, by gender



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. The reference group for statistical tests is men.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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This section explored some of the most important trust cleavages in Norway in a descriptive manner, and uncovered trust cleavages by education, income, and place of residency. Trust cleavages between men and women also exist. These gaps tend to overlap, as peripheral regions tend to have more lower educated and poorer residents, and more limited economic opportunities. Thus, trust cleavages get a clear spatial dimension. A similar conclusion was drawn in the case of neighbouring Finland, which is a country with very similar characteristics (OECD, 2021[27]). Researchers have moreover shown that these trust cleavages between the centre and periphery have been stable in the past two decades in Scandinavian countries, highlighting that this is a structural problem, also for Norway (Mitsch, Lee and Morrow, 2021[28]).

Norway has a solid economy and welfare state but the lack of strategic management of resources could hamper trust

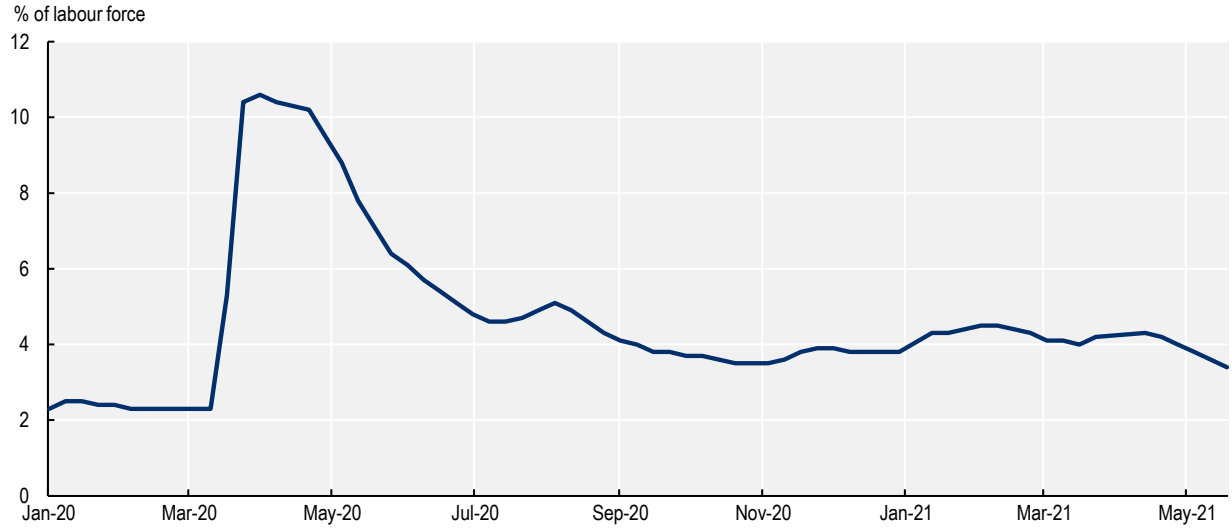
In democratic societies, citizens' political preferences translate into policies. However, it is equally true that such policies influence how citizens think about their public institutions (Kumlin and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014[29]). Because trust is, at its core, dependent on the evaluations by citizens of the performance of their political institutions. Moreover, economic performance has long been singled out as a key driving factor behind trust. There are good reasons for this: the state of the economy could have direct effects on people's lives and is an important component influencing the level of well-being of a given population. In positive phases of the economic cycle, citizens tend to reward their institutions for economic prosperity with higher trust, and oppositely when the economy is performing poorly trust levels decrease (Van Erkel and Van Der Meer, 2016[30]).

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last two years can be seen as a reminder that exogenous shocks are key in explaining trust. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerability of Norway's economy in the face of global trade dynamics, but it also underlined the importance of Norway's welfare state to protect citizens against economic crises.

Just as in the rest of the world, the economic consequences of the pandemic were substantial in Norway. A decrease of 2.5% of the GDP was recorded in 2020 (OECD, 2021[31]) and the strongest fall for the Norwegian economy since the 1970s. The size of the economic shock caused some businesses and government services to almost completely shut down to limit the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, this lead to long-term economic hardship (Koronakommisjonen, 2021[32]). Unemployment rates increased to over 10% of the active population in the first wave of the pandemic (see Figure 2.10) (OECD, 2021[31]), with most people being temporarily laid off and having to rely on unemployment schemes to preserve their income (Koronakommisjonen, 2021[32]). A sizeable part of the decline of Norway's economy could moreover be attributed to the international context, including plummeting oil prices and a weaker currency. To compensate for this economic decline, and as mentioned previously (Section "Trust and COVID-19, fighting and recovering from the pandemic" in Chapter 1), the Norwegian government engaged in widespread business and household support measures (Bjertnæs et al., 2021[33]; Koronakommisjonen, 2021[32]). These ended up costing about NOK 178 billion (about EUR 17.9 billion) in the 2020 national budget (Koronakommisjonen, 2021[32]).

Figure 2.10. Unemployment rate in Norway 2020-21

Registered unemployment rate



Source: OECD (2021[31]) "Economic Forecast Summary (May 2021)", *Norway Economic Snapshot*, OECD, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/economy/norway-economic-snapshot/.

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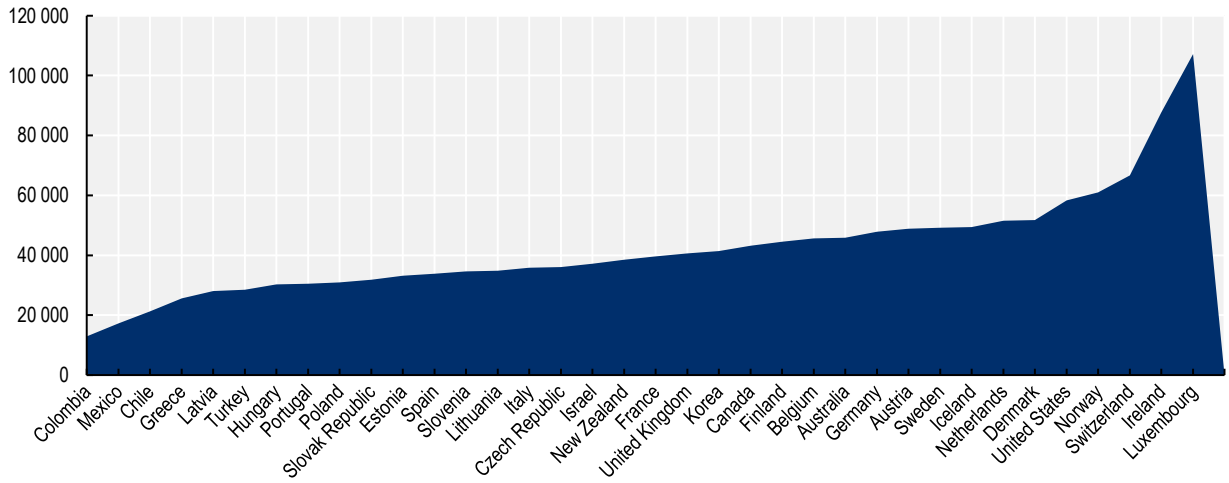
However, the economic damage was more limited than expected, as more conservative estimates expected a drop that could reach 6% of Norway's GDP (OECD, 2020[34]). However, the Norwegian economy has been able to absorb the shock and proved resilient, GDP was predicted to grow again by 3.4% in 2021, and 3.7% in 2022 (OECD, 2021[31]).

Nevertheless, a full recovery of the pandemic will remain dependent on the enduring effectiveness of vaccines in the face of new potential mutations of the virus. Further, it will take some years to overcome other trends, such as compensating for the fact that fewer jobs were created in 2020 (Bjertnæs et al., 2021[33]; Koronakommisjonen, 2021[32]). Still, the outlook is positive as the Norwegian economy is projected to recover from the effects of the pandemic. The capacity to absorb shocks may have positive effects for institutional trust in Norway as institutions have managed to limit the effect of the crisis.

A key element explaining the resilience of the Norwegian economy is its welfare model: it combines good quality and well-paid jobs, with high (although stagnating) productivity and extensive public services. Labour market participation rates of the adult population are high (but declining). In consequence, most citizens have access to decent living standards, and poverty rates (before and after taxes and transfers) are low. Norway maintains the fourth highest GDP per capita of all OECD member states (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11. GDP per capita, Norway in a comparative perspective, 2020



Note: GDP per capita, expressed in US dollars at constant prices, 2015 PPPs. Data from 2020 reported.
Source: OECD productivity statistics, 2021.

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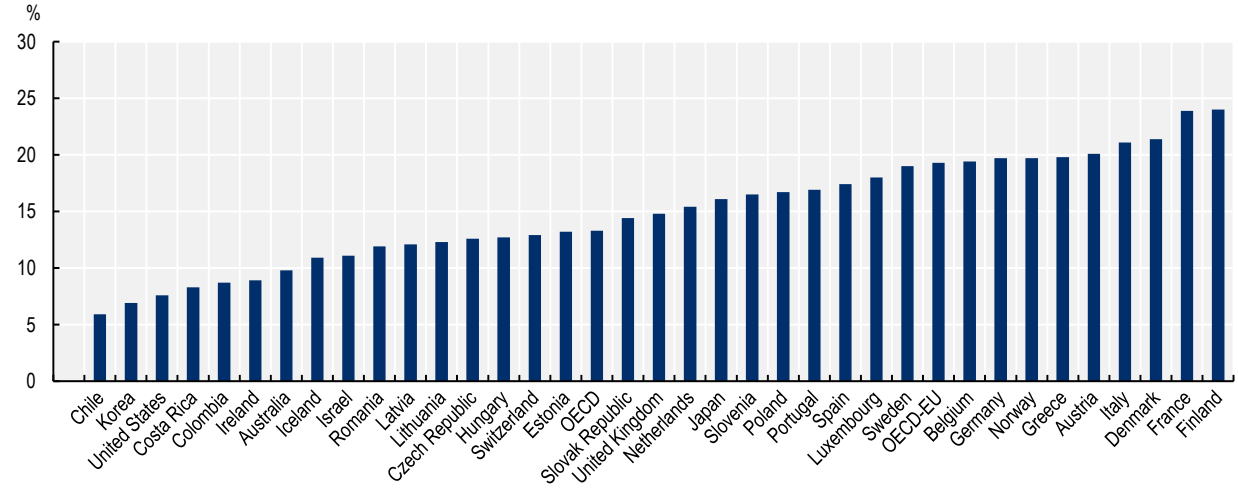
Citizens care about a fair distribution of economic resources in their country, and low levels of poverty and inequality are conducive to higher trust in public institutions (Goubin and Hooghe, 2020[35]; Schnaudt, Hahn and Heppner, 2021[36]). In Figure 2.12 and Figure 2.13, we present data from the OECD Social and Welfare Statistics on the extent of social protection in Norway (Figure 2.12) and the level of income inequality in Norway (Figure 2.13). The figure on social protection depicts the percentage of Norwegian GDP that is allocated to social services. In total, Norway spent about 19.7% of its GDP in 2019 on social protection, which is a sizeable amount, and puts it among the top spenders of the OECD. Further, Figure 2.13 depicts the Gini coefficient for all OECD member states. Lower scores imply lower levels of inequality (perfect equality is measured as 0, perfect inequality as 1). As can be observed, income inequality is comparatively low in Norway and taxes and transfers play an important role in reducing it. Indeed, the Gini coefficient changes from 0.39 before taxes and transfers to 0.27 which is amongst the smallest of OECD member countries (OECD, 2021[24]).

Figure 2.12. Public expenditure on social protection as a % of GDP, Norway in a comparative perspective



Note: Public expenditure on social protection as % of the Gross Domestic Product, data from 2019 reported.
Source: OECD Social and Welfare Statistics, 2021.

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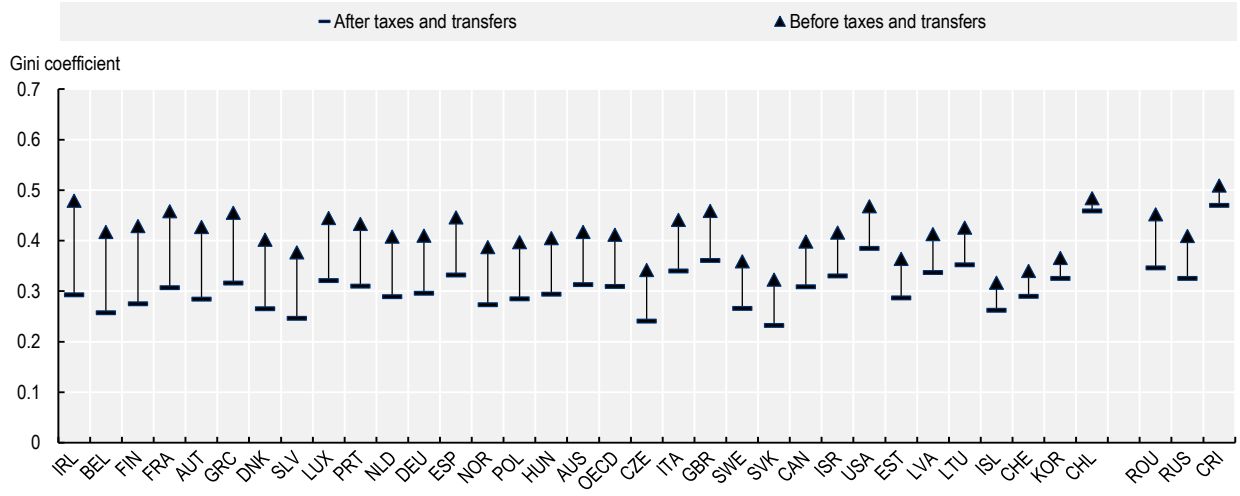
Figure 2.13. Differences in household income inequality pre-and post-tax and government transfers



Note: Countries are ranked from the highest to the lowest difference before and after taxes. All Gini coefficients are based on the 2012 new income definition and are for the working-age population, disregarding the effect of public pension schemes.
Source: OECD (2021[24]), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/pmk40s

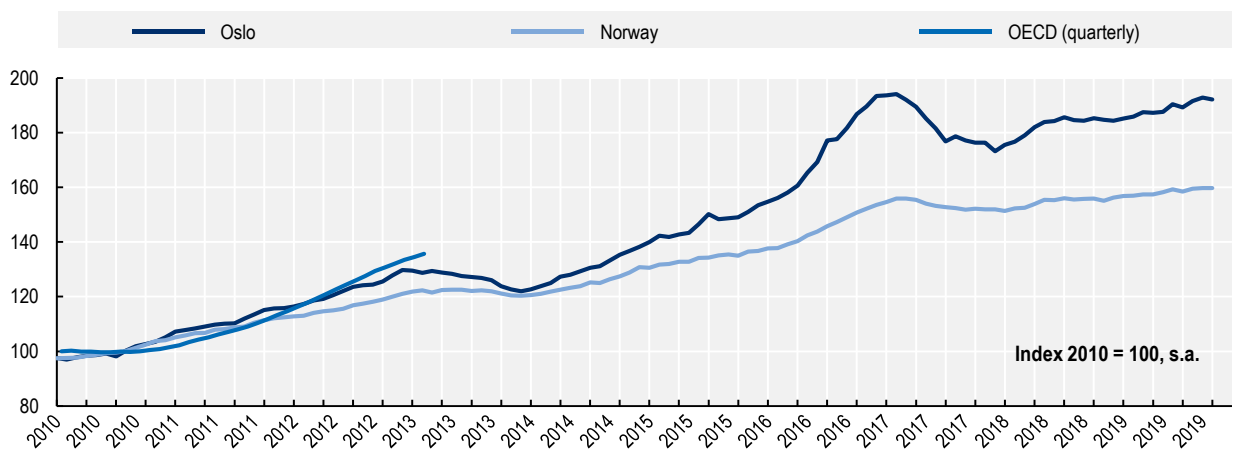
There are, however, structural challenges threatening the Norwegian economy in the mid to long term, which may strain public trust. One is connected to Norway's labour force participation, which has been structurally declining over the last two decades: the number of adults that are part of the active population is going down. Further, among those adults who are part of the active workforce, Norway records the highest number of long-term sick leave absences in OECD countries. Similarly, 12% of the population aged between 20-64 years' of age relies on disability benefits. This is in contrast to neighbouring Sweden, Finland and Denmark, where only 6% of the population receives disability benefits (OECD, 2019[37]). Such

trends increasingly put the Norwegian welfare state under pressure, as high activity rates are quintessential in sustaining the social solidarity that is underpinning these universal welfare services (Esping-Andersen, 2008[38]; OECD, 2019[37]). It also points to the fact that a significant minority of the adult population cannot take part in a meaningful way in the workforce, which may affect their feeling of belonging in Norwegian society. All of these trends have the potential to undermine trust and will need to be addressed through different economic policies (OECD, 2019[37]) and (OECD, 2021[31]).

A second long-term trend with the potential of harming trust, is the narrowing fiscal space in Norway: health care and pension costs are rising as the population gets older, and putting public financing under pressure. Non-oil deficits are reaching the boundary of 3% of the National Oil Fund. The margin of discretionary spending is reducing, and there is little scope to further expand public services without implementing fiscal consolidation (OECD, 2019[37]). Norway already has one of the highest tax burdens in the OECD, and the size of Norway's public sector in terms of public employment is the largest of all OECD member states (OECD, 2021[24]). Moreover, labour costs are already high and there are little prospects of further productivity growth (as productivity is already high). In consequence, it is important to further improve 'value for money' in public spending, and to focus on public sector innovations while remaining within the boundaries of current budgets and staff capacity (OECD, 2019[37]).

A third and final major risk for the Norwegian economy in general, and trust in particular, is the housing market. Recent developments could contribute to creating a sense of economic insecurity that has been associated with diminishing trust. Housing prices are rising faster than disposable incomes, and household debt levels are expanding. The current debt per household in Norway is among the highest of all OECD member states. There is a substantial risk that this will undermine consumption in the longer run, reduce Norwegians' purchasing power, and dampen economic growth. It also poses macro-financial risks in terms of debt sustainability of banks (OECD, 2019[37]). Given the importance of citizens' personal economic resources, and the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and trust levels, it is important to ensure that housing remains affordable and accessible for all Norwegians (Goubin and Hooghe, 2020[35]; Van Erkel and Van Der Meer, 2016[30]).

Figure 2.14. Housing prices are high and getting higher



Note: s.a. stands for seasonally adjusted prices.
Source: Calculations based on Real Estate Norway (Eiendom Norge) data; OECD Economic Outlook (database).

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The economic consequences of the pandemic, as well its repercussions for trust in public institutions are likely to fuel debates in Norway in the years to come. However, and more fundamentally, the size of the public sector seems to have reached its limit, and structural economic reforms will be necessary to ensure that all citizens remain included in the Norwegian economy and enjoy similar social standards in the longer run.

The quality and appraisal of public services

Access to quality services, such as education, health care, transportation and justice is essential to connect people with opportunities, higher-paid jobs, better living standards and longer, more fulfilling lives (OECD, 2020[39]). Research finds that people who directly and frequently benefit from services are able to provide accurate assessments of those services (Van Ryzin, 2007[40]; González, 2020[41]). A positive relation between perceived performance and user satisfaction has been established in the literature. The mechanism linking performance and satisfaction is known as “expectancy disconfirmation theory”. According to this theory, citizens evaluate government services through a combination of experience (including with private providers), expectations and information received from others (Young Mok, Oliver and Van Ryzin, 2017[42]; Oliver, 2010[43]). Concretely, experienced or expected service attributes such as ease of access, quality of services and courtesy of treatment, among others would shape satisfaction levels (OECD, 2021[24]) (IPSOS, 2011[44]). In turn, levels of satisfaction with services influence public trust (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017[26]; Van Ryzin, 2007[40]). Box 2.1 presents a good example of how this model has been articulated in a measurement instrument (e.g. the Australian Citizens Experience survey)

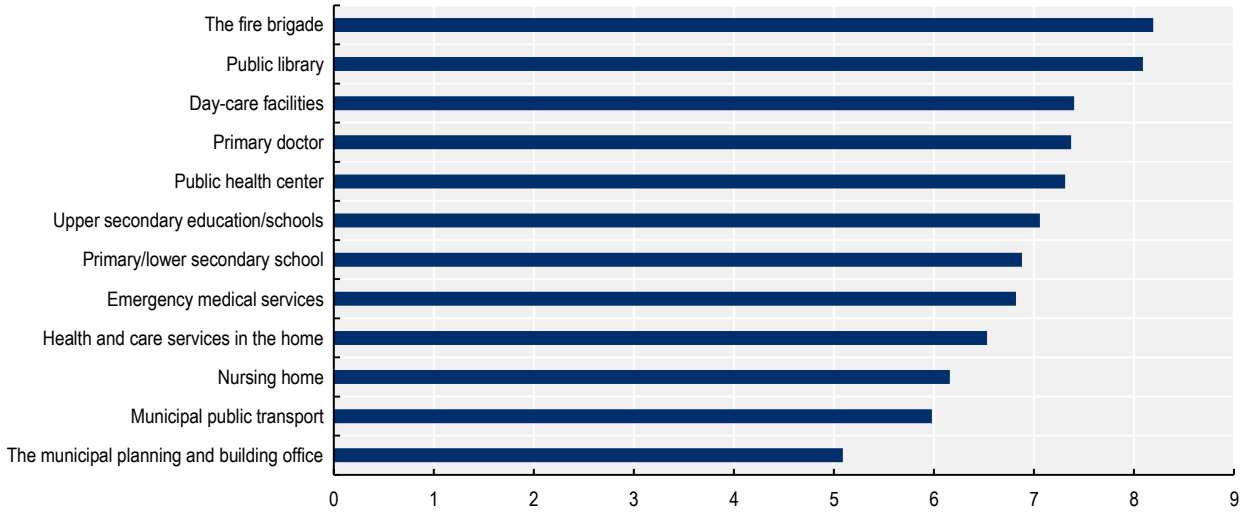
Given the comprehensiveness of its welfare model, the public sector in Norway has significant direct involvement in service provision. However, the responsibility for the provision of services is divided among the three levels of government. The central level has responsibility for services such as the police, labour and several social benefits, tax collection and central agencies and regulatory bodies. Municipalities (i.e. local level) are responsible for much of the direct service provision including education (from day care to junior high school), health centres and emergency rooms, care for the elderly and local transport and infrastructure. Municipalities are fully integrated into the welfare state and are responsible for about half of public service production (Borge, 2010[45]). In turn, the counties have the responsibility for country roads and secondary education.

Satisfaction with municipal level services

The citizen satisfaction survey reports on satisfaction with a wide variety of services at the municipal and state levels. In general, satisfaction with municipal services tends to be high in Norway. On average on a scale of 0-10 all services scored higher than five. However, there is wide variation, services such as the fire brigade and public libraries (above 8 on average) fare significantly better than municipal public transport systems and the municipal planning and building office (see Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15. Average levels of satisfaction with municipal services, 2021

Average on a scale of 0-10



Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied are you with the following services?
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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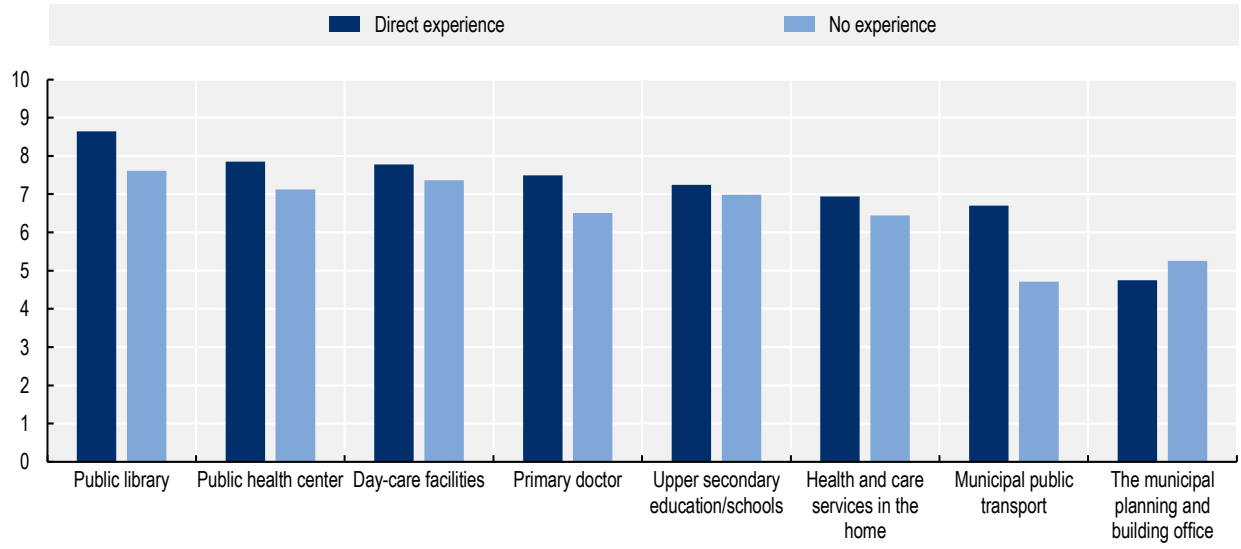
It is, however, important to note that level of exposure to these services varies as more people tend to use services such as visits to their primary doctor, the public health centre and municipal public transport more frequently than others. In turn, services such as day care facilities or nursing homes are predominantly used by specific segments of the population. Lack of direct experience does not necessarily prevent survey respondents from answering satisfaction questions about both types of services (i.e. services they have used and others they have not used).

Figure 2.16 depicts average satisfaction levels by direct experience over the past 12 months. For the majority of services considered, people with recent experience reported higher satisfaction levels. Differences are larger in the cases of public libraries and municipal public transport systems. The only service for which direct exposure results in lower levels of satisfaction is the municipal planning and building office as those who had recently used those services actually reported, on average, statistically significantly lower levels of satisfaction with services. It is nevertheless worth mentioning that direct experience with services varies significantly as for instance only small shares of the population report using services such as nursing homes (6%) and the municipal and planning office (13%).

Figure 2.16. Average satisfaction with municipal levels by direct experience

Average on a scale of 0-10



Note: Have you used the service in the past 12 months? How satisfied are you with the following services? Only services for which the difference is statistically significant at 95% based on a t-test are displayed.
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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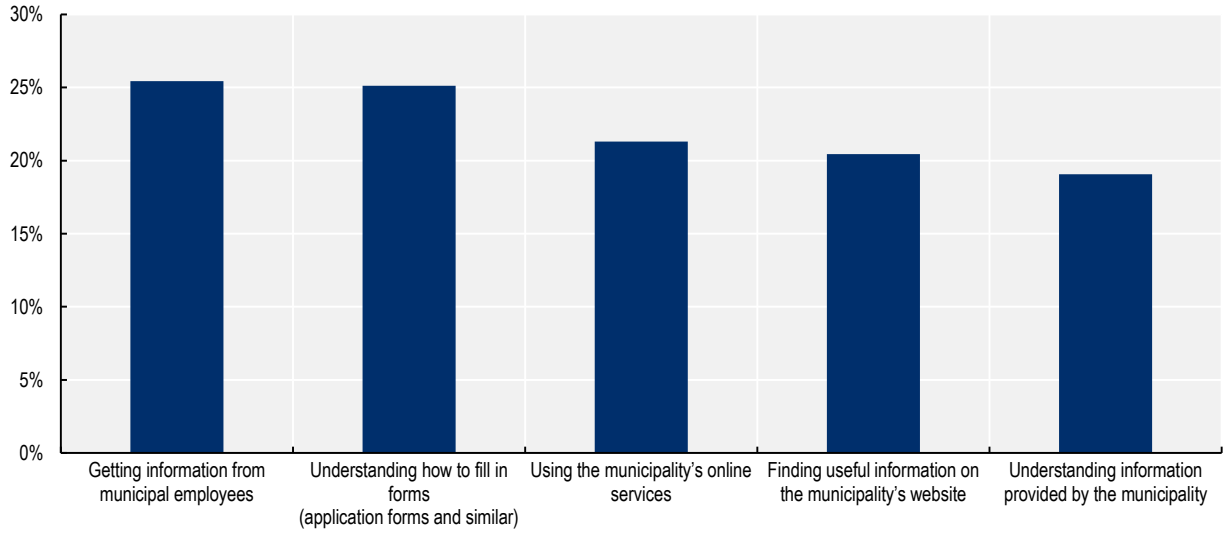
Additionally, research has documented the existence of the so-called halo effect, i.e. the notion that attitudes towards the public sector could influence people's answers to questions about satisfaction with public services (Van de Walle, 2017[46]). In addition to general satisfaction questions, the Norwegian Citizens Survey includes a handful of general questions about how easy or difficult it is to access and use information, fill out forms and how useful and understandable that information. It also assesses how easy or difficult it is to use online services. While the majority of the Norwegian population finds it easy to perform each of these tasks, between 19% and 25% of Norwegians find some of them rather difficult. Figure 2.17 shows the percentage of the population (0-4) who finds them difficult. About one-quarter of the Norwegian population finds it difficult to get information from municipal employees or understand how to fill in forms. About 20% of people find it rather difficult to use municipal services online, finding information on the website or understanding the information provided by the municipality.

Figure 2.17. Percentage of the population reporting that each of the following are difficult

On a scale from 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



Note: Answer to the question: How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality?
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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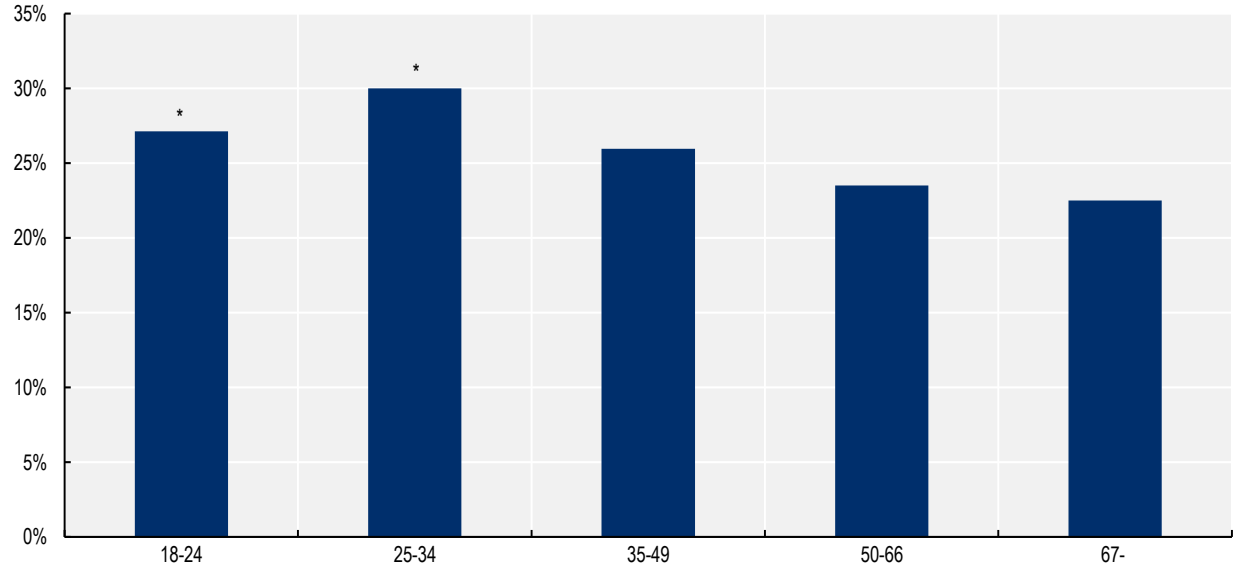
There is, however, variation across different groups. A higher proportion of people in younger cohorts report that they struggle to obtain information from municipal employees. As such, while this is the case for one-third of respondents who are between 25 and 34 years of age and 27% of those who are 18 - 24 year olds only 22.5% of those who are 67 or older report encountering such difficulties (see Figure 2.18). A natural interpretation of these differences is that younger cohorts are more used to digital technologies and online solutions and therefore are less accustomed and tend to rely less in direct interaction with municipal employees.

In turn, people who are more educated systematically encounter fewer difficulties in their different interactions with municipal employees through direct or online channels. For instance, while over 35% of the Norwegian population with basic education have difficulties understanding how to fill in forms, the share is 20% for those with a tertiary education. To conclude, satisfaction with municipal services is high in Norway however, there is variation by services and recent exposure (in the past 12 months), which tends to positively influence satisfaction levels for most services. Still, some segments of the population encounter problems in finding information or when trying to access services through online or direct channels. Ensuring that municipal services continue adapting and striving to simplify while ensuring that all segments of the population have access is essential in preserving people's institutional trust.

