

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Recruitment and work arrangements for employees with intellectual disability in competitive employment

Christian Wendelborg¹  | Veerle Garrels² | Hanne Marie Høybråten Sigstad³ | Evan E. Dean⁴

¹Diversity and Inclusion, NTNU Social Research, Trondheim, Norway

²Department of Vocational Teacher Education, Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway

³Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

⁴Center on Developmental Disabilities, Kansas University, Lawrence, Kansas, USA

Correspondence

Christian Wendelborg, Diversity and Inclusion, NTNU Social Research, Dragvoll Allé 38 B, NO-7491 Trondheim, Norway.

Email: christian.wendelborg@samforsk.no

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Abstract

Norwegian employment policy, the activation policy, states that life on social security should be the last resort after exhausting all available activation measures. Despite this, people with intellectual disability are almost entirely excluded from the competitive labour market in Norway. This article highlights the conditions that promote employment of people with intellectual disability and factors that stimulate recruitment. This study explores (1) How do companies recruit employees with intellectual disability, including (a) how do private companies differ from public companies regarding recruitment and (b) which role does The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and upper secondary education play in this; (2) Which working arrangements do employees with intellectual disability have? and (3) What types of support do companies receive? A quantitative survey mapped the experiences of employers who have hired people with intellectual disability and highlighted factors that may promote recruitment. Most companies recruited people with intellectual disability with support from NAV. For approximately, one in five recruitments of employees with intellectual disability, collaboration with upper secondary education played a role in the hiring process. Social networks were a way into employment only in the private sector, and a larger share of private companies employed people with intellectual disability in ordinary positions without subsidies. About 27% of the companies did not receive any support when hiring employees with intellectual disability. Due to more flexible hiring regulations, there may be more structural factors promoting the recruitment of people with intellectual disability in the private sector than in the public sector. Further, the employment of people with intellectual disability in competitive labour may depend on policies and how policies are adapted and enforced by NAV employees. More extensive collaboration between upper secondary education and workplaces could also be beneficial to recruiting employees with intellectual disability.

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INTRODUCTION

Most countries pursue an explicitly stated goal of increased employment rates for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, employment opportunities for people with disabilities are limited, with employment rates typically 25%–40% lower than those of the broader population (OECD, 2010). Moreover, research consistently shows that employment rates are meagre amongst people with intellectual disability (ID) (Parmenter, 2011; Verdonshot et al., 2009). While support systems vary between countries, the marginal labour market position of people with ID appears to apply across the borders (Arvidsson et al., 2016; Bush & Tassé, 2017; Hedley et al., 2017; McConkey et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, research on the labour market participation for people with ID is scarce (Ellenkamp et al., 2016). Thus, we know little about their work situation, recruitment and possibilities for maintaining employment in the competitive labour market. This article aims to contribute with new knowledge about the conditions that promote employment of people with ID, with a particular focus on factors that stimulate the recruitment process.

Centralised recruitment processes and streamlined recruitment practices through centralised web-based platforms may limit employment opportunities for people with ID (De Lima, 2016; Moore et al., 2018). In addition, centralised HR management is increasingly involved in recruitment processes, resulting in reduced involvement by line managers or direct supervisors, which may hinder customisation opportunities for work seekers with ID. Thus, recruitment strategies in themselves may form a barrier to inclusive employment, and Miethlich and Šlahor (2018) recommend a barrier-free recruiting process as a measure to increase the hiring of people with disabilities (e.g., provision of sign language interpreters).

Others point out the importance of network contacts in the employment search for people with disabilities. Carey et al. (2004) found that most of the severely communicatively challenged job applicants they studied used their social networks when trying to get a job. Similarly, Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2011) documented how those with disabilities secured employment based on their social network contacts, leading to the conclusion made by Langford et al. (2013) that social networks may be equally or even more critical for people with disabilities in finding and securing employment as for those without disabilities.

Some research has looked into employers' attitudes or willingness to hire employees with ID. Many employers appear unwilling to recruit employees with ID, and Cavanagh et al. (2017) suggest that employers may avoid the recruitment of employees with ID due to a lack of understanding of their support needs. However, research has also identified a minority of more open-minded employers willing to hire employees with ID (Olson et al., 2001; Unger, 2002). Ellingsen (2011) found that 12% of all employers in Norway are positive towards hiring employees with ID, which suggests a larger potential for people with ID to participate in competitive employment than current numbers suggest.

