

Equality status assessment 2026

Summary and main findings from a report
about citizen-controlled personal assistance



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Thank you, Uloba members and other disabled people who shared your experiences when you responded to the seven equality status assessment surveys in the period from 2020 to 2026.

The annual equality status assessment reports are available in Norwegian at www.uloba.no. [\(link\)](#) These reports provide detailed descriptions of citizen-controlled personal assistance (BPA), the method we used, and analyses of the gap between political intentions and the condition for disabled people with needs of assistance.

[On the website about the equality status assessment 2026 \(link\)](#) you will find both the relatively short report “Funn fra Ulobas spørreundersøkelse” and the more comprehensive report “Status for BPA”.

If you have any questions or would like a presentation of the findings from the reports, please contact Project Manager Egil G. Skogseth at esk@uloba.no [\(link\)](#)

An ambiguous personal assistance policy

When the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) adopted the statutory right to citizen-controlled personal assistance (abbreviated “BPA” in Norwegian), the stated aim was to strengthen equality and participation. However, the way the legislation has been implemented has allowed municipalities to choose whether citizen-controlled personal assistance serves as a tool for equality or a rationed service. As a result, many disabled people in need of assistance experience exclusion, poor living conditions, and social isolation.

Key findings from Uloba's equality status assessments

In seven reports in the “Tilstandskartlegging” series, we have examined how Norwegian municipalities interpret and implement the Storting's policy on citizen-controlled personal assistance (BPA). The reports explore both the positive and negative effects of the administration of BPA and of the assistance scheme itself for disabled people, their families and other people close to them, and society.

This summary presents findings from this year's survey. It also highlights key findings from our analyses of municipal and County Governor data on the administration of citizen-controlled personal assistance between 2015 and 2025.

The conclusions presented here are based on analyses of administrative data on citizen-controlled personal assistance, municipal policy and management documents, and responses from several hundred disabled people who participated in Uloba's seven annual surveys conducted between 2020 and 2026. The complete Equality status assessment reports series, published in Norwegian, is available at uloba.no. ([link](#))

For a concise overview of the findings from the reports published between 2020 and 2025, see [“Equality status assessment 2025. Status ten years into the Norwegian personal assistance reform”](#). (link) It summarises the main trends identified in the annual surveys conducted between 2020 and 2025.

Challenging the care mindset

Citizen-controlled personal assistance is based on a fundamental principle: people should have control over their own lives. The scheme challenges traditional ways of organising support services. Citizen-controlled personal assistance was developed by disabled people who believed that they themselves should decide which assistance they need, and how it should be provided. This was a response to traditional health and care services, where decisions were often based on professional and administrative assessments rather than on the individual's own choices and priorities.

Controlled and rationed freedom

Since 2013, the Norwegian state and municipalities are mandated to administer laws, policies, and services in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Convention requires disabled people to be recognised as citizens entitled to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others.

In 2014, the Storting unanimously agreed that citizen-controlled personal assistance should give disabled people control over their assistance and, therefore, greater control over their own lives. Around 14,500 disabled people who need at least 25 hours of assistance per week were granted an individual right to personal assistance. Municipalities were also expected to ensure that disabled people with low to moderate assistance needs could access citizen-controlled assistance where appropriate. The intention was clear: personal assistance should be a tool for equality, participation, and independent living.

The reform was introduced because citizen-controlled personal assistance was seen as an important contribution to equality and participation for disabled people with substantial assistance needs.

For many disabled people, citizen-controlled personal assistance is essential for opportunities in employment and education, and for living an active and independent life.

The statutory right was also intended to form part of the Government's effort to follow up the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Convention is based on the principle that disabled people are citizens with the same human rights as everyone else. This means that both the state and municipalities are expected to organise services in ways that enable disabled people to exercise and enjoy those rights.

Despite this, the Storting allowed the municipalities to continue treating disabled people with assistance needs as users in need of care. The legislator decided that citizen-controlled personal assistance should remain part of the Health and Care Services Act. The act defines citizen-controlled personal assistance as an alternative way of organising health and care services. It also requires municipalities to ensure that personal assistants conduct their tasks in a manner which is justifiable from a professional healthcare perspective.