Figure 2.18. Difficulties getting information from municipal employees by age group

On a scale of 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



Note: Answer to the question: How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality? The * means that the difference is statistically significant at 95%; the reference group for comparisons is 67 or more.
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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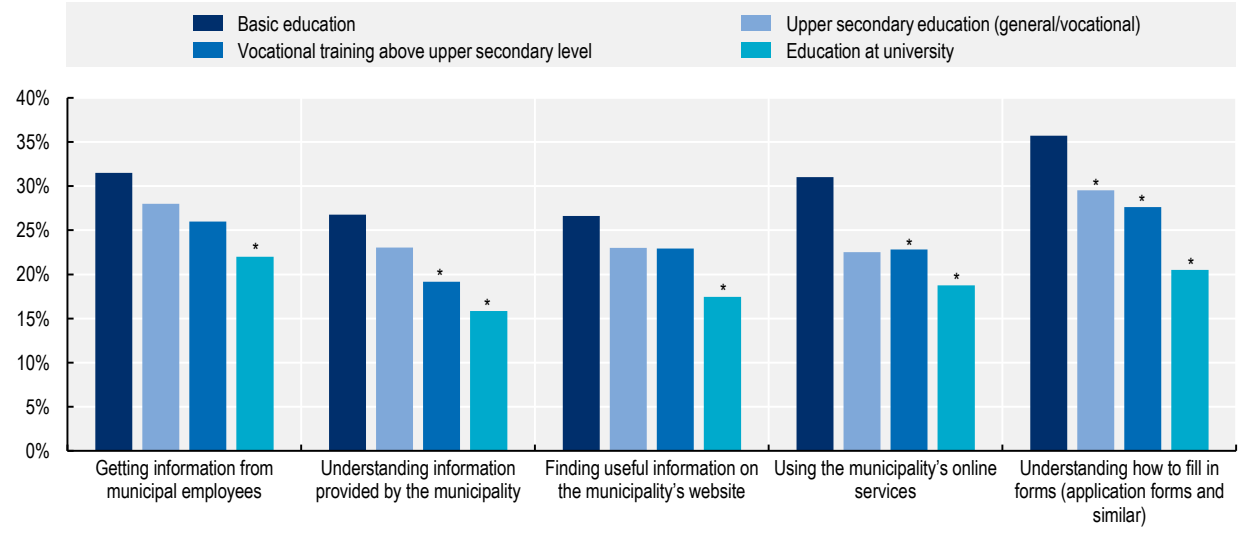
Figure 2.19. Percentage of the population who finds difficult each of the following by education level

On a scale of 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



Note: Answer to the question How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality? The * means that the difference is statistically significant at 95% the reference group is basic education.
Source: OECD calculations based in the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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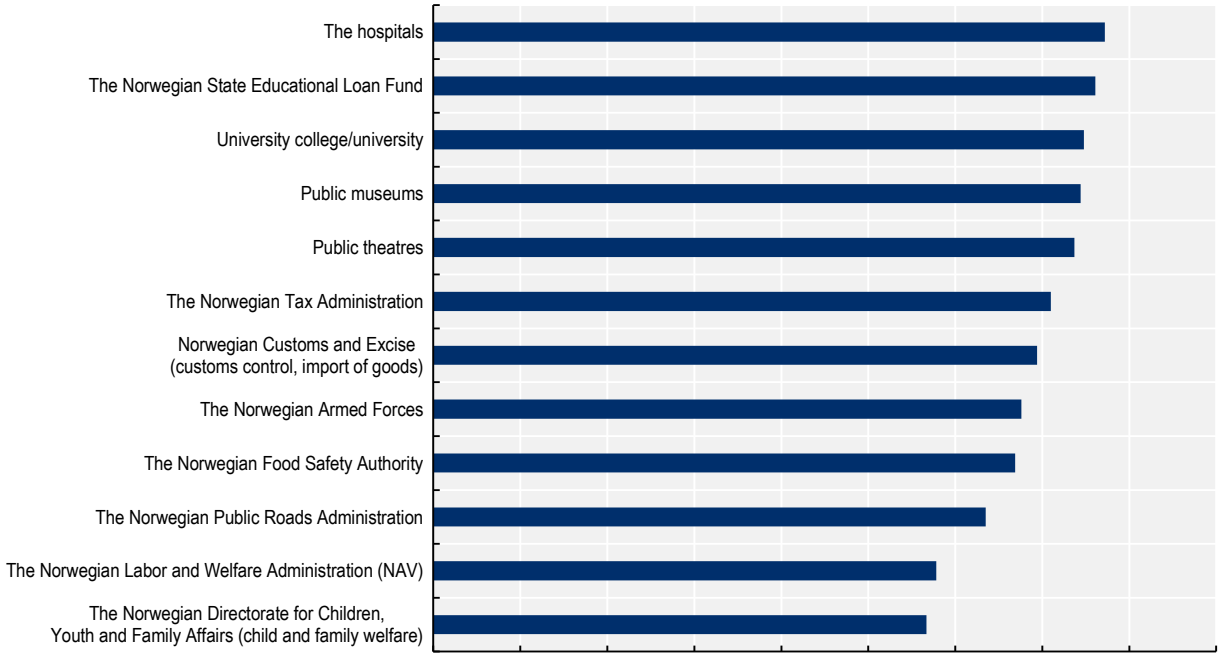
Satisfaction with state level services

As previously indicated, the central or state level remains responsible for the provision of key services to the Norwegian population. Norway has a long tradition of central agencies. It is expected that these agencies are professional, implement public policies and provide services, regulation and surveillance (Christensen and Laegreid, 2021[47]). Accordingly, many agencies either focus predominantly on a regulatory role, still with direct implications in people's lives (e.g. the Norwegian Food Safety Authority) or a mixed role whereby they are part of designing the regulation of a given sector and providing direct services or benefits to people (e.g. the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration NAV). The State is also responsible for some key services such as hospitals, public museums and theatres. Still, people's awareness and knowledge of some state provided services tends to be vague and they are harder to identify. Accordingly, fewer respondents answer questions about satisfaction with state provided services or report having had direct experience with them.

Out of all the services that fall under the responsibility of the state, the highest levels of satisfaction are reported with hospitals followed by the Norwegian State Education and Loan Fund, Universities as well as public museums and public theatres. In turn, some agencies in charge of managing benefits and providing assistance such as the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family fare comparatively poorly in levels of satisfaction (although still above five). The Norwegian Tax Administration and the Norwegian Customs and Excise Agency have comparatively high levels of satisfaction as reported by citizens. In the case of the tax administration, some of the interviews conducted for this study associate high levels of satisfaction with the tax agency to a successful digitalisation process whereby it is much easier for people to find personal information, calculate their taxes, tax returns are pre-filled out and there are feedback mechanisms between people and the administration.

Figure 2.20. Average levels of satisfaction at the state level

Average from 0-10



Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following state services?
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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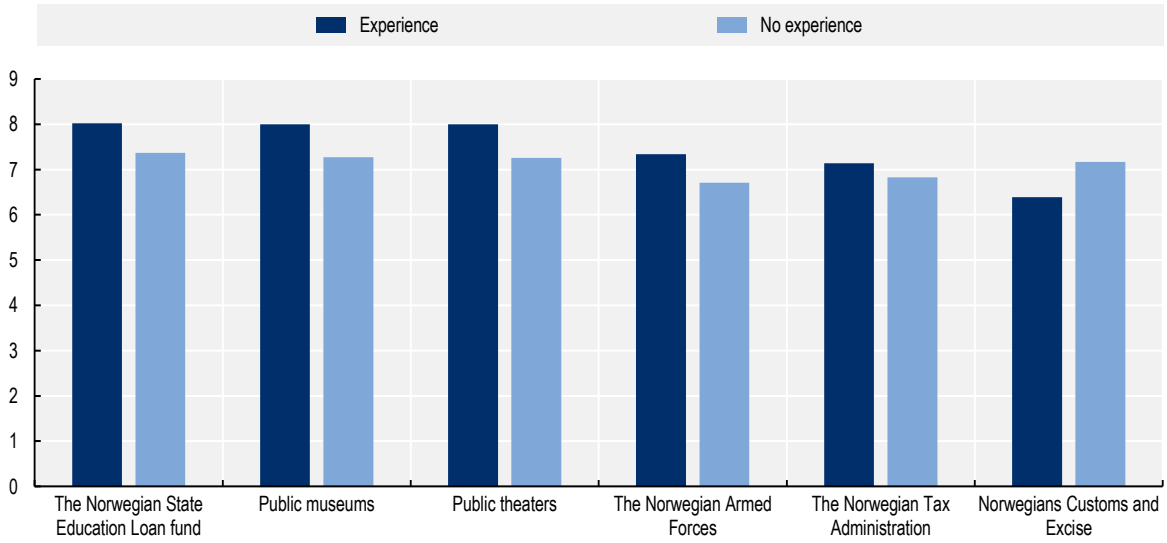
In the case of services provided by the state, in fewer instances there are differences that are statistically significant by experience (see Figure 2.21). Like municipal services, the majority of State services score high. The difference is the largest in the case of public museums and public theatres, which in turn have been used in the past 12 months by 15% and 9% of the population respectively. Some 15% of the population reports recent contact with the Norwegian Customs and Excise Agency, those with recent experience report on average lower satisfaction levels. Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that average satisfaction levels with the Custom and Excise Office have, on average, increased from 66.2% in 2017 to 69.5% in 2021 (Direktoratet for forvaltning og økonomistyrings, 2021[48]).

Figure 2.21. Average satisfaction by experience, state level services

Average from 0-10



Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following state services? Have you used any of the following services in the past 12 months? Only differences statistically significant at 95% are displayed.
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Box 2.1. The Australian Citizen Experience Survey

In 2018, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Australia launched the project of a Citizen Experience Survey with the objective of informing senior secretaries in the Centre of Government about the future of services. The baseline of the survey was established in March 2019 and data are collected every four months allowing for regular monitoring. The framework under which the survey works recognises the importance of both experience and expectations in shaping satisfaction and ultimately leading to the perception of the trustworthiness of Australian public services.

Figure 2.22. Conceptual model of the Australian Citizen Experience Survey

Source: Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Key features of the survey design are mentioned below

- People can answer the survey whether or not they have accessed services in the last twelve months
- Respondents are sourced from a non-probability panel which pays a very small financial incentive for completing (less than USD 5)
- Responses are anonymous and de-identified
- Participants are excluded from doing this survey again for at least 12 months
- The Survey takes 15-20 minutes to respond
- The questions respondents are asked are shaped by the answers they provide. In this way the survey acts a little like a 'choose your own adventure' – or 'tell us your story from your shoes'. It fully places the citizen at the centre
- The survey specifically asks people to, as best as they can, only consider their past experiences with services, and not their views on the Government or governmental policies

Source: Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The determinants of public trust in public institutions

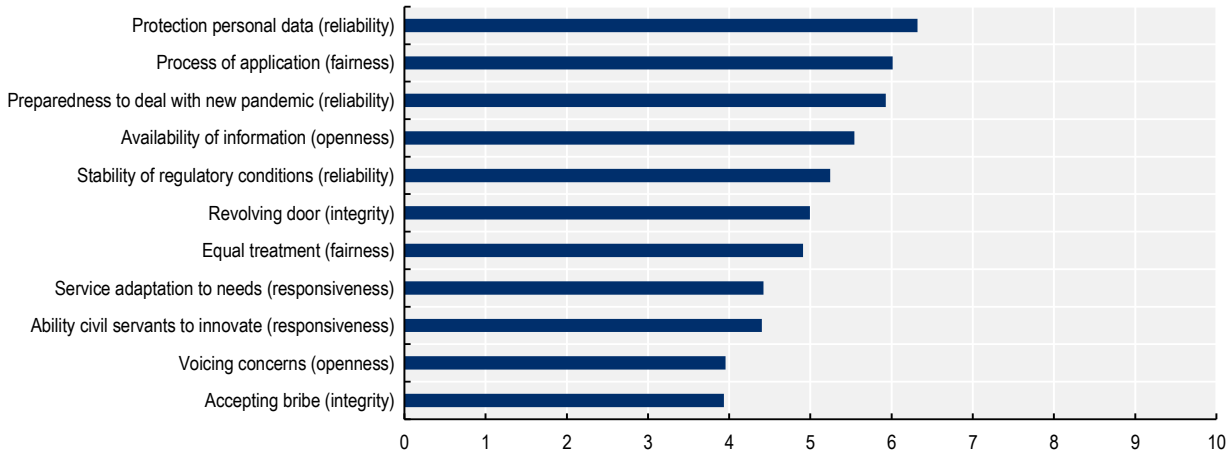
The OECD Trust Survey implemented as part of this case study makes it possible, for the first time in Norway, to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the determinants of trust. As presented in Chapter 1 the survey includes questions on trust levels of institutions (see Table 1.2) and also 11 questions on the

determinants of public trust according to the five dimensions included in the OECD Framework (see Table 1.4) on the determinants of public trust (i.e. responsiveness, reliability, openness, integrity, fairness). Respondents were asked how likely or unlikely certain events or conditions were in the case of their public sector. In Figure 2.23, the average values of the respondents' general assessment of the quality of Norway's institutional system is presented.

Questions pertaining to reliability are especially high: on average citizens feel that their institutions can be trusted to protect their data, ensure stable rules and norms, and are prepared to manage future crises, such as for example a new pandemic. All told, citizens are confident their state can be relied upon to organise the safe and orderly management of Norway's society. Citizens also believe that their state is open – as measured through the accessibility of information about public services – and that it treats citizens fairly – as measured through a question about equal treatment by public services. Level of innovation and openness to change scored less positively. Less than half of the respondents think the government would move quickly to correct problems to improve services (responsiveness), or that citizens are able to voice their concerns and influence a systematic change of services when this would be necessary (openness). Finally, integrity perceptions are mixed. Overall, respondents do not think that their members of parliament can be bribed to change their voting behaviour in the Storting; yet about half of the respondents think it is likely that politicians would accept a business job in turn for a political favour (revolving door).

Figure 2.23. Drivers of institutional trust in Norway

Average values



Note: In the case of the integrity questions respondents were asked about the likelihood of misconduct occurring so a lower value actually means it is less likely to happen.
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey. Scale ranges from 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). Weighted average values reported.

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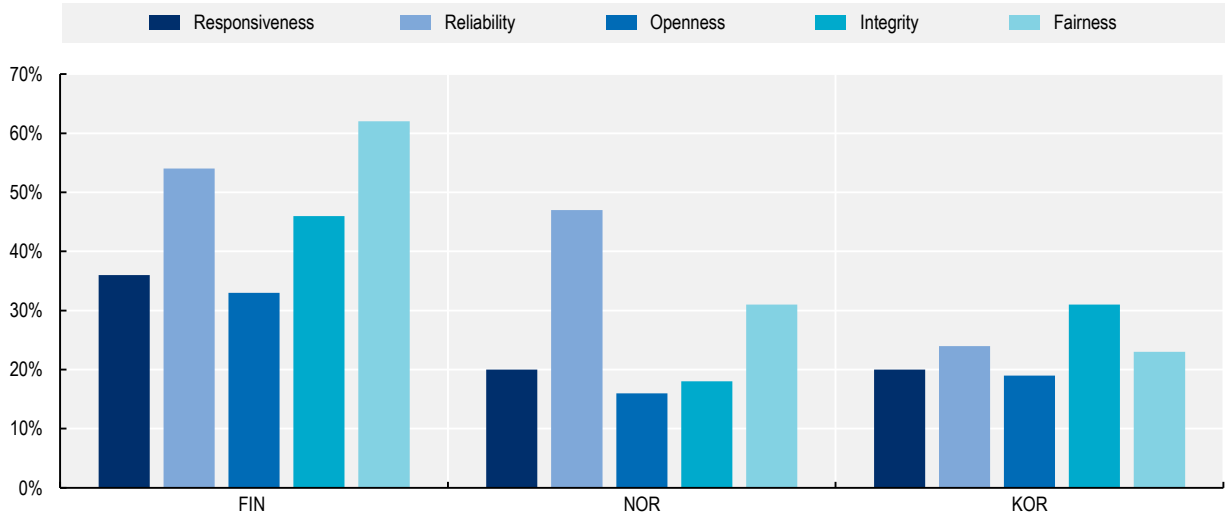
In comparative terms Norwegians are highly positive about the performance of their public services (Figure 2.24). As indicated before, reliability is high and it looks like these are the highest across a sample of OECD member states. Norway also scores well on the fairness dimension (42%), in comparison with countries such as Italy or Slovenia, but Germany and Finland (46% and 62%) do better. In contrast, only 28% of Norwegians believe that their institutions are open, while this percentage is 33% in Finland, 36% in Germany, and even 47% in the USA. For the other two dimensions, Norway's score are usually high, but not necessarily the highest for this sample of OECD countries (with Finland usually scoring the best

across these dimensions). In sum, citizens believe that their institutions are qualitative, reliable, and that administrators and politicians work for the good of citizens, but they do not believe that their institutions are innovative or very open.

Figure 2.24. Percentage of the population that believes their government is responsive, reliable, open and fair and demonstrates integrity



Notes: Data for Korea are also from 2017 and were collected by the Korean Development Institute in co-operation with the OECD. The scale used for Finland is 1-10. In the case of Finland, data are based on the special module on Trust in Public Institutions Survey, fielded by Statistics Finland in the framework of the Consumer Confidence Survey in August 2020. In the case of Norway, data are based on the Citizens Survey fielded by DFØ in the summer of 2021. Percentage of the population answering 7-10 for each of the drivers.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey; Statistics Finland; Trustlab; OECD/KDI, Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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The analysis presented in the following pages focuses on three main trust indicators. Trust in the central government is the most widely used statistic in the field of trust and captures both political and institutional factors (OECD/KDI, 2018[49]; Algan, 2018[50]). The other two main trust indicators are trust in the local government and trust in the civil service. As discussed in the previous section, municipalities play a key role in Norway in terms of service provision and interaction with people living in Norway. In turn, and considering that Norway has a comparatively large public sector, both in terms of public spending and public employment (OECD, 2021[24]) public servants (both at the central and municipal level) play a key role in policy formulation and are often the face of service provision and policy implementation. They thus play a crucial role in building the trust relationship between people and public institutions "If I cannot trust the local policemen, judges, teachers, and doctors, then whom in this society can I trust?" The ethics of public officials become central here, not only with respect to how they do their jobs but also to the signals they send to citizens about what kind of "game" is being played in the society" (Rothstein, 2013[51]).

Trust in the central government

Figure 2.25 displays the key determinants of trust in government. Reliability or government preparedness to adress future challenges stand as the most important determinant of trust in government in Norway. An increase of one standard deviation in government's reliability could lead to an increase of about 0.5 points in trust in government. The question capturing this aspect relates specifically to the potential spread in Norway of a new contagious disease and how likely it is that government institutions will be prepared to protect people's lives. Considering that the survey was conducted during the spring and early summer of 2021 it is no surprise that the COVID-19 outbreak is still vivid in people's minds and affected people's

response. While overall it is recognised that the authorities have handled the pandemic well, it is also acknowledged that they were unprepared when the COVID-19 emergency arrived (Corona Commission, 2021[52]). It is expected that crises will become more common. Accordingly, further strengthening preparedness and assessing potential risks for the society at large will be important in preserving trust in government.

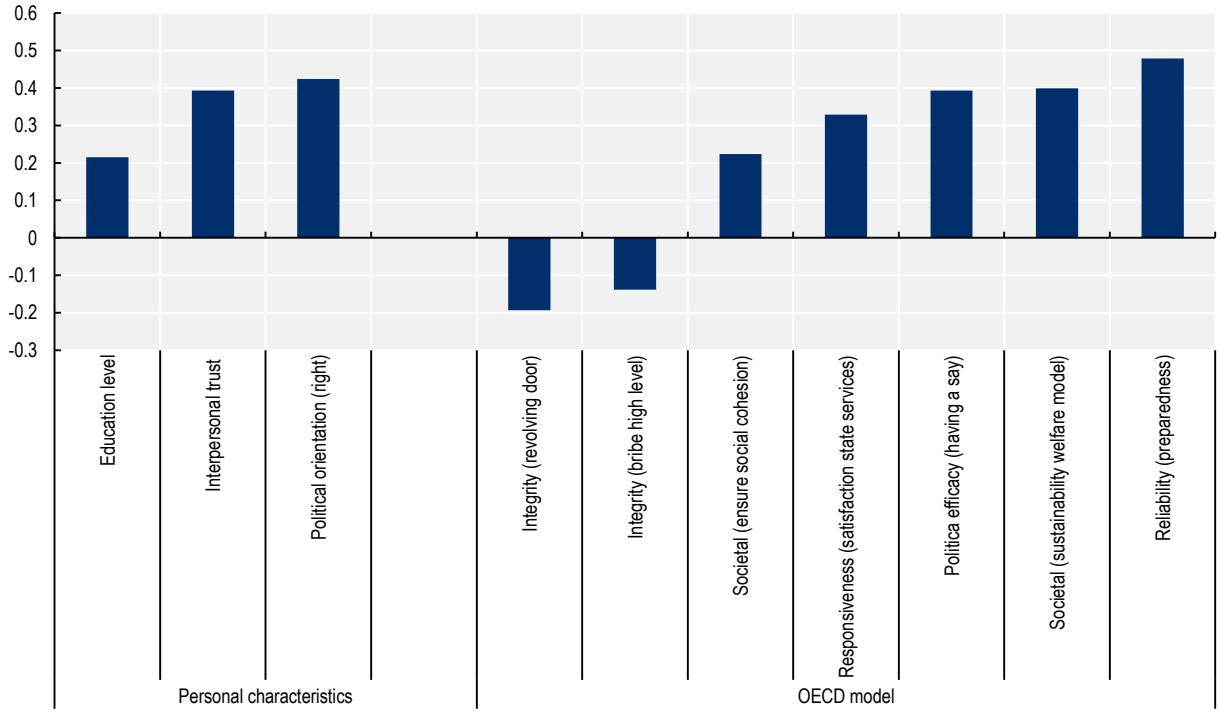
Other factors influencing levels of trust in government are the extent to which public institutions are perceived as doing enough to ensure the sustainability of the welfare system. Norway has a comprehensive and generous welfare system that contributes to equality, reducing poverty, minimising uncertainty and enhancing well-being. Such systems, alongside complementary measures, have cushioned the effects of the economic downturn brought on by COVID-19. Still, pressures exist regarding the sustainability of the welfare system as well as the need to rethink them in view of socioeconomic changes and developments (Kangas and Kvist, 2018[53]). Evidence suggests that economic crises that lead to welfare retrenchment hurt trust in government while, in turn, positive experiences of good welfare performance positively influence trust levels (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017[26]). Accordingly, the evolution and performance of the welfare system will be key for maintaining high levels of trust in government in Norway.

The policy making style in Norway is characterised by collaboration, consultation and the involvement of affected stakeholders. Norwegians display the third-highest levels of external political efficacy among OECD countries (OECD, 2021[24]). Ensuring that active and functional mechanisms through which people could have their voice heard persist and are reinforced, which is critical to maintaining and strengthening levels of trust in government. The perception of having a say in what the government does is the third-largest determinant of trust in government.

In turn, perceived corruption or expected lack of integrity has the potential to undermine trust levels. Both of the integrity questions included as part of the OECD trust survey are statistically significant with the expected negative sign (expectations of corruption or misconduct diminish trust levels) and added together are the fourth-most important determinant of trust in government. While levels of integrity in Norway are comparatively high, there are risks that concerns will increase about corruption, which could be triggered by repeated episodes of misconduct by politicians or bureaucrats. This could affect democratic legitimacy and trust (Linde and Erlingsson, 2013[54]). In turn, some personal characteristics influence levels of trust in government. The more people report to be politically on the right the higher the trust in the government, one plausible explanation is that at the moment of the data collection the governing coalition was led by the right. In turn, levels of interpersonal trust also influence institutional trust, this is consistent with views arguing that trust in others is a necessary condition for the development of trust in institutions. In short, institutional trust stems from interpersonal trust (Fukuyama, 1996[55]).

Figure 2.25. The determinants of trust in government in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in…



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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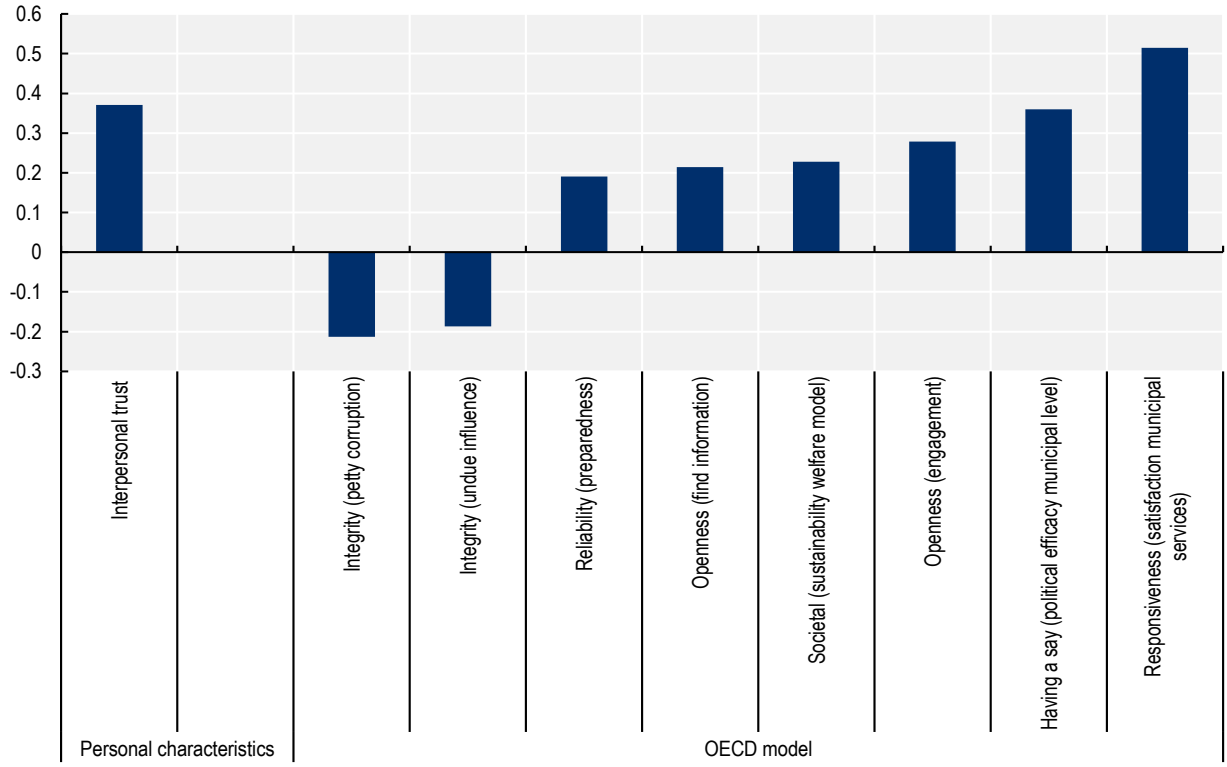
Trust in the local government

Trust in the local government is influenced by a different mix of determinants. Satisfaction with municipal services stands as the most important driver of institutional trust (see Figure 2.26). Such a result underscores the crucial role played by services in shaping people's appraisal of public institutions and the crucial role they play in preserving the trust relationship. External political efficacy at the municipal level stands as the second most important determinant of trust in the local government and further confirms the importance of having channels for people to influence policy making. Along the same lines, both of the openness components in terms of availability of information and engagement opportunities have a statistically significant effect on trust in the local government and, taken together, represent the most important driver. Focusing on satisfying citizens' expectations regarding democratic decision making possibilities is important for strengthening trust in the local level. In turn, further strengthening people's sense of empowerment to influence governmental systems may help translate openness efforts into higher trust (Schmidthuber, Ingrams and Hilgers, 2020[56]).

Figure 2.26. The determinants of trust in the local government in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in….



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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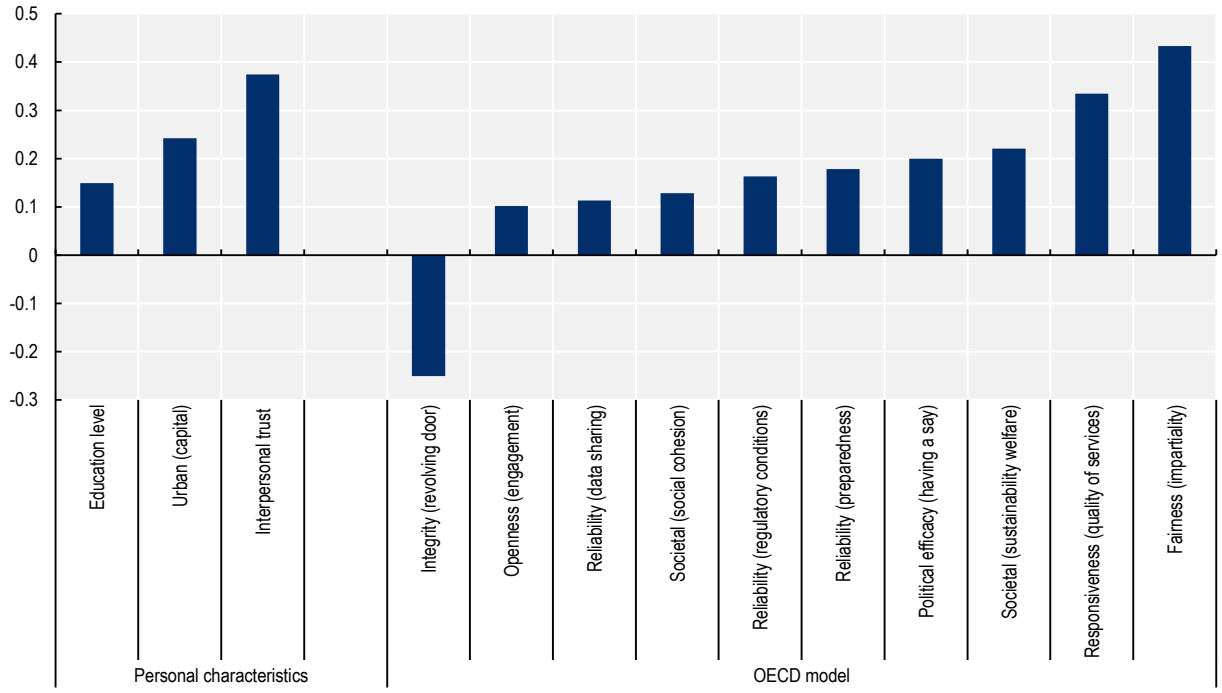
Trust in the civil service

The third institution analysed as part of this case study is the civil service (both at the municipal and national level). In Norway, the civil service is considered meritocratic and professional and the level of mutual trust between agencies, and between agencies and ministries (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005[11]). The most important determinant of trust in the civil service corresponds to the fairness dimension of the OECD trust framework and refers to impartiality of treatment when addressing the administration. Accordingly, an increase of one standard deviation in expectation of impartial treatment will lead to an increase of 0.43 points in public trust (see Figure 2.27). The second most important determinant is the responsiveness of public services or the extent to which they respond to people's complaints. When people believe that public institutions are doing enough to ensure the sustainability of the welfare system they are more likely to trust the civil service. Factors that lead to more trust in the civil service include: the preparedness to cope with future risks (e.g. new contagious diseases), stability of regulatory conditions and a reliable use of personal data shared with the administration. In turn, levels of external political efficacy (e.g. having a say in what the government does) both at the central and local government levels also increase levels of trust in the civil service.

When people expect their politicians and officials to engage in misconduct, it affects levels of trust in the civil service and indicates the importance of considering integrity risks. People living in Oslo and those with higher levels of education have higher levels of trust in the civil service. According to some of the interviews carried out for this study, this could be explained by the fact that people in Oslo live closer to a wider number and variety of government agencies and more educated people find it easier to understand the different instances, requirements and jargon of the administration.

Figure 2.27. The determinants of trust in the civil service in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in….



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Comparative analysis of institutional trust determinants

Table 2.1 shows the determinants of trust levels in the three institutions studied as well as those factors that are overlapping. The positive sign within brackets indicates the institution for which the coefficient is larger. Political orientation (being further to the right) only shows significance for trust in government. In turn, aspects capturing satisfaction with services or openness (access to information and engagement) are stronger as determinants of public trust in the case of trust in the local government. Impartiality of treatment (fairness) and all aspects measuring the reliability dimension have a positive influence in trust in the civil service.

Table 2.1. Comparison of the determinants of trust in public institutions in Norway

	Trust in government	Trust in local government	Trust in civil service
Personal characteristics			
Education level	(+)		
Interpersonal trust	(+)		
Political orientation (right)			
Urban (capital)			
Institutional characteristics (OECD model)			
Member of storting/or at the municipal level accepting bribe (lack of integrity)		(+)	
High level politician/or at the municipal level exerting influence (lack of integrity)			(+)
Service adaptation (responsiveness)			
Satisfaction services (responsiveness)		(+)	
Preparedeness to fight a new disease (reliability)	(+)		
Stability of regulatory conditions (reliability)			
Protection of shared data (reliability)			
Engagement issues affecting community (openness)		(+)	
Finding information (openness)			
Impartiality of treatment (fairness)			
Having a say (political efficacy)	(+)		
Societal (sustainability welfare model)	(+)		
Societal (ensure social cohesion)	(+)		

Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government, the local government and the civil service in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. + presents the institution for which the coefficient is the highest.

Variables that influence trust in government in a single institution

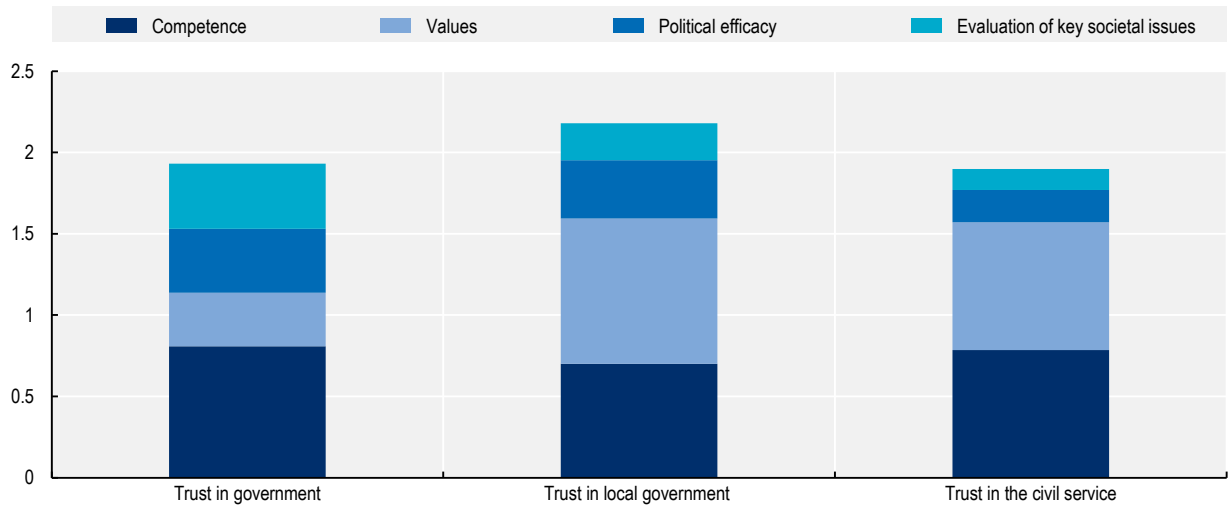
Variables that influence trust in more than one institution

Figure 2.28 presents the expected changes in the level of trust in government, local government and the civil service following a one standard deviation increase in each of the factors that are statistically significant. For example, if the different components of competence (i.e. responsiveness and reliability) increased by one standard deviation, trust in national government would increase by 0.81 points. Similarly, if significant components of values (i.e. absolute value of integrity) increased by one standard deviation, trust would change by 0.33 points. A change of one standard deviation in the evaluation of the role of public institutions in key societal trends, in particular expectations about the sustainability of the welfare system and preserving social cohesion would improve trust by 0.40 points, the largest relative change for the three institutions under consideration.

In the case of trust in the local government, increases of one standard deviation of 'values' components, specifically openness and integrity will lead to an increase of trust in the local government of 0.84 points compared to changes in competences (i.e. responsiveness and reliability) that will influence trust in the local government by 0.70 points. In the case of the civil service, both changes in values (0.79) and competences (0.79) have an equivalent effect in trust levels. Changes in external political efficacy have a higher relative effect on trust levels in government (0.40) and the local government (0.36) than in the civil service (0.20). Compared to other countries with similar administrative traditions and cultural contexts there are some similarities and differences in the key determinants of institutional trust (see Box 2.2).

