
**ANALYTICAL NOTE:
MECHANISMS FOR COLLECTION, SHARING AND
DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION IN
THE AREA OF SERVICES FOR DISABLED CITIZENS IN
THE CITY OF AALBORG, DENMARK**



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Department of Care of the Elderly and Disabled
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1 Introduction

In order to provide a thorough description of the mechanisms for sharing and distributing information related to the social services for disabled citizens in the Municipality of Aalborg, a basic introduction to the Danish welfare system as such as, is necessary. In the following chapters some of the general structures and underlying assumptions and values pertaining to the social service sector for disabled citizens will be addressed. Firstly, the Danish welfare system and the distribution of responsibilities will be described and then in the following chapters some of the underlying definitions and key terms of the disability policy, in general, will be outlined.

1.1 *The Danish welfare system*

The Danish society is a Danish welfare model where a regulatory state offers extensive redistributive services and transfers financed by a progressive taxation system. The taxation system is mainly based on a progressive income taxation system, with a relatively high rate of taxation (in 2005 the average taxation rate was 50.1 %). Furthermore, a relative high VAT on consumer goods adds to the financing of welfare services and transfers. The Danish state delivers a series of welfare services such as infrastructure, health care, education, defence, assistance to developing countries and social services such as old age pension, early retirement pension, and others. The standard of living is relatively high, and the difference between the rich and the poor is smaller than in many of the countries Denmark, traditionally, is compared with.

Another notable characteristic of the Danish welfare model is the combination of high economic growth with a relatively equal distribution of income, due to the progressive tax system that is the primary source to finance the welfare system.

The production system is capitalistic. The state and other public authorities, however, exercise a considerable regulatory control and provide comprehensive services for the citizens. Citizens enjoy extensive financial security. They are supported in times of sickness, unemployment and old age. Supplementary services include subsidies for rent payment and a supplement to families for expenses incurred in raising children. Furthermore, citizens are offered services such as day-care centres, health care and home care.

Contrary to most other EU member states, social benefits in Denmark, to a very limited degree, depend on individual insurance programmes, and citizens' right to benefits depends only, to a limited extent, on their former activity on the labour market.

In the political system and culture, professional and industrial bodies as well as interest organisations play a major role. They are involved in political decision-making processes in a large number of areas. Involvement of these organisations takes place via formal channels, such as representation on committees, boards and commissions which the decision-makers then consult about political issues, for example new legislation. However, the organisations also seek influence via more informal contacts. Danish political culture is, in many areas, characterised by co-operation, dialogue and negotiation between the authorities and the related organised interests. This means that the professional and industrial bodies will also have an influence on society's development. The result is a highly consensus-orientated political culture.

This is also characteristic of the disability policy area where disability organisations engage in a continuous dialogue with the decision-makers through, among other, formal boards and committees.

This kind of political culture has had tremendous influence on development within the disability policy area.

Danish disability policy forms an integral and coherent part of the values and norms on which Danish society is based. Therefore, the services for disabled citizens are universal, that is, they are granted on the basis of citizenship alone and independent of family income etc. Almost all services are financed via the above mentioned progressive taxing system and are therefore free of user/family payments.

1.2 Division of tasks/responsibilities in Danish public sector

The Danish welfare model is characterized by a decentralized public sector. In January 2007 a local government reform came into force. The reform outlines a new administrative structure for the public sector with 98 new municipalities, five new regions as opposed to the former 271 municipalities and 14 regional authorities (Counties). The reform also redistributed the tasks of welfare services between the administrative level. The new Municipalities are responsible for most welfare tasks and it is the intention that they become the citizens' main access point to the public sector.

As a result of the Local Government Reform, the main responsibilities of social services for disabled citizens were transferred from the regions to the Municipalities, in order to place the political responsibilities closer to the citizens.

The regional authorities are led by a democratically elected regional council without authority to levy taxes. The municipal authorities are governed by a democratically elected local council with the authority to levy taxes.¹

The five new regions have been established in order to meet the goal of ensuring a strong, regional health sector for the future. Within the health area, the five regions are responsible for hospitals, psychiatric treatment, the Danish Health Security and for providing the basis for optimum utilisation of resources, professional as well as economical.

The Danish Government and the Danish Parliament (Folketinget) determine the framework for the regional and local authorities by legislation. The Government and its 19 Governmental Departments (Ministries), with the Prime Minister's department as head of Government, is responsible for policy, legislature and rulemaking procedures and supervision of the regions and local authorities.