Competitive work may be in both the public and private sectors. Roulstone (2012) states that people with disabilities traditionally prefer to work in the public sector, believing it to be more open to their employment. Moreover, the public sector may be less marked by models that promote productivity and competitiveness. However, business-like ideology has strongly influenced public sector reforms over the past decades, and private corporations have become the model of governance and management in public administrations worldwide (Lindberg et al., 2015). Despite this, Roulstone (2012) argues that the public sector is the most adaptive employment context for disabled people. Some of Roulstone's (2012) arguments are based on the idea that promoting the rights of people with disabilities is considered a public sector duty in the United Kingdom. Herein lie some of the reasons for the fragmented knowledge about people with ID in competitive employment; policy, laws and legislations, support systems and the labour market differ considerably between countries. Thus, more research on this field from different systems and countries is required.

The Norwegian setting

In Norway, the support system for employment is the same for everyone with reduced work capacity, regardless of the type of impairment, disease or disability that leads to this reduced capacity (Tøssebro & Olsen, 2020). The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is responsible for social security allowances and labour market measures. Moreover, NAV is obliged to support people who experience difficulties entering the labour market and help them find employment. For people with



ID, the following employment options exist: (i) Competitive labour market employment (with or without permanent support), (ii) temporary labour market measures (including supported employment), (iii) permanent sheltered work (segregated or not) and (iv) day activity centres (Tøssebro & Olsen, 2020).

Competitive employment may occur with or without NAV support, including wage subsidies, transport to and from work, mentors at the workplace, combinations of allowance and pay, and so forth. Such supports may compensate for the extra costs that hiring people with disabilities may impose on a workplace (e.g., additional job coaching and accessibility accommodations) and may support the employees at the workplace.

Temporary labour market measures, such as supported employment (SE), are intended to improve people's work capacities and working-life skills, and they provide support during a transition towards employment. Some temporary measures require long-term follow-up and support, which may conflict with NAV's standard procedures, but Vocational Rehabilitation Companies (VRC) often provide such follow-up and support in the transition to competitive employment. VRCs work contractually for NAV (Tøssebro & Olsen, 2020). VRCs organise permanent sheltered work, typically situated in segregated settings. However, sheltered work may also be in ordinary companies with support from a VRC. The latter is not explicitly linked to the SE methodology, although it concerns the inclusion of a group with extensive needs for help and support in order to be able to work in an ordinary workplace. Day activity centres are not a part of the labour market system, but they function as social services that provide people with ID with a daytime occupation in lieu of employment.

In Norway, Wendelborg and Tøssebro (2018) found that 5.6% of people with ID participate in competitive employment, and only 3.3% do so without any labour market measures. Thus, people with ID are almost entirely outside the competitive labour market in Norway. This marginalised situation is in line with findings from international research, which typically describe non-inclusive labour markets for people with ID (Ellenkamp et al., 2016).

These findings contrast with the Norwegian employment policy referred to as the activation policy (Stjernø & Øverbye, 2012), which states that life on social security should be the last resort. Therefore, no one should be entitled to a disability pension unless all available activation measures have been exhausted (Social Security Act § 12–5). There are, however, legal exceptions for people with substantial support needs for employment called 'obvious cases'. Until 2015, people with what was described as 'severe' ID were excluded from employment supports because they qualified under this exception. However, from 2015,

the qualifier 'severe' was omitted for people with ID (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2018, p. 68). Hence, people with ID almost automatically receive a disability pension from NAV without assessing their work capacity or trying out any workplace measures. At the same time, a disability pension is a prerequisite for people with ID to receive support and follow-up from VRCs in sheltered employment. Thus, this automatic eligibility for a disability pension may form an obstacle to labour market participation, but the disability pension also gives access to certain employment options.

As NAV is responsible for income security through disability benefits, labour market measures and employment support for companies hiring people with reduced work capacity, NAV is a decisive actor in employing people with ID in Norway. However, since the early 2000s, municipal forms of governance have changed significantly in Norway (Baldersheim & Rose, 2005), and this may have left less room for the interests of smaller groups such as people with ID. Indeed, cost control and administrative responsibility may undermine social policy and political objectives (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2009). As a result, NAV employees are in a situation where they work under an increased goal and result management and, at the same time, gain increased discretionary action through the expansion of the definition of 'obvious cases'. As the American sociologist Lipsky (1971) described in his street-level bureaucracy theory, the result may be that caseworkers can choose practical solutions and sign off simple cases, in our case for disability benefits, often contrary to official political goals.