Figure 2.28. The determinants of self-reported trust in public institutions in Norway…

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation in aggregate policy dimensions or other determinants



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government, the local government and the civil service in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey. The integrity component that has negative coefficients is treated in absolute values.

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Box 2.2. The Determinants of Trust in Public Institutions in Finland

In 2020, the OECD in co-operation with the Ministry of Finance in Finland carried out a case study on the determinants of public trust in Finland, which was also based on the OECD Trust survey. Like Norway, Finland is a high trusting society where institutional trust is a cornerstone of the administrative culture. In Finland the so-called Finnish paradox was identified showing that although the country has comparatively high levels of institutional trust, the levels of political efficacy are low and participation through formal mechanisms has been diminishing. The report shows that different elements of government competences and values are important for building institutional trust in Finland. The Finnish government has put together an inter-agency expert group to advance in the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the report, some of which are included below.

- Keep measuring people's trust in government, in order to identify pockets of distrust that may fracture the Finnish social contract. Strengthen the role of institutional trust as a key element for collectively addressing the societal transformations in Finland (e.g. ageing, climate change, a more diverse society).
- Take a cohesive approach to service design and delivery in the digital age, such as setting standards, guidelines and initiatives to secure people's involvement across the design and delivery of services.
- Reinforce and promote the core values of serving people as part of the administrative culture and profile and display the work carried out by the administration, including during crises. Address the noxious effects brought about by hate speech and higher exposure of civil servants through social media.

- Reform the design process of government programmes by clarifying responsibilities and enhancing dialogue between the political leadership and the senior civil service to facilitate the inclusion of subjects such as climate change, intergenerational justice, equality, etc. in the recovery plans.
- Strengthening political efficacy by engaging citizens in policy choices and monitoring results, and by giving regular feedback on inputs provided by civil society.
- Public accountability and transparency can be reinforced by focusing on results rather than processes, fostering innovation and experimentation in the civil service, and identifying clear and measurable results to be monitored in user-friendly and open source formats.
- Strengthening existing structures and adopting a systemic and unified approach that focuses on longer scenarios would strengthen foresight exercises.
- Strengthen the Finnish culture of public integrity by clarifying the existing channels for reporting wrongdoing and improving the measures for managing conflicts of interest and pre- and post-public employment.
- Secure equality in the availability of and participation in early childhood education as well upper secondary education. Implement specific protective measures in the school transitions of children and young people with an immigrant background.
- Finland could repeat the OECD trust survey in the future as regular monitoring tools to evaluate governance outcomes, identify levers for change and improve evidence-based decision making.

Source: OECD (2021[27]), *The Determinants of trust in public institutions in Finland*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-en.

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Notes

[1] The relative order of trust in different institutions varies by sources. For example according to the 2019 Norwegian elections study trust in the municipal council is 5.7 on average (same value as in the OECD trust survey) but in this case higher than trust in the national parliament (5.5) and the national government (5.4). These discrepancies demostrate that trust level fluctuate. A potential source explaining these discrepancies refers to the timing of the surveys, trust tends to be higher after elections, which can influence the trust averages in local election studies while the OECD trust survey was fielded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[2] Recent versions of the OECD Trust survey have included a variation by formulating the question in terms of "the news media"

[3] https://search.nsd.no/study/NSD2546

3 Competences and trust in Norway

This chapter builds on the empirical analysis carried out for this case study. It deepens the analysis in a key dimension that drives institutional trust: competence. This encompasses responsiveness, or government's ability to deliver services at the quality level that people expect, and reliability, or the effective management of social, economic and political uncertainty, all while incorporating evolving needs and addressing future challenges. It discusses several trends with the potential of influencing public trust: the effects of municipal mergers and the police reform. Digitalisation needs to be accelerated with a focus on inclusive, data driven and proactive service. It is also important to overcome barriers to innovation within the administration and further focus on mission-related tasks instead of processes and compliance. It also looks at the need to review policy-making processes and enhance preparedness, which are essential tools for addressing complex multidimensional challenges ahead.

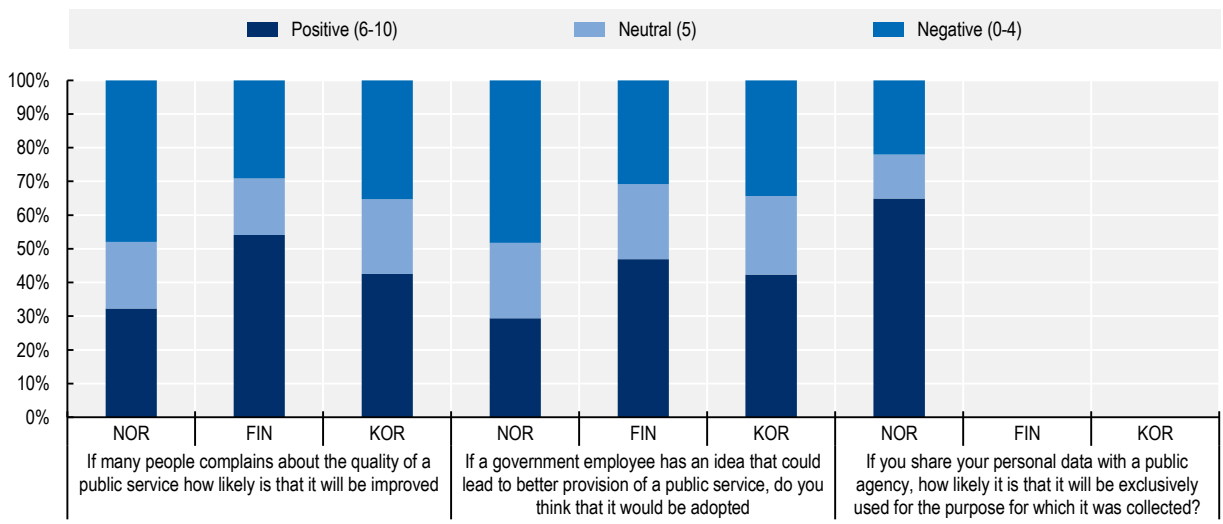
Responsiveness

Responsiveness reflects the core objective of the public administration: to serve citizens and deliver the services that are needed and expected (OECD, 2017[1]). The OECD Trust survey formulates the responsiveness questions in terms of the development and adaptability of services to people's needs and expectations as well as the experience and overall satisfaction with services provided at different levels. Three questions in the OECD Trust survey could be associated with elements of the responsiveness dimension.

- If many people complain about the quality of a public service how likely will it be improved?
- If a government employee has an idea that could lead to better provision of a public service, do you think that it would be adopted?
- If you share your personal data with a public agency, how likely will it be exclusively used for the purpose for which it was collected?

The percentage of the population considering that services will be adapted following people's complaints in Norway (Figure 3.1) is comparatively low (32% compared to 39% in Korea and 53% in Finland). Similarly, only about one-third of people in Norway believe that if a civil servant has an idea that could lead to better provision of services it will be implemented, compared to 45% in Finland and 40% in Korea. This last result could reflect different things including lack of innovation but also the fact that innovation processes are not transparent and consequently not known by people. Still, despite the fact that satisfaction with public services tends to be high in Norway (see Chapter 2), the perceived responsiveness is comparatively low (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Percentage of the population who are positive, neutral or negative about the following



Note: The scale in Finland was 1-10; the negative category covers 1-4.
Source: OECD Trust survey applied in the Norwegian Citizens Survey and in the Finnish Consumer Confidence Survey. Date for Norway are 2021. Data for Finland are 2020. Data for Korea were collected by OECD and KDI in 2017.

StatLink https://stat.link/umfx3t

Furthermore, according to the empirical results presented in Chapter 2, the extent to which people are satisfied with services and/or believe that services will be adapted following their feedback and in line with their expectations is amongst the dimensions with the largest influence on trust in Norway. An increase of one standard deviation in satisfaction levels would be associated with an increase of 0.51 points in trust in

the local government, on a scale from 0-10. Service responsiveness is also the driver with the second highest relative effect of trust in the civil service and although the effect is somewhat weaker, it is also significant for the national government.

The combination of the survey results, the interviews conducted as part of this study as well as information from secondary sources led to the identification of three transformations of public services in Norway that can enhance and maintain public trust. These are: 1) guaranteeing high quality and sustainable services as the basis of an inclusive, people-centred society; 2) strengthening already high levels of digitalisation with a focus on a data driven and proactive approach to further developing seamless services. 3) strengthening a culture of public sector innovation through an enabling environment, better co-ordination and enhanced skills and capabilities.

Maintaining high quality and sustainable services as the basis of a people-centred society

The public sector in Norway is amongst the largest of OECD member countries both in terms of public spending and public employment (OECD, 2021[2]). Income and profit taxes represent 41.7% of total taxation, which is above OECD average amounting to 34.1% (OECD, 2021[2]). In addition, to this relatively high levels of direct taxation, Norway can resort to additional financial resources from the oil derived wealth fund that grants further room for manoeuvre to finance public spending. Public funds play a key role in funding services that are - to a large extent - free of cost and accessible to the whole population.

Even before the shock brought about by COVID-19 it was recognised that sustaining the high levels of economic output and comprehensive public services, key to Norway's wellbeing, was fiscally challenging (OECD, 2019[3]). In addition to the volatility of oil prices, this is attributed to continued weak productivity growth, relatively high labour costs, plus weakening labour-force participation all of which were signalled as elements weakening economic capacity to support high quality outcomes that are crucial for maintaining high levels of wellbeing (OECD, 2019[3]). In turn, the additional fiscal effort required to mitigate the pandemic's effects will further reduce fiscal space and means that spending will have to become more strategic.

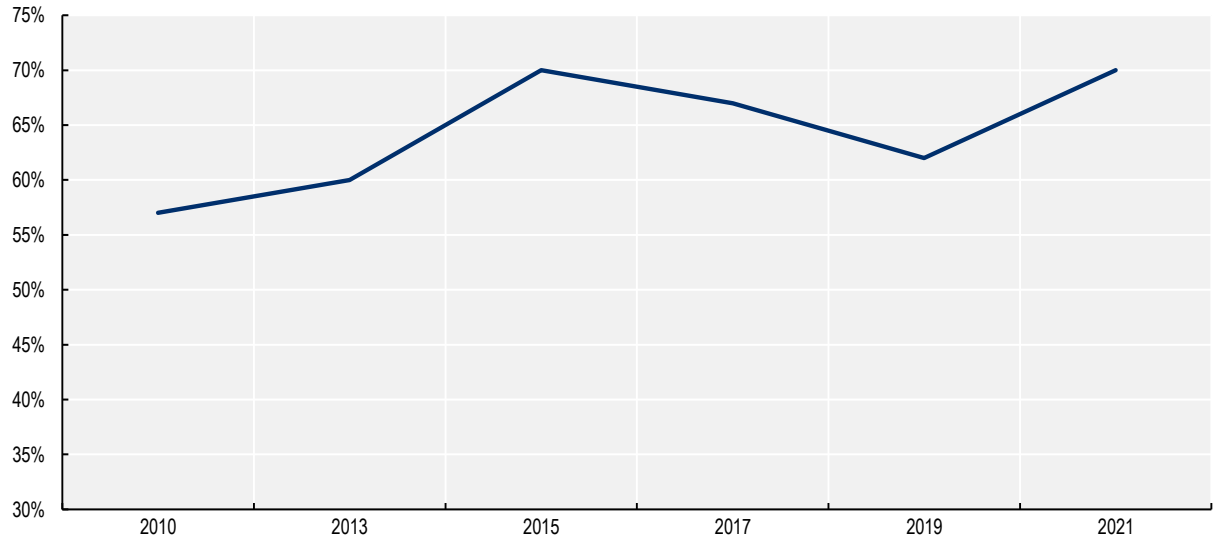
Still, high quality services remain a cornerstone of the Norwegian welfare system. They maintain low levels of inequality and poverty, enhance social cohesion and - as showed in the previous section - influence levels of trust in different institutions. Throughout the interviews carried out for this study two past reforms whose effects are being felt now (and whose next phases are being considered) were highlighted as having the potential of affecting levels of institutional trust. These include the reform of the police services and the local government reforms encompassing the municipal structural reform and the regional structural reform, which have resulted in the mergers of several municipalities and changes in the counties' structure.

The reform of the police service was adopted in 2015 following the report of an independent commission that was established in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 2011. It consists of two parts: one part concerning the organisational structure of the police and another one concerning the quality of services, police work and management. Accordingly, the main aims were to create a more centralised and robust police force, with greater focus on efficiency, emergency preparedness and resilience as well as a more visible and local police presence (Christensen, Laegreid and Rykkja, 2018[4]; DFO, 2021[5]). The reform resulted in larger police districts, fewer police stations and less local presence, which led to less frequent contact between people and police officers. According to a recent DFO report, the reform has been successful in creating more robust professional environments that could handle more complex cases while the goal of enhancing the local presence has not been reached (DFO, 2021[5]). The latter is consistent with an earlier report that showed that about 80% of police officers strongly disagree or slightly disagree with the statement that "the reform provides a better police offer" (OSLOMET, 2019[6]).

Still, as shown in Figure 2.1, in 2021, the police displayed the second highest level of institutional trust in Norway, following the courts. Data from the different waves of the Citizens survey shows the percentage of the population satisfied with police services decreased from 70% in 2015, when the reform was adopted, to 62% in 2019 (Figure 3.2). The 2021 data shows a spike to about the same level as in 2015. However, as the data, which are still comparatively high, were collected in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic it could reflect an assessment carried out during very specific circumstances (e.g. more time spent at home, fewer overall situations requiring police intervention and police forces working on COVID-19 related tasks). It will, therefore, be important to monitor the evolution of this indicator over time.

The reform sheds light on the tension between reaction capacity and governance legitimacy by maintaining direct contact with people (Christensen, Laegreid and Rykkja, 2018[4]). Preserving and enhancing the trustworthiness of the police will rely on the objectives being achieved concomitantly. Communicating to people the objectives of the reform jointly and further progressing in improving local presence are important steps in this direction.

Figure 3.2. Percentage of the population that is satisfied with the police, 2010-21



Note: To make scales across different waves compatible they are reduced to three categories: satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied.
Source: OECD calculations based on different waves of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

StatLink https://stat.link/42k6t1

As previously indicated, satisfaction with municipal services is the most important determinant of trust in the local government.

There are a number of ways that governments can build scale to manage issues of public service cost, mix and quality. The most common ways involve various formats of inter-municipal co-operation and municipal mergers, either voluntary or mandatory. In addition, another option, which is chosen by some countries, is merging municipalities but keeping the former municipalities as sub-municipal entities or districts. Each has its pros and cons. Municipal mergers can lead to larger scale and cost savings in municipal service delivery. Many OECD countries carried out municipal merger reforms in recent decades (OECD, 2017[7]). Motivated by different reasons and with varied results, these processes followed different approaches: 1) compulsory mergers led by the central government (Japan, New Zealand); 2) voluntary

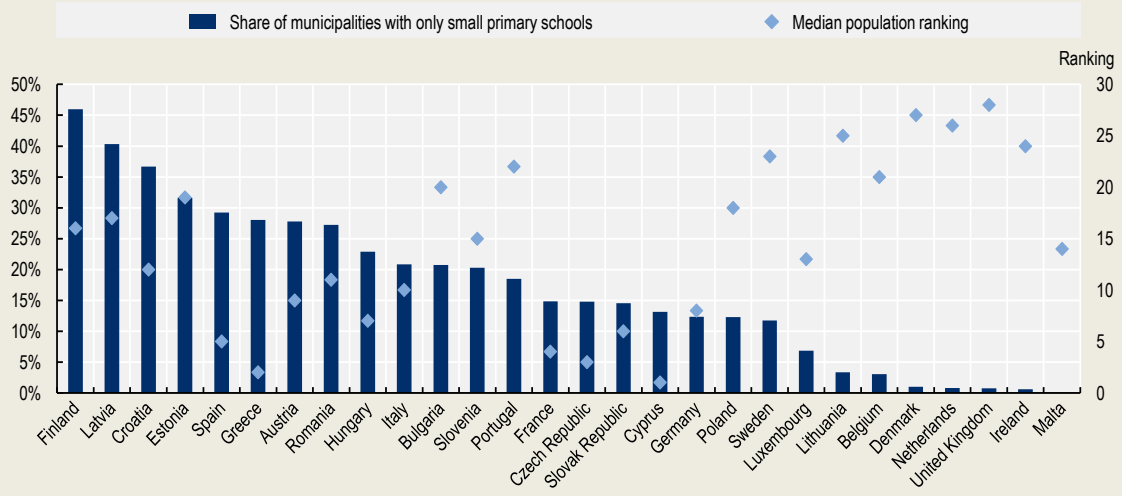
processes with strong incentives (France, Iceland); and 3) mixed or "two-step" processes with mandatory and voluntary phases (Estonia, Denmark, Finland), see Box 3.1.

Box 3.1. Municipal mergers and service delivery

The relationship between municipal size and service provision. Recent OECD estimations show that countries with sparse rural areas and relatively smaller shares of school age population face the largest costs of education provision, linked to a higher number of small rural schools. Moreover, the share of municipalities with small schools is relatively large not only in sparsely populated countries with considerable municipal fragmentation, including Spain and Greece, but also in countries that have undergone municipal consolidation reforms, including Finland and Estonia (OECD, 2021[2]). The difference between the two cases lies in the absolute number of municipalities providing education on a small scale (i.e. hundreds of municipalities in the case of highly fragmented countries facing a decline in the number of students such as Spain) and the consequent need for co-ordination to increase the scale of provision where feasible.

Figure 3.3. Share of municipalities with only small primary schools vs. median municipality size ranking, EU27+UK

2018 LAU2 boundaries and population; 2011 school data



Note: A small primary school has an average cohort of less than 21.4 students.
Source: (OECD/EC-JRC, 2021[8]) based on (Goujon A., Jacobs-Crisioni C., Natale F., Lavalle C. (Eds), 2021[9]) and (Jacobs-Crisioni, C., C. Perpiña Castillo, J.-P. Aurambout, C. Lavalle, C. Baranzelli, and F. Batista e Silva, n.d.[10]).

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Additional mechanisms to build scale for public service delivery and Inter-municipal co-operation

Besides mergers that may be politically difficult to carry out, inter-municipal co-operation can bring many advantages. It helps generate economies of scale, efficiency and quality gains and cost savings while preserving municipal identity and proximity. Inter-municipal co-operation is also a flexible solution. As times change, co-operation can be strengthened, scaled back or ended according to the needs of co-operating partners (OECD, 2020[11]). Many national governments in the OECD promote inter-municipal co-operation by improving legal frameworks, spreading the values and benefits of co-operation amongst

mayors, and providing incentives for partnership. Examples of countries with the most integrated forms of inter-municipal co-operation are France, Italy, Portugal and Spain (OECD, 2021[12]; OECD, 2019[13]).

Sub-municipal governance

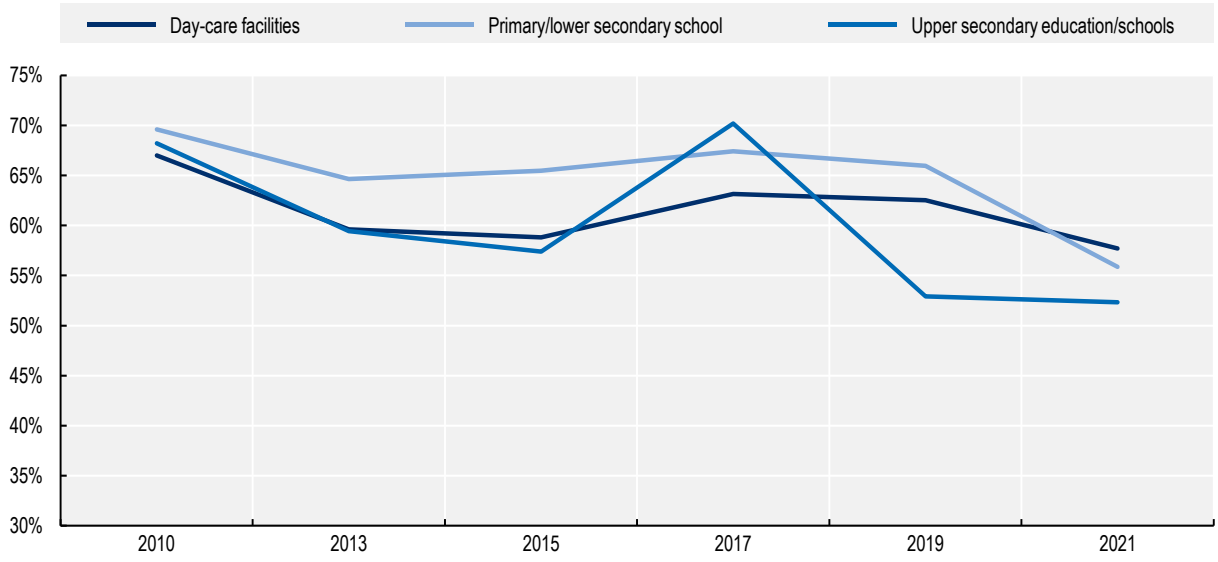
Several EU and OECD countries have municipal administrative subdivisions, especially countries with predominantly large municipalities. This type of sub-municipal governance can be a very innovative tool if well designed and implemented. Sub-municipal units are often former municipalities that have been merged and now depend on a "mother municipality". Although they have lost their self-governing status, they maintain a certain level of proximity in particular in remote and isolated areas to better address local needs in terms of basic services and to overcome issues related to community identity, historical legacies, traditions, local democracy and trust. This form of sub-municipal governance exists in the United Kingdom (parishes), France (*communes nouvelles*), Portugal (*freguesias*) and many other countries (OECD, 2021[12]).

A second reform area that was mentioned as having the capacity to affect access to services and influence public trust are the local government reforms. These reforms started in 2014 and 2015 and by 2020 had led to a reduction in the number of municipalities from 428 to 356 municipalities and from 19 to 11 counties. The reforms were directed at transferring power and responsibility to municipalities that are larger and therefore could achieve economies of scale. Among the main objectives of the reform were as follows a) providing good equal services for inhabitants today and in the future; b) comprehensive and co-ordinated community development c) sustainable and financially solid municipalities and d) strengthening local democracy and giving municipalities more power; e) strengthen the counties' roles as community developers and facilitate better collaboration amongst municipalities.

The nation-wide local government reform, particularly the municipal component, entailed that all municipalities made merger decisions within a limited time. Decisions to merge were voluntary and municipalities were allowed to express their preferences. Decisions to merge were taken through participatory processes including broader public consultations through referenda or surveys in most municipalities (Dahl Fitjar, 2021[14]). In the case of suburban areas the reform led to relatively few mergers as central cities tend to provide public goods that suburban areas can also enjoy (e.g. infrastructure, cultural institutions) without funding them. Accordingly, only one such merger between a central city and its preferred suburban partner took place. Merger decisions were not found to be correlated with the responsiveness of local politicians or satisfaction with public services (Dahl Fitjar, 2021[14]).

The evolution of satisfaction with municipally provided services shows mix patterns. Compared to 2010, levels of satisfaction with day-care facilities, primary/lower secondary schools and upper secondary education schools was lower in 2021 (see Figure 3.4) and could be partly reflecting that education institutions were closed at several instances during the COVID-19 pandemic. In turn, satisfaction with higher education is the lowest of all education services considered (just above half of the population). The OECD found recently that there is a need in Norway to promote efficiency and quality in higher education, address social differences and strengthen interactions with businesses and the community (OECD, 2019[15]).

Figure 3.4. Percentage of the population satisfied with education services, 2010-21



Note: To make scales across different waves compatible they are reduced to three categories: satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied.
Source: OECD calculations based on different waves of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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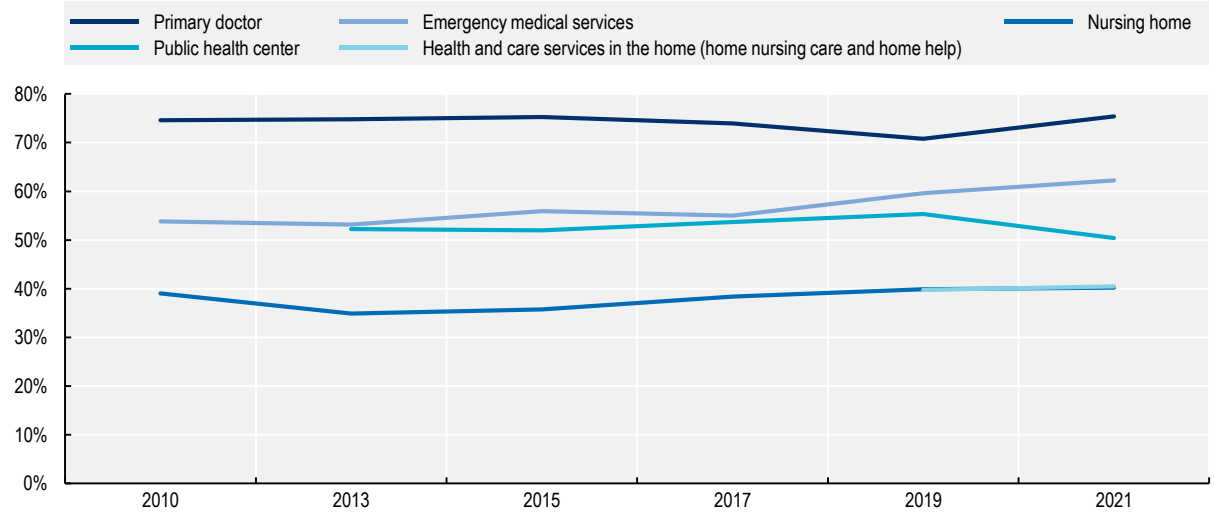
In turn, in the case of health services satisfaction levels remain rather stable over time, with some perceived increases both for primary doctors (general practitioners) and emergency rooms both highly requested during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 3.5). Overall, health coverage is very comprehensive and out of pocket spending is low for users. In addition, health indicators are comparatively good in Norway while a key challenge is the sustainability of health care spending. Health spending has outpaced economic growth over the past decade and looking ahead demographic, technological and other factors are projected to add pressure on health and long-term care spending in the medium to long run (OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2019[16]).

Figure 3.5. Percentage of the population satisfied with health services, 2010-21



Note: To make scales across different waves compatible they are reduced to three categories: satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied.
Source: OECD calculations based on different waves of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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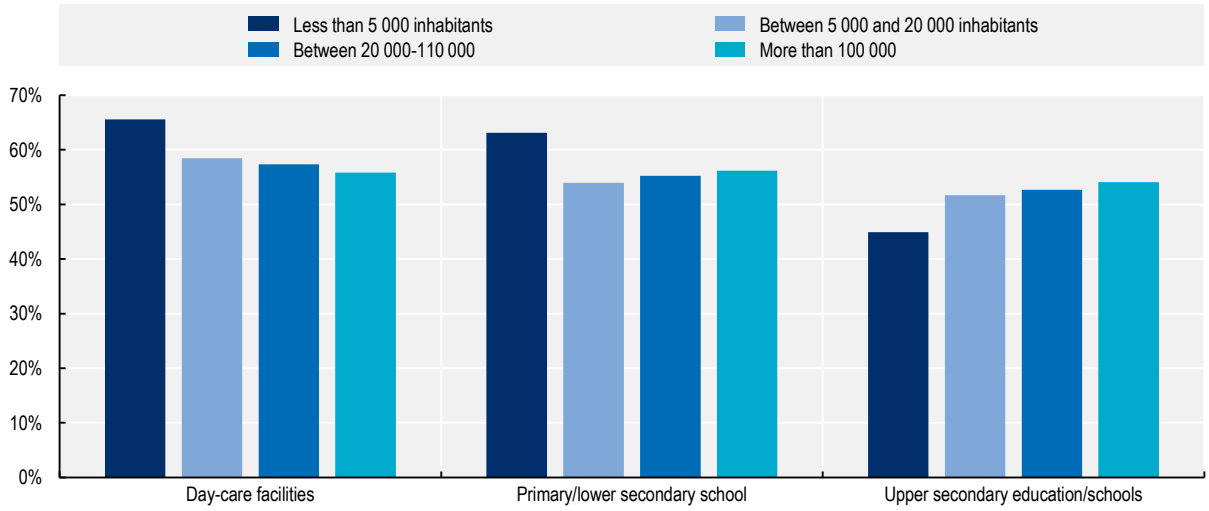
In the case of small municipalities, one of the key concerns expressed in the interviews carried out for this study as a potential risk of mergers refers to losing proximity with public services as well as losing frequent contact with public institutions. On the contrary, it is also argued that larger municipalities allow for more specialisation of services, for example in the health sector, and higher formal competencies amongst staff providing services (Sogstad, Hellesø and Sundlisæter Skinner, 2020[17]). Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of the population satisfied with education services by size of municipalities measured by population size. People in smaller municipalities tend to be satisfied with education services for lower levels of education while the trend is the opposite for more complex services, such as those provided by upper secondary schools (see Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.6. Percentage of the population satisfied with education services by size of municipality, 2021



Note: The reference group is municipalities with less than 5 000 inhabitants, differences between this group and all others are statistically significant at 95%.

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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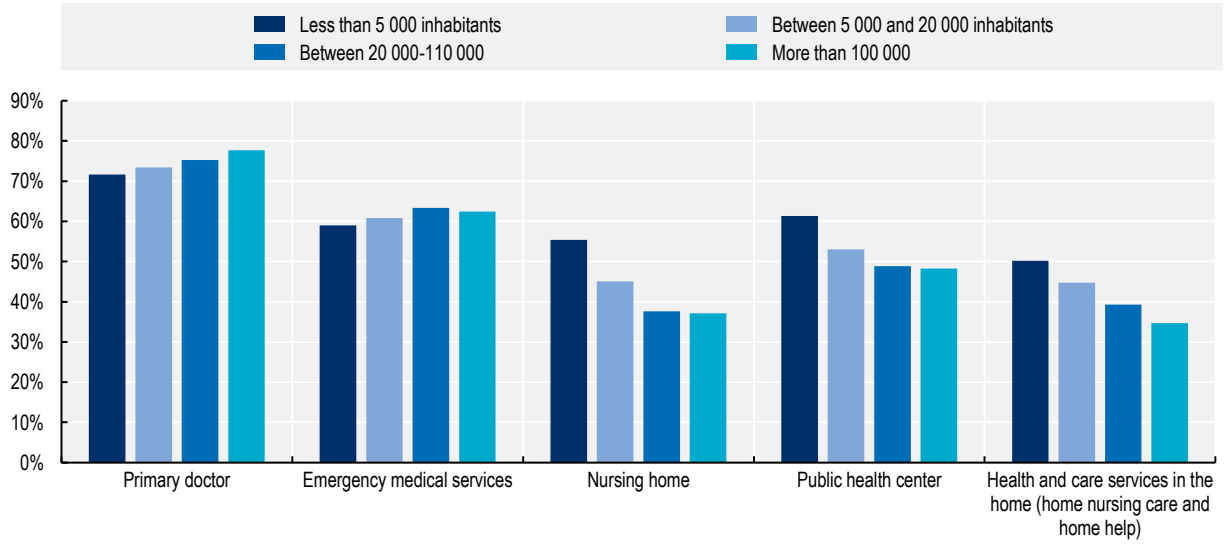
The scenario is slightly different for health services as people in larger municipalities report higher satisfaction levels with general practitioners and emergency services than people in smaller towns. These differences are most likely associated to easiness of access given wider availability of facilities and professionals. However, when it comes to regular health facilities (i.e. public health centre) or long-term care facilities (i.e. nursing home and health and care services at home) people in smaller municipalities report higher satisfaction levels. As these tend to be long-term arrangements, coping with them may be easier in smaller places.

Figure 3.7. Percentage of the population satisfied with health services by size of municipality, 2021



Note: The reference group is municipalities with less than 5 000 inhabitants, differences between this group and all others are statistically significant at 95%.
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Smaller municipalities, particularly in remote areas, tend to face limited economies of scale and scope in the provision of local public services. This can affect the quality, quantity or mix of services provided, and potentially affect the level of trust in national, regional and municipal government. A stream of the fiscal decentralisation literature argues that fragmentation could enhance local growth as a local government closer to people can implement policies that are better aligned with expectations and provide goods and services in a better way and therefore enhance institutional trust. On the other hand, too much fragmentation could lead to policy fragmentation, overlapping functions and inefficiencies in the use of resources. Empirical evidence has found that municipal fragmentation has a negative effect on GDP (Bartolini, 2015[18]). However, this is conditional on the degree of rurality as the negative impact of fragmentation decreases with the share of population living in rural areas to the point of being mildly positive in extremely rural regions. Accordingly, rather than a one-size-fits-all policy of municipal agglomeration, a place-based approach to institutional reform is preferred so the urban/rural characteristics of each region are taken into consideration (Bartolini, 2015[18]). In Box 3.2 the example of the 2017 Estonian administrative reform (Box 3.1) displays how a combination of 'context mindful' mergers and inter municipal co-operation can contribute to ensuring high quality services are delivered while preserving public trust.