The Storting adopted a so-called cost-neutral reform. Granting citizen-controlled personal assistance instead of traditional services was not intended to increase municipal expenditure. Municipalities were expected to provide the same number of assistance hours regardless of whether a disabled person applied for citizen-controlled personal assistance to support equal participation or for traditional health and care services.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services stated that the legislation would have to balance "very different and partly contradictory considerations" when the statutory right was proposed. The reform which Parliament passed in 2014 can therefore be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it can be seen as an instruction to greatly increase the number of disabled people with citizen-controlled personal assistance to promote equality and realise human rights. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as an instruction to municipalities to manage citizen-controlled personal assistance as a rationed and controlled version of traditional health and care services.

Activism and public investigations

Disabled people's organisations are unanimous in their view that the municipalities do not administer citizen-controlled personal assistance in line with the Storting's intention. In 2019, the government appointed a committee, BPA-utvalget, to investigate the scheme. They also concluded that action was needed: The Storting should expand the group entitled to citizen-controlled personal assistance. In addition, disabled people should be able to receive personal assistance hours to participate in kindergartens, schools, and higher education. The four disabled members of the committee proposed changing citizen-controlled personal assistance from being an alternative organisation of care services to a tool for equality and the realisation of human rights. Their main proposal was to move the assistance scheme from the Health and Care Services Act to a separate citizen-controlled personal assistance act.

The opposition demanded that the government should present a white paper on citizen-controlled personal assistance, but the Minister of Health and Care Services believed that too many questions were unanswered. In October 2025, Jan Christan Vestre appointed an expert committee to investigate citizen-controlled personal assistance from an equal right perspective. The committee's task is to investigate the benefits of citizen-controlled personal assistance, who should be eligible for personal assistance in the future, and how the scheme should be organised and regulated. The committee will also propose ways to coordinate citizen-controlled personal assistance with other services. Furthermore, the committee will examine the prerequisites for a safe working environment for assistants, as well as how many assistants and what level of funding is necessary to implement the committee's proposals. Uloba's reports, "Equality status assessment 2026" and "Assistant survey 2026", shed light on several of the issues being examined by the expert committee.

On January 1st, 2026, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was incorporated into the Human Rights Act in Norway. This is a strong signal that the legislation must protect and promote the human rights of disabled people. From 2026, the courts must give the convention greater weight than other legislation in the event of a conflict between legal provisions. The most important effect, however, is that disabled people's organisations have a stronger position when they advocate for new policies. In 2027, the Norwegian

Government and Parliament will decide which steps should be taken to make citizen-controlled personal assistance a tool for equal rights.

Contents of Equality status assessment 2026

Equality status assessment 2026 ("Tilstandskartleggingen 2026") documents the situation of disabled people with assistance needs. The survey is based on 386 responses to Uloba's questionnaire, which was sent to disabled people with needs of assistance in January 2026. The report "Tilstandskartleggingen 2026. Status for BPA" (Equality status assessment 2026. Status of citizen-controlled assistance) also includes analyses of official statistics on the administration of citizen-controlled personal assistance provided by municipalities and County Governors. In this year's report, we examine the County Governor appeals system. We highlight the consequences of the Storting's strengthening of municipal self-government and differences in the way County Governors handle complaints.

The door opener who became a gatekeeper

The findings from the survey are complex. In the two chapters on citizen-controlled personal assistance with a co-work leader, we see that many children and adults with needs of assistance state that the scheme contributes to equality. At the same time, municipal rationing of personal assistance prevents many from participating on an equal footing with their peers.

The Equality status assessment show that the municipalities' administration of citizen-controlled personal assistance did not change in line with expectations from the government and the Storting. After the statutory right was introduced in 2014, there has been only modest growth in the number of disabled people with citizen-controlled personal assistance. In 2025, growth stopped completely. Most municipalities have not greatly increased the number of disabled citizens with personal assistance.

Women, middle-aged people, and people with low to medium assistance needs seem to be systematically given lower priority. Many disabled people feel that they receive too few assistance hours to be able to participate in society on an equal footing with others.

The processing time for complaints against citizen-controlled personal assistance decisions is often long. This, combined with uncertainty about the outcome of the appeal, creates unpredictability and can be burdensome for the individual. The findings suggest that the County Governor's role as a guarantor of legal protection does not always work as intended, and that this contributes to the right to personal assistance often is not realised.

Low growth in the reform period, no growth in 2025

The clearest indicator of whether the citizen-controlled personal assistance reform has been implemented is the number of people who receive the scheme.

