

## SENIOR POLICY MEASURES AT ST. OLAV'S HOSPITAL — NORWAY

### 1. Organisations involved

- St. Olav's Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital;
- Fafo Institute for labor and social research
- Local NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) centre.

### 2. Case description

#### 2.1. Introduction

St. Olav's Hospital, Trondheim University Hospital, is integrated with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim and is owned by the Central Norway Regional Health Authority. As a public health enterprise, the main tasks of the hospital are patient treatment, research, the education of patients and their relatives (e.g. living with a chronic disease) and the education of health professionals. The hospital has 9,726 employees, with approximately 77 % women and 23 % men. In 2012, there were approximately 2,000 employees over the age of 55, 600 employees over the age of 62 and 130 employees over the age of 67. According to the hospital's 2011 annual report, employees over 56 years represented 19 % of all staff. The total annual budget amounted to EUR 8.3 billion in 2014.

At the national level, recommendations regarding adaptation of work for older workers are built into the Inclusive Workplace agreement, which dates back to 2001 and is a central framework for tripartite cooperation between the government, employers and employee organisations. The main legal rights for workers over the age of 60 are covered by The Working Environmental Act and Holidays Act and there is no specific legislative requirement for the hospital to have a senior policy.

At the company level, recommendations for adapting work organisation for older workers, especially to avoid night working, is built into the various collective agreements on labour conditions negotiated between the trade unions and the hospital. The occupational safety and health (OSH) policy and measures for older workers form part of the general OSH policy of the hospital, which covers all employees. The adaptation of work with regard to the reduction of risks, stress and physical workload also forms part of the overall OSH policy, as it is not treated specifically as a 'senior' issue.

#### 2.2. Aims

The hospital aimed to encourage workers aged 55 years and over ('senior workers') to remain in employment. Reducing the number of employees choosing early retirement would not only lead to valuable knowledge and labour being retained, but also minimise the cost of contractual pensions ('Avtalefestet pensjon', AFP) to the hospital. A good senior policy <sup>(1)</sup> is key to achieving this.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Senior policies are a workplace instrument promoted by the Norwegian government and social partners to retain older workers at work through a number of actions, including mapping the age structure of the company and implementing measures specifically for older workers (i.e. senior benefits). The age at which older workers can start receiving senior benefits is defined with the social partners at the workplace level.

## 2.3. What was done and how?

A pilot senior policy project was introduced in 2007 and evaluated in 2008/9. This initial scheme was rejected, mainly because it did not include senior nurses and doctors. In 2009/10, a group consisting of trade union representatives, external consultants and the hospital's own human resources department developed a new set of measures. The external consultants from the Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research developed senior courses that provided information and support for managers in implementing the new senior policy.

### **Measures implemented**

Employees aged 55 years and over were presented with a 'package' of various measures, comprising (1) senior days, as a general scheme from the age of 60; (2) awareness-raising measures; and (3) development activities (see more detail below).

In addition, as part of the awareness-raising measures, an individual talk is held between the older employees and their managers (part of the annual performance appraisal), which aims to encourage older employees to remain in work for longer. These measures introduced in 2009 are still in effect today.

#### **1. Senior days**

'Senior days' apply to all employees from the year they turn 60. They allow the older worker to take a certain number of additional days off in the year, determined by their age (as illustrated in the table below). The scheme could be combined with part-time positions and disability benefits. The scheme does not apply to those who already receive a contractual pension (AFP) or partial retirement benefits.

Senior days must be taken as full days off and must be evenly distributed throughout the year. The timing of the senior days should be agreed between the employee and the team leader, who must also ensure that the entitlement is taken by the end of each leave year.

Senior days were introduced from 1 January 2011.

Type of measure	Description	Timetable and responsibility
Additional days off	Effective from 1 January 2011 Effective from the year you turn 60 Age 60: 4 days off per year Age 62: 6 days off per year Age 65: 8 days off per year	Employees and manager

#### **2. Awareness-raising measures**

Awareness-raising measures target managers and older workers.

Type of measure	Description	Timetable and responsibility
Regular training and information services to executives	Training managers in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good conversation</li> <li>- attitudes</li> <li>- feedback</li> <li>- individual focus</li> <li>- exit interview</li> </ul>	Director for leadership development