Box 3.2. The 2017 Administrative reform in Estonia

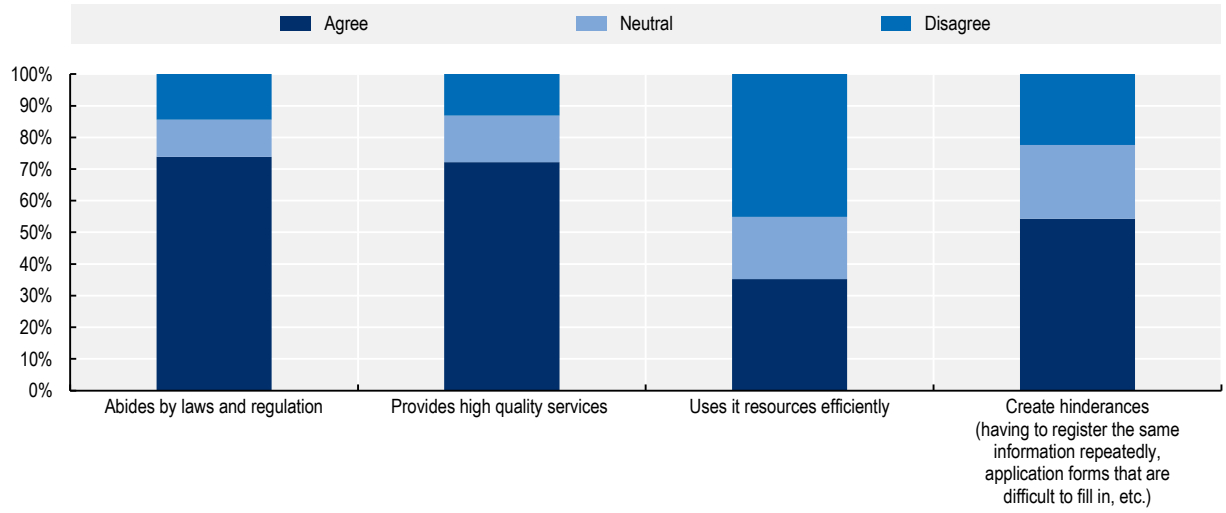
Since its independence in 1991, Estonia has been engaged in a political debate about its multi-level governance model. Between 1995 and 2014, successive governments attempted to reform the Estonian subnational government structure, notably to reduce the number of municipalities through voluntary municipal mergers, but without much success. Finally, the *Administrative Reform Act*, adopted in June 2016 by the Parliament (Riigikogu), introduced a minimum municipal population size of 5 000 inhabitants and 11 000 as a recommended size. The reform, carried out in 2017, significantly changed the structure of the Estonian local government. It stripped counties (*maakond*) of most of their functions and reallocated their tasks to ministries and municipalities. However, the counties did not cease to exist - as they still represent central government in the regions and as their borders are used as statistical units. The municipal reform also reduced the number of municipalities via mergers, from 213 to 79. The size of municipalities in 2019 varied from 141 inhabitants on Ruhnu island to 434 562 inhabitants in Tallinn. The average municipal population is 16 559, and the median population is 7 372. Central governments have encouraged municipalities to improve efficiency in welfare services, especially by promoting voluntary municipal mergers and intermunicipal co-operation (IMC). Eventually, each municipality will develop its own strategy to deal with shrinkage (OECD, forthcoming[19]).

However, municipal mergers can be politically difficult and it is not clear that they automatically lead to cost savings (Blom-Hansen, J. et al., 2016[20]; Moisio, A. and R. Uusitalo, 2013[21]; OECD, 2019[13]) (Moisio, A. and R. Uusitalo, 2013[21]; OECD, 2017[7]). Municipalities provide a wide variety of services, and the optimal production scale varies by type of service. Municipal mergers may then lead to economies of scale in some services but to diseconomies in others. Despite the recently enlarged municipal size in Estonia, there is still room for bigger scale in certain services and IMC could be a viable alternative approach as it involves minimal government restructuring and is a flexible solution. In addition, a successful IMC in one service area may lead to widened co-operation in other services, and in some cases even to a later voluntary merger. However, since only 14% of municipal revenue comes from own revenue sources, municipal incentives for engaging in voluntary co-operation are low (OECD, forthcoming[19]).

Source: OECD (2022[22]), *Shrinking Smartly in Estonia: Preparing Regions for Demographic Change*, OECD Rural Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/77cfe25e-en

High quality services remain crucial for trust building in Norway and are a cornerstone of the Norwegian welfare system. However, there are challenges in ensuring that these services are attuned to people's expectations and societal developments, while remaining fiscally sustainable. Such tension is also observed in the data. Almost three-quarters of Norwegians totally or partially agree with the statement "public institutions provide high quality services" and a similar proportion consider that public institutions abide by laws and regulations. However, Norwegians are also mindful that there is room to achieve efficiencies, as 44% of the population does not think that public institutions use their resources efficiently while over half of the population believes that public institutions create hindrances such as more red tape, slower service provision, etc.

Figure 3.8. Percentage of the population that considers that public institutions observe certain characteristics, 2021



Note: To the question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Norwegian public sector (at state, municipality or county or municipality level)? Abides by laws and regulations, provides high quality services, uses its resources efficiently, creates a lot of additional hindrances (having to register the same information repeatedly, application forms that are difficult to fill in, etc.). In the case of the latter the formulation of the question is inverted as it is asking about a negative behaviour.
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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While municipal mergers could be an important tool for achieving the optimal scale in service provision it is key that they consider the local context particularly the degree of rurality to avoid creating unintended negative social and economic consequences. In fact, it may be preferable to further inter-municipal co-operation as a way of resolving the political complexity of mergers. Ensuring that services remain people centred and are not a source of social differences is fundamental for maintaining high levels of institutional trust; indeed, providing guidance about what people centricity entails could contribute to ensuring that services remain fit for purpose.

Deepening digitalisation with a focus on inclusive, data driven and proactive services

Norway is a highly digitalised society. According to data from Eurostat, in 2020, 92% of the Norwegian population used the Internet to interact with the authorities, a 14 percentage point increase from 2011 and significantly higher than the EU average (57%). In turn, 81% of the population reported having completed a form online (28 points higher than in 2011), significantly above the EU average (38%).

The public sector relies heavily on technology to improve public service delivery, spur inter-agency and sectoral organisation processes, support business innovation and increase digital inclusion for greater social equality (OECD, 2017[23]). The government has recently enacted a digital strategy for the public sector for the period 2019-2025 with the goal of having one digital public sector. The strategy stresses the role of digitalisation in promoting greater efficiency, creating value for the private sector and simplifying everyday life for people (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2019[24]). Meeting the needs of users through new ways of working and structures as well as enhancing digital skills in the administrations are key components of the strategy. The strategy has recently been complemented with a digital memorandum compiling decrees and providing recommendations on how to apply digitalisation in the public sector. One of the aspects included in the memorandum is the *only once* principle calling on public institutions to request information from people at a single time as well as share data within government

more actively including through the use of a common data catalogue (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2021[25]).

Box 3.3. Key elements of the Norwegian digitalisation strategy

The Norwegian digitalisation strategy for the period 2019-2025 "One digital public sector" recognises that digitalisation aims to give citizens, businesses and the non-profit sector a simpler everyday life through better services and more efficient use of resources. The purpose of the strategy is to support a digital transformation in the individual agencies and in the public sector as a whole. The strategy is built around the following components.

- **Seamless services and user centric focus**. The goal is for users to perceive their interaction with the public sector as seamless and efficient, as one digital public sector.
- **Increased data sharing and value creation.** The public sector shall share data when it can and protect data when it must. Open public data shall be made available for reuse for developing new services and value creation in the business sector
- **Clear and digitalisation-friendly regulations.** Regulations should be clear and understandable, without unnecessary discretionary provisions and with harmonised concepts. They should also facilitate the partial automation of administrative procedures, appropriate use of artificial intelligence and digital transformation.
- **A common ecosystem for national digital collaboration.** Municipalities, county authorities and central government agencies must be able to collaborate in order to develop user-centric, seamless and efficient digital services.
- **Governance and co-ordination for a more seamless public sector.** The aim of the Government is to facilitate a more systematic realisation of benefits from digitalisation through collaboration and co-ordination across sectors and levels of government.
- **Enhanced co-operation with the private sector.** The public sector should not do itself what the market can do better. Digital collaboration with the business sector and voluntary organisations can provide the basis for new, innovative services
- **Increased digital competence in the public sector.** Strengthen the capability of government agencies and their ability to realise benefits from digitalisation.
- **Cyber security.** Safeguarding security and privacy requirements in a good way as a way to preserve trust.
- **Economic and administrative consequences.** The initiatives of the strategy shall contribute to better use of resources and more efficient management.

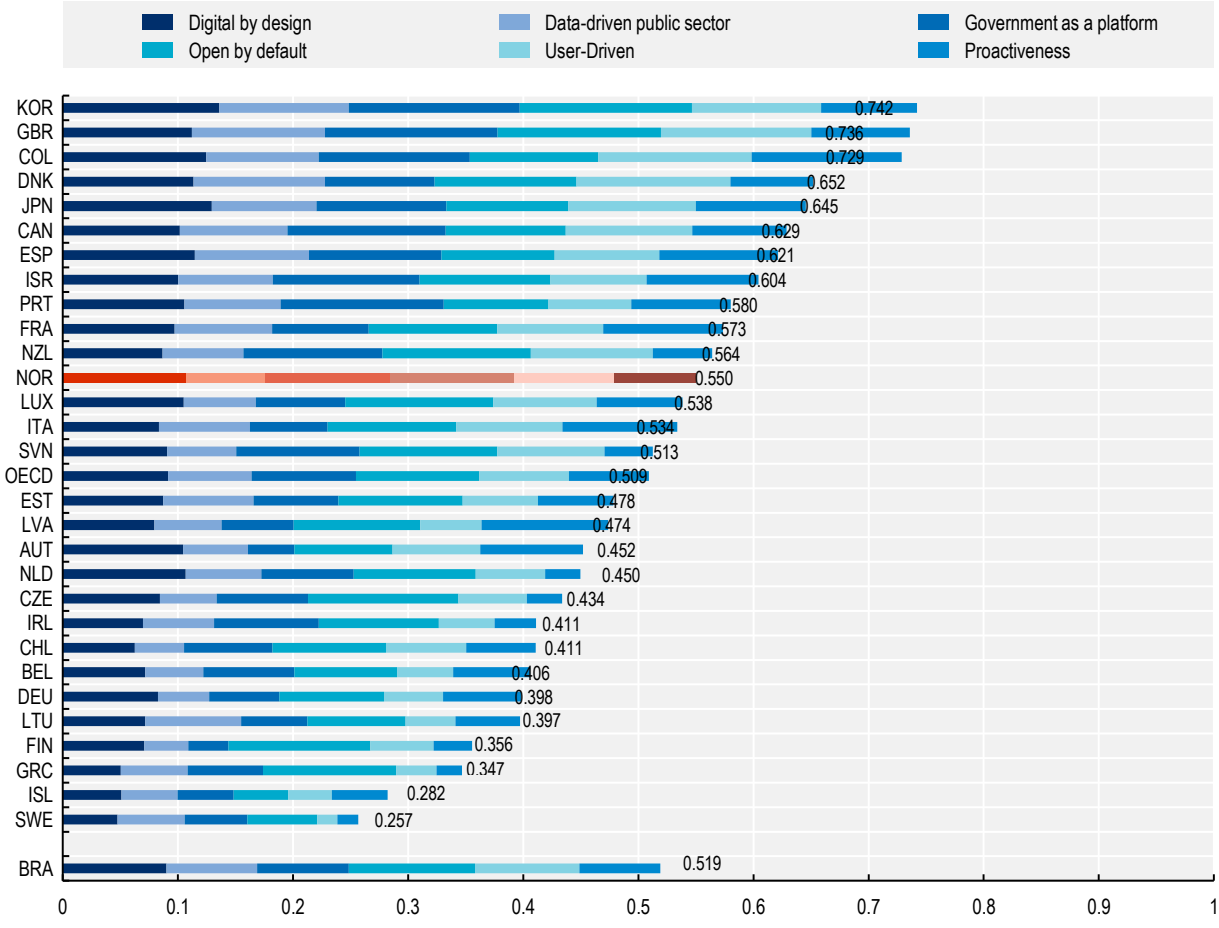
Source: One Digital Public Sector. Digital strategy for the public sector.
https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/db9bf2bf10594ab88a470db40da0d10f/en-gb/pdfs/digital_strategy.pdf

The fact that public service delivery in Norway was already highly digitalised made it easier for public authorities to continue service provision throughout the COVID-19 crisis. In turn, the pandemic made clear that digital services could play a key role in strengthening resilience and adapting to change. Digitalisation is expected to play a strategic role in solving complex challenges and an integrated public sector should continue to develop high-end digital infrastructure that leverages artificial intelligence and facilitates data driven innovation (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2020[26]). In the interviews carried out for this study, several interviewees indicated that while indeed the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of society and many digital solutions were adopted overnight, a key challenge is to ensure that the whole population is part of this new digital world and that some groups are not left behind.

In turn, as previously shown using data from the Norwegian Citizens Survey, slightly more than one-quarter of the population with just basic education reported that it was difficult to find information online on government websites (see Figure 2.17). Deepening digitalisation should consider those individuals who find it difficult to interact with the administration through digital channels. It will be important to make special efforts to not leave them behind in their ability to access services and interact with the administration. The existence of multiple channels may be challenging. As such (and in the spirit of ensuring “one digital public sector” in alignment with the Norwegian digitalisation strategy) an omni-channel strategy should be reinforced. With an omni channel strategy, the journey of a user is understood and supported, across whichever channels they wish to use at whatever point in the journey they wish to access them and through whatever combination of services makes sense to them and their particular circumstances. Finally, highly digitalised services can also be complemented with specific actions for enhancing inclusiveness such as information campaigns and online information channels.

Norway is above the OECD average in the OECD Digital Government index that analyses the level of maturity of digital government policies and their implementation under a coherent and whole-of-government approach (see Figure 3.9). The index aims to measure the extent to which governments are becoming digitally competent to foster integrated and coherent operations as well as an end-to-end, user-driven transformation of service design and delivery. By doing so, the Digital Government Index aims to appraise the competence of governments to operate in an increasingly digital and global world (OECD, 2020[27]). Norway fares comparatively well in the digital by design and user-driven components of the index, both of which are above the OECD average. There is however room to further improve in increasing proactiveness (where Norway scores near the OECD average) and in becoming a data-driven administration where it is slightly below the OECD average (OECD, 2017[23]).

Figure 3.9. OECD Digital Government Index, 2019



Source: OECD (2021[2]), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en.
Data are not available for Australia, Hungary, Mexico, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.

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A data-driven public sector also favours enhanced governance, sharing and use of data, supporting the use of innovative and alternative sources of data in the access, evaluation and monitoring of services over time. This approach supports continuous improvement in response to feedback and usage data, thereby enabling public sector organisations to prioritise and meet users' needs. It is expected for the government to complement external publication of service performance data (e.g. interactive dashboards) both in aggregated terms through tools such as the citizens' survey or by the specific agencies in charge of service provision. This complements the creation of a skilled public sector that relies on data as a core component to effectively design and deliver its activities. An example of how the use of data could contribute to delivering services for those in greater need is described in Box 3.4.

Box 3.4. San Francisco improves service delivery to disadvantaged youth

Sharing data between different organisations within the public sector can be one of the greatest challenges to improving outcomes and delivering public value. In the city of San Francisco, the experience of disadvantaged youth prompted the heads of foster care, juvenile probation and mental health departments to work with the city's attorney to facilitate the limited exchange of case information among the necessary agencies. This transformed the level of care for children interacting with these agencies due to an improvement in case co-ordination and the identification of overlapping clients. This was made possible thanks to an integrated data system that recognised and focused on the families that were the most vulnerable, most troubled and most in need. As a result of the data integration, it was possible to carry out "evaluation and monitoring" activities, which led officials to realise that a mere 2 000 users of services consumed half the resources of the department, and that most of those families lived within walking distance. As a result, the Human Service Agency concentrated "delivery" of services in specific neighbourhoods and co-located services at community centres, further increasing efficiency and the quality of service delivery. As a result of this new linked data source, subsequent "anticipation and planning" efforts were able to be carried out that provided a better assessment of the needs of high-risk youth, identifying opportunities to divert them from getting into trouble, understanding where youth were falling through the cracks and establishing what services were needed to intervene earlier to prevent those negative outcomes. Initially supported by a low-tech system, the system was transferred to a more sophisticated platform to enable the three agencies to better understand the interplay between the data. Creating a shared view of the data highlighted that those clients who were under the care of multiple systems were at higher risk of committing a crime. It found that 51% of San Franciscans involved in multiple systems were convicted of a serious crime, 33% had been served by the three agencies, and 88% of these youth committed a crime 90 days after becoming involved with multiple agencies. This offered a critical window of opportunity for the caseworker to intervene and provided the justification for a web-based integrated case management system to make this connection in real time.

Source: OECD (2019[28]), *The Path to Becoming a Data-Driven Public Sector*, OECD Digital Government Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/059814a7-en..

Ensuring that units and structures responsible for digital service delivery enhance user-centred and user-driven approaches to service delivery is of essence, not only for improving user experience and simplifying access to services but for making sure that digital services remain inclusive and fit for purpose. As such, it is crucial that citizens and businesses define and communicate their own needs in terms of services' content and access throughout the service design and delivery processes, thereby helping to drive the design of government policies and public services towards a higher level of responsiveness. Involving frontline service providers can also contribute to better adjusting and transforming services as they have "in the field" knowledge and participate in developing on-site solutions when providing services.

The Norwegian administration could further enhance its proactiveness by offering a seamless and convenient service delivery experience and by addressing problems from an end-to-end and anticipatory rather than fractioned and reactive approach. In turn, while services provided often collect information and measure satisfaction levels, the use of this feedback and how results are communicated to people is not a common feature of digital service provision and it is an aspect that could also be strengthened.

The administration could draw on several of the projects currently ongoing. For example, seven[1] life events are prioritised in the government strategy that was previously mentioned. The life events represent wicked problems, cross-sectoral challenges, which call for changes at a systemic level, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer about how to solve them. Addressing these challenges means having to find new ways to share data, work with regulatory issues and changes in terms of prioritising, financing and organising . It

also requires a combination of ambitious top-down goals and broad bottom-up efforts to create good solutions. Advancing towards better approaches to solve challenges that require collective and targeted efforts from different parties (e.g. mission approach),[2] which could improve the delivery of seamless services to users. In turn, it is not sufficient to focus on today's users and their needs to develop seamless services but on solutions, simplifications and improvements for future users. Using foresight for exploring how to meet the needs of future users could contribute in future proofing seamless services, improving satisfaction levels and further strengthening public trust.

Box 3.5. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for helping people finding the right services at the right moment in Finland

The Aurora AI programme launched by the Ministry of Finance of Finland lays the foundation for using Artificial Intelligence to bring people and services together in a better way. It was developed as an operating model for arranging public administration activities to support people in different life situations and events so that services provided by organisations function seamlessly between service providers in different sectors. It therefore creates the prerequisites for smoother service use in different situations and life events. Some of its objectives are:

- Reducing the amount of time spent going from one place to another.
- Improving the functional and technical possibilities for co-operation between public administration and other sectors.
- Strengthening the ethical use of artificial intelligence as part of public service provision and operating models.

The programme uses snapshots to examine life from the human perspective. For example, a person who is about to go through a certain life event, for instance changing jobs, will automatically be offered, public, private and third sector services to proactively support the transition from one job to another without a going on unemployment.

Source: https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/whats-new/news/2020/auroraai-helps-people-find-the-right-services-at-the-right-moment

Such an approach will require delivering data and services to the public without waiting for formal requests. It implies a capacity to anticipate societal and economic developments as well as users' needs, by capturing real-time information and applying that information to the re-design of services. The dimension encompasses requested provisions for delivery of services to users, proactive requests for feedback from users and enabling citizens to access real-time information on service delivery (e.g. through smartphones apps and dashboards).

Digitalisation can ensure that the needs and expectations of citizens who grow up surrounded by digital technology are met by adequate public services that are convenient and fit for the future. As the use of digital technologies further advances, there will be an increasing focus on how public authorities manage the safety of personal data and ensure the privacy of citizens that have entrusted them with their personal information. Public trust will depend on data being used transparently, safely and legitimately, while misuse or data leaks have the potential to damage the trust relationship (OECD, 2021[29]) (OECD, 2021[30]).

While little data exists on this issue, Figure 3.1 shows that around two-thirds of Norwegians do trust that authorities only use personal data for their intended purpose. This is important and has also been shown to be a significant driver of trust in the civil service (see Figure 2.27). Nevertheless, the survey revealed that around 1 in 5 people (22%) in Norway does not fully trust authorities with their personal data and there is little variation across age groups, regions or gender on this issue. However, people with lower levels of income as well as education are generally more concerned as are people with a migrant background. The

latter is contrary to most other drivers of public trust where migrant background tends to be positively related to public trust. This lack of trust could lead to those groups being less willing to engage in digital tools offered by government to provide services, they could be losing out on the service and also feel excluded or alienated as a result.

Trust as a foundation, building capabilities, spreading skills and generating innovation

Norway is confronted with several challenges on the horizon that could influence levels of institutional trust. As signalled in the previous section, there will be less leeway to increase public spending on the basis of oil generated resources. The share of older people is expected to increase, while fertility rates are at persistently low levels. As in other countries, the job market is expected to transform with jobs being lost in low skilled industries. Moreover, the effects of global warming need to be mitigated, which may require a productive transformation in some sectors. At the same time, Norwegian people expect to maintain access to high quality public services and continue to enjoy high living standards.

The interviews carried out for this study recognised that the institutional structure in Norway is complex, with many public agencies at the central and local levels. Co-ordination and co-operation both across ministries and agencies and across levels of government is often challenging. It is also acknowledged that the public administration is facing increasingly complex and dynamic contextual conditions permeated by several waves of reforms that often face competing priorities, resulting in a fragmented and in some cases redundant decision-making process. As signalled by Laegreid "it is not a question of hierarchy, market or networks but of how the mixtures of these forms of co-ordination change in different reform movements and how the trade-offs between them alters" (Laegreid, 2020[31]). In turn, there is also a perception that too much time is spent by public servants in complying with administrative processes instead of focusing on their mission-related tasks, particularly frontline service providers.

Accordingly, the success of any strategy or policy could be increased if it uses a whole-of-government approach, with clarity about the final objectives and the course of actions to reach them. The Norwegian administrative culture is based on a consensual policy making model, which takes into account the wants and needs of people. However, to effectively accompany the transformation of Norwegian society, policy-making processes could be reviewed to enhance co-ordination among stakeholders, reduce inefficiencies and build on the knowledge and experience accumulated by users and civil servants, including frontline workers to design and deliver better services through a people-centred approach to policy making. The use of pilots could become an important tool for building the evidence base that could contribute in scaling up innovation within the administration.

The lack of a whole of government approach as well as difficulties in achieving co-operation across government bodies were identified as an obstacle for spurring innovation within the administration through the qualitative work for this study. It was signalled that there is a lack of understanding about the challenges being faced, absence of a common direction and lack of clarity in distribution of roles. These factors were deemed as to be obstacles for achieving further innovation in the public sector. In turn, most innovative initiatives take place at the local government level with a lack of involvement from the ministries that do not have a direct or clear role in the process. This makes it difficult to streamline practices or share experiences.

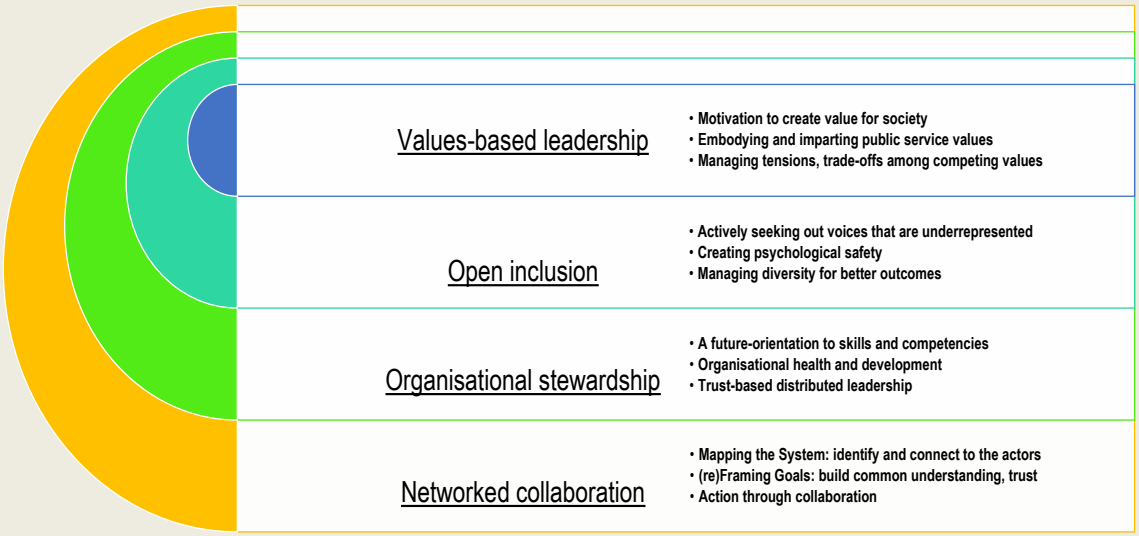
Nevertheless, public sector innovation is recognised as one of the most important strategies for increased sustainability in the medium and long term (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2020[26]) Data from the Innovation Barometer for the Public Sector shows that public innovation in Norway is the lowest amongst Nordic countries (COI, 2021[32]). And there is recognition that in comparison with other Nordic countries Norway and Denmark have mostly concentrated on process measures and have not invested in structural support to promote innovation (NIFU and Ramboll, 2019[33]). A white paper on how to develop an innovative public sector has been prepared by the administration and is based on the OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation (OECD, 2019[13]). The Norwegian white paper espouses three

principles: a) public authorities (at the political and administrative level) should provide room for manoeuvre and incentives to innovate; b) leaders must develop the required competence and a culture for innovation in the public sector; c) public enterprises must pursue new forms of co-operation including with the private and non-profit sector (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2020[26]). However, according to the OECD Trust Survey implemented as part of this case study only 29% of the Norwegian population expects that an innovative suggestion by a civil servant on how to improve services would be taken into account.

The success of the Norwegian efforts for improving public sector innovation would depend to a large extent on the leadership capabilities of senior civil servants working on complex public sector challenges. Evidence collected through nine country case studies on new approaches to solve public challenges shows that innovation is essential to solve complex challenges and core to the definition of public sector leadership (Gerson, 2020[34]). In turn, spurring that type of innovation within the administration relies on senior civil servants having the adequate set of capabilities to do so (see Box 3.6).

Box 3.6. Senior leadership capabilities

Four capabilities were identified as crucial for Senior Civil Servants (SCS) in dealing with complex challenges. The term 'capabilities' is used rather than 'skills' or 'competencies', because, cognitive, affective, and behavioural qualities go well beyond skill to include judgement and knowledge (Gerson, 2020[34]).



These four capabilities are arranged in concentric circles. Starting at the core, individual SCS are required to be values-based leaders, balance multiple and often competing values that guide their decision making in the public interest. Successful leaders challenge their own internal perceptions through open inclusion – by searching for voices and perspectives beyond those they normally hear from (open) and ensuring psychological safety for these voices to contribute to their leadership challenges (inclusion). They act as organisational stewards by reinforcing a trust- and values-based culture and equipping their workforce with the right skills, tools and working environments. Finally, looking beyond their own organisation, successful SCS are adept at collaborating through networks, with other government actors, and beyond.

Source: Gerson, D. (2020[34]), "Leadership for a high performing civil service: Towards senior civil service systems in OECD countries", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 40, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ed8235c8-en.

However, the adoption and generalisation of those capabilities is expected to take place in a context where civil servants safeguard both the interests of people but also those of the state. Core values of the Norwegian administration include strong adherence to the rule of law represented by principles of legality, neutrality, equal treatment and predictability, these values are considered the cornerstone of good administrative practices (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2019[35]).

Breaches of trust in the relationships between civil servants and the public and/or civil servants and the state could increase the costs of collaboration, harm the social contract and affect the democratic stability of society (Alecu, 2019[36]). Advancing the transformation of public administration requires conciliating these core values with the necessary transformation that the adoption of innovative practices may require. The risk and uncertainty involved in innovation requires discussion at political levels in order to work towards a common understanding of risk appetite and to ensure that the public and media understand the decision-making process (Tõnurist and Hanson, 2020[37]). The role of the highest levels of administrative leadership to inform and manage the political interface with respect to risk and experimentation needs to be highlighted and addressed openly (see Box 3.6).

Box 3.7. Innovation Management Support at Vinova (Sweden)

Vinnova, Sweden's Innovation Agency, supports public sector entities, companies, non-government and civil service organisations to undertake innovative activities and efforts. This support spans a number of domains, from financial (EUR 310 million annually) to capability building, and is considered to be a core part of the agency's role. Through the support provided, Vinnova aims to secure and strengthen the effectiveness and longevity of the innovation that they finance and support. One way this is operationalised is through the Innovation Management Support Programme (IMSP), which is focused on realising and improving innovation outcomes for Vinnova-funded innovation projects.

Innovation management is a concept around which a growing practice is forming and becoming more formalised. Broadly, it speaks to the systematic management of and support for innovation and how that management can be operationalised. At the international level, several efforts have been made to standardise the practice of innovation management, while the practice in public sector administrations is not yet widespread.

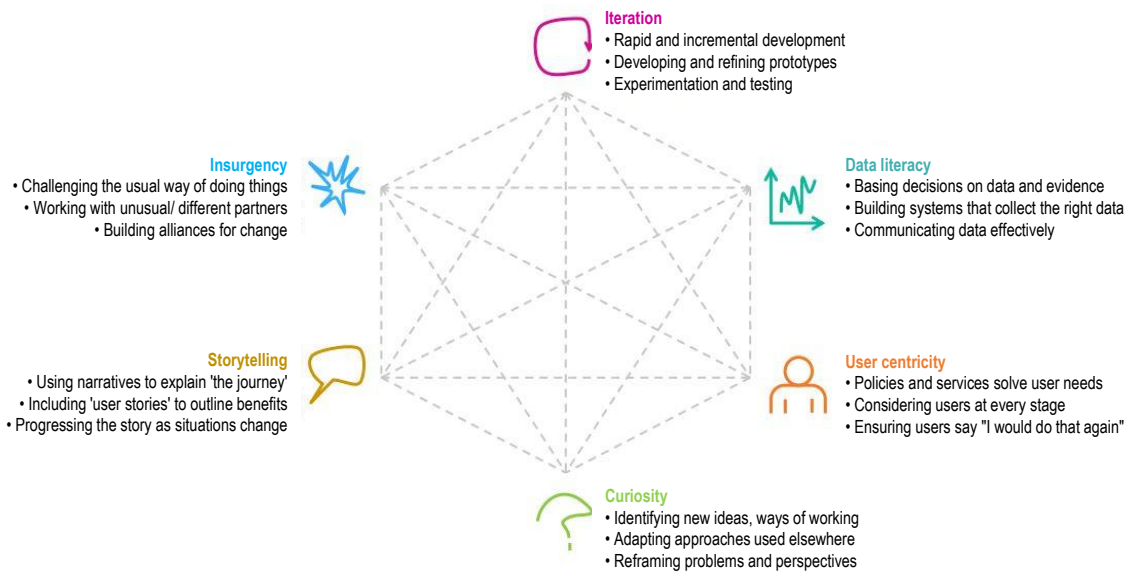
The IMSP was initiated in 2018 as a pilot programme. Its key aims include : strengthening the capacity and innovation processes of organisations and Vinnova-funded projects to innovate effectively, encouraging cross-sector collaboration between organisations to overcome silos and lock-ins, helping to create the conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish, and providing expertise and coaching to innovation partners. The individual supports were based on a needs assessment and packaged and delivered in modules based on those needs. In the first instance, it was focused on a number of diverse yet specific projects and initiatives. More recently, in 2021, the IMSP has begun transitioning to be more broadly focused on Vinnova's strategic priority areas, or missions, to more effectively address long-term, complex, and horizontal societal challenges. Recognising this, Vinnova is now experimenting with structures designed to support multi-actor action and research and to encourage organisations funded by Vinnova to engage not only in projects but also with the underlying policy, governance, and systems.

Accordingly, it is essential to have an operational environment in place that will not prevent senior civil servants from using the leadership capabilities they possess and it is expected that they will play an active stewardship role in making sure that their organisation has access to the right skills for innovation and the best conditions to put them to use (see Box 3.7). An enabling operating environment to move in this direction is of the utmost importance as it will pave the way towards building a dynamic and results-oriented public administration.

Box 3.8. Core skill areas for public sector innovation

The OECD's innovation skills model puts forward six core skill sets that all public organisations need to nurture to embed innovation capabilities (see Figure 3.10). These areas with the proper promotion/advocacy and development can enable a wider adoption of innovation practices and thus an increased level of innovation in the public sector. For a modern 21st-century public service, all officials should have at least some level of awareness of these six areas in order to support increased levels of innovation in the public sector.

Figure 3.10. Six skills areas for public sector innovation



Source: https://www.oecd.org/media/oecdorg/satellitesites/opsi/contents/files/OECD_OPSI-core_skills_for_public_sector_innovation-201704.pdf

Embedding into the governance system the capacity to explore possibilities, experiment and continuously learn will contribute to coping with fast-paced change, uncertainty and unpredictable events. Such capacity is referred to as 'anticipatory innovation governance' and is being pursued by other Nordic countries such as Finland (OECD, 2021[38]). Anticipatory innovation could become a crucial tool for spreading and generalising an innovation culture within the Norwegian administration, strengthening its foresight capacity and making it ready for the future.

Opportunities for improvements

The results regarding the determinants of public trust have shown that high quality services and their transformation are critical in preserving and improving levels of institutional trust in Norway. Given the amount of taxes paid by Norwegians and the natural endowment of the country in terms of oil reserves, people expect to receive high quality services free or at relatively low costs. The challenge faced by Norway is maintaining services that are people centred while deepening inclusiveness and achieving sustainability. Along these lines, a whole of government approach with people-centred policies and services could be of great help. In a context where better spending and seeking further efficiencies may be required, Norway could envisage, in addition, the following options to strengthen and improve its trust capital.

Welfare services are becoming more complicated and require more human resource skills, which makes it harder for small municipalities to provide efficient and quality services. While municipal mergers could be an important tool for achieving the optimal scale in service provision, it is key that they consider the local context so as to ensure equality in service delivery across regions and population groups. Indeed, targeted actions could be taken in rural areas and in favour of vulnerable groups. In turn, they may be combined with inter-municipal co-operation as a way of softening the political complexity of mergers.

Ensuring that services continue to be designed around people's needs and are not a source of social differences is fundamental for maintaining high levels of institutional trust. Involving users and frontline workers in the adaptation of services as well as institutionalising mechanisms for reporting on feedback received by users could contribute to enhancing people-centred services and shoring up high levels of satisfaction and trust. The preparation of guidelines outlining the characteristics of people-centric services could become a crucial tool for guaranteeing that services are evolving with people's needs and expectations.

Norway could further embrace public sector innovation as an avenue to fight global challenges and improve the provision of public services. The success of Norwegian innovation efforts depends largely on the capacity to adopt a coherent whole of government approach with enhanced co-ordination across institutions and levels of government, as well as on senior managers' ability both to overcome existing barriers to innovation and ensure that they right skills exist within the administration. Accordingly, it is important to work towards developing an enabling operating environment that could spread to the rest of the administration. Breaking down silos, generating spaces for innovation and being transparent about the risk appetite alongside a co-ordinated political administrative interface are important in making innovation the driving force behind service improvement. The use of pilots could be a crucial tool for building the evidence base required for scaling up innovation within the administration and advancing towards wider adoption of innovative practices in the administration.