When the right to citizen-controlled personal assistance came into force on January 1st, 2015, 2,981 people had citizen-controlled personal assistance. At the end of 2024, 4,451 people had the scheme. This represents an increase of 1,469 people over the ten-year reform period. In 2025, there was no growth at all.

The findings also suggest there are great differences between municipalities. At the end of 2025, 59 municipalities had no residents with citizen-controlled personal assistance. In many other municipalities, only a few residents had the scheme. At the same time, some municipalities had a much higher proportion of residents with citizen-controlled personal assistance than the national average of 0.08 per cent.

The overall development indicates that only a few municipalities have followed up the Storting's intention to invest in citizen-controlled personal assistance.

Applicants for personal assistance are treated differently

The municipalities' own figures on the administration of citizen-controlled personal assistance show that several groups are systematically disadvantaged.

Women

At the end of 2025, men had an average of nine more citizen-controlled personal assistance hours per week than women. The findings give reason to question whether women are treated differently from men when the municipalities assess the number of citizen-controlled personal assistance hours.

Middle-aged people

The number of children and young adults with citizen-controlled personal assistance has grown since the statutory right came into force in 2015. The number of middle-aged people aged 50 to 66 with citizen-controlled personal assistance, on the other hand, has grown by only 42 since 2015. This may indicate that it is becoming increasingly difficult for middle-aged disabled people to be granted citizen-controlled personal assistance.

Disabled people with low to moderate assistance needs

The Storting established citizen-controlled personal assistance as a statutory right for disabled people who need at least 25 hours of assistance per week. In the bill introducing the statutory right, it was specified that municipalities must still assess applications from disabled people with low to moderate assistance needs individually. Nevertheless, the group receiving fewer than 25 hours of citizen-controlled personal assistance per week has not grown over the eleven years since the statutory right came into force.

This indicates that many municipalities in practice treat 25 hours of assistance per week as the minimum threshold for granting citizen-controlled personal assistance. As a result, many disabled people with

low or moderate assistance needs are denied personal assistance for equal participation at home, in their neighbourhoods and in society.

The County Governor's role as guarantor is under pressure

Applicants for citizen-controlled personal assistance who do not agree with the decision can send a complaint to the municipality. The municipality first considers the complaint and decides whether the decision should be changed or not. If the municipality upholds the decision, the case must be sent to the County Governor. The state's representative in the county then assesses whether the decision is in line with the law and the intention of the law. If this is not the case, the County Governor must support the complainant.

National politicians have emphasised that the right to complain is intended to ensure the legal protection of applicants for citizen-controlled personal assistance when the municipalities make mistakes. It is therefore worrying that some respondents report that although the County Governor have supported them the municipality made minimal or no changes in the decision.

The County Governor's role in the processing of complaints has changed over time. Following the amendments to the Public Administration Act in 2017, which placed greater emphasis on municipal self-government, the County Governors instruct the municipalities less often than before on how to change citizen-controlled personal assistance decisions. Instead, the County Governor often overturns decisions and sends them back to the municipality for reconsideration. The municipality is then largely free to decide how to formulate a new decision regarding services. Municipalities that make no or only minimal changes to the original decision challenge a key premise of the current appeals system. If the County Governor's decision does not lead to real changes for the individual applicant, its role as a guarantor of legal protection is weakened.

Complainants experience that County Governor support is not sufficient

In 2025, the County Governors case worked a record number of complaints against citizen-controlled personal assistance decisions, 548 cases in total. In almost half of the cases, they supported the complainant. This is a significantly higher rate of reversal than in complaints concerning municipal health and care services in general, where The County Governor supported the complainant in 18 per cent of the cases.

Findings from our survey indicate that the County Governor's decision does not always lead to real changes for the applicants. The statistics on the County Governors' handling of complaints and the survey responses indicate that many people must appeal several times in the same citizen-controlled personal assistance case. This is both stressful and time-consuming. Some people feel that the municipality eventually makes a real change to the decision. Others do not.

The County Governors have different thresholds for supporting disabled people filing complaints on personal assistance decisions

Official statistics from the period between 2012 and 2025 show that the proportion of cases where the complainant is supported varies widely between the County Governors' offices. The ten County Governors' offices supported the complainant in 42.2 percent of all personal assistance cases processed in the period.