A Norwegian study by Spjelkavik et al. (2012) showed that NAV employees saw a potential for increased work participation for people with ID. However, since people with ID gets disability benefits without any work capacity assessment, the threshold for receiving work-oriented measures in competitive employment is higher (Spjelkavik et al., 2012). Mandal (2008) also points out that NAV often 'drops the case' when a person gets a place in sheltered employment, and only 1%–2% of people in sheltered employment transfer to competitive employment (The Norwegian Directorate for Children Youth and Family Affairs, 2013). Siperstein et al. (2014) report similar findings in the United States as they found that very few people with ID in competitive employment have ever worked in a sheltered setting. Thus, disability benefits and sheltered employment may become an unintended but significant barrier to including people with ID in competitive employment.

Aim of the study

This article highlights the conditions that promote the employment of people with ID, focussing on factors that

stimulate the recruitment process. In addition, this study explores how people with ID were recruited into competitive employment and investigates which working arrangements employees with ID have in competitive workplaces. More specifically, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do companies recruit employees with ID?
 - a. How do private companies differ from public companies regarding the recruitment of employees with ID?
 - b. Which role does NAV and upper secondary schools play in this recruitment?
2. Which working arrangements do employees with ID hold?
3. Which supports do the companies receive when hiring employees with ID?

METHOD

This study is part of the project 'Effective school-work transition processes for students with mild ID', funded by the Norwegian Research Council. The project aims to investigate factors that may contribute to the employment of young adults with ID. In this study, we used a quantitative survey to explore factors that may promote the recruitment of people with ID.

Instrument

The sample received an anonymous online survey in November 2020, consisting of background questions, if they had any prior experience with employing people with ID, recruitment procedures and employment conditions for these employees. In addition, the questionnaire contained a section for all companies regardless of whether they had prior experience with hiring people with ID. The survey described ID as a 'cognitive impairment, which manifests through general learning disabilities and logical and abstract thinking difficulties. People with this condition usually experience challenges with independent functioning, and they often need help to manage their everyday living. [...] In this survey, we focus on people with mild ID who require some support, and not those with more severe impairments'.

Sample description

The sample in this study consists of three different subsamples:

- a sample consisting of all child care centres (public and private), nursing homes for elderly (public) and cafeteria businesses (public and private) in a randomly drawn sample of municipalities representing 15% of the inhabitants in Norway (57 municipalities) (1353 employers invited/302 participated of which 47 had prior experience with hiring people with an ID);
- a sample of companies in the private sector recruited from 'Helt Med' ('Fully Included'), which is an initiative run by a Norwegian foundation (SOR) that works for the development of services for people with ID. The initiative aims to recruit people with ID into regular jobs combining pay and benefits by matching willing employers with employees with ID. This subsample consists of employers that are known to employ people with ID (58 employers invited/22 participated of which 21 had prior experience with hiring people with an ID);
- a sample of companies in the private sector recruited from the project 'Ringer i vannet' (RIV) (Ripples on water). The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) established RIV to promote activity from employers to increase the employment of people with impaired functioning. The initiative is a methodology for collaboration between NHO companies that sign an agreement with RIV and companies that arrange active labour market measures (VRC's) so that NHO companies may recruit more people who are receiving labour market measures (1119 employers invited/154 participate of which 59 had prior experience with hiring people with an ID).

Altogether, 2530 employers were invited to participate in the survey, and 478 responded, resulting in a response rate of 19%.

Ethical considerations

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data approved the study (2020). We used a secure and anonymous solution for internet surveys developed at the University of Oslo's website (nettskjema.no). Therefore, the collected data could not be traced back to individual respondents.

Data analysis

The STATA software package version 14.2 Special Edition (StataCorp, 2015) was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive bivariate analysis was conducted, using Chi-square and Cramer's V as a gauge of difference between groups.



RESULTS

Four hundred and seventy-eight employers participated in our survey, and 127 of them (26%) had prior experience hiring employees with ID (see Table 1 for background information about this sample). While two-thirds of the companies (67.1%) in our sample belong to the private sector (as is the same distribution in Norway population of companies), four out of five companies (78%) that have previously employed people with ID belong to the private sector ($\chi^2 = 9.3$; Cramer's $V = 0.14$; p -value = 0.002). Thus, more companies in the private sector hire people with ID than in the public sector in our Norwegian sample.