Type of measure	Description	Timetable and responsibility
General information about life phase-oriented personnel policy in which the senior measures are included	Target audience: managers Information at meetings, via intranet, Kilden <sup>(2)</sup> , Pulsen <sup>(3)</sup> and brochures	Director of Organisation Department in the start-up phase. Achieved through continuous updating of the information available on the intranet Clinic managers to put the issue on the agenda within the clinic, for example in department meetings
General information about senior measures	Audience: employees over 55 Information at meetings, via intranet, Kilden, Pulsen, brochures, etc.	Director of Organisation Department in the start-up phase. Achieved through continuous updating of the information available on the intranet Clinic managers to put the issue on the agenda within the clinic
Pension information	Information provided to employees about retirement options and rights, especially the ability to combine a pension and a job	KLP <sup>(4)</sup> , accessible by telephone for those unable to attend personally
Senior courses	Regular offers of seminars and information sessions for workers aged 55 and over Combined programme for employees of a given age. Themes include pensions and economics, law, myths about ageing, the consequences of early retirement, exercise and diet, motivation	Director of Organisation Department, two courses per year
Mentor/buddy system	Environments created to promote and preserve the expertise of older employees. Employees who are at a later stage in their career are used as mentors/sponsors/supervisors for colleagues (new employees, employees that will have new tasks)	Manager
Senior talks	Annual talk (part of the annual performance appraisal) between older employees and managers aged 55 years and over in which the objective is to determine individual needs in the future. Training and maintenance of competence is a central theme of these discussions	Manager Goals and performance in cooperation with the manager agreement

<sup>(2)</sup> Kilden is the name of the intranet at St. Olav's.

<sup>(3)</sup> Pulsen is the internal newspaper.

<sup>(4)</sup> KLP is the pension provider.

Type of measure	Description	Timetable and responsibility
Exit interview	An exit interview is carried out with all older workers who leave the business to conclude the lessons learned from their experience and provide them with information about opportunities for retired workers	Manager or human resources advisor

### 3. Development activities

Development activities cover collective and individual activities.

Type of measure	Description	Timetable and responsibility
Training and courses; maintenance/development of skills	Specialised training, maintenance/development of skills is arranged in accordance with a development/career plan for employees	Manager
Educational leave	Employees may, by agreement, be allowed to take educational leave with/without pay	Manager
Motivational programme	All employees aged 55 and over are offered adjusted programmes focusing on motivation and job satisfaction	Director of Organisation Department obtains offers from a number of external suppliers
Individual guidance	Opportunities are provided for counselling for employees in the later stages of their career if wanted/needed	Director of Organisation Department ensures that his/her department provides such guidance

## 2.4. What was achieved?

The senior policy scheme introduced in 2009 was evaluated in 2012. The Work Research Institute, which was in charge of the evaluation, concluded that most measures had achieved the intended result and were well received by older workers.

The actual retirement age increased from 63.73 years in 2009 to 64.23 years in 2012. Responses from the annual employee survey show that job satisfaction among older workers/seniors reached a high score.

Other key points from the evaluation report include the following:

- The most popular measures were the 'senior days' for employees aged 60 and above, information meetings about pensions and senior policy, senior courses and training of managers. When older workers were asked to identify factors that prevent early retirement, 66 % highlighted 'senior days'. Development programmes focusing on motivation and job satisfaction are also highly appreciated among older workers.
- The effect of the intranet (digital 'network 55+') was questioned because it fell short of achieving its aim of experience exchange among older workers. It was mainly used as a source of information.

The evaluation in 2012 identified some key areas for improvement:

- More courses are needed for older workers.
- Improved information and training for managers is required.

- The selection criteria for attending the motivation course 'Arbeidsglede 55' needs to be evaluated.
- The clinics should be financially rewarded when employees are retained in the workforce.

Based on these suggestions, the number of senior courses was increased from two to three per year. The need to build a 'senior policy' into OSH training programmes for managers was also identified.

In 2011, St. Olav's Hospital received the national award for 'This year's senior initiative' from the Centre for Senior Policy in Norway.

## 2.5. Success factors

The following success factors have been identified:

- *Integration into general OSH policy:* The senior policy scheme builds on an established OSH policy.
- *Clear and consistent roll-out plan:* The senior policy is rooted in all levels of the organisation (managers, employees, the board, trade union representatives). It is therefore important to grant enough time for the implementation process and for all parties to be sufficiently involved.
- *Ownership by top management:* This is essential for creating an understanding of the importance of senior focus throughout the organisation.
- *Management training:* Ensuring that managers have the skills for effective communication with older workers regarding their health and needs is crucial, as they are the front-line of policy roll-out.
- *Capacity to make decisions:* Managers need to have the necessary freedom of action (within specified limits) to make decisions and enter into agreements with older workers, such as the scheduling of senior leave days.
- *Long-term perspective:* The senior policy is an ongoing project that was developed based on a pilot and is maintained and developed on a continuous basis.
- *Diverse measures:* An attractive range of measures are available to employees, with tangible time and skills benefits, demonstrating the company's commitment to valuing its older workers.

## 2.6. Transferability

Although St. Olav's is a very large, complex and bureaucratic enterprise, the measures are suitable for other large companies. Elements of the programme could also be successfully transferred to smaller companies.

## 2.7. Further information

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## 3. References and resources

- Home page (<http://www.stolav.no/en/>) and web page related to the scheme (<http://www.stolav.no/no/Aktuelt/Nyheter/Pulsen/Senior-med-stil/115845/>).
- Articles, reports, etc., available at: <http://www.stolav.no/no/Aktuelt/Nyheter/Arkiv-2012/St-Olavs-seniorpolitikk-ut-i-verden/119057/>