The proportion of cases in which the complainant is supported is significantly lower than 42,2 percent in three of the County Governors' offices: 1) Vestland, 2) Agder and 3) Vestfold and Telemark.

The proportion of cases in which the complainant is supported is significantly higher than 42,2 percent in three of the County Governors' offices: 1) Møre and Romsdal, 2) Troms and Finnmark, and 3) Østfold, Buskerud, Oslo, and Akershus.

This indicates that the County Governors have different thresholds for supporting disabled people filing complaints on personal assistance decisions. The legal protection of applicants for citizen-controlled

personal assistance has been weakened by the Storting. The level of legal protection also varies between municipalities and between counties.

Municipalities prefer not to grant personal assistance

Findings from the 2026 survey suggests that most municipalities do not administrate citizen-controlled personal assistance in accordance with the Storting's intention. Almost three out of four respondents did not receive information about citizen-controlled personal assistance before applying. More than half of the respondents reported that when they asked for personal assistance, their municipality suggested a care service instead. Almost half had one or more applications for citizen-controlled personal assistance rejected. Nearly six out of ten had to complain after receiving a personal assistance decision. Among the respondents with citizen-controlled personal assistance, almost three out of ten stated that the assistance hours do not cover their needs. One in three experience that the municipality limit the work leader's ability to lead the assistance scheme. A considerable proportion of respondents stated that they have a negative experience based on their dialogue with the municipality about citizen-controlled personal assistance.

Gains freedom, self-determination, and participation

Most respondents with citizen-controlled personal assistance describe the scheme as crucial for their ability to live an independent life. Around eight out of ten state that citizen-controlled personal assistance makes it possible for them to live independently and make decisions about their own everyday lives. Approximately the same number state that assistance scheme makes it possible to live more on their own terms. Many also emphasise the importance of personal assistance for social participation, opportunities to be active, and for being able to take care of their own health.

The importance of personal assistance for children and young people

The responses from the 22 children who participated in the survey suggest that citizen-controlled personal assistance strengthens self-determination, independence, and participation for those under 18 years. A majority report that citizen-controlled personal assistance enables them to make more decisions about their everyday lives, become more independent and take part in social and leisure activities. At the same time, many report that the assistance hours granted by their municipality is insufficient to participate in sports, leisure activities, and social life.

When municipalities ration assistance hours, responsibility is shifted onto the families. Several respondents report that family members are exhausted from providing unpaid assistance. Some also report that family relationships are weakened. Findings suggests that restrictive municipal practices contribute to disabled children becoming socially isolated. The analyses suggest a gap between the human rights goals of participation and equality on the one hand, and children and young people's actual opportunities to spend time with friends and participate in the scouts on the other. The result of such administrative practice is that the human rights of disabled children are violated.

Effects of personal assistance for adults with a co-work leader scheme

A total of 107 adults with personal assistance with a co-work leader responded to the 2026 survey. A considerable proportion of them state that the scheme makes it possible to live in their own home, participate in society, take care of their health, be social and exercise self-determination in everyday life.

At the same time, the survey show that many disabled in this group are not granted the assistance hours they need. They lack assistance hours to cover basic needs, safeguard their health, and/or participate in society. When the hours of citizen-controlled personal assistance are not enough, participation in society decreases and the risk of social isolation increases. The municipalities' rationing of personal assistance also has consequences for family members and other close relatives. Many of them become exhausted from having to step in as unpaid assistants.

In particular, the findings regarding municipal proposals for institutional care, low expectations from society at large, and a high degree of social isolation point to challenges that are at odds with the political and human rights goals of equality, self-determination, and participation in society. The findings from the survey indicate that citizen-controlled personal assistance decisions that cover people's assistance needs contribute to self-determination, independence, and participation in society.

State functional assistance in working life delivers results

The survey shows that functional assistance is crucial for labour market participation among many disabled people with needs of assistance. All respondents with functional assistance state that the scheme is necessary for them to be able to work. Most are very satisfied with NAV's administration of the scheme, both in terms of the allocation of hours, dialogue, and predictability. At the same time, many are calling for better coordination between functional assistance and citizen-controlled personal assistance, and a large majority want the schemes to be brought together in a single assistance scheme administrated by the state.