Regarding which industry sectors score best on hiring employees with ID, companies within 'retail and warehousing' and 'hospitality and catering' are sectors that most frequently employ people with ID ($\chi^2 = 28.8$; Cramer's $V = 0.25$; p -value = 0.000). Table 1 shows further that larger businesses tend to employ people with ID more often than smaller companies ($\chi^2 = 37.1$; Cramer's $V = 0.28$; p -value = 0.000). However, 53% of employees in Norwegian businesses work in companies with over 100 employees (NHO, 2018), and thus employees with ID are overrepresented in smaller companies.

Research question 1: How do companies recruit employees with ID?

- How do private companies differ from public companies regarding the recruitment of employees with ID?
- Which role does NAV and Upper Secondary Schools play in this recruitment?

Table 2 shows that most companies in our study recruited people with ID through NAV or VRCs, although VRCs seem to be less involved in the recruitment of people with ID in the public sector (17.9%) than in the private sector (50.5%). Further analysis, not shown in the table, shows that 28% of the companies recruited people with ID without support or involvement from NAV or VRCs, as opposed to 72% who did get such support or involvement. Approximately, one in five companies in the private sector (22.2%) had recruited people with ID through the social network of someone in the company. In the public sector, social networks were not reported as an existing recruitment pathway, indicating a more flexible recruitment process in the private sector. For approximately one in five recruitments of employees with ID (21.3%), collaboration with upper secondary school played a role in the hiring process.

Research question 2: Which working arrangements do employees with ID have?

Table 3 shows that half of the companies employed people with ID in a sheltered work position or in an ordinary position with subsidies (multiple answers were possible). There was no difference between companies belonging to the private or public sector. However, a larger share of private companies employed people with ID in an ordinary position without any subsidies.

Research question 3: Which supports do the companies receive from NAV when hiring employees with ID?

Table 4 shows that one in four companies in the private sector (24.2%) and one in three companies in the public sector (35.7%) did not receive any support from NAV for the employee with ID. For those companies receiving support, unspecified assistance from NAV or a VRC was the most frequent type of support reported (45.7%), followed by wage subsidies (44.1%). These findings are more or less the same for both the private and the public sector, while there were no differences by company size or industry sector.

Our study also indicates that few companies received specific support to accommodate employees with ID at the workplace. For example, only one in 10 companies (10.2%) report that they received mentoring support for the employee with ID, and even fewer companies (approximately 5%) received support in the form of personal assistance for the employee with ID.

DISCUSSION

Findings from this study contribute with new knowledge regarding the recruitment of people with ID into competitive employment. Data suggest that most of the jobs held by people with ID are in the private sector, and 46.5% of them work in companies with more than 30 employees. Since most of the Norwegian working population work in companies with more than 100 employees, our finding suggests that larger companies are not more likely to hire employees with ID. Further, the private sector is more active in recruiting employees with ID than the public sector. These findings align with Arvidsson et al. (2016) report from Sweden, where only 17% of people with ID worked in the public sector, and approximately, 75% worked in companies with 50 or fewer employees.

Our finding that the private sector is more likely to hire people with ID than the public sector is somewhat

TABLE 1 Companies included in this study by public/private sector; industry sector and size, and if they have employed people with ID

	All companies		Companies with prior experience with hiring people with ID		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	% within public/private sector
Public	157	32.9	28	22.0	17.8
Private	320	67.1	99	78.0	30.9
Total	477	100.0	127	100.0	26.0
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	% within sector
Industry/construction	65	14.0	22	17.9	33.8
Retail and warehousing	27	5.8	12	9.8	44.4
Hospitality and catering	28	6.0	14	11.4	50.0
Education/child care	218	46.9	35	28.5	16.1
Health and social services	57	12.3	20	16.3	35.1
Other services	70	15.1	20	16.3	28.6
Total	465	100.0	123	100	26.5
Size (employees)	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	% within size
10 or fewer	84	17.6	15	11.8	17.9
11–15	89	18.6	16	12.6	18.0
16–20	92	19.2	13	10.2	14.1
21–30	82	17.2	24	18.9	29.3
30 or more	131	27.4	59	46.5	45.0
Total	478	100.0	127	100.0	26.6

TABLE 2 How was the employee(s) with ID recruited in the public and private sector? (% , n, multiple answers possible)