Finally, it is important that Norway continue using tools such as the digitalisation of services, to keep providing high-end seamless services to people. However, it is important to bear in mind that digital tools should be inclusive and leave no groups behind. They should include the use of simple language information campaigns and online information channels. Secondly, there is room to further improve in the use of data and enhance proactiveness in seeking and reporting on user feedback and adapting services accordingly.

Reliability

Strengthen preparedness to address long-term societal challenges

The reliability of public services is a key government competence and driver of institutional trust. It reflects the capacity of governments to anticipate the ever-evolving needs of citizens as well as the challenges societies face on different time horizons (OECD, 2017[1]; Brezzi et al., forthcoming[39]). Reliable governments can minimise uncertainty in social, economic and political settings and provide the basis for people's wellbeing, including future generations. While public services often need to respond and be adapted in the short term, for example as a reaction to shocks such as the COVID-19 crisis, reliable governance requires governments to adopt a forward-looking vision and adequate reforms, the impact of which often extends far beyond election cycles. Similarly, it requires an agile organisational culture and institutional capacities to adapt as well as to better understand the needs of users (OECD, 2020[40]). This vision and long policy horizon are crucial for tackling many of the key challenges related to climate change, demographic shifts and technological advances. Failure to provide a stable and forward-looking policy environment can erode trust when people realise that their own future livelihood and that of future

generations is threatened. This can lead to a vicious cycle of eroding trust which can make it even harder to adopt the necessary reforms (Heinemann and Tanz, 2008[41]).

The OECD Trust Survey applied in Norway includes a battery of questions on the extent to which public institutions are doing enough to address intergenerational challenges. These are:

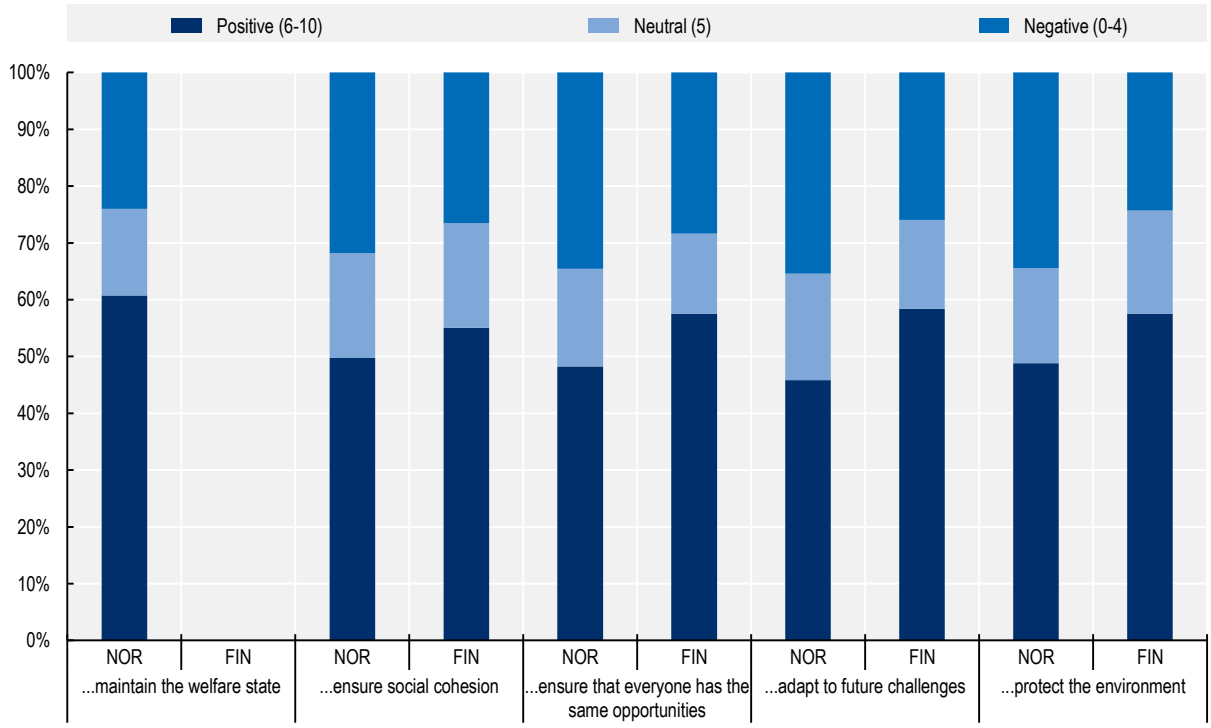
- Protecting the environment
- Ensuring social cohesion
- Adapting to future challenges
- Ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities
- Maintaining the welfare state

Figure 3.11 shows that Norwegians generally tend to trust public authorities to do enough for maintaining the Norwegian welfare state, providing equal opportunities for all in society, and ensuring social cohesion. However, Norwegians consistently perceive the role of public institutions less favourably than in Finland (see Figure 3.11). For example, 58% of the population in Finland considers that public institutions are doing enough to fight climate change compared to 49% in Norway. The same pattern is observed for other long-term trends such as enhancing social cohesion (55% in Finland and 50% in Norway) and ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities (58% in Finland and 48% in Norway).

Climate change, demographic shifts, and technological advances give rise to challenges for workers, businesses and governments that can only be tackled by adopting a long-term policy vision. Unaddressed, they all pose fundamental threats to the wellbeing of citizens and to the functioning of societies and to democratic systems as a whole. Reliable governance requires the adoption of foresight strategies that look beyond the next election cycle to prepare societies for the longterm. In Norway, less than half of people (46%) are convinced that the government is doing enough to adapt to future challenges.

With the exception of actions on environmental protection, younger and older age groups report higher trust in government's capacity to address long-term policies (Figure 3.12). Similarly, Oslo and the eastern part of Norway have higher trust levels than other Norwegian regions. In addition, foreign born believe that the government is better prepared than people born in Norway (Annex Table 3.A.1).

Figure 3.11. Percentage of population with confidence that public authorities are "doing enough" to address key societal challenges in Norway and Finland



Note: Figure shows percentage of population answering negatively (0-4), neutrally (5) or positively (6-10) to the question of whether public authorities are doing enough to address five key societal challenges. In the case of Finland the scale was 1-10 and therefore it is aggregated in the following way: negative (1-4), neutrally (5) and positively 6-10. Data for Norway are 2021, data for Finland are 2020.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in Norwegian Citizen Survey 2021.

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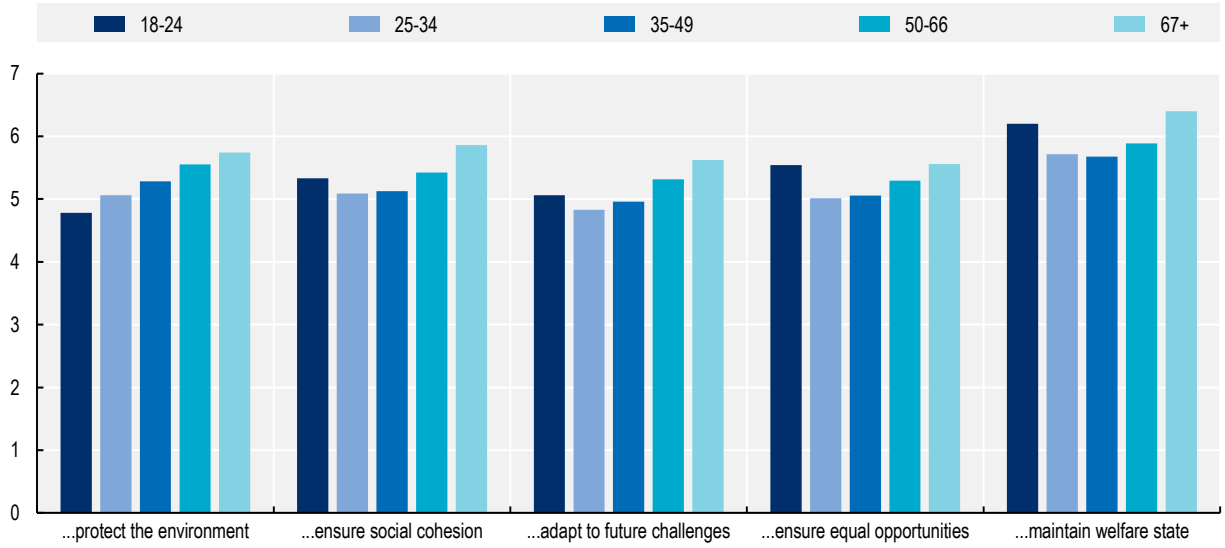
The maintenance of the welfare state is a known predictor of public trust (Kumlin, 2017[42]) and also found to be a key driver in Norway as it is significant for all the institutions tested (Figures 2.25; 2.26 and 2.27). However, some interviewees for this report raised concerns regarding the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the fiscal capacity of the public sector to maintain high levels of welfare spending. While people in Norway are used to high levels of social benefits — which were also deployed in quantity during the pandemic — a state with less fiscal room for manoeuvre might not be able to meet those expectations going forward including those of new generations. Another concern referred to economic inequality, which has been rising somewhat, and only a strong and sustainable welfare state is able to counter this trend and ensure that nobody is left behind, even in relative terms.

Figure 3.12. Percentage of population with confidence that public authorities are "doing enough" to address key societal challenges, by age groups



Note: Figure shows percentage of population answering negatively (0-4), neutrally (5) or positively (6-10) to the question of whether public authorities are doing enough to address key societal challenges.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in Norwegian Citizen Survey 2021.

StatLink https://stat.link/okaml5

While only a snapshot in time rather than a well-studied trend, it is important to note that around one-quarter to one-third of Norwegians think that public authorities are not doing enough on these key social policies, and this share is even higher among some groups (see Annex Table 3.A.1). For instance, women are on average less positive about existing policies aiming to safeguard equal opportunities for all, as are people with lower levels of education and lower average incomes. The exception are people with very low incomes of less than NOK 150 000 (about EUR 15 208) per year, who are also more likely to be recipients of social benefits.

In turn, the transition to a 'green' economy, which strives to reduce the amount of CO_2 emissions per person is a key factor in reducing global warming. It is also a challenge where the majority of the costs need to be incurred in the present, while the benefits are largest for future generations. In that sense, many policies aimed at protecting the environment can be seen as an inter-generational transfer in the same way that current generations benefit from sacrifices made by people who lived in the past. It is also somewhat different to payments on social benefits that can be seen as intra-generational transfers, while a functioning pension system again shifts money between generations. It is easy to see how each of these transfers requires the trust of citizens in the public sector to make effective and efficient use of their money.

On the issue of protecting the environment, and as previously discussed, around half of the people living in Norway believe that the government is currently doing enough (see Figure 3.11) and yet one-third does not think this is the case. There is a clear age gradient shown in Figure 3.12 and younger people on average tend to be much less satisfied with existing policies. This is intuitive as they are also more likely to bear more of the consequences and costs of inaction on climate change. Other groups that are on average more concerned about this issue are individuals with a university-level education, people with low incomes, as well as Norwegians born in Norway (see Annex Table 3.A.2).

Designing a stable and forward-looking policy

In addition to the questions about how much public institutions are doing to address long-term challenges, the reliability dimension also includes the following two questions.

- If a new and serious infectious disease were to start spreading in Norway, how likely is it that the authorities would be sufficiently prepared to be able to protect the citizens' lives and health?
- If you were to start a business, how likely is it that future framework conditions (taxation, regulations, etc.) will be predictable and able to ensure a viable business?

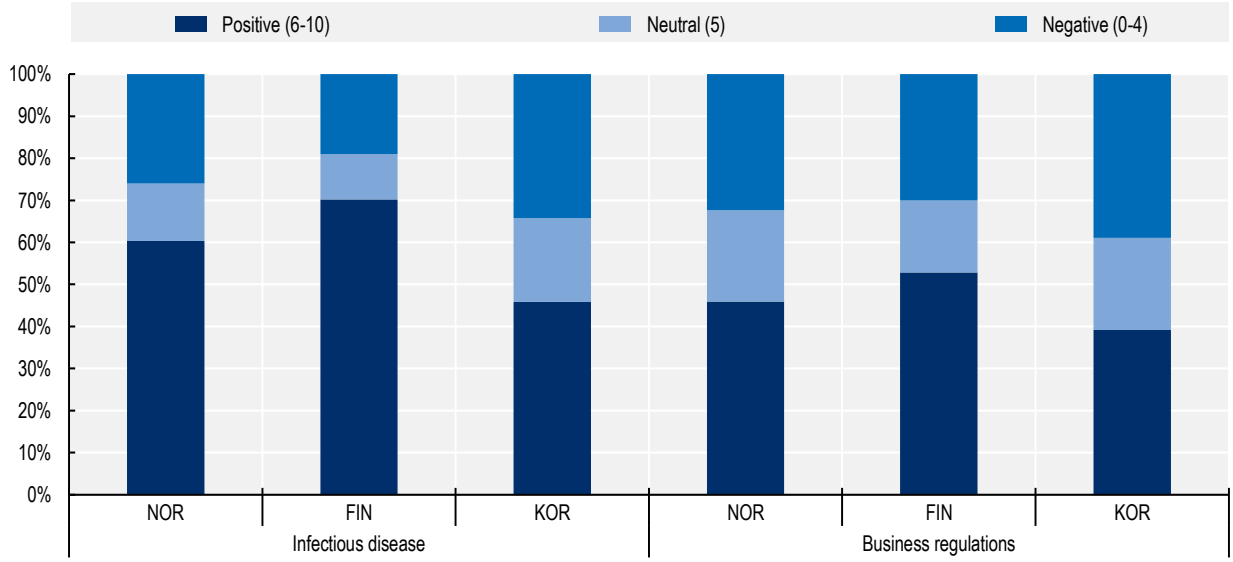
In the case of Norway, the most important determinant of trust in the government is the extent to which it will be able to protect people's lives in the case of a new pandemic. An increase of one standard deviation in government preparedness would lead to an increase of 0.47 in trust (see Figure 2.25).Importantly, reliability, both in terms of preparedness and in terms of stability of regulatory conditions, are amongst the main determinants of people's trust in the civil service. Around 60% believe that their public authorities would be sufficiently prepared to protect citizens' lives and health in case of a serious infectious disease spreading in the country (see Figure 3.13) this figure is lower than in Finland (70%) but higher than in Korea (46%) where the data were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic. An interpretation of these data are that people believe that lessons will be drawn from the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and institutions will be better prepared for when the next pandemic hits. It also shows that successfully overcoming short-term crises can raise citizens' trust in government.

The Norwegian administration was able to react quickly and adequately to the COVID-19 emergency. The success of the Norwegian response is attributed to a collaborative and pragmatic decision-making style, successful communication with the public, substantial resources and trust in government (Laegreid, 2020[43]) However, a successful response does not necessarily mean that the public administration was sufficiently prepared. As shown in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.4 in Chapter 1) the share of the population that believes that the government was well prepared to deal with COVID-19 was only 18% in June 2020, according to an independent Commission (Corona Comission, 2021[44]). There is room to further anticipate and prepare for future crises by enhancing foresight, strengthening co-ordination and working on the basis of scenarios for fighting crisis that are expected to become more frequent and harsher (OECD, 2021[2]).

Perceived government reliability has a significant and relatively large effect as a driving force of public trust. Accordingly, if the crisis continues and there are new setbacks (due for instance to the emergence of new virus variants that is resistant to vaccines) people may adopt a more negative view of the capacity and preparedness of public authorities to effectively tackle challenges in the future.

Another aspect related to government reliability is the provision of a stable business environment which includes the provision of rules and regulations for businesses that are predictable and reduce uncertainty. According to the OECD Trust Survey, almost half of people in Norway have a positive perception of the predictability of business regulations, while around one-third does not (see Figure 3.13). Concerns about predictability of the business environment are more widespread among people with lower incomes and those living in the north of the country (see Annex Table 3.A.2). Conversely, people with university-level education, higher average incomes, or a migrant background[3] tend to see business stability more favourably. The predictability of business regulation was also raised during the interviews in relation to climate change action. Indeed, while businesses may not generally be opposed to new regulation, policies aimed at protecting the environment need to remain as predictable as possible in order to allow for strategic decisions to be made and efficient plans to be ready. Given the ongoing transformation of the Norwegian economy to be 'greener', this will also be a factor to monitor closely.

Figure 3.13. Citizen perception of government preparedness and reliability



Note: Figure shows percentage of population answering negatively (0-4), neutrally (5) or positively (6-10) to the questions of 1) "If a new and serious infectious disease were to start spreading in Norway, how likely is it that the authorities would be sufficiently prepared to be able to protect the citizens' lives and health?", 2) "If you were to start a business, how likely is it that future framework conditions (taxation, regulations, etc.) will be predictable and able to ensure a viable business?", and 3) "If you share your personal details with a public authority, how likely is it that said information will be used only for the purposes for their intended purpose". The scale in Finland was 1-10 and corresponds to the following: negatively (1-4), neutrally (5), positively (6-10). Data for Norway are 2021, data for Finland are 2020. Data for Korea are 2017.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in Norwegian Citizen Survey 2021.

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A reactive approach to setting policy is proving increasingly ineffective: waiting until a crisis has struck before acting is far less effective than anticipating and preparing before a crisis has blown up. Accordingly, Norway could benefit substantially from further strengthening its anticipation capacity. Anticipation is about creating knowledge about the future that leads to possible acting in the present to help bring about the kind of futures that are desired (OECD, 2020[45]). The Norwegian administration is preparing for mid- to long-term challenges through several strategies. In addition, to the aforementioned digital government strategy and the white paper on public sector innovation, the public administration has also advanced a national strategy for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and propositions on transformation from oil to a more sustainable productive sector. The government appointed a commission "Norway towards 2025" composed of experts from academia and the public and private sectors to investigate the basis for value creation, production, employment and welfare following the COVID-19 pandemic, the report from the commission was published in 2021 and advances recommendations on among others achieving a green transition and further deepening digitialisation (NOU, 2021[46])

Despite the existence of several strategies and initiatives, the administration could continue to work on systematically integrating a forward-looking whole of government approach to policy making. The mechanisms for setting high-level objectives and how these are translated into sectoral objectives (e.g. target setting, actions for implementation and monitoring strategies) could be reviewed. This process must focus on mission-related tasks rather than 'process fulfilment' or compliance mechanisms. Accordingly, trust should be considered the foundation for the work of public institutions and based on the experience and knowledge of civil servants, particularly frontline employees.

In turn, anticipatory innovation refers to acting on this knowledge for the purpose of exploring and experimenting with emerging issues or future scenarios. By probing in a complex environment, this action

creates additional knowledge about how a system responds while it also actively shapes it. This requires a broad-based capacity to actively explore possibilities, experiment, and continuously learn as part of a broader governance system. This capacity must be intentionally and persistently supported since the dominant system will tend to crowd out or deprioritise anticipatory innovation as part of a portfolio of activities (OECD, 2020[45]). Some of the key characteristics of anticipatory innovation governance as compared to traditional policy making are presented in Box 3.9. Further endorsing anticipatory innovation governance is consistent with the need to enhance innovation capabilities and skills as presented in the responsiveness section of this chapter.

Box 3.9. Key features of anticipatory innovation governance as opposed to traditional policy making

An anticipatory innovation government approach entails outlining parameters around which policy makers wish to make changes: preferable futures or futures to be avoided. It involves experimenting in a real world environment to determine effective policy, ideally with a subset of individuals or groups that would be affected by government intervention, technologies or large-scale changes. Based on knowledge from experimentation, policy makers continuously reassess those preferable futures, and whether or not they are tracking towards them. The table below depicts different components of anticipatory innovation governance as they pertain to policy making and compares them to traditional models.

	Traditional policy making	Anticipatory innovation governance
Evaluation approach	Evaluation as the last stage in an often multi-year policy cycle	Continuous evaluation assessment; exploring future effects (e.g. changes in public values, ethics, intergenerational fairness)
Policy cycle	Long research and drafting cycles, with policy implemented accordingly	Recognition that cause-effect relationships are impossible to know in advance, and that the policy implementation itself changes the problem space
Research and analysis approach	Exploring the problem space through research and analysis	Exploring the problem space through small-scale real-world experiments and innovation
Research and analysis focus	Research and analysis focused on what has happened	Research and model development focused on a range of possible futures
Participation	Policy domain experts and primary affected population	System of related policy areas and affected populations, which changes over time

Source: OECD (2020), Anticipatory Innovation Governance.

Opportunities for improvement

It is clear that the reliability of policies and services is a key competence of government and a crucial driver of public trust in Norway. Reliability can be tricky to measure and grasp as the challenges governments need to prepare for are by definition evolving. Moreover, as demographics and technology change, the needs and expectations of citizens change with them. The challenge for the Norwegian government is to maintain their long-term policy horizon, strengthen foresight strategies to improve preparedness and adopt new ones, including crisis plans for service provision and development.

Preserving and further enhancing the reliability of policies and services will depend on the public administration's appropriate planning capacity, its strategic co-ordination and agility in enhancing resilience to future shocks. Norway could review the processes for setting high-level policy objectives and how these are reflected in sectoral objectives, including through target setting, actions for implementation and monitoring strategies. The review process should focus more on mission-related tasks rather than on

'process fulfilment' or compliance mechanisms. Accordingly, trust must be considered the foundation for the work of public institutions, which should be rooted in the experience and knowledge of civil servants, particularly those in charge of policy design and frontline service providers.

Many issues and challenges discussed in this chapter and report are cross-cutting and involve the co-ordination of many stakeholders in Norway, within and outside of government. It will be important to adopt a co-ordination mechanism between them, clarify responsibilities and set clear targets. New, uncertain and complex challenges will require departing from traditional silo-oriented ways of doing things and moving towards innovative governance models. Indeed, establishing cross-ministerial committees for complex multidimensional challenges (e.g. climate change) could become an institutional arrangement with which to build synergies and enhance collaboration across the different institutions. In turn, further reinforcing and expanding tools of anticipatory innovative governance may contribute to shifting from reactiveness to preparedness, which will be incredibly important in preserving institutional trust.

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Annex 3.A. Detailed survey results

Annex Table 3.A.1. Confidence in government to address key challenges, average scores by groups

Public authorities are doing enough to…		...protect the environment	...ensure social cohesion	...adapt to future challenges	...ensure equal opportunities	...maintain welfare state
	All	**5.35**	**5.36**	**5.16**	**5.26**	**5.93**
Gender	Male	5.54	5.33	5.09	5.38	5.91
	Female	5.15	5.38	5.24	5.14	5.95
Age group	18-24	4.78	5.33	5.06	5.54	6.20
	25-34	5.06	5.09	4.83	5.01	5.71
	35-49	5.28	5.12	4.96	5.05	5.67
	50-66	5.55	5.42	5.32	5.29	5.89
	67+	5.74	5.86	5.62	5.56	6.40
Education level	Primary	5.42	5.49	5.27	5.03	5.97
	Upper secondary	5.39	5.24	5.08	5.05	5.74
	Vocational	5.79	5.37	5.22	5.13	5.70
	University	5.21	5.38	5.17	5.43	6.07
Income level	Income <150k	4.82	5.35	5.18	5.26	5.86
	150k-250k	5.21	5.23	5.06	5.03	5.80
	250k-350k	5.36	5.19	5.09	4.81	5.73
	350k-450k	5.48	5.49	5.29	5.20	5.93
	450k-550k	5.56	5.52	5.31	5.20	5.85
	550k-750k	5.30	5.30	5.14	5.18	5.88
	750k-1m	5.36	5.29	5.08	5.22	5.81
	>1m	5.31	5.38	5.14	5.53	6.12
Region	Oslo	5.31	5.43	5.13	5.42	6.13
	Ostland	5.42	5.38	5.21	5.18	5.87
	Vestland	5.37	5.36	5.19	5.31	5.93
	Nord	5.25	5.22	5.09	5.07	5.75
Country of birth	Norwegian	5.26	5.27	5.07	5.20	5.87
	European	5.95	5.80	5.64	5.54	6.29
	RoW	6.02	6.20	6.08	5.90	6.61

Notes: Reply on 0-10 scale to question "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Public authorities do enough to…".
Source: OECD Trust Survey in Norwegian Citizen Survey 2021.

Annex Table 3.A.2. Reliability of public institutions, average scores by groups

Public authorities are doing enough to…		Protection against infectious disease	Predictable business regulations	Responsible use of personal data
	All	**5.93**	**5.24**	**6.32**
Gender	Male	5.69	5.25	6.16
	Female	6.17	5.23	6.48
Age group	18-24	5.55	5.23	6.24
	25-34	5.55	5.09	6.30
	35-49	5.84	5.32	6.44
	50-66	5.97	5.24	6.31
	67+	6.58	5.29	6.22
Education level	Primary	6.14	4.95	5.96
	Upper secondary	5.63	4.95	5.96
	Vocational	5.90	4.91	5.81
	University	6.06	5.51	6.68
Income level	Income <150k	5.40	5.03	6.15
	150k-250k	5.87	5.08	5.80
	250k-350k	5.72	4.84	5.74
	350k-450k	5.98	5.04	6.15
	450k-550k	5.96	5.28	6.15
	550k-750k	5.96	5.22	6.31
	750k-1m	5.84	5.19	6.40
	>1m	6.07	5.53	6.76
Region	Oslo	5.97	5.41	6.47
	Ostland	5.92	5.11	6.21
	Vestland	5.95	5.32	6.32
	Nord	5.84	5.06	6.25
Country of birth	Norwegian	5.88	5.19	6.34
	European	6.12	5.74	6.24
	RoW	6.53	5.63	6.22

Notes: Reply on 0-10 scale to questions: a) "If a new and serious infectious disease were to start spreading in Norway, how likely is it that the authorities would be sufficiently prepared to be able to protect the citizens' lives and health?", b) "If you were to start a business, how likely is it that future framework conditions (taxation, regulations, etc.) will be predictable and able to ensure a viable business?", c) "If you share your personal details with a public authority, how likely is it that said information will be used only for the purposes for which it was collected?".
Source: OECD Trust Survey in Norwegian Citizen Survey 2021.

Notes

[1] These life events are 1) New in Norway; 2) Losing and finding a job; 3) having children; 4) deaths and inheritance; 5) starting and running a business; 6) seriously ill children; and 7) starting and running a voluntary organisation.

[2] Two of the life events - Seriously ill children and Starting and running a voluntary organisation are exploring whether a mission-approach can be a good fit when working with cross sectoral challenges. The mission-approach is used because the life events represent challenges that must be solved through collective and targeted efforts from many different agentsor government services.

[3] Migrant background refers to people either born abroad, or having immigrant parents.

4 Values and trust in Norway

This chapter focuses on the core values that inform governments' actions and thereby influence levels of institutional trust. These include government's openness, integrity and fairness. It argues that high levels of political empowerment and participation in politics are key components explaining a good functioning democracy in Norway. However, it analyses some participation gaps, and, in particular, how a rural/urban divide overlap tends to affect fairness (equity in service delivery), integrity (influence at local level), and openness (in terms of participation, i.e. voter turnout). Finally, it presents some concrete policy actions to proactively reach out to those population groups that may feel left behind and strengthen social dialogue and inclusive and fair policy making in Norway.

Openness

Openness as a cornerstone of public governance

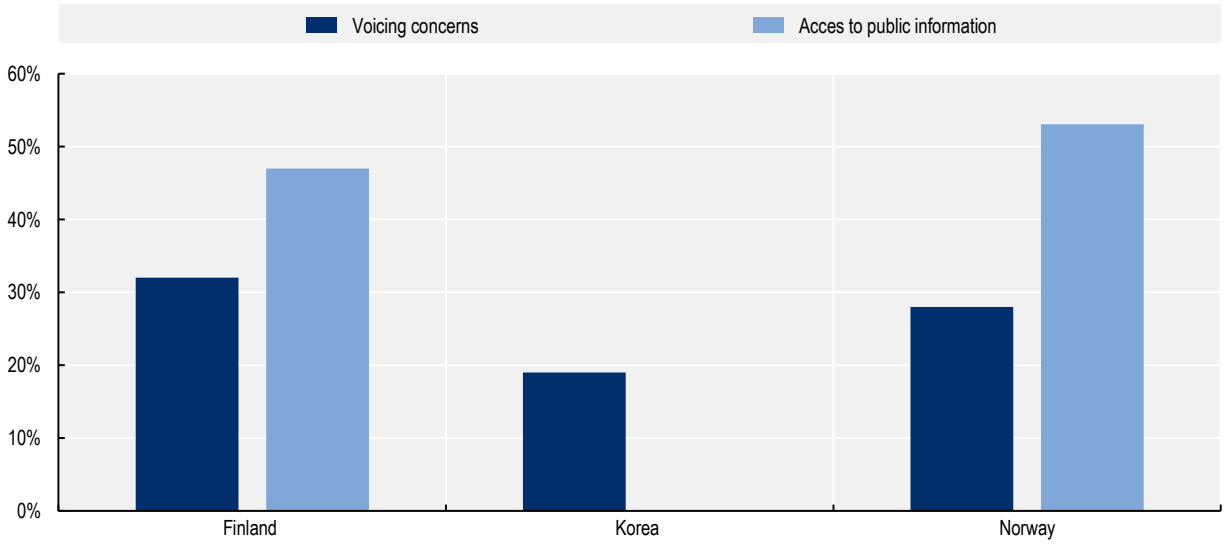
According to the OECD, open government refers broadly to a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth (OECD, 2017[1]). Opening governmental processes to the public and promoting a two-way relationship between the government and the public are key to building and promoting trust, as well as engaging citizens and furthering transparency (Bouckaert, 2012[2]). Indeed, cross-national evidence from European countries shows that countries that invest in government openness benefit from higher levels of trust in the public system (Schmidthuber, Ingrams and Hilgers, 2020[3]). However, the causality between trust and openness is complex: the effect of openness on public trust was found to be mediated by other elements, and although openness is necessary, it may not be sufficient with regards to trust. While openness initiatives can promote trust, citizens also need to trust the institutions that are inviting them to participate and to feel trusted by the government, believing that the invitation to participate is genuine and that they are empowered to influence political systems.

As understood among the five key drivers of public trust, openness refers to and is measured, first, on governments' mandate to inform, consult and listen to citizens, by letting people know and understand what the government does. This refers to promoting government transparency[1] by granting access to public sector information, which also strengthens accountability. Second, openness depends on the government's capacity to engage citizens and other stakeholders, including their perspectives and insights and promoting co-operation in policy design and implementation. The OECD Trust Survey module carried out in Norway includes the following two questions, which gauge the population's opinion about 1) transparency; and 2) opportunities for citizens' inclusion and participation:

- If a decision is to be made which will impact the area where you live, how likely is it that you and other local residents will be given the opportunity to influence the decision?
- If you need information about how to use a public service, how likely is it that the information in question will be easy to access?

Norway has a strong culture of openness regarding public decision-making processes and disclosure of public information (Robinson, 2020[4]). Evidence from the OECD Trust Survey shows that 53% of Norwegians expressed that it was likely that information on how to use a public service would be easy to access when they need it, and 28% declared that it would be likely that they would be given the opportunity to influence a decision to impact in the area where they live. In this sense, although the country scores comparatively higher than other OECD countries in terms of access to public information (which is also supported by evidence at the local level from the Citizens Survey),[2] its figures on voicing concerns are slightly below the average (Figure 4.1). In fact, the two dimensions of openness have different impacts on public trust, whilst access to public information has a significant effect only on trust in local government, the capacity to influence policies is relevant for both trust in local and national government. Further, there is a statistically significant albeit small effect of engagement opportunities in trust in the public administration.

Figure 4.1. Citizens' expectations of their ability to access information and voice their concerns on a decision affecting them



Note: Percentage of the population that on a scale from 0-10 answered 6 or more to the questions: If a decision is to be made which will impact the area where you live, how likely is it that you and other local residents will be given the opportunity to influence the decision? and If you need information about how to use a public service, how likely is it that the information in question will be easy to access?. The latter was not asked in the case of Korea.
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian Citizens Survey, in the Finnish Consumer Confidence survey and OECD/KPI.

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Norway has been a pioneer country in transparency policies. In 2004, article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution[3] provides that "everyone has the right of access to documents of the State and municipal administration, as well as the right to follow the proceedings of courts and democratically elected bodies." In 2009, Norway ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents (CETS 205) and in 2010 it was among the countries that funded the Open Government Partnership. In addition, the Norwegian Freedom of Information Act states that all documents of public administration are open by default, and aims to facilitate the re-use of public information. Since 2010, there has been an online access portal to public records (Electronic Public Records, OEP), where all government documents are registered (GRECO/Council of Europe, 2020[5]). Indeed, according to OECD evidence, Norway is among the top OECD countries on open government data, though it has been highlighted that it has recently reduced its efforts to promote re-use of data outside the public sector (OECD, 2019[6]).

Further, the Norwegian government and public agencies proactively provide information through media outlets, press releases, campaigns and websites. There is a "State communication strategy", first launched in 1993 and renewed in 2009, that serves as a framework for designing local strategies and plans for information and communication. The strategy stipulates that citizens should: 1) receive correct and clear information regarding their rights, duties and opportunities, 2) have access to information regarding the State, and 3) be invited to participate in the development of policies and services.

The level of perceived transparency in political decision making is relatively high in Norway. According to wave nine of the European Social Survey fielded in 2018, 71.9% of Norwegians respondents think that a great deal or some political decisions are transparent, the highest value among 19 surveyed European countries. These results are consistent with data collected through the OECD Survey on Lobbying, which shows that Norway makes public and accessible online not only discussions within the plenary sessions in parliament, but also discussions within commissions, which provides Norwegians with opportunities to

hold their government accountable (OECD, 2021[7]). An illustrative example from the education sector mentioned during interviews conducted for this study may support this evidence. When the curriculum process for schools was updated, the Ministry of Education set up a Commission with experts and gave them the mandate to carry out the task. All interested stakeholders could set up meetings with the Commission and participate in debates. Moreover, all questions and debates were posted online, and everyone (teachers, teachers' unions, headmasters' union, etc.) could follow the commission's work and discussions on a day-to-day basis. Afterwards, a white paper on the topics discussed in the process was developed, there was a formal hearing, the document was openly discussed in Parliament, and the curriculum was decided. Once again, within the Ministry, stakeholders, who had followed the process and had complete information on it, were involved and there were meetings with unions and the organisation of local governments. Even if not consensual, the process was completely open. Further, in order to grant access even during the pandemic, for instance, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation ensured that all political meetings in the local governments were streamed online, so it was easy for people to access what politicians were discussing.