Within this framework, the regional and municipal authorities have extensive authority and self-definition. The regional and municipal authorities' right to manage their own affairs, under state supervision, is laid down in the Constitution of 1953². The local autonomy is among the most extensive in the world.

The political intention is to allow/promote local differences within service levels in both practice and within the legal framework. However, the administrative distribution of the decision-making authority to a relatively large number of local authorities makes unintended differences in the administrative practice likely. Therefore the strongly decentralised Danish system implies a well-

¹ www.denmark.dk/en/menu/AboutDenmark/GovernmentPolitics/PublicAdministration/MunicipalAdministration/

² The first Danish Constitution was signed on June 5, 1849, and has been amended in 1866, 1915 and latest in 1953.

developed complaint system, which allows citizens the opportunity to complain against decisions made by municipal authorities. This also implies a complaints system which, in practice, contributes to maintaining certain uniformity.

Almost all administrative decisions made by the local authorities on social welfare, in the first instance, can either be appealed to a Court as a civil lawsuit, or to one of many Public Appeals Boards. Each Governmental Ministry has an associated Board of Appeal. If a disabled citizen wishes to appeal a decision made by the local authorities, the appeal will automatically go to the National Social Appeals Board.

The National Social Appeals Board is an administrative authority with judicial powers. The Board is an independent body, and thus not constrained by instructions from or opinions of authorities or other bodies on individual case handling and decision-making processes. The Board refers to several ministerial policy areas, such as those under the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, the Ministry of Taxation, the Ministry of Education, etc.

Another Board of appeal relevant to the disability area is The National Social Security Agency. Often disabled persons receive social pensions, and or/social housing benefits, and all questions or complaints regarding pensions or social housing benefits, must be directed to this agency.

The National Social Security Agency is also an agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is responsible for assessing applications and appeals within certain social areas. The acts relevant to their work include: the Social Pensions Act, the Social Services Act, the Activation Act, the Child Benefit Act, the Housing Benefit Act and the Daily Benefit Act. The Agency represents Denmark in international cooperation activities within the social security field.

Supplementing the activities of local authorities and Regions, within the area of assistance and support to the disabled is at wide range of governmental, semi- and non-governmental structures – institutions/organisations which contribute to the coordination and development of the sector of disability and social support.

2 Definitions and principles in Danish disability policies

The formal structures of the service system for disabled citizens are closely related to the Danish conceptualisation of disability and of the ideal relationship between disabled citizens and the surrounding society. In the following chapter the concept of the disability and the development of disability policies will be briefly introduced.

2.1 The concept of disability

The concept of disability, in a Danish context, is perceived as dynamic and continuously changing and therefore no exhaustive definition of the concept can be given. However, the definition found in the UN standard rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Disabled persons captures the spirit of the concept adequately:

“The term handicap means the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others. It describes the encounter between the person with a disability and the environment. The purpose of this term is to emphasise the focus on the shortcomings in the environment and in many organised activities in society, for example,

information, communication and education, which prevent persons with disabilities from participating on equal terms”

Disability equals limited opportunities for citizens to fully participate in activities within the surrounding society. The notion of disability thus characterises something external to the person, namely the barrier that the disability and society pose, thereby hindering the person in fulfilling his or her citizenship on equal terms with other citizens. In consequence, a focal point of the Danish disability policy is to provide compensative services and aids in order to limit, or off-set, the effects of the disability. The main objective is to ensure equal opportunities, integration and normalisation of living conditions for all citizens.

2.2 Basic principles in disability policies

At present, the main objectives of disability policies are intertwined with the historic development within the sector. Up until 1980, large, state-run, all-embracing institutions were responsible for caring for disabled persons. In response to the segregation of disabled citizens from surrounding “normal” society, the care for disabled persons was devolved to the counties in 1980'ies and the all-embracing institutions were, to some extent, split up in smaller units. The most recent step towards further decentralisation was taken in 2007 when additional authority and tasks were devolved to the municipalities and, at the present time, the disability sector consists of relatively small and increasingly specialized service units.

The overall objective is normalisation and integration (The Danish Disability Council 2002: 9) encompassed by the ***principle of equal treatment and equal rights***. This has, through a resolution of the Danish parliament, formally been the point of reference for disability policies since 1993. The resolution stated that the responsibility for honouring the principle of equal treatment and rights rests with the public or private authority, organisation or business. The resolution is coherent with the UN standard convention on equal treatment for disabled.