	% within sector		Total	
	Public	Private	Freq.	% of 127
Through open announcement in competition with other jobseekers without disabilities	14.3	18.2	22	17.3
Through open advertising in competition with other jobseekers with ID	17.9*	5.1	10	7.9
Through the social network of someone in the company	0.0	22.2**	22	17.3
Through NAV	57.1	51.5	67	52.8
Through a VRC	17.9	50.5**	55	43.3
Through collaboration with upper secondary school	14.3	23.2	27	21.3
Other	14.3	11.1	15	11.8
N	28	99	127/218	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (chi).

unexpected. Indeed, it is contrary to Roulstone's (2012) suggestion that people with disabilities typically see the public sector as more attractive than the private sector because of a perception of less focus on productivity led by market mechanisms. However, in Norway, a de-bureaucratisation and efficiency reform was implemented in the public sector to increase productivity and to match

the productivity growth seen in the private sector (Oppegaard et al., 2019). Moreover, there are strict hiring regulations for the public sector, and the Norwegian Civil Service Law states that the highest-qualified applicant must be employed (Civil Service Law § 3). Within this context, hiring decisions are generally based on assumptions about and documentation of competence and productivity

TABLE 3 Types of working arrangements for employees with ID in public and private sector (%; multiple answers possible)

	Permanently arranged (sheltered) work in an ordinary company	Ordinary position with subsidies	Ordinary position without subsidies
Public	50.0	53.6	14.3
Private	50.4	54.6	37.4*

* $p < 0.05$ (chi).

TABLE 4 Types of support that companies have received from NAV when hiring employees with ID (%; N , multiple answers possible)

Types of support from NAV	% within sector		Total	
	Public	Private	Freq.	% of 127
Wage subsidies	42.9	44.4	56	44.1
Facilitation grants (for aids or adaptations of the workplace)	14.3	14.1	18	14.2
Mentors	7.1	11.1	13	10.2
Personal assistance	3.6	5.1	6	4.7
Coverage of the employer period in the event of sick leave	0.0	9.1	9	7.1
Inclusion allowance (eg for necessary equipment)	0.0	8.1	8	6.3
Unspecified assistance from NAV or VRC	39.3	47.5	58	45.7
Other	3.6	5.1	6	4.7
Do not know	0.0	5.1	5	3.9
No support	35.7	24.2	34	26.8
N	28	99	127/213	

(Østerud, 2020). While the regulation originally came into place to prevent discrimination and promote equality in public sector employment, it is in place to question whether this regulation may create a barrier for hiring people with ID in the public sector in Norway. Therefore, measures for positive discrimination may be warranted to counteract the low employment level of people with ID in the public sector. In this perspective, the private sector, which does not fall under the regulations of the Civil Service Law, may be more flexible and less rigid in the recruitment process.

Increasing employment rates for people with ID may require employers to be flexible, have positive attitudes towards diversity and be willing to provide accommodations in the workplace. Findings from our study indicate that private companies more often hire employees with ID than do public companies. Moreover, while it seems relatively common for private companies to hire people with ID through someone's social network, this pathway towards employment was non-existing in our sample of public companies. The public sector may follow a more rigid recruitment process than the private sector, which seems to have a more flexible approach towards recruitment.

In addition to not being hindered by recruitment regulations, private sector companies may hire employees

with ID to display corporate social responsibility. Companies may hire employees with ID because it is the 'ethically right thing to do' towards society, thus creating a socially responsible image for their customers (Meacham et al., 2019). Even though our survey does not provide data on employers' motivations for hiring people with ID, it may be questioned whether there exist fewer external incentives for public companies to hire employees with ID than for private companies.

Our study further indicates that people with ID more often hold ordinary positions without subsidies in the private sector than in the public sector, which may again reflect a more flexible organisation in the private sector, with more opportunities to accommodate work tasks for employees with special needs.

Previous research indicates that NAV employees bypass the activation policy's objective by expanding their discretionary action opened by the definition of 'obvious cases' regarding disability pension. The result of almost automatically granting a disability pension based on ID diagnosis may be a massive barrier for the labour market participation of people with ID (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2018). Moreover, research suggests that VRCs only, to a limited extent, help people with ID to transition

from sheltered employment towards competitive employment (The Norwegian Directorate for Children Youth and Family Affairs, 2013). In light of this, our findings of NAV's and VRC's essential role in recruiting people with ID in competitive employment are surprising and present a more nuanced picture than was currently seen. How can we understand this seeming contradiction of findings?