Finally, transparency, access to information and open communication were also central to the Government's strategy to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the government broadcast regular meetings with health authorities and highlighted the role of science and public health in informing the government's choices; on the other hand, the government strategy focused on informing people continuously about what strategic choices they made and why, as well as on the issues they were unsure of or had no information. The communication strategy adopted was to be open on information, advice received from experts, consequences and underlying values. Moreover, the prime minister and the Minister of Health gave press conferences at least once a week. According to research still in progress, several elements of the Norwegian pandemic communications strategy were praised as important for building trust and achieving better results than neighbouring Scandinavian countries. These elements are a) not only about sharing the data but making sure that people understand it; b) a responsible communication model where objections are presented and criticism is accepted; c) dialogue with your surroundings (e.g. scientific community) but decisions remaining at the political level. Being open about uncertainty has also contributed to building confidence among people (Øyvind, 2021[8]). Additionally, there have been press conferences specifically for children, where they had the opportunity to ask questions and express their concerns directly to the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister showcasing the importance of choosing different channels to reach different audiences.

People feeling empowered and capable of participating in politics: The foundation of the Norwegian system

According to data from the OECD Trust Survey, people's perception that they can have an influence on public decisions affecting their lives is an important determinant of trust in government, both at national and local level (Chapter 2). In addition, a recent study using European Social Survey data found that reforms that open up organisational processes to citizens, non-governmental organisations and other external actors result in greater levels of public trust. Especially when people feel that they have meaningful opportunities for political participation, they feel empowered to participate in politics and influence what the government does (Schmidthuber, Ingrams and Hilgers, 2020[3]). In this sense, the fact that Norwegians are highly active, politically speaking, together with the widespread feeling that they have a say in what the government does, are important factors explaining the country's high levels of trust.

Policy making in Norway follows a consensus-based style, which has a long tradition of involving civil society, different stakeholders including unions to be consulted, collaborate and participate in the development of public policies (Box 4.1). Further, political parties and voluntary organisations have strong roots in civil society, are embedded in the local and regional fabric, and are key not only for democratic governance, but also for welfare provision (Saglie and Sivesind, 2018[9]).

Box 4.1. Mechanisms in place for people to participate and influence public policies in Norway

According to the *Instructions for the Preparation of Central Government Measures*, green papers, public reports, as well as all proposed laws, regulations, or measures that could have a major effect on society are supposed to be subject to public consultation, and open to input from the whole Norwegian population. People are asked to submit comments and are given between six weeks and three months to do so. If these consultative comments result in major amendments to a proposal, a revised version is circulated for consultation anew.

Consultations also give access to interest groups and subject matter experts, in order to ensure that different viewpoints are included in the decision-making process in political bodies such as the Norwegian parliament and County councils. They can address public service performance and development, in order to develop more user-friendly and user-oriented services, too; and can be organised in the form of written comments or meetings where the concerned parties give comments and answer questions.

Another mechanism for citizens to influence what public institutions are doing - or should be doing - are public meetings, which are organised at the County and Municipality level. Public meetings –also called town hall meetings- are widespread in 95,2% of municipalities, are intended to be open for all interested parties and citizens, and are a platform for information sharing regarding policy plans. Issues of concern range from education to County reform.

According to a recent report commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, there are multiple opportunities provided by local governments to participate, such as contact committees for voluntary organisations, contact committee/council for immigrants or channels for citizens' participation in the budget process. In 2020, most of municipalities (67%) have established cooperation forums for the business community. Besides, 71% of municipalities obtain people's feedback through user surveys.

At the local level, the local authority is required to have three committees that give advice to local municipality before they make decisions: one for the elderly, one for youth and one for people with disabilities, which ensures that the voices of underrepresented population groups are also heard. Some municipalities also have panels of the same citizens that give advice, or a "Kafé system", where politicians invite people for dinner for listening and discussing their concerns.

Some initiatives in the use of representative deliberative processes have taken place in Norway. For example, the city of Trondheim is developing the new municipality master plan using a citizens' panel.

Finally, co-operation between employers, unions and government (tripartite collaboration) has a long history in Norwegian working life. Trade unions have a greater influence on employment than in most other countries. A huge proportion of employees become members, and the trade unions enter into collective bargaining agreements with employers, which then are binding for all employees.

Further, it is relevant to mention that children have rights to participate in decisions that affect them, such as conventional children's right, and whenever any ministry proposes policies that affect youth, they are required to organise youth panels to advise them.

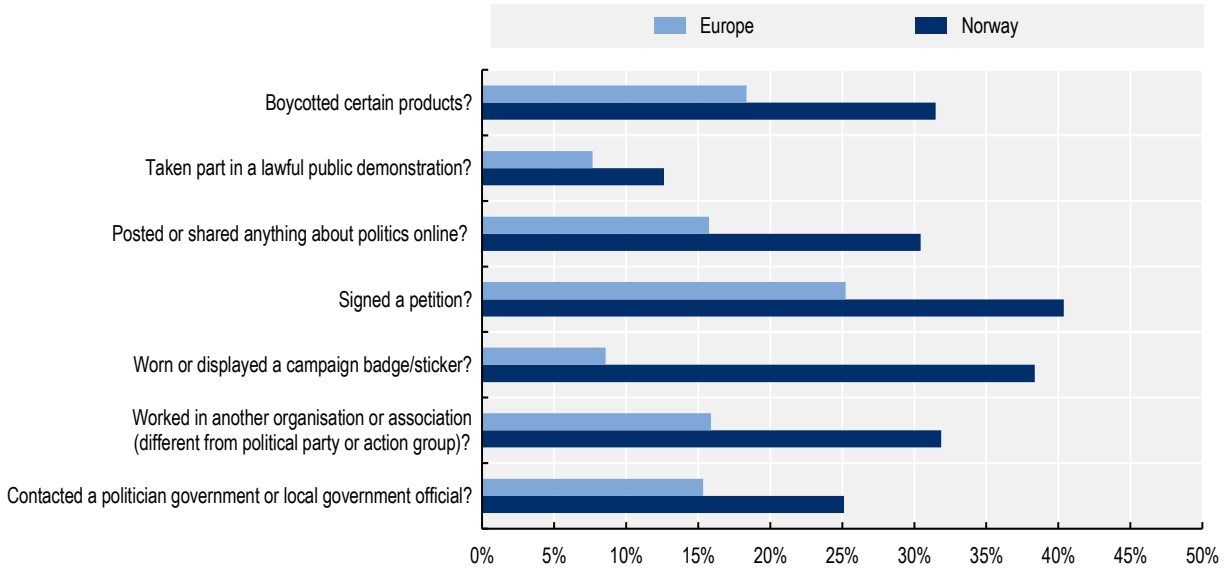
Source: Desk research for this case study and (Jones et al., 2021[10]).

As suggested by data from the European Social Survey, people in Norway generally participate through different channels and in comparatively higher proportions than on average in Europe (Figure 4.2). Norwegians participate broadly and in many forms, which supports the argument on a pretty egalitarian

and not cumulative pattern in terms of political involvement, i.e. people use a wide arrays of channels in order to participate in civic life (Rose, 1982[11]; Pettersen and Rose, 1996[12]). Norwegians' involvement in decision making is widespread, they aim to politically influence decisions in a broad sense, for instance, including issues pertaining to the workplace (Lafferty, 1984[13]). High levels of involvement fulfils one of the main democratic promises: not only to cover the political sphere, but also the social one, and extend to all places where power is exercised to make binding decisions for an entire social group (Bobbio, 1987[14]).

Figure 4.2. Percentage of the population reporting to participate in political life in Norway and Europe, 2018

Percentages reported



Note: weighted data reported (dweight).
Source: OECD calculations based on the European Social Survey, wave 9.

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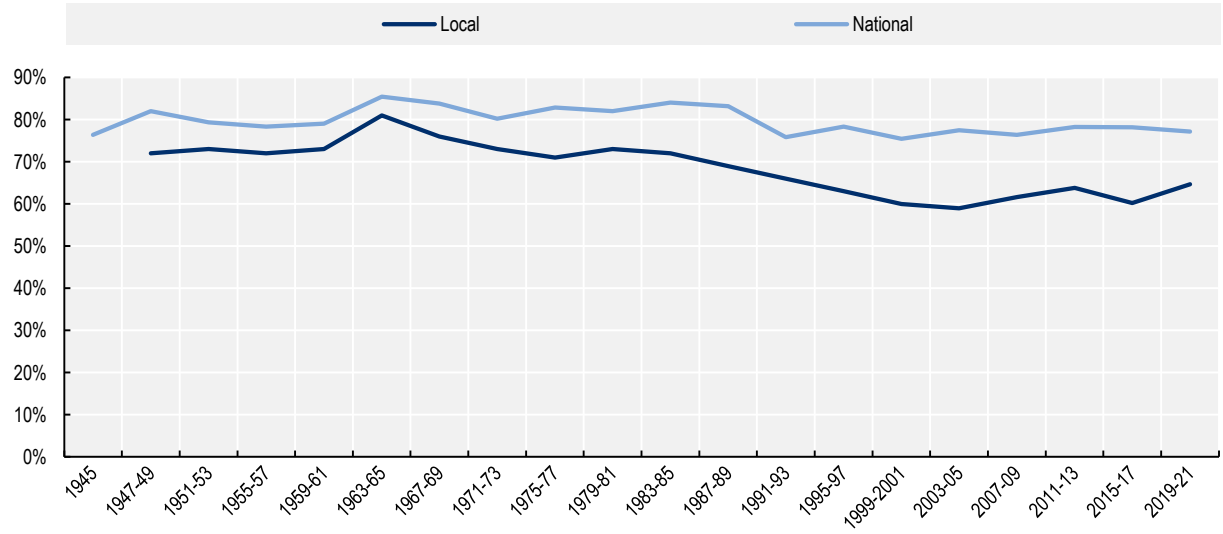
Turnout levels in Norway are amongst the highest in the world, 77% voted in the most recent national elections, and contrary to global trends, figures haven't decreased in recent years (Figure 4.3).This could be related to the fact that voter registration is automatic, which makes it easier for Norwegians to vote, to an extended voting period[4] and easy access to polling stations both in the advance period and on election day. Another factor contributing to high turnout is the fact that Norwegians generally have a favourable opinion of their representative institutions. These positive turnout figures though, are not replicated at the local level with a difference of about 10 percentage points over the past twenty years (see Figure 4.3). In 2019, there was an increase in local election turnout; however, electoral participation at the local level has dropped substantially in comparison with turnout in national elections, even though municipalities do have important responsibilities regarding the provision of public services (such as providing primary education, care for the elderly, etc.) (Borge, 2010[15]). While it is common that "second order elections", such as local elections, have lower turnout rates (Marien, Dassonneville and Hooghe, 2015[16]), this pattern of diminishing turnout at the local level in Norway remains an unresolved challenge (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[17]).

Figure 4.3. Turnout in Norway: Trends



Note: Elections are held every 4 years. At the national level, we include the percentage of eligible Norwegians who go and cast a vote from 1945, and at the local level from 1947. For ease of visualisation, we combined the dates.
Sources: OECD calculations based on Listhaug and Grønflaten (2007[18]), International IDEA (2021[19]), and Statistics Norway (2021[20]).

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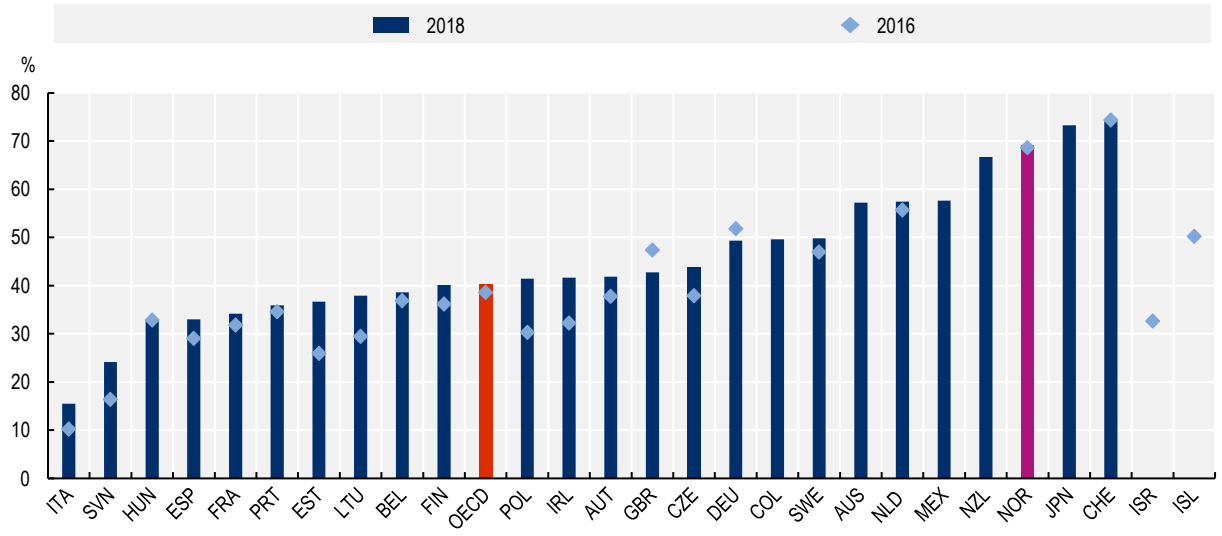
According to the data collected in the summer of 2021 through the OECD Trust survey applied in the Norwegian Citizens Survey, the parliament is the most trusted political institution, 69% of Norwegians declared to trust it. In turn, political parties are trusted by 43% of Norwegians. These numbers are comparatively higher than in other OECD countries, where Parliaments are generally the least-trusted political institution (OECD, 2021[21]). These percentages may suggest that people feel their interests are well represented in the country's policies and laws, which is consistent with interviews conducted for this study. As per the experts consulted, the Norwegian party system represents different groups well, established political parties are also fairly good at incorporating new topics into their agendas, and the electoral system is open enough to allow new parties to enter the political scene. For instance, in 2019 from grassroots movements against toll roads emerged a political party that got seats in several communities. Further, given the substantial public funding allocated to them, both voluntary organisations and political parties have been recently regulated to be transparent, reinforcing a trustworthy relationship with the State and the public (Saglie and Sivesind, 2018[9]). As political parties, trade unions and voluntary organisations have a key role representing different interests, and participating in these organisations makes citizens feel they have a stake in collective endeavours, builds mutual trust and encourages a sense of belonging (Parvin, 2018[22]). However, membership in these organisations has declined over the years, and according to the Citizens Survey, just about 6%[5] of Norwegians declared to be active party members, and 24% to be an active member of a trade union.

Further, a little over half of the Norwegian population declared to feel they have a say in what government does. This evidence is similar to data collected through the European Social Survey, with 69% of Norwegians considering that they have a say in what the government does. Norway is above the OECD average and is among the top performers in terms of external efficacy (Figure 4.4). Likewise, Norwegian figures supports findings of a recent analysis of 30 European countries highlighting that political efficacy always has significant effects on participation. People's perception that their participation will influence what government does (external efficacy) has a positive impact on traditional forms of participation, as well as on participation within the political system. An individual's self-perception of their ability to understand political processes (internal efficacy) has a positive effect on any form of participation (Prats and Meunier, 2021[23]).

Figure 4.4. Having a say in what the government does, 2016 and 2018 (or nearest available year)

Percentage of the population



Note: The scores reflect the percentage who answered "some", "a lot" or "a great deal" to "How much would you say the political system in [country] allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?"
Source: OECD (2021[21]), *Government at a Glance 2021*.

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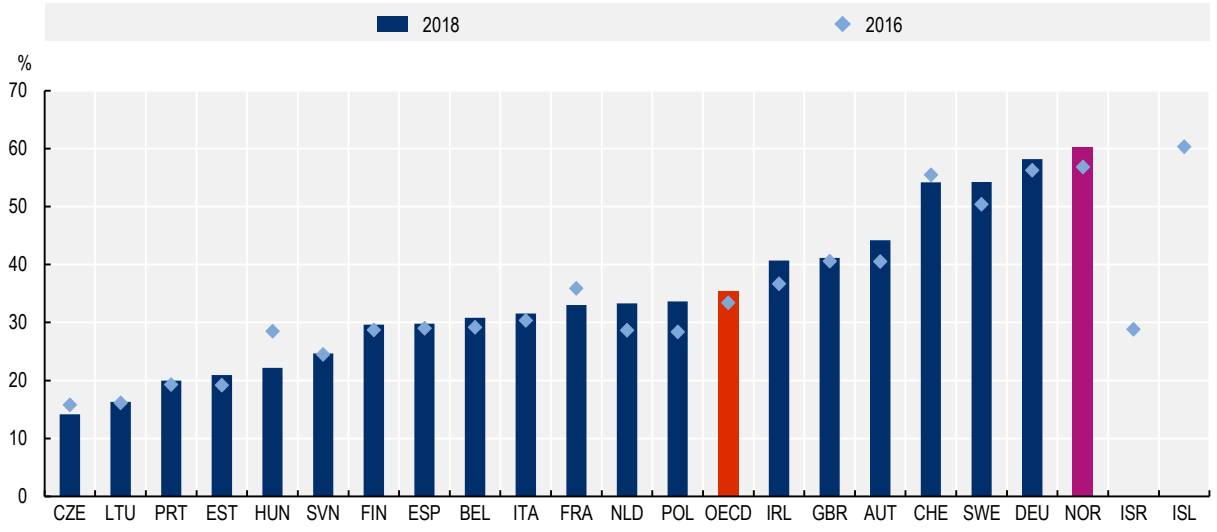
In turn, regarding internal efficacy, according to the OECD Trust Survey, most Norwegians (55%) have confidence in their own ability to participate in politics, a figure that is comparatively higher than in most European countries (OECD, 2021[21]). According to ESS, Norwegians display the highest levels of internal political efficacy (i.e. people's own ability to participate in politics) of the OECD countries (Figure 4.5). This can be linked to the fact that Norway is the only country in the world where there is a national framework (and a 70-year tradition) to conduct mock elections in schools – including debates and interaction with party members from youth organisations - every other year, which is held one week before local or parliamentary elections. This familiarises students with the political realm and trains them to be active democratic citizens, which helps perpetuate the democratic system. Indeed, a study on the impact of political education at schools in Norway showed that mock elections had a positive effect on students' willingness to vote in parliamentary elections (Borge, 2016[24]).

Figure 4.5. People's confidence to participate in politics, 2016 and 2018

Percentage of the population



Note: The scores for 2016 and 2018 reflect the percentage who answered "quite confident", "very confident" or "completely confident" to "How confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics?" The options "not at all confident" and "a little confident" are not shown.
Source: OECD (2021[21]), *Government at a Glance 2021*.

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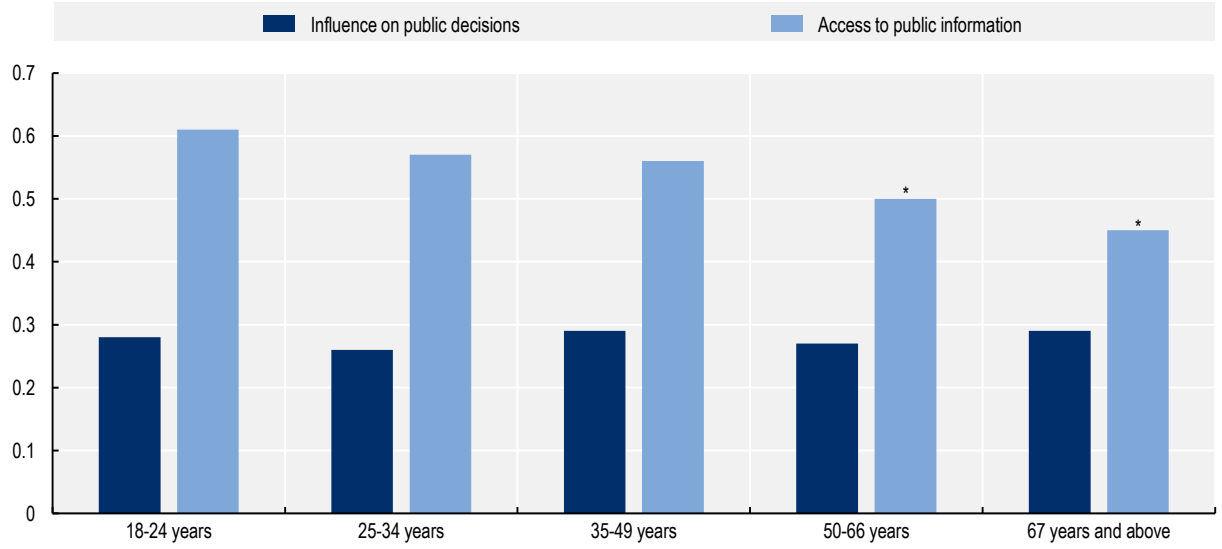
Furthering openness and engagement of everyone and at all levels

Although Norwegians are very active politically, the country is not exempt from participation gaps and political disparities (Dalton, 2017[25]). As such, for strengthening openness and preventing differences from becoming structural political inequalities, Norway needs to better understand who is (or feels) left behind, and what the expectations and perceptions of different groups of society are with respect to participation and engagement.

According to the OECD Trust Survey and the interviews carried out for this study, while the ability of voicing concerns does not change according to age, older people find it significantly more difficult to access information than younger cohorts (Figure 4.6). In addition, the ability to voice concerns and access information about government actions increase significantly for higher-levels of income.

Figure 4.6. Citizens' perceptions of openness by age



Note: Percentage of the population answering 6 or more to the questions: If a decision is to be made which will impact the area where you live, how likely is it that you and other local residents will be given the opportunity to influence the decision? If you need information about how to use a public service, how likely is it that the information in question will be easy to access? Other respondents were coded as 0 (having low or neutral perceptions). Weighted average values are reported. Reference group for statistical tests is 35-49 years old.
* Statistically significant at 95%.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded in the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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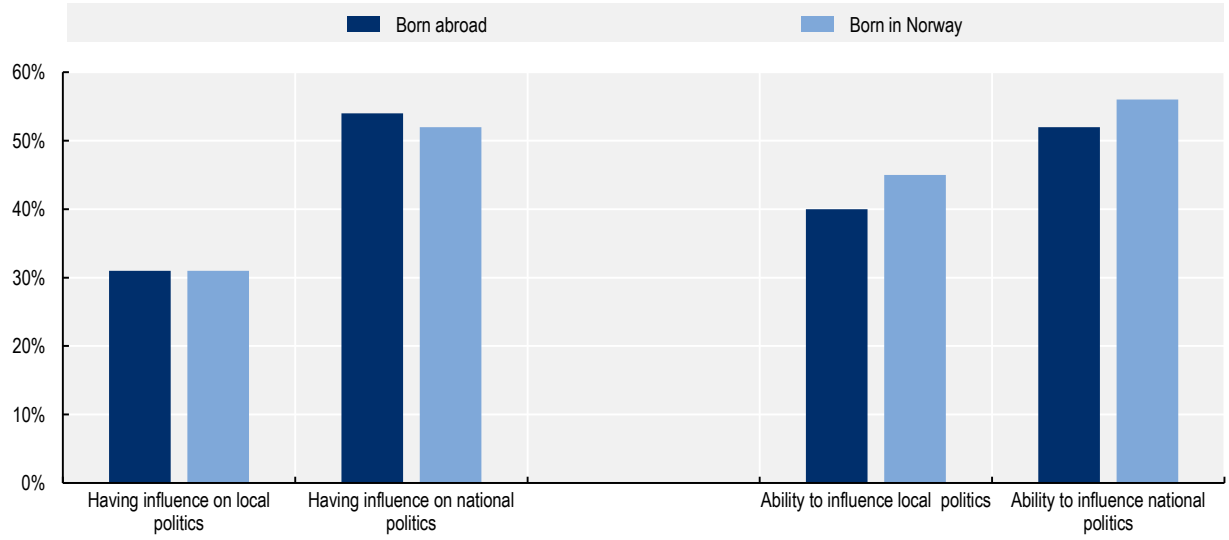
Data on the local level also suggest participation gaps across socioeconomic characteristics, which is of key relevance given that openness and external political efficacy are among the main determinants of trust (Chapter 2). Indeed, a study on participation in local politics in Norway, found that whilst young people and women in urban areas prefer to perform activities to influence public opinion (such as signing petitions or participating in demonstrations), better educated men in municipalities prefer to influence policy making more directly (for example contacting local representatives or raising issues within a local party organisation) (Pettersen and Rose, 1996[12]). Another study also highlighted that initiatives to promote participation varied along different municipalities, with diminishing participation opportunities depending on people's residency (Bergh, Haugsgjerd and Karlsen, 2020[26]). Participation types were also found to be affected by size of political units (Rose, 2002[27]). For instance, proximity and familiarity in small and less populated areas make contacting politicians more common, thus facilitating civic activities, such as attending meetings. These findings could suggest that in order to increase participation, the Norwegian government could adopt different strategies according to political units, instead of promoting a general or one-size-fits all strategy at the local level.

Concerning local politics and geographical gaps, another point was raised during interviews conducted for this study: a stronger polarisation of the rural-urban divide reactivated after centralisation reforms. As Norway has a wide territory with a small and scattered population, with the exception of the capital and other large cities, the conflict between national and local interests has persistently crosscut politics in the country. Data collected by the OECD Trust Survey shows no significant differences between people born abroad and in Norway (Figure 4.7). In turn, people who do not live in Oslo and its surroundings tend to trust political institutions less, such as political parties, the *Storting* or the government (see Chapter 2). Further, they have lower levels of political efficacy (Figure 4.8). This evidence may suggest that people who live in the periphery feel left behind, and that their interests are not broadly represented by political parties. Indeed, the urban-rural cleavage and the dispute about centralisation has been highlighted as key factors in explaining political alignments and agenda.

Figure 4.7. Citizens' perception of openness by place of birth



Note: Percentage of the population who answered 6-10 to the following questions: To what extent are people such as yourself able to influence the political decision-making processes in your municipality? To what extent would you say that the Norwegian political system allows people such as yourself to exercise political influence? How confident are you about your own ability to participate in politics? How confident are you about your own ability to participate in local politics? Other respondents were coded as 0 (having low or neutral perceptions). Weighted average values are reported. Reference group for statistical tests is citizens born in Norway.
* Statistically significant at 95%.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded in the Norwegian Citizens Survey

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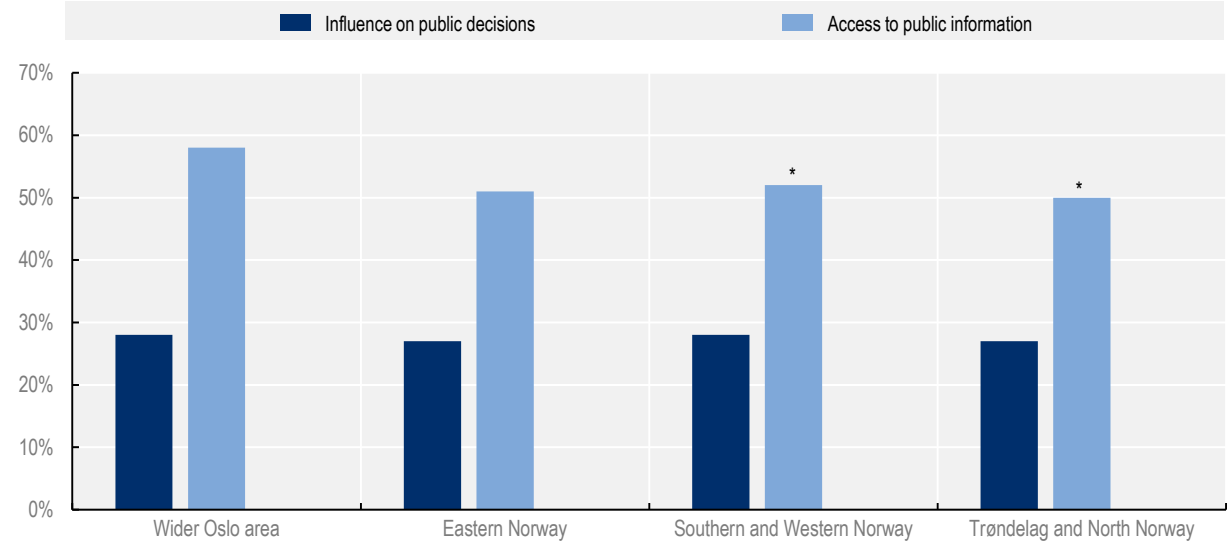
Figure 4.8. Citizens' perceptions of being able to influence politics, by region of residence



Note: Percentage of the population answering 6 or more to the questions: To what extent are people such as yourself able to influence the political decision-making processes in your municipality? To what extent would you say that the Norwegian political system allows people such as yourself to exercise political influence? How confident are you about your own ability to participate in politics? How confident are you about your own ability to participate in local politics? Other respondents were coded as 0 (having low or neutral perceptions). Weighted average values are reported. Reference group for statistical tests is citizens living in the wider Oslo area.
* Statistically significant at 95%.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded in the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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In order to ensure the best policy options and alternatives to address participation gaps, it is key to consider the specific context, as well as political socialisation, historic and cultural elements. Besides, citizens are found to have very heterogeneous democratic ideals. Those who favour representative democracy consider 'accountability' to be a central value (Bengtsson and Christensen, 2014[28]). An experimental study on a representative sample of Norwegians indicated that regarding acceptance of policy decisions, people focus on sensitiveness to citizens' preferences, or fair treatment beyond direct influence (Arnesen, 2017[29]). In this regard, reaching out to the ones left behind may require a mix of solutions. A key initiative to this end is to use comprehensive, regular and representative population surveys (Box 4.2). These facilitate citizen engagement and allow the government to obtain updated feedback on their perceptions, experiences and evaluations of public governance and services (Box 4.3), thus reinforcing vertical accountability beyond votes or electoral periods.

Box 4.2. Surveying as a way to engage people and strengthen accountability on public governance

Among the many mechanisms and initiatives to promote stakeholders' engagement and participation, surveying is a frequently used and key tool. Surveying enables governments to consult people and allows citizens to voice their opinion.

When participating in regular population surveys, citizens are invited to provide their feedback on different public governance related aspects, which allows governments to further vertical accountability beyond electoral processes. At the same time, governments and policy makers can use data collected to better inform policies, identify citizens' priorities and concerns, as well as assess the support or impact of different initiatives. This is the case of current specific initiatives and surveys on public governance carried out in for example Norway or Australia as well as larger global initiatives to track the progress on governance development goals such as the Praia Handbook on governance statistics.

Norway's Citizens Survey

Since 2009, the Agency of Public Management in Norway has carried out the Citizen Survey. The Survey provides a substantial knowledge base for assessing the performance of public services across sectors, and provides insights that can contribute to long-term public sector development. The survey is understood as an additional way to engage citizens apart from direct mechanisms. It addresses perceptions, expectations and areas of improvement, aiming to develop public outputs and services in a more user-friendly manner, based on citizens' needs and expectations.

Australia's Citizen Experience Survey

Since 2019, aiming to have a whole-of-Australian Public Service and cross-sectional view of service experience, which could complement individual agencies' initiatives and measurements, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Australia has carried out the Citizen Experience Survey. The regular and national survey measures public satisfaction, trust and experiences with Australian public services, supporting the public service to continually improve Australian public services.

The Praia Handbook on Governance Statistics.

Further, pursuant to the inclusion of a Goal on Public Governance in the Sustainable Development Goals (Goals 16), the handbook is an important tool to advance in the measurement of public governance. The UN Citi Praia Handbook on Governance Statistics is a comprehensive effort to map all existing measurement initiatives on public governance. It divides public governance into eight different dimensions: 1) non-discrimination and equality; 2) participation; 3) openness; 4) access to and

quality of justice; 5) responsiveness (satisfaction with services, political efficacy); 6) absence of corruption; 7) trust; 8) safety and security. The handbook sheds light on the feasibility of generating comparative evidence and measuring several dimensions of public governance through household surveys.

Source: https://www.nsd.no/nsddata/serier/innbyggerundersokelsen_eng.html; https://www.pmc.gov.au/public-data/citizen-experience-survey; Praia Group: Handbook on Governance Statistics (sdg16hub.org)

In addition, national and local dialogues were found to be a nodal element during crisis periods. Beyond the usual communication and participation mechanisms such as online mechanisms or institutional communication platforms, different countries' experiences highlight the importance of people-centred approaches for building institutional trust, where citizens are given the opportunity to talk about their feelings regarding uncertainties and concerns, and expectations on policy choices for the future, such as the Lockdown Dialogues in Finland (Box 4.3). Further, other countries have introduced representative deliberative processes in participation strategies as an alternative way to engage the broader public in influencing political processes. As part of these processes, a randomly selected group of people (who are broadly representative of a community) spend significant time learning and collaborating through facilitated deliberation to form collective recommendations on complex problems for policy makers. By the use of random selection and stratified sampling,[6] these processes may bring excluded categories of people (e.g. youth, the disadvantaged, women, and minorities) into public policy and decision making (OECD, 2020[30]).

New ways of participation and promoting engagement need to be understood as complementary instead of a replacement of traditional ones, as democratic governance requires the use of different mechanisms for different purposes to take advantage of their strengths and weaknesses (OECD, 2020[30]). In this sense, social changes in Norway have affected the way of understanding politics and organisations, and while traditional mechanisms and institutions have been adapting slowly, there is not yet an alternative replacement of them (Panebianco, 1988[31]; Manin, 1997[32]; Scarrow, 2002[33]). While some innovative processes may remove participation barriers, it is important that all members of society construct an identity as citizens (Parvin, 2018[22]; Faucher, 2015[34]).

Box 4.3. Engaging people in dialogues during lockdowns

A "citizen-informed" strategy has been needed to rebuild trust during crisis periods. Different countries have adopted different approaches as seen in the examples below.

Finnish 'Lockdown Dialogues'

As part of the responses put forward by the Finnish government to monitor the evolution of COVID-19 and with the intention of capturing people's feelings, opinions and expectations, the government initiated the Lockdown Dialogues. These dialogues have been not only a vivid testimony of the social experience caused by the pandemic in its different phases, but have also contributed to identifying issues that may require government attention and have become inputs for shaping policy responses. The dialogues started during the first months of lockdown and continued after the restrictions were lifted (renamed Finnish National Dialogues). Between April and September, over 100 dialogues were organised with over 1 000 participants, including civil organisations, individual citizens, municipalities and government offices. Information gathered during dialogues feed into the government's COVID-19 crisis management co-ordination, as well as the exit and recovery strategies.