In continuation of the overall objective of normalisation and integration, two additional principles can be identified. One is as mentioned a principle of “compensation” and the other is “sector responsibility”.

The principle of ***compensation*** covers disabled citizens' right to compensative services, both individual personal aids such as a hearing aid or a support-contact person, but also more collective measures for example the adjustment and planning of all activities in society so that they are accessible for all citizens irrespective of functional impairments. This applies to parallel services, such as sign language TV-news, adjustment of the physical accessibility of all buildings, private or public, which have a “public purpose” e.g. private shops or public libraries. In some cases compensation is about changing public attitude and breaking down barriers of understanding between society and groups of disabled citizens. The principle of compensation does not equate that all citizens should be treated the same way; it does however mean that all citizens are entitled to equal opportunity and to participate in all spheres of society despite different starting points.

The principle of ***sector responsibility*** encompasses the idea that only by placing responsibility with the relevant department/administrative level can equal opportunity be achieved in all spheres of society. Sector responsibility is one of the ground breaking developments since eliminating/removing the all-encompassing state run institutions, because responsibility, for example that related to educating disabled children is, primarily, encompassed in the general

educational system and responsibility for employment efforts for disabled is, in principle, placed with the national job-centres.

The principle of sector responsibility is part of the Parliamentary Resolution on Equalisation of Opportunities of 1993 (B43). The resolution emphasises the principle of including private players. The principle is described in the guidelines for the Act on Social Service, c.f. section 3.2, just as The National Social Appeals Board has used the principle as an important argument in several decisions. In practice, sector responsibility also includes financial responsibility within the sector and ensures that services are made accessible to all citizens irrespective of functional level.

3 Legal framework for services for disabled citizens

The legal framework for services for disabled people is primarily found in the Danish Act on Social Services and the Social Pension Act.

3.1 Danish Act on Social Services

In 1998, a comprehensive reform of parts of the social legislation was carried out. The reform, in outline, directed attention towards the right to self-determination for all citizens irrespective of disability and stipulated that all services and assistance should be tailored according to the citizen's individual needs.

The objects of this Act are

- To offer counselling and support so as to prevent social problems;
- To offer a number of general services designed to serve as preventive measures at the same time;
- To satisfy needs resulting from impaired physical or mental function or particular social problems.

The object of the assistance provided under this Act is to improve the capability of the individual recipient, encourage them to be self-reliant, or to facilitate his/her daily life and enhance the quality of life.

The assistance provided under this Act is based on the individual recipient's personal responsibility and the responsibility for his/her family. Assistance will be provided on the basis of the recipient's particular needs and conditions and in consultation with the individual recipient.

3.1.1 Scope of the Act

Any person who is lawfully resident in Denmark is entitled to assistance under this Act³. For adults with impaired physical or mental function or particular social problems special action is required. The purposes of such action are to:

- prevent a deterioration of the problems facing the individual;

³ The Minister for Social Affairs is authorised to lay down rules governing the conditions subject to which assistance under this Act may be granted in exceptional cases while a person is residing outside Denmark for a temporary period.

By agreement with other states or international organisations the municipal authority and the regional authority may grant assistance for care or treatment, etc., in Denmark for periods of substantial duration to a person who has a special connection to Denmark, but who is not a Danish resident at the date of application. The same shall apply to the care or treatment, etc., of a Danish resident taking up residence in another country to which he/she has a special connection.

- improve the individual's social and personal function and development opportunities;
- improve the individual's opportunities for life experiences through contact, social and other activities, treatment, care and attendance; or
- provide overall services adapted to the individual's particular needs in his/her own home, including shared accommodation under the Act on General Housing etc., or in accommodation under this Act.

The municipal authority shall grant assistance under this Act, having given due regard to the purposes mentioned above, to persons with substantial and permanent impairment of mental function who are unable to attend to their own needs and interests, irrespective of whether or not the individual has given consent. However, assistance cannot be granted by use of physical coercion.

The municipal authority shall ascertain whether any relative or other person is in a position to safeguard the interests of the individual. The municipal authority or the regional authority shall assess whether or not the state-administration should be asked to appoint a legal guardian under the Legal Guardianship Act.

On March 30th 2007 Denmark signed the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities thereby committing Denmark to ratify the convention and implement these rights in national law.