Health related personal assistance is safe and secure

A clear majority of the respondents state that citizen-controlled personal assistance makes it possible to choose how they will take care of their own health. More than eight out of ten receive assistance to take care of their health through citizen-controlled personal assistance. They receive assistance with one or more of the following tasks:

- Exercise and/or travel to a physiotherapist, dentist, or doctor
- Simple health-related tasks that people usually do themselves
- More advanced health-related tasks
- Creating a safe and predictable framework for safeguarding their mental health

Almost all the respondents perceive their assistance as safe and secure. Most assistants who perform such tasks do not have an education within health or care. In most cases, the work leader

provides unqualified assistants with training in how to conduct health-related tasks. Some state that the specialist health service contributes to this training. The findings indicate that citizen-controlled personal assistance with a stable and small group of assistants is well suited for conducting health-related tasks, including advanced health-related tasks.

Exclusion and poverty affect living conditions

The most serious findings in the Equality status assessment 2026 relate to participation, living conditions and social belonging.

Among the respondents of working age, only about three out of ten participate in the mainstream labour market. More than half are in what the government refers to as a state of exclusion. At the same time, many state that they want to pursue education, get a job or work more than they do today.

Disabled people in need of assistance are strongly overrepresented in low-income groups. For many, disability benefit is the most important source of income. At the same time, many state that they pay significant fees for personal assistance and other municipally allocated services.

The findings show that disabled people in need of assistance still have significantly poorer economic living conditions than the rest of the population. This limits the possibilities for participation and increase the risk of poverty.

Social isolation is still a serious problem

Half of the participants in the survey fully or partially agree that they are socially isolated from the rest of society. The proportion is even higher among those who state that their personal assistance hours do not meet their needs of assistance, those who are not in work or education, those who feel that society has low expectations of them, and those who experience discrimination.

This is the report's most worrying finding. When half of disabled people in need of assistance experience social isolation, it strongly

suggests that society fails ensuring the participation and inclusion that both Norwegian legislation and human rights require.

A citizen-controlled personal assistance scheme in line with human rights

The findings of the Equality status assessment 2026 show that, at the beginning of 2026, many disabled people could not realise their right to personal assistance. Norway must change both policy and administrative practice to transform citizen-controlled personal assistance into the tool for equality that the Storting and disabled people's organisations agree it should be.

The Storting's incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the Human Rights Act signals a political will to strengthen and anchor these rights legally. Most parties have acknowledged that citizen-controlled personal assistance will not be an effective tool for equality if the scheme is an alternative organisation of allocated health and care services from the municipalities.

In 2026, Uloba prepared a knowledge base for the work of developing the future citizen-controlled personal assistance policy. The report "Tilstandskartleggingen 2026. Funn fra Ulobas spørreundersøkelse" (link) deals with, among other things, the dialogue with the municipality about citizen-controlled personal assistance, personal assistance to safeguard health and functional assistance in working life. The report "Tilstandskartleggingen 2026. Status for BPA" (link) deals with the other topics that we have presented in this summary.

The report "Assistentundersøkelsen 2026. Fornøyde assistenter bidrar til likestilling" (link) examines questions such as 1) Do assistants have a safe and secure working day? and 2) Is citizen-controlled personal assistance sustainable from a workforce perspective?

In 2027, Norway's political leaders will shape a new citizen-controlled personal assistance policy that is in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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Uloba is Norway's largest facilitator of citizen-controlled personal assistance. It was Uloba that developed citizen-controlled personal assistance in Norway.

Uloba is an organization by, with and for disabled people. Uloba is part of the Independent Living movement, and there it is called "Nothing about us without us".

This also means that it is the disabled themselves who know best what kind of assistance we need to live the way we want. Uloba consists of disabled people who want to live independently. We fight together for this freedom.

Uloba is organised as a non-profit cooperative, which means that we are owned by the same people we are there for: our members.

Equality status assessment 2026. Summary and main findings from a report about citizen-controlled personal assistance

Report authors: Egil G. Skogseth (Project Manager),
Rannveig Frøseth Sinkaberg and Andreas Rollheim Melby
Quality Assurance: Aage Gjesdal
Reference group: Henriette Nielsen and Regine Elvevold
Photographer: Christian Houge
Project coordinator: Henriette Nielsen
Designer: Maren Jessica Tanke
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Uloba – Independent Living Norge SA

Address: Tollbugata 114, 3041 Drammen
E-mail: post@uloba.no (link)
Phone: +47 32 20 59 10
Organization number: 963 890 095