Citizens Panel for the recovery strategy in the Midlands (England)

Residents from across the West Midlands in England put forward their priorities and principles to rebuild the region following the COVID-19 pandemic. A citizens panel that met following the first lockdown proposed the priorities. The panel was composed of 36 local people from across the region and a range of backgrounds to learn about issues facing the region and share experiences of how the pandemic has affected them and their families. As a result, they agreed on six priorities for helping the region recover. The priorities identified by the panel were:

- **Getting back to normal safely.** Ensuring people can live safely and there is clear guidance as we move out of lockdown and to avoid new peaks.
- **Healthcare.** Making sure that patients can be treated, avoiding risk of Covid-19, and the healthcare system gets back on track to diagnose and treat people when they need it. It also means promoting healthy living to reduce demand for the NHS in the long term
- **Mental health.** Specific emphasis on making sure that anyone who needs mental health support knows where to find it and is guided to access support.
- **Education.** Preparing children to go back to an adapted school environment, ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Making sure that every child is supported to make up for lost time so children from all backgrounds are equally able to achieve their goals.
- **Employment.** Creating new jobs, with an emphasis on apprenticeships and entry-level jobs. Making sure that additional training is provided to give people the right skillsets to enter the workforce and getting people who have lost their jobs for COVID-related reasons back into work.
- **Promoting and supporting business.** Promoting and supporting business - especially smaller and/or local businesses and the self-employed (e.g. encouraging people to buy local). Providing financial and business support to help them get back on their feet and protect jobs.

Source: (OECD, 2021[35]) based on Highlights from the OECD webinar: "The ties that bind: Government openness as a key driver of trust", 11 September 2020; Mental health support, jobs, and training among key recovery priorities for West Midlands Citizens' Panel (wmca.org.uk)

Finally, rapidly changing media and information ecosystems – understood as the relevant governance frameworks, actors and technologies impacting how people get and share information – are affecting how people consume and share information, and in turn who and what they trust. Technology, in particular individuals' increasing reliance on the internet and social media platforms as a primary means of receiving news, is altering how people consume, transmit and share information. Such technologies have facilitated interaction, increasing opportunities for engagement and co-ordination, though at the same time have facilitated the spread of harmful and misleading content. While mis- and disinformation[7] are not a new phenomenon, the potential for rapid spread of such content online both feeds on and aggravates a crisis in public trust. Such content can also – intentionally or not – confuse the public, threaten informed participation, pose real-world threats to policy implementation, public health and safety, and can intensify political polarisation (Matasick, Alfonsi and Bellantoni, 2020[36]).

During interviews conducted for this study, participants repeated that COVID-19 has served as a wake-up call for the government to engage with the challenges and opportunities presented by social media, notably around reaching youth. The government has focused increasingly on the use of social media platforms: in 2015, for example, an inter-ministerial working group was formed under the Prime Minister's Office, comprised of communication advisors from Norwegian ministries, to co-ordinate and stimulate increased use of social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter at the ministry-level". As noted in the OECD Report on Public Communication: The Global Context and the Way Forward, furthermore, the Government of Norway also organises weekly meetings with heads of communication to align priorities and streamline a unified digital presence.

These examples of strategic and co-ordinated approaches to promoting effective public communication and engagement with the public are important. Nevertheless, while OECD analysis found that officials value the utility of digital communication, findings also suggest there is room to ramp up the use of online tools to reach and engage underrepresented groups. Notably, only 16% of Center of Governments considered "expanding reach to specific types of stakeholders" as one of the top three priority objectives of digital communication, and only 15% have developed directives focused on using social media to support engagement. Moving forward, governments, including Norway's, can continue to take advantage of the opportunities provided by novel information and communication technologies to reach and engage with all segments of society. Continued efforts to promote cross-government co-ordination, the provision of training and the creation of guidelines on the effective use of digital tools are examples of ways in which governments can seek to improve their communication while safeguarding the core values of the administration (see Box 4.4).

Furthermore, the OECD's *Principles of Good Practice for Public Communication Responses to Mis- and Disinformation* propose ten principles that can help promote a whole-of-society response to the challenges presented by the spread of misleading and harmful content. The principles include practical examples and reiterate the importance of governments communicating transparently, honestly, and impartially, and to conceive of the public communication function as a means for two-way engagement with citizens. Beyond public communication, furthermore, the principles seek to help promote healthy information ecosystems via a systemic and holistic approach to support an environment conducive to effective sharing of information and data and to fostering democratic dialogue. Ultimately, the principles aim to provide practical guidance and present a range of good practices on government interventions aimed to counter mis- and disinformation, address underlying causes of distrust, and to promote openness, transparency and inclusion.

Box 4.4. UK's counter disinformation initiatives

The Government Communication Service of the United Kingdom launched in 2019 a counter disinformation toolkit that aims to support public officials in preventing and tackling the spread of disinformation as well as in disseminating reliable and truthful information.

The RESIST toolkit is divided into five independent components that helps to:

- **R**ecognise disinformation
- use media monitoring for **E**arly warning
- develop **S**ituational insight
- carry out **I**mpact analysis
- deliver **S**trategic communication
- **T**rack outcomes

In addition to the toolkit, the UK Cabinet Office partnered with the University of Cambridge to create a game called Go Viral! (https://www.goviralgame.com/en). The game was designed to help the public understand and discern the most common COVID-19 misinformation tactics used by online actors, so they can better protect themselves against them. As per initial results, there have been over 207 000 digital 'inoculations' to health misinformation delivered through the Go Viral! Game, and the intervention was found to raise players' ability to resist misinformation by up to 21%.

Source: UK Government Communication Service; UK's presentation during OECD Public Governance Committee, October 2021.

Opportunities for improvements

Norway has multiple initiatives and extensive regulations furthering openness as a key value of governance. It has a sound democratic system that broadly ensures people feel represented, empowered and heard, whilst public institutions are transparent and accountable. Yet, there is still room for improvement.

Information about public administration and how to access services is still often presented in hard-to understand bureaucratic language, which poses a challenge for some social groups. During COVID, public officials recognised that it has been difficult to reach all different groups of society, especially immigrants. In this regard, the government of Norway could expand efforts to use plain language, identify the best channels to reach different groups and to use the public communication functions as a means of supporting audience understanding and two-way communication with all segments of society. Experiences such as the film studio to reach out to young people set up by the municipality of Trondheim could be replicated elsewhere.

Concerning engagement and participation, as per the interviews conducted for this study, experts highlighted that though Norway is characterised by broad citizen participation in policy making, during the pandemic the government followed a top-down decision-making style, even, at times, to the exclusion of expert bodies. Additionally, legal experts have criticised the fact that because of emergency powers the government was able to move ahead very quickly, preventing the Parliament from being better informed and included in decision making. In order to strengthen openness, and safeguard its characteristic consensual decision-making style, Norway could improve emergency preparedness, and promote transparent and accountable procedures that could be applied amid a crisis.

In order to ensure high levels of political participation, Norway must keep investing and improving its initiatives related to political socialisation and outreach to segments of the population that feel left behind. This will also include initiatives to strengthen participation in and representation of civil society and political organisations, which have declined in the recent years. To strengthen organisations, the government of Norway may consider a more proactive approach to develop initiatives on transparency and good governance, such as promoting the accountability of leaders and democratic candidate selection procedures, as well as participative decision-making processes within organisations such as political parties or trade unions. This could allow it to better represent interests and identify people's concerns, including those of the younger generation. Moreover, drawing on survey data from "*Young in Oslo 2015*", a study on youth participation in Norway found that active involvement in socially oriented organisations is positively related to political participation especially among immigrant youth (Ødegård and Fladmoe, 2020[37])

Finally, though it was underscored that Norwegians feel empowered and capable of participating in politics, reinforcing initiatives to further positive political attitudes can help to anticipate democratic deficits. Indeed, there are different initiatives to engage the youth and promote political socialisation. For instance, students from 13 to 19 years old can be elected as representatives to the Pupils' Common Council, which can make proposals, comments and represent students on issues related to children and young people included in the city council agenda. There are also annual meetings at the Town Hall. However, a study found that the impact of these initiatives would be stronger if organisation of councils were not only authority-driven, and if participants could have the right to take executive decisions (Ødegård, 2007[38]). As such, the government of Norway may explore the possibility to make these initiatives real ways to influence policy makers and to fulfil expectations in order to achieve real change and enhance citizens' trust over the long term.

Integrity

Integrity is a core value of public service and perceived corruption is low

Public integrity refers to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritising the public interest over private interests in the public sector (OECD, 2017[39]). Fostering integrity and preventing corruption in the public sector is crucial to maintaining confidence in government and public decision making. Corruption implies abusing the trust that has been placed in a public duty; thus, by definition, it implies eroding trust in public institutions. On the contrary, integrity is a precondition for all government activities to be legitimate, trusted, as well as effective (OECD, 2017[39]).

Most European citizens value the honesty and impartiality of their civil servants. Indeed, institutional trust was broadly found to depend on the perception of the impartiality and honesty of officials (Grönlund and Setälä, 2011[40]). Further, a recent study of 173 European regions found that the absence of corruption – i.e. citizens expect their public officials to act ethically – was the strongest institutional determinant of citizens' trust in the public administration (Van de Walle and Migchelbrink, 2020[41]).

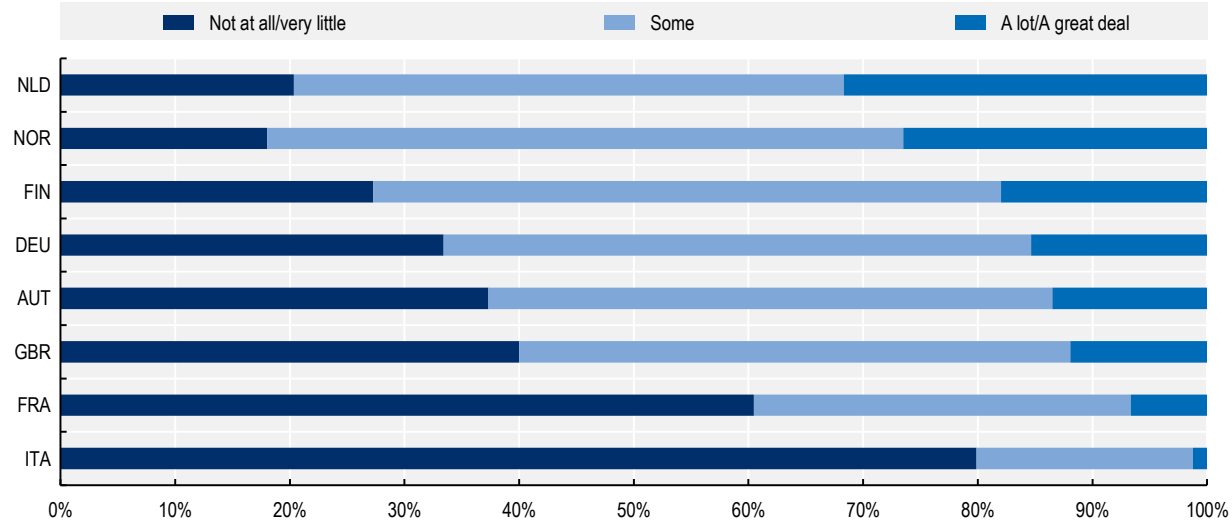
Public *integrity* is measured in relation to the government's mandate to use powers and public resources ethically, by upholding high standards of behaviour, committing to fight corruption, and promoting accountability. The OECD Trust Survey carried out in Norway includes the two specific questions below on issues of bribes, revolving doors and political influence.

- If a member of parliament (the Storting) were offered a bribe or other benefit in return for exercising their influence on a parliamentary matter, how likely is it that they would accept it?
- If a prominent politician were to be offered a well-paid job in business in return for a political favour, how likely is it that they would accept said job offer?

Norway is amongst the countries with the lowest levels of perceived corruption in the world. The Norwegian legal framework for combating corruption is strong, regulations are enforced and there are no reports of official impunity (GAN Integrity, 2020[42]). Further, the country has an outstanding track record, implementing all recommendations throughout all evaluation rounds of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO/Council of Europe, 2020[5]). The government is broadly perceived to take decisions in the interest of its citizens (Figure 4.9). A minority of Norwegians (24%) perceive the country to be governed by a few large players who act in their own interest (TI NORGE, 2021[43]). According to the OECD Trust Survey, only 26% of Norwegians consider that if a parliamentarian were offered a bribe or other benefit in return for exercising their influence on a parliamentary matter, they would likely accept it. Similarly, experts consider that only on very rare occasions do public sector employees grant favours in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements (Vdem).[8]

Figure 4.9. People's perception that the government takes into account the interests of all citizens, 2019

How much would you say that the government in your country takes into account the interests of all citizens?



Source: OECD calculations based on the European Social Survey 2019.

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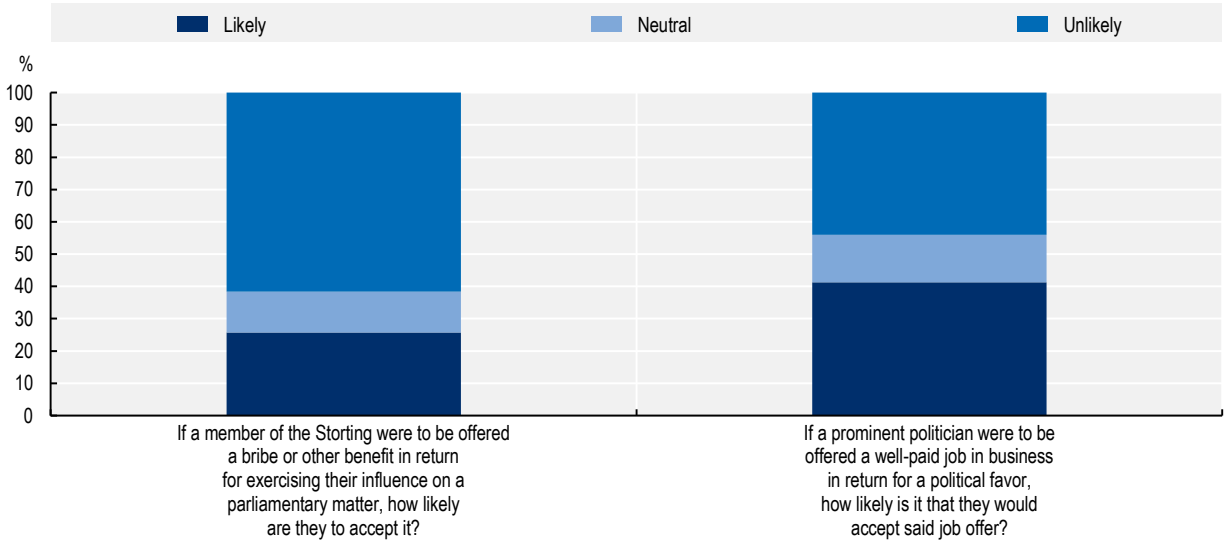
Norway has a robust integrity system, public institutions operate in an autonomous way, free from external pressures, and corruption provisions are extensive and rigorous (Renå, 2012[44]). Currently, there is no specific anticorruption agency or specific policy or strategy on integrity. Nonetheless, integrity is one of the top priorities of the Fourth Norwegian Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership. In addition, a co-operation Forum for Anticorruption was established by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security in 2019, and a platform for sharing integrity-related data is currently being created (GRECO/Council of Europe, 2020[5]). Further, and as per its key role in exercising integrity, it is worth noting the role of the civil service, which is highly trusted in Norway (Figure 4.10).

The Norwegian public administration is merit-based and relies on a values-based approach, which emphasises promoting integrity instead of preventing corruption. Public employees are recruited based on concrete skills and act on a daily basis according to core principles and values that guide public service. The *Ethical Guidelines for the Public Service,* established in 2005, require all public officials to take into account the public interest, and to follow principles of loyalty, transparency, impartiality and professionalism. Based on the aforementioned strengths of the public service and envisioning greater effectiveness, a reform towards a more trust-based management of the public sector has been floated (see Chapter 1).

According to the OECD Trust Survey, only 26% of Norwegians consider that it would be likely that a member of the parliament (*Storting)* would accept a bribe or other benefit in return for exercising their influence on a parliamentary matter. In turn, 41% of respondents think it would be likely a prominent politician would accept a well-paid job in business in return for a political favour. In addition, the analysis shows that integrity is one of the main drivers of public trust in Norway, unlike other countries with similarly high performing integrity systems, such as Finland (see Chapter 2).

Figure 4.10. Percentage of the population considering that undue behaviour is likely to occur



Note: Weighted data reported. "Likely" corresponds to the percentage of the population that on a scale from 0-10 answered 6-10. "Neutral" are those who answered 5 and "unlikely" those who answered 0-4.
Source: OECD survey applied in the Norwegian Citizens Survey, 2021.

StatLink https://stat.link/vrb2m9

Findings could be linked to an uneven distribution of perceptions of risks of undue influence and corruption at local level (further addressed in next section), or the fact that Norwegians have a strong "zero tolerance" position towards corruption. According to a recent survey carried out by Transparency International Norway, 94% of respondents declared that even if public authorities deliver good results they would not consider any form of corruption to be acceptable.

In this sense, though corruption cases and scandals seldom occur in the country, they can have a substantial impact on public opinion, which was the case when the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) incorrectly implemented European social security regulations for several years, events that became known to the public in August 2020. Indeed, short-term institutional trust may be vulnerable to topical occurrences (Bäck and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2019[45]), and uncovering corruption cases may negatively expose government, leading to a drop in institutional trust, despite the fact that the government has actually done a good job.

During the interviews conducted for this study, it was underscored that when corruption cases occur, they create a lot of attention (because of their rarity and the fact that the media plays a watchdog role) and public officials are actually held accountable. For instance, the NAV case mentioned above influenced changes in the political and administrative leadership. Although relatively minor, the following story reported during the virtual fact finding mission is telling. The Prime Minister was found in violation of the COVID-19 regulations by having slightly more guests than allowed to celebrate her birthday in a restaurant. The sanction to this violation would have been a verbal recrimination. However, as it was the Prime Minister, in consideration of her rank and expectations of exemplary behaviour a fine was imposed. The Prime Minister apologised to the society and paid the fine. This shows that although societies that highly trust their government give them broader margins of manoeuvre, it does not mean that trust can be understood as a blank check. Cases of breaches by high profile figures who end up not being accountable for their wrongdoing could have noxious effects on institutional trust.

The administrative leadership in the public sector plays a key role for integrity. They are expected to be effective public managers, but also inspire colleagues, and promote ethical values (OECD, 2020[46]). Experts and officials interviewed for this study said that trust in public institutions broadly relies on the behaviour of leaders, who must set the example in their daily actions and decisions. Moreover, they also have the responsibility to transmit values to new generations of public officials. That is why their training (see Box 4.5) and behaviour can be key for the public administration. They take full responsibility, and accept sanctions even more severe than usual in order to lead by example.

Box 4.5. Training leaders in public administration

The Flemish Public Service has a joint training programme together with the Dutch Public Service, whereby top managers are trained in coaching colleagues. This enables cross-border peer coaching, which has a number of advantages, such as allowing peers to draw on a wealth of experience from top managers of public organisations, broadening training to identify and face multiple challenges or learning how to manage common issues to avoid contextual biases.

The training is based on the idea that an external perspective may be needed to challenge perceptions and to ensure a greater sense of confidentiality and honest sharing. Through the joint coaching-training, peers also become familiar with the other country's customs and governance styles, broadening openness and tolerance, while allowing public officials to also identify common issues that affect public administrations in general.

Source: (OECD, 2020[46])

On this last point, it is worth mentioning that last GRECO report suggests that Norway should increase its efforts to ensure formalised training[9] and counselling channels on ethical matters (GRECO/Council of Europe, 2020[5]). Indeed, success of systems based on promoting integrity and *preventing* instead of *reacting* to corruption, such as the Norwegian one, relies on the fact that every public official acknowledges that core values of the public sector, but that they are also aware of them when facing ethical dilemmas, and know how to manage them. Daily ethical dilemmas need to be identified, such as situations where is unclear how a public official should proceed to resolve the situation in a good and moral way (e.g. delivering a report that is needed urgently, but is incomplete). It is also important to identify the potential risks faced by civil servants when providing further training on how to face and tackle these risks. The American government provides an interesting and practical example on ethics training that could be relevant to consider (Box 4.6).

Box 4.6. Scenario-based ethics training

The U.S. Office of Government Ethics has created a series of slide decks to help agencies implement scenario-based live training in their agencies. The slides provide public officials with practical training that is not focused on the traditional communication of guidelines, but instead present dilemmas officials may face in their daily activities.

Public agencies are provided with material to present public officials with practical situations in which they confront an ethical choice and where it is that clear that they may face a risk. The material addresses different situations, such as a social invitation, a contact made by social media or a former colleague, or receiving a gift from other employees.

The slides focus first on what public officials may think when confronted with one of these situations, the situation is described, and they are then asked to reflect on the fundamental principles or rules linked to the situation and whether they should seek advice and from whom. Then, practical actions are discussed, including how to react to these situations, and how to manage them. Finally, principles and rules relevant to the situation are explicitly mentioned, and clear guidance about how to put into practice various principles, codes, and rules that guide public officials' behaviour.

Source: U.S. Office of Government Ethics, https://www.oge.gov.

Close connections and personal networks may increase risks of undue influence and favouritism

Corruption refers to the abuse of public power for private gain. This abuse can take many forms: from simple bribes to more subtle ways of undue influence, that is, when some powerful groups exert influence in policy making to further their own priorities at the expense of the public interest. For instance, using personal connections to influence policy and not reporting conflicts of interest or providing decision makers with manipulated data, etc. Whilst these practices are not necessarily illegal, they may steer the decision-making process away from the public interest.

In interviews conducted by the OECD for this study, it has been identified that close networks, especially at the local level, may lead to increased corruption risks; in particular due to conflicts of interest. In addition, the empirical results of the OECD Trust Survey show that integrity is among the most relevant determinants of trust in local government. For example, according to the Citizens Survey, 59% of Norwegians believe it is common for public sector employees at the municipal level to favour family members and friends when processing cases (Citizens Survey 2021). This evidence supports findings from last GRECO report (GRECO/Council of Europe, 2020[5]) and previous studies. In some municipalities, ties between the public and private sector are very close and therefore enforcement by authorities of integrity regulations on concerned parties is uneven (Kantar Gallup, 2017[47]). A study from Transparency International on Norway underscored that local government officials were rarely offered bribes, but they could be offered benefits frequently, which may be perceived as being unethical though not illegal (Renå, 2012[44]). In addition, using data from regional governments a study found that local public investments were affected by favouritism and particularism related bias (Fiva and Halse, 2016[48]).

Taking into consideration perceptions and risks of undue influence, it is key to have clear stipulations to regulate how the private sector is involved in policy making. To this end, many OECD countries have either legislative frameworks, rules of procedure or codes of conduct to regulate interactions between stakeholders and public officials and policy makers (OECD, 2021[7]). For instance, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence issued in 2007 the "Ethical Guidelines for contact with business and industry in the defence

sector".[10] These guidelines, revised in 2019, provide guidance for public officials to act ethically in their contact with business and industry.

Lobbying regulations are considered to be part of a broader group of policies and government efforts, such as open government, access to public information laws and integrity reforms, among others, to add transparency and accountability to political processes. However, while there are rules for ensuring that the documentation of decisions is available alongside the freedom of information action act, there is currently no regulation on lobbying. The existence of transparency in decision making and a trustworthy relationship between policy makers and different stakeholders were cited as key reasons for not having lobbying regulations. However, the risk is that there are no controls, limit or sanction in case officials should forget to make transparent a meeting or contact. Norway could consider starting a dialogue on how to improve transparency on the many forms and actors influencing policies, as is the case in other OECD countries (see Box 4.7). Such a dialogue could be framed under a similar logic to the one that has been used for reforms on party financing. These reforms, rather reacting to a corruption scandal for instance, were developed under a political discourse of minimising corruption risks and preserving and strengthening international reputational considerations (Tonhäuser and Stavenes, 2019[49])

Box 4.7. Furthering transparency on influence in policy making

In France, according to *Law No. 2016-1691 on transparency, the fight against corruption and on the modernisation of economic life*, the High Authority for Transparency in Public Life (HATVP) manages a public register, and citizens can access information about the identity of those who try to influence policies, the activities they perform in order to influence, the expenditure related to these activities, as well as public decisions targeted by them.

In Italy, the *rules of procedure of the Parliament* require that everyone who represents an interest, and interacts with policy makers, must register and report their activities, as well as disclose their interests.

In Chile, in accordance to *Law No. 20.730*, the Council for Transparency developed an online platform to give access to data on public officials' hearings and meetings. All the information can be searched and filtered by policy maker, stakeholder, or dates, and it is possible to download the datasets to go through and/or reuse the data collected by the Council. Moreover, the online tool allows users to visualise time trends, compare information according to ministries and see infographics on companies, types of interest, etc.

Source: HATVP, infolobby.cl; 2020 OECD Survey on Lobbying.

Though 74% of Norwegians stated that they believe the authorities are transparent in the handling of COVID-19 (TI NORGE, 2021[43]), the pandemic showed the relevance of new influence channels and of social media, as well as how these could be used to widen unequal access to policy making (OECD, 2021[7]). Lobbyists who already had access to key decision makers and were able to sustain long-established relationships through phone calls, webinars, emails and instant messages increased the advantages linked to their access. As such, developing lobbying regulations in Norway could consider these new influencing methods to further transparency and integrity in policy making and better equip the government to insulate public policy from untoward outside interest.

Opportunities for improvement

Largely, the public administration in Norway works on a trust basis and there is widespread belief, corroborated by evidence, that civil servants behave honestly and according to the guiding principles of the civil service. Alongside high levels of competence, high standards of behaviours in the public administration are a key element in explaining high performance of the country in public governance.

However, its core values and its approach based on preventing corruption through promoting integrity could be strengthened by investing in improving co-ordination and centralisation on integrity efforts. For instance, the government could organise regular events or platforms to exchange information and harmonise initiatives of different public agencies and levels of government.

This would feed into the holistic policy approach proposed in previous chapters. Further, practical training on ethical dilemmas could better equip public officials to support the values-based integrity system. Such training should be framed under the guiding logic that greater emphasis is expected on achieving outcomes for people rather than complying with processes. New governance models also require embracing a variety of voices and inputs instead of pursuing just mission-related objectives. It is important to ensure that collective interests win out over self-interest and that integrity risks are minimised. Upgrading ethical training and guidance to new challenges will contribute to reinforcing the values of the Norwegian administration while maintaining trust as a core guiding principle.

The Norwegian system has proved to be resilient. It absorbs and rebounds from the rare corruption cases as these are made visible and the responsible public officials are held accountable. At the same time, in order to reduce risks of undue influence at the local level, Norway could start discussions on whether to develop regulations on lobbying activities, with the aim of defining fair interactions and ensuring that the public interest remains at the very heart of all public policy.

Fairness

Fairness as a dimension of institutional trust refers to whether public institutions are perceived as improving living conditions for all, providing consistent treatment of citizens and businesses, regardless of their gender, economic status, ethnic origin, etc. (Brezzi et al., 2021[50]). Fairness of public institutions is thus related to both the outcomes and the quality of decision making. Results may include the level of income inequality (see also Chapter 2 and 3), or citizens' access to high quality social protection (de Blok and Kumlin, 2021[51]; Lühiste, 2013[52]). When people perceive that inequalities are high, or that opportunities are just for a few, this may lead to less support for democratic principles and achievements (Schnaudt, Hahn and Heppner, 2021[53]) reduce compliance with regulations and ultimately reduce institutional trust (OECD, 2017[54]; Lipps and Schraff, 2020[55]).

In turn, a fair process matters for decision acceptance. Positive perceptions of fair treatment lead to greater trust in government, acceptance of agency decisions, better compliance with regulations and more co-operative behaviour in dealing with government agents. The reverse also holds: citizens are more likely to accept negative outcomes, such as financial penalties, if they feel that they have been treated fairly (Frey, Benz and Stutzer, 2004[56]; Tyler, 2006[57]; Marien and Werner, 2019[58]). Overall, both outcomes and processes are important in shaping fairness assessments.

The OECD Trust Survey includes two questions to assess fairness in Norway, in addition to the analysis by the socio-economic characteristics of respondents. These are:

- How likely is it that everyone where you live will be treated equally in contacts with public sector employees, regardless of their social of economic status?
- If you were to apply to the public authorities for help or support, how likely is it that your application will be processed fairly?

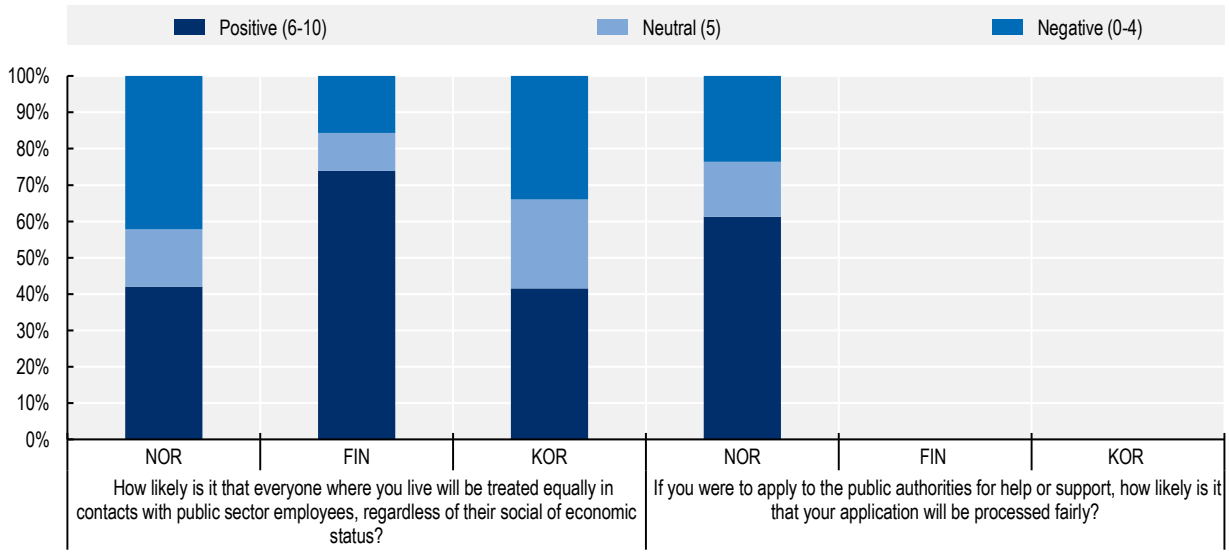
The public sector in Norway is perceived as fair and non-discriminatory, although with some significant differences among population groups. Public institutions in Norway perform comparatively well in terms of fairness, as fairness and egalitarianism are key components of its welfare model (Østerud, 2005[59]). Among OECD countries, Norwegians are the most satisfied with their current social protection system (OECD, 2021[60]; OECD, 2021[61]) and, on average, are not worried about their financial security, either in their present life, or when they will reach old age. People in Norway also believe it is easy to access benefits in case they become ill or unemployed, and are highly satisfied with their education system, and their access to child care services (see also Chapter 3) (OECD, 2021[60]; OECD, 2021[61]).

Even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, people remained positive about their government, health services, and receiving adequate treatment (see Chapter 1). Some 71% of Norwegians think that everyone is treated with respect by public services, and 58% believe that everyone receives equal treatment. However, only about half of the respondents agree that the public sector treats all citizens, regardless of their position in life, in a similar manner.

According to the OECD Trust Survey only 40% of Norwegians consider it likely that everyone would be treated equally in contacts with public sector employees, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This is on par with results in Korea, but significantly lower than in Finland, where this figure reaches 74% (Figure 4.11). These numbers could indicate that there are divides in the Norwegian society that could influence people's relationship with public institutions.

Further, 60% of the Norwegian population considers that if they apply for help or support to the public authorities their application will be treated fairly. The sense of impartiality of treatment is the most important determinant of trust in the civil service. As per our empirical analysis presented in chapter 2 an improvement of one standard deviation on impartiality of treatment is associated with an increase of trust in the civil service of 0.43 points.

Figure 4.11. Percentage of the population answering positively, neutrally or negatively to the following questions



Note: The question used in Finland was the following: If an individual belongs to a minority group (e.g. sexual, racial/ethnic and/or based on national origin), how likely is it that he or she will be treated the same as other citizens by a government agency? The question used in Korea was the following: If a citizen belonging to a social minority (e.g. sexual, racial/ethnic and/or based on nationality) is the victim of discrimination, how likely is it that relevant authorities will pursue the case? The scale for Finland is 1-10, 1-4 negatively, 5 neutral and 6-10 positively.
Source: Citizens Survey DFØ, 2021.

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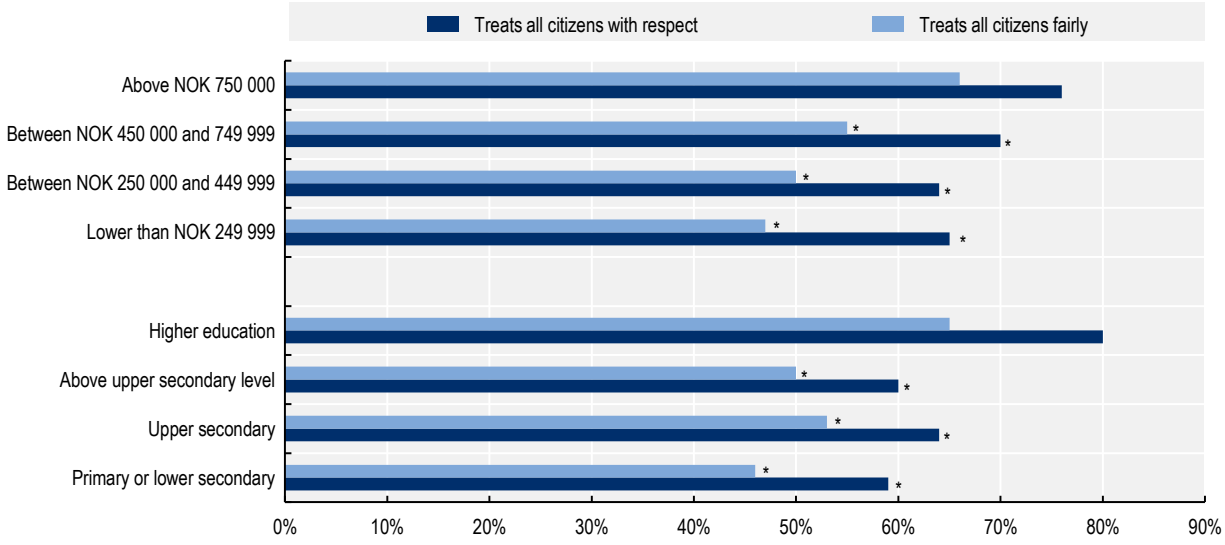
There are, however, differences in fairness perceptions by socioeconomic characteristics. Over two-thirds of Norwegians with higher household incomes and educated think that institutions are fair, whilst, less than half of people with lower income and lower levels of education, agree with the statement that institutions treat everyone in a similar way. These differences are consistent with academic findings showing that people tend to evaluate their society as a fair one, when they themselves are doing well economically, and when they feel that they can influence the political process (Anderson and Tverdova, 2001[62]; Shore, 2019[63]). However, these findings may also suggest that the Norwegian institutional system is not only characterised by egalitarianism, but also by a certain level of elitism.

People born abroad evaluate the Norwegian society as fairer than people born in Norway. Migrants seem to evaluate Norway as fairer than the countries they left, which in some cases could be very difficult contexts. Gender differences are present, but show mixed patterns: women more often believe that public institutions treat them with respect, but men are more likely to believe that there is no discrimination in treatment. Finally, regarding place of residency, people living in Oslo (and greater Oslo) have more positive fairness perceptions. When it comes to fairness perceptions, divides on the basis of origin, place of residency and gender are, on the whole, less pronounced than those based on income and education.

Figure 4.12. Percentage of Norwegians considering public institutions are fair, by social status



Note: based on the question "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Norwegian public sector (at state, municipality or county municipality level)?" The public sector… (a) treats the citizens with respect and (b) treats ...treats all groups fairly, irrespective of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or similar. Citizens answering agree, and agree strongly are coded as believing in the fairness of their institutions. The corresponding amounts in Euros are the following. Above NOK 750 000 (above EUR 76 101), Between NOK 450 000 (EUR 45 661) and NOK 749 999 (EUR 76 100); Between NOK 250 000 (EUR 25 367) and NOK 449 999 (EUR 45 660). Lower than NOK 249 999 (EUR 25 367). The reference group for statistical tests is higher educated and highest income group.
Source: Citizens Survey DFØ, 2021.

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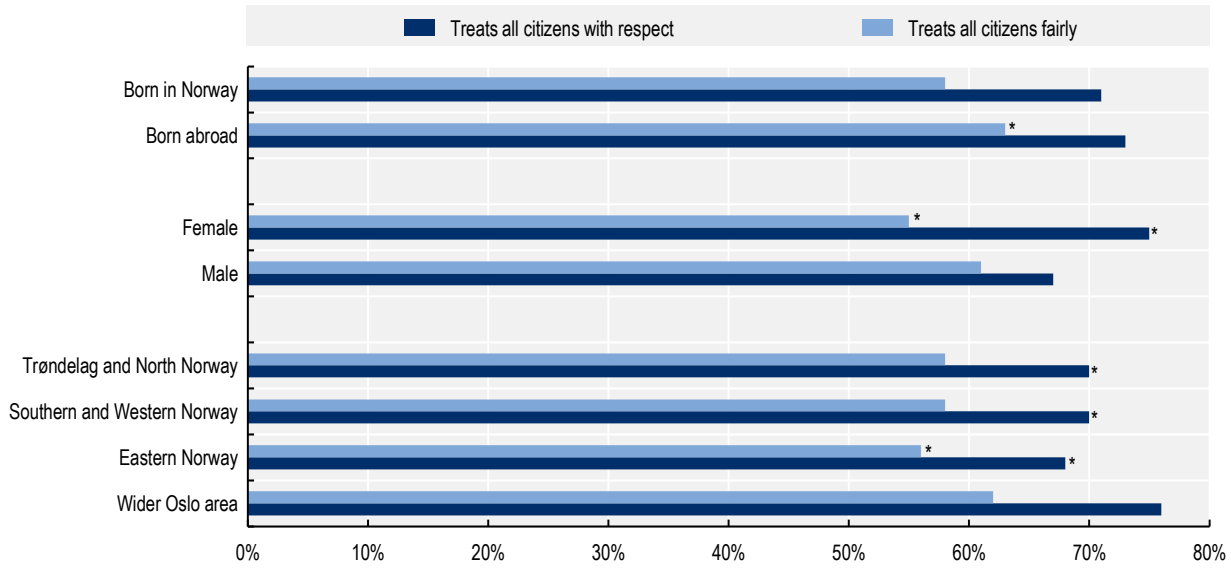
Figure 4.13. Percentage of Norwegians considering public institutions are fair, by origin, gender and place of residence



Note: based on the question "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Norwegian public sector (at state, municipality or county municipality level)?" The public sector… (a) treats the citizens with respect and (b) treats ...treats all groups fairly, irrespective of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or similar. Citizens answering 'agree', and 'agree strongly' on these questions are coded as believing in the fairness of their institutions. Reference group for statistical tests is citizens living in the Oslo area, men and born in Norway.
Source: Citizens Survey DFØ, 2021.

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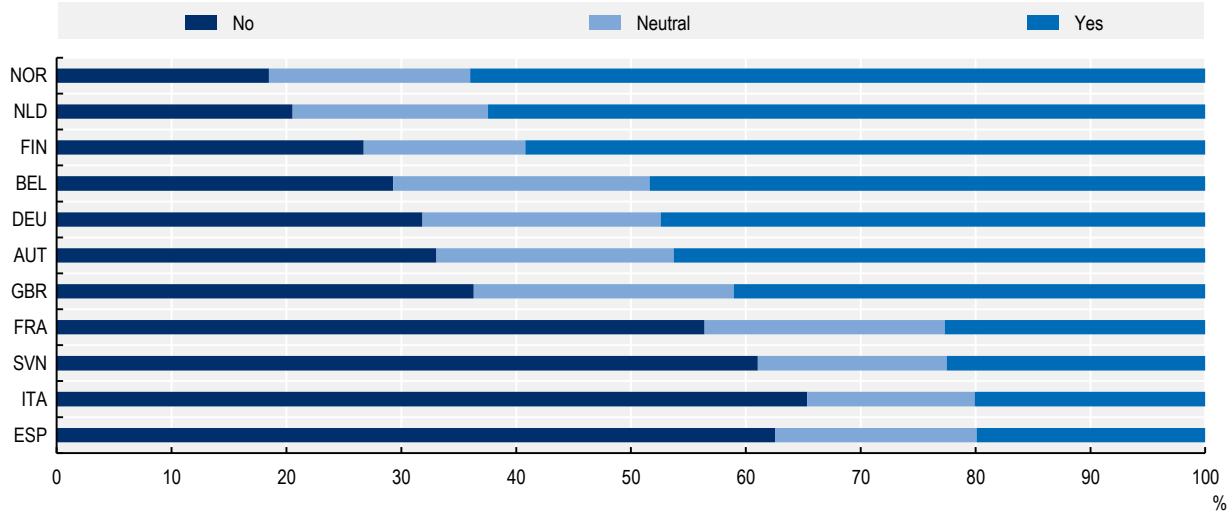
Fairness in policies and policy making

Slightly less than two-thirds of Norwegians believe they have a fair chance to participate and influence decision making (i.e. without being discriminated on the basis of origin, etc.), which puts Norway at the top of the subset of European countries including the Nordic ones (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.15 displays fairness perceptions in the education sector. Almost 85% of Norwegians believe they could pursue the type of education they want to follow. These results outperform other European countries in the selection (neighbouring Finland is closest, with 77% of Finns agreeing with this statement). In turn, parental background has only a very limited influence on educational performance in Norway, which is in contrast to patterns in most OECD countries. Nevertheless, gaps between the performance of migrants and native members of the population, as well as boys and girls, remain present, which is an important challenge for the fairness of the education system ahead (OECD, 2019[64]; OECD, 2020[65]).

Figure 4.14. Citizens' perception that everyone has a fair chance to participate in politics in Norway, as a percentage

Fair chance to participate in politics

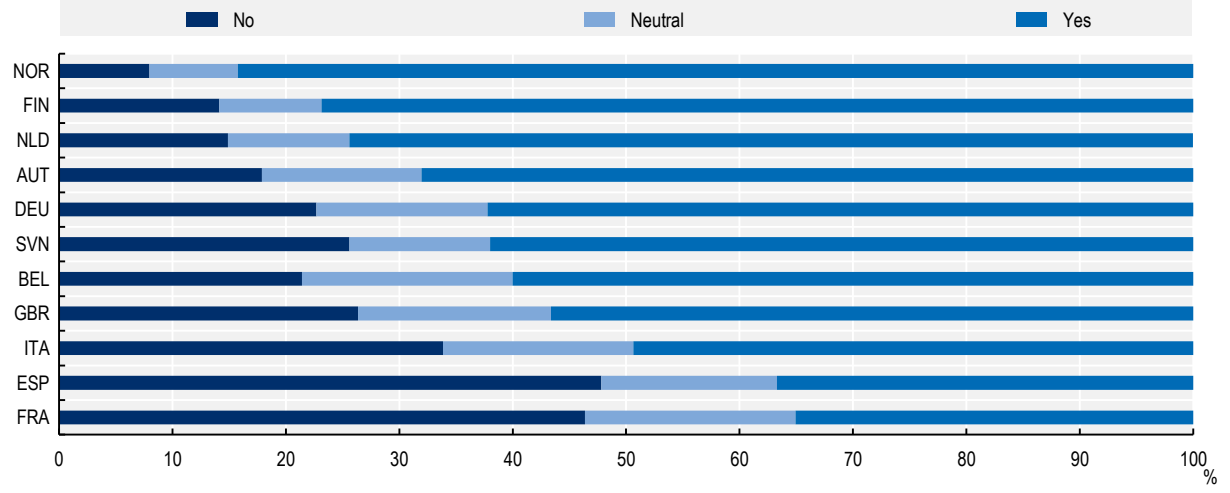


Note: This Figure is based on the following question: How much would you say that the political system in [country] ensures that everyone has a fair chance to participate in politics? Answers were recorded such that respondents answering "not at all" or "very little" are coded as negative, respondents that answered "Some" were coded as neutral, and respondents that answered "a lot" or "a great deal" were coded as positive.
Source: European Social Survey, wave 9 (2018).

StatLink https://stat.link/wg84th

Figure 4.15.Citizens' perception that everyone has a fair opportunity to achieve the level of education they want, expressed in percentages

Fair chance to get the education you want



Note: This Figure is based on the following question: Overall, does everyone in [country] have a fair chance of achieving the level of education they seek. Answers were recoded such that respondents answering "does not apply" (0-4) are coded as negative, respondents that answered 5 were coded as neutral, and respondents that answered that this applied to their country (6-10) were coded as positive. Weighted data reported (dweight).
Source: European Social Survey, wave 9 (2018).

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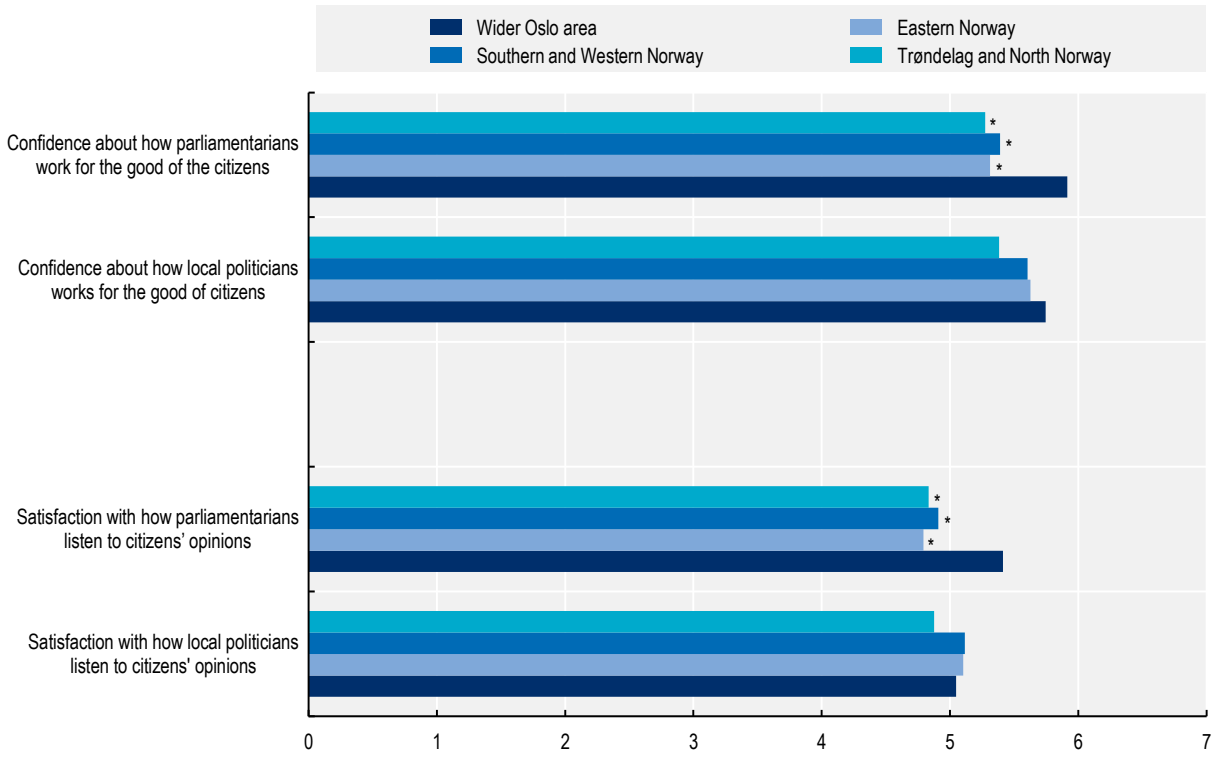
Norwegians have a higher opinion of the competence of their local politicians and services (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[17]; Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019[66]). Respondents in all regions are equally likely to believe that their local politicians are motivated to work for the benefit of all citizens. However, Figure 4.16 shows that people living in more remote regions are on average less likely to think that members of the Parliament (Storting) take their opinions into account (Figure 4.16), while respondents in all regions are equally likely to believe that their local politicians are motivated to work for the benefit of all citizens.

Figure 4.16. Procedural fairness evaluations in Norway, do citizens feel that citizens' voices matter in decision making

Average values reported



Note: questions were asked on a 0 to 10 point-scale (0: very dissatisfied/low confidence, 10: very satisfied/high confidence). Weighted data reported. Reference group for statistical tests is the greater Oslo area.
Source: Citizens Survey DFØ, 2021.

StatLi https://stat.link/y0wheo

Further, research from democratic innovations has argued that through better design of policies, and more inclusive policy making, fairness perceptions can increase (Marien and Werner, 2019[58]). Norway still has scope to deepen citizens' inclusion in decision making through democratic innovations (e.g. through citizen assemblies, participatory budgeting, the organisation of referendums, etc.) particularly at the local level and in more rural regions (Haugsgjerd and Segaard, 2020[17]). This does not replace the traditional civil society dialogue, which remains a strength of the Norwegian democracy, but rather adds to it.

Increasing diversity within the administration

Another area associated with Norwegians' fairness perceptions relates to whom is actually representing and acting on behalf of the citizens. People should feel represented by their parliament and government, as well as by their public administration. Having diverse groups of people in public life, including the young and elderly, those living on the periphery, women, and citizens with a migrant background, will lead to more responsive policy making, and increased perceptions of fairness (Nolan-Flecha, 2019[67]; OECD, 2020[68]).

A more diverse workforce leads to better performance, reduces group think, and ensures that outsider perspectives are more widely integrated. In other words, increasing diversity in the public administration could improve public services and distributive justice perceptions. Procedural fairness perceptions are also improved because citizens perceive that decisions are made by people representing them, and feel that there is room for people like them in those groups. Finally, from an ethical angle, public services are paid for by tax services, and should thus adequately represent the societies they govern (Nolan-Flecha, 2019[67]; OECD, 2020[68]).

In Norway, challenges remain in terms of ensuring a diverse administration that, in turn, could also contribute to improving trust in the public administration. Norway is a top performer in gender equality within the OECD. In fact, women are overrepresented in public sector employment: 70% of employees in the public sector are female (OECD, 2021[21]). While representation of women in political positions has improved, following the 2021 election 45% and 53% of members or parliament and cabinet are women respectively. However, the percentage of women at senior management positions in central government has completely stagnated at 43% (when comparing 2020 with 2015 data). The pay gap between men and women persists, and especially so in more senior level positions (Statistics Norway, 2020[69]). These imbalances imply that both men and women have objective reasons to assume that their public institutions are not operating in a fair way. Further attention and initiatives should thus be taken to ensure an inclusive working environment for both groups, as well as a more equal access to leadership functions in the administration, as well as in the parliament.

Second, there are almost no members of parliament without a higher education degree. In a similar vein, while Norway is ageing, the elderly are less likely to turn out on election day, and members of parliament have become younger, on average (qualitative interviews of March 2021; (Bergh, Haugsgjerd and Karlsen, 2020[26]; Heidar, 2005[70]). The parliament of Norway contains the highest percentage of young members of parliament (i.e. aged 40 years or younger) in the OECD (2021[21]). Equal participation for all socioeconomic groups remains a political challenge in Norway, and political parties in particular should make an effort to ensure that their rank-and-file members come from all socioeconomic classes in Norway.

At the community level, diversity had no discernible effect on generalised trust (McLaren, 2012[71]), but international studies (including Norway in more comprehensive analyses) have found a negative relationship between migration concerns and institutional trust (McLaren, 2012[71]).

In the interviews carried out for this study it was also signalled that people with a migrant background are underrepresented in politics, as well as the public administration and the media. According to Statistics Norway, in central government services, only 12.7% of employees had a migrant background in 2020. Municipal and county government services do slightly better, as 14.7% of their employees had a migrant background. The inclusion of migrants in public administration could contribute to ensuring that they feel represented by these institutions, and may contribute to better policy making (Nolan-Flecha, 2019[67]). In turn, the private sector and public companies do better: 19.9% of employees are migrants, which corresponds to the actual share of migrants in the Norwegian population and suggests that migrants face structural barriers to entering the public administration (Statistics Norway, 2021[72]). Taken together, this suggests that room for further action exists to actively pursue the inclusion of people with a migrant background in public administration.

Opportunities for improvement

Although Norway performs comparatively well in terms of fairness, there are differences across social groups regarding their perceptions of fairness and egalitarianism, which suggests there is still room for improvement. The centre-periphery divide is persistent in Norway. There is additional room for including citizens in decision making through new technologies, processes and tools. Traditional social dialogue between civil society and public institutions should continue, but may be complemented with additional tools such as deliberative processes particularly at the local level and in regions farther away from the centre.

It is important to improve the diversity of the public administration and public institutions, particularly in the senior management and at the political level, to ensure that different perspectives are represented in service provision. This could happen by, for instance, actively pursuing the inclusion of people with a migrant background in the public administration and in political institutions such as political parties.

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Notes

[1] Transparency refers to stakeholder access to, and use of, public information and data concerning the entire public decision-making process, including policies, initiatives, salaries, meeting agendas and minutes, budget allocations and spending, etc. Information and data disclosed should serve a purpose and meet citizens' needs.

[2] 60% of the population considers that it is easy to get information from municipal employees and 69% that it is easy to understand information provided by the municipality.

[3] https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/1814-05-17#KAPITTEL_3

[4] Early voting starts as early as first of July for an election taking place in mid-September.

[5] According to other surveys such as Norwegian Survey of Living Conditions EU-SILC this figure amounted to just 2% in 2020. The EU SILC survey includes two different response categories member of a political party amounting to 8% of the population and active member of a political party signalled by the referred 2%. As the Norwegian Citizens Survey only asks about active party membership, amounting to 6%, without previously asking for just membership it is likely that it captures a combination of both EU-SILC response categories.

[6] Even after stratifying certain groups, it is difficult to ensure that the ones answering within the groups are the most representative persons.

[7] Mis-information is information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm. Dis-information is information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organisation or country. Mal-information refers to information that is not based on reality and used to inflict harm on a person, organisation or country.

[8] Norway scores 2.45 on the public sector corrupt exchanges indicator (0-4). Experts are asked "How routinely do public sector employees grant favours in exchange for bribes, kickbacks, or other material inducements?" Responses range from 0 (Extremely common. Most public sector employees are systematically involved in petty but corrupt exchanges almost all the time) to 4 (No. Never, or hardly ever).

[9] In Norway there are e-learning platforms providing training that all civil servants are supposed to go through. This is “dilemma-training” and the seven duties that the civil service must perform related to the relationship between the civil service and political leadership.

[10] https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/01cd500717fb4a61ba179646f10b59c0/ethical-guidelines-for-contact-with-business-and-industry-in-the-defence-sector.pdf

Annex A. Detailed results econometric analyses

In order to test the relationship between trust in public institutions, its main drivers and the impact of other contextual variables, the study carried out an analysis based on linear regressions. In all regressions, independent variables are normalised, meaning that the coefficients reported represent the change in the dependent variable as a result of one standard deviation increase in the explanatory variable. Results from linear regressions are presented for trust in government, the local government and the civil service.

The policy and contextual drivers of trust in government, the local government and the civil service are presented respectively in Table A A.1, Table A A.2 and Table A A.3. The three instances are regressed using the three broad categories presented in the conceptual framework: 1) interpersonal drivers; 2) policy drivers (i.e. competences and values); and 3) sustainability and perception of government actions in key societal trends. Each of the individual categories is first regressed on the dependent variable, first including the full set of variables, and in the following using a selection determined by a stepwise regression. In the final columns, all three categories are grouped together, and the significant variables are retained (using the same methodology). The full models, marked in bold, have the higher explanatory power and are those retained for subsequent policy analysis (see Chapters 2-4). Only a subset of questions, including questions on the trust drivers and long-term sustainability and key societal trends are asked to the whole sample of the Norwegians Citizens Survey. However, generally the survey is divided with some questions on the state level only asked to half of the sample and some questions about the municipal level asked to the other half of the sample. Accordingly, the regressions for central and local government consider the relevant questions for those levels as control variables.

Table A A.1. Trust in Government

	Interpersonal drivers		Policy drivers (competences and values)		Sustainability and key social trends		Full model	
VARIABLES	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**
Interpersonal trust	0.707***	0.702***					0.391***	0.393***
	(0.0468)	(0.0468)					(0.0502)	(0.0494)
Geographical location (capital)	0.152**						0.188**	
	(0.0774)						(0.0768)	
Gender (male)	-0.103						-0.0427	
	(0.0700)						(0.0697)	
Education level	0.226***	0.224***					0.214***	0.215***
	(0.0380)	(0.0371)					(0.0391)	(0.0388)
Born in Norway	-0.00548						0.324**	
	(0.143)						(0.138)	
Age (More than 35)	-0.0442						-0.0142	
	(0.0840)						(0.0859)	
External political efficacy	1.026***	1.010***					0.372***	0.393***
	(0.0481)	(0.0454)					(0.0583)	(0.0545)
Internal political efficacy	-0.0847*						-0.0561	
	(0.0457)						(0.0457)	
Political orientation (right)	0.596***	0.583***					0.448***	0.424***
	(0.0406)	(0.0402)					(0.0399)	(0.0378)
Integrity (bribe high level)			-0.222***	-0.218***				-0.139***
			(0.0537)	(0.0537)				(0.0528)
			-0.233***	-0.237***			-0.260***	-0.193***

Integrity (revolving door)			(0.0532)	(0.0531)			(0.0436)	(0.0516)
Responsiveness (service adaptability)			0.0922*				0.0680	
			(0.0537)				(0.0562)	
Responsiveness (service innovation)			-0.00413				-0.0434	
			(0.0545)				(0.0539)	
Responsiveness (quality of state services)			0.655***	0.678***			0.319***	0.329***
			(0.0579)	(0.0551)			(0.0633)	(0.0597)
Reliability (preparedness fight spread of new disease)			0.653***	0.675***			0.488***	0.479***
			(0.0517)	(0.0507)			(0.0533)	(0.0502)
Reliability (stability regulatory conditions)			0.0672				-0.00911	
			(0.0524)				(0.0520)	
Reliability (confidentiality of shared data)			0.149***	0.170***			0.0920*	
			(0.0505)	(0.0492)			(0.0502)	
Openness (voicing concerns)			0.169***	0.207***			0.0762	
			(0.0491)	(0.0455)			(0.0501)	
Openness (availability of information)			-0.0509				-0.0558	
			(0.0540)				(0.0529)	
Fairness (equality of treatment by socioeconomic)			0.0609				-0.0600	
			(0.0554)				(0.0577)	
Fairness (Equality of treatment application)			0.142**	0.177***			0.0161	
			(0.0651)	(0.0580)			(0.0661)	
Sustainability (protect the environment)					-0.173***	-0.173***	-0.0535	
					(0.0341)	(0.0341)	(0.0503)	
Sustainability (ensure social cohesion)					0.443***	0.443***	0.265***	0.224***
					(0.0496)	(0.0496)	(0.0656)	(0.0584)
Sustainability (adapt to future challenges)					0.142***	0.142***	-0.0143	
					(0.0477)	(0.0477)	(0.0649)	
Sustainability (ensure that everyone has the same opportunities)					0.265***	0.265***	0.00698	
					(0.0474)	(0.0474)	(0.0677)	
Sustainability (maintain welfare state)					0.837***	0.837***	0.411***	0.399***
					(0.0457)	(0.0457)	(0.0663)	(0.0588)
Constant	6.302***	6.242***	6.294***	6.294***	6.288***	6.288***	5.979***	6.281***
	(0.161)	(0.0359)	(0.0348)	(0.0345)	(0.0241)	(0.0241)	(0.155)	(0.0362)
Observations	3 507	3 507	3 347	3 347	8 316 (full dataset)	8 316 (full dataset)	2 605	2 587
R-squared	0.380	0.378	0.466	0.465	0.327	0.327	0.560	0.556

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.
***p<0.01

Table A A.2. Trust in the Local Government

	Interpersonal drivers		Policy drivers (competences and values)		Sustainability and key social trends		Full model	
VARIABLES	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**
Interpersonal trust	0.784***	0.781***					0.379***	**0.371*** **
	(0.0410)	(0.0410)					(0.0501)	**(0.0500)**
Geographical location (capital)	0.325***	0.312***					0.178*	
	(0.0793)	(0.0791)					(0.0928)	
Gender (male)	-0.316***	-0.309***					-0.145*	
	(0.0685)	(0.0681)					(0.0778)	
Education level	-0.0490						-0.0457	
	(0.0365)						(0.0437)	
Born in Norway	-0.546***	-0.536***					-0.118	
	(0.127)	(0.127)					(0.134)	
Age (more than 35)	0.0403						-0.0261	
	(0.0849)						(0.0957)	
External political efficacy	0.900***	0.895***					0.338***	**0.360*** **
	(0.0435)	(0.0432)					(0.0592)	**(0.0579)**
Integrity (bribe high level)			-0.122**					
			(0.0498)					
Integrity (prevalence of corruption)			-0.240***	-0.287***			-0.206***	**-0.213*** **
			(0.0569)	(0.0548)			(0.0556)	**(0.0555)**
Integrity (conflict of interests)			-0.170***	-0.195***			-0.204***	**-0.187*** **
			(0.0564)	(0.0553)			(0.0565)	**(0.0550)**
Responsiveness (service adaptability)			0.0931				0.0744	
			(0.0662)				(0.0640)	
Responsiveness (service innovation)			0.0364				-0.0256	
			(0.0610)				(0.0620)	
Responsiveness (quality of municipal services)			0.626***	0.665***			0.455***	**0.514*** **
			(0.0642)	(0.0627)			(0.0700)	**(0.0663)**
Responsiveness (understanding online services)			0.138	0.162***			0.0852	
			(0.0976)	(0.0614)			(0.0988)	
Responsiveness (using online services)			0.0596				0.120	
			(0.104)				(0.106)	
Reliability (preparedness fight spread of new disease)			0.235***	0.267***			0.173***	**0.190*** **
			(0.0574)	(0.0549)			(0.0597)	**(0.0543)**
Reliability (stability regulatory conditions)			0.146**	0.153***			0.0812	
			(0.0616)	(0.0567)			(0.0596)	
Reliability (confidentiality of shared data)			-0.0530				-0.0866	
			(0.0571)				(0.0559)	
Openness (voicing concerns)			0.403***	0.432***			0.275***	**0.279*** **
			(0.0630)	(0.0556)			(0.0636)	**(0.0550)**
			-0.130**				-0.0878	

Openness (availability of information)			(0.0622)				(0.0605)	
Openness (access municipal information)			0.178**	0.218***			0.134*	**0.214*** **
			(0.0702)	(0.0647)			(0.0689)	**(0.0628)**
Openness (understanding municipal information)			0.0589				0.104	
			(0.0778)				(0.0752)	
Openness (understanding municipal forms)			-0.0426				-0.121	
			(0.0868)				(0.0829)	
Fairness (equality of treatment by socioeconomic)			0.00106				-0.0425	
			(0.0661)				(0.0667)	
Fairness (Equality of treatment application)			0.139*				0.0315	
			(0.0800)				(0.0786)	
Sustainability (protect the environment)					-0.354***	-0.354***	-0.0688	
					(0.0339)	(0.0339)	(0.0518)	
Sustainability (ensure social cohesion)					0.587***	0.587***	0.173**	
					(0.0522)	(0.0522)	(0.0737)	
Sustainability (adapt to future challenges)					0.345***	0.345***		
					(0.0505)	(0.0505)		
Sustainability (ensure that everyone has the same opportunities)					0.185***	0.185***	-0.132*	
					(0.0477)	(0.0477)	(0.0745)	
Sustainability (maintain welfare state)					0.491***	0.491***	0.248***	**0.228*** **
					(0.0459)	(0.0459)	(0.0760)	**(0.0613)**
Constant	6.290***	6.306***	5.899***	5.890***	5.874***	5.874***	6.042***	**5.863*** **
	(0.141)	(0.126)	(0.0390)	(0.0394)	(0.0247)	(0.0247)	(0.148)	**(0.0409)**
Observations	3 775	3 775	2 180	2 180	7 757	7 757	1 971	**1 971**
R-squared	0.343	0.342	0.530	0.524	0.282	0.282	0.568	**0.558**

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01

Table A A.3. Trust in the Civil Service

	Interpersonal drivers		Policy drivers (competences and values)		Sustainability and key societal trends		Full model	
VARIABLES	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**	**All**	**Selection**
Interpersonal trust	-0.183***	-0.182***					0.3195	**0.3743**
	(0.0287)	(0.0286)					(0.0288)	**(0.0288)**
Geographical location (capital)	0.357***	0.365***					0.235***	**0.243*** **
	(0.0500)	(0.0500)					(0.0458)	**(0.0453)**
Gender (male)	0.0603						0.021	
	(0.0451)						(0.023)	
Education level	0.173***	0.181***					0.159***	**0.150*** **
	(0.0267)	(0.0253)					(0.0241)	**(0.0237)**
Born in Norway	-0.362***	-0.347***					0.106	
	(0.0874)	(0.0872)					(0.0832)	
Age (more than 35)	-0.0551						-0.0909*	
	(0.0582)						(0.0526)	
Education level	0.0408							
	(0.0265)							
External political efficacy	0.793***	0.793***					0.115***	**0.20*** **
	(0.0289)	(0.0290)					(0.0315)	**(0.0301)**
Integrity (bribe high level)			-0.183***	-0.182***				
			(0.0323)	(0.0323)				
Integrity (revolving door)			-0.182***	-0.182***			-0.238***	**-0.250*** **
			(0.0317)	(0.0318)			(0.0250)	**(0.0250)**
Responsiveness (service adaptability)			0.313***	0.327***			0.284***	
			(0.0317)	(0.0297)			(0.0324)	
Responsiveness (service innovation)			0.0213				0.00988	
			(0.0313)				(0.0326)	
Responsiveness (quality of services)			0.572***	0.581***			0.444***	**0.459*** **
			(0.0317)	(0.0315)			(0.0345)	**(0.0339)**
Reliability (preparedness fight spread of new disease)			0.186***	0.192***			0.149***	**0.179*** **
			(0.0313)	(0.0307)			(0.0331)	**(0.0321)**
Reliability (stability regulatory conditions)			0.170***	0.177***			0.132***	**0.163*** **
			(0.0319)	(0.0320)			(0.0318)	**(0.0318)**
Reliability (confidentiality of shared data)			0.161***	0.167***			0.101***	**0.113*** **
			(0.0306)	(0.0307)			(0.0311)	**(0.0310)**
Openness (voicing concerns)			0.113***	0.130***			0.0625*	
			(0.0302)	(0.0292)			(0.0319)	
Openness (availability of information)			0.0648**				0.0458	
			(0.0314)				(0.0323)	
Fairness (equality of treatment by socioeconomic)			0.0162				-0.0110	
			(0.0325)				(0.0344)	

Fairness (Equality of treatment application)			0.419***	0.445***			0.354***	**0.4332*** **
			(0.0403)	(0.0368)			(0.0413)	**(0.0380)**
Sustainability (protect the environment)					-0.312***	-0.312***		
Sustainability (ensure social cohesion)					0.461***	0.461***	0.0592	
					(0.0485)	(0.0485)	(0.0398)	
Sustainability (adapt to future challenges)					0.230***	0.230***	0.0236	
					(0.0459)	(0.0459)	(0.0395)	
Sustainability (ensure that everyone has the same opportunities)					0.313***	0.313***	-0.0192	
					(0.0467)	(0.0467)	(0.0423)	
Sustainability (maintain welfare state)					0.576***	0.576***	0.157***	**0.220*** **
					(0.0442)	(0.0442)	(0.0404)	**(0.0317)**
Constant	6.384***	6.362***	6.236***	6.240***	6.240***	6.240***	6.137***	**6.172*** **
	(0.102)	(0.0868)	(0.0202)	(0.0202)	(0.0224)	(0.0224)	(0.0939)	**(0.0248)**
Observations	7 230	7 230	6 639	6 639	8 084	8 084	5 756	**5 756**
R-squared	0.365	0.365	0.554	0.553	0.310	0.310	0.591	**0.589**

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions in Norway

Trust in public institutions is a cornerstone of the Norwegian administrative and political model. It has also been a crucial element in Norway's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Preserving and strengthening this "trust capital" will be essential for Norway in addressing future trade-offs and challenges, such as ensuring the sustainability of the welfare model, coping with climate change and maintaining social cohesion. Based on the results of the OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, this study examines the main determinants of trust in Norway's national government, local government and public administration.

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