3.2 Early retirement pension

Persons who cannot support themselves due to long-term impairment of their capacity for work are entitled to a maintenance benefit from the Danish State in the form of an early retirement pension. A condition for obtaining an early retirement pension is that a person's capacity for work cannot be improved by training, rehabilitation or treatment. The basic principle is that everybody should be able to lead an independent, active life with an attachment to the job market.

In a pension context, capacity for work is defined as the ability to meet the requirements made by the job market with respect to performing different types of clearly defined tasks. It is thus a matter of evaluating the skills of the individual person in comparison to the requirements of the present job market.

It is the local authority that assesses whether a person is entitled to early retirement pension. This assessment is made on the basis of all relevant information about the person's health, education, etc. If a person's capacity for/ability to work is reduced by at least 2/3, the local authority will grant an early retirement pension. The pension is equal to the highest level of unemployment benefit if the pensioner is single, and 85% of the daily benefit level if the pensioner is married or has a partner.

If the local authority refuses an application for early retirement pension, it has to provide documentation that the applicant can perform specified work functions, possibly after having been trained, rehabilitated or after some other initiative has been taken. The work functions stipulated by the particular local authority must, to a reasonable extent, exist within the job market.

The early retirement pension ceases when a person reaches the age of 65. From that point on citizens are paid an old-age pension, which the Danish State pays to everyone who is over 65 years of age, irrespective of their capital or health situation. The old-age pension is, however, a smaller pension than the early retirement pension.

4 Different types of social services and benefits targeted disabled citizens

A consequence of sector responsibility is that all sectors within the Danish society are involved in carrying out services for disabled citizens. There are, however, specialised types of service and benefits specifically targeted disabled citizens, which will be introduced in this chapter. Primarily, these services are legally based upon the Social Services act cf. chapter 3, which posit the separation of accommodative services from measures of help and support and from daytime activities.

A wide range of services, benefits and cash transfers are offered disabled citizens, they encompass home help for cleaning and personal hygiene, lending of equipment enabling the disabled citizen to manage ordinary domestic chores. In addition, a health visitor scheme obliges local authorities to employ nurses to care for people in their own homes. In cases where disabled citizens cannot manage on their own, they are offered accommodative arrangements in specially adapted housing or small communities with other disabled people.

The main objective is to provide disabled citizens with a life pattern that resembles that of ordinary citizens. It is a basic premise, even for the specialised services, that integration and normalisation is the focal point when composing individual service schemes. Individual support schemes are composed by combining different services into one overall offer.

4.1 Types of housing and accommodation facilities

It is worth noting that rented housing in Denmark is in general heavily subsidized, both with regard to the construction of social housing schemes and also with regard to payment of citizens rent. The Ministry of Welfare estimates that social housing schemes for Elderly and Disabled in 2005 were subsidized by approximately one third of the total initial costs. Citizens living in rented housing are entitled to subsidies graduated according to the citizens' annual income level. Pensioners and citizens receiving early retirement payments are additionally entitled to rent subsidies, which also consist of graduated benefits. Rented housing and co-operative housing account for approximately half the housing stock in Denmark.

The municipalities are obliged to provide housing for disabled citizens who need care, attendance or treatment. There are primarily two types of accommodation schemes offered to disabled citizens:

- The first is the possibility of setting up social housing schemes where the disabled citizen is can rent an apartment. Typically, this type of housing is established as co-housing schemes with common (service) areas and a shared team of professional support and assistance.
- The second, a specialised housing scheme, of either a temporary or long-term character, is established in publicly owned or rented buildings. In this case disabled citizen is referred to an accommodation facility. The temporary situation would be used for short term courses of treatment after which the citizen would be able to move or to assist a specific target group over a period of time, for instance, young disabled citizens. The long term accommodation offers are primarily offered to disabled citizens with an extensive need for support and assistance, in principle the same target groups as the first type.

A common factor for the various types of accommodation is that support and benefits are provided irrespective of the type of accommodation in question, and any pension awarded to the citizen in question is paid irrespective of type of accommodation.

Prior to the structural reform in 2007 there was a general rule that the municipalities, mainly, organised their housing schemes as social housing schemes. The county's use of the latter was limited in relation to the use of temporary and long-term housing schemes in publicly owned or rented buildings. In sum, the present composition of the different types of housing schemes vary according to the historic origins depending on whether it stems from a municipal or county responsibility and, in effect, there are also variations across target groups.

The present trend is, however, that subsidized social housing is increasingly used for setting up new housing schemes targeted at disabled citizens. But, in cases where a temporary housing schemes are needed and/or