First, we must remember that only 5.6% of the population of people with ID in working-age are employed, and 3.3% are employed without any labour market measures (such as sheltered work). The latter share represents approximately 600 people of a population of 17 650 people with ID in the age range 18–66 in Norway (Wendelborg & Tøssebro, 2018). Thus, even though NAV has an essential role in recruiting people with ID in competitive employment, the involvement is marginal in pure numbers.

Second, while Lipsky (1971) argues that street-level bureaucrats find solutions through discretions on how they enforce policies they are assigned to uphold, and in some cases disregarding the best interest of the member of the public, Vike et al. (2016) argue that service providers may stretch far to reduce the harmful effects of lack of resources for users. Service providers are members of the local community, like whom they serve. Thus, NAV employees may go to great lengths to reduce the adverse effects of lack of resources and try to do the best they can for the public member (Solstad, 2020). As the activation policy still is the main objective in social policy, NAV employees may use their discretion to fulfil the activation policy and not just 'drop the case' after delivering a disability pension (Mandal, 2008). Either way, the employment of people with ID in competitive labour depends on policies and how these policies are adapted and enforced by NAV employees.

Another somewhat unexpected finding in our study is the limited extent to which upper secondary school is involved in recruiting employees with ID. Collaboration with the upper secondary school was part of the recruitment process for only 21.3% of the companies that had hired employees with ID, indicating little continuity in the transition from school to work. However, with vocational education and training, upper secondary schools are in a position where they may help students with ID develop and practise important working life skills, particularly through apprenticeships in local companies. Indeed, coherence between learning in school and practical training in the workplace is considered essential for students' development of vocational competence (Hiim, 2017). Moreover, a collaboration between upper secondary schools and workplaces may provide a smooth trajectory from school to work for young adults with ID, as schools may continue to help their

students develop the required working life skills. In addition, schools may offer suggestions for possible accommodations, and employers may become more positive towards hiring people with ID as prejudices about the working capacity of people with ID are refuted. Therefore, it is concerning that upper secondary schools are only to a limited extent involved in the recruitment of people with ID.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In an effort to develop new strategies for improving integrated employment outcomes in Norway, this study sought to understand the hiring practices of Norwegian companies for employees with ID. We targeted subsamples in our study towards businesses that we know are more likely to have experience with hiring people with ID than the typical company. Thus, the total sample in this study is not representative of Norwegian companies in general. This bias may have been further strengthened by the low response rate in the survey. However, while Wendelborg and Tøssebro (2018) found in a study of population registry data that 5.6% of the population of people with ID, which is estimated to be approximately 1000 people, were employed in the competitive labour market, 127 companies in our sample had the experience of employing people with ID. Therefore, we can argue that a fair share of the Norwegian companies with such experience is included in this study.

Our survey was sent out to a total of 2530 employers, and 478 of them responded, giving a response rate of 19%. This is lower than we had hoped for; however, it is in line with what we expected. Hellevik (2016) argues that even surveys with as low as 4% response rate have scientific value, and therefore, this study may also have a legitimate function in broadening the knowledge base about employment for people with ID. Ultimately, the primary purpose of this study was not to generalise findings but rather to describe recruitment processes and work positions for people with ID in Norway. Therefore, the response rate was not crucial for this study, as we were first and foremost interested in identifying conditions that may promote or hinder the recruitment of people with ID into competitive employment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there may be more structural factors promoting the recruitment of people with ID in the private sector than in the public sector. Further, there are indications that NAV employees make exceptions for people with ID regarding the activity policies objectives through



how they uphold and enforce this policy. Thus, employment of people with ID in competitive labour may depend on policies and how these policies are adapted and enforced by NAV employees. At the same time, the public sector should be allowed to be more flexible and less rigid in the recruitment process. In addition, more extensive collaboration between upper secondary education and workplaces could also be beneficial to recruiting employees with ID. In this study, we have explored conditions that promote employment of people with ID and structural factors that stimulate their recruitment from employers' perspectives in Norway. The findings from this study can inform future research on structural factors that also focusses on employers' perspective and reasoning. In a complex and ever-changing labour market, more research on structural factors and employer perspectives is needed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study is approved by The Norwegian Centre for Research Data and the authors declare that the research meets ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

ORCID

Christian Wendelborg  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3610-9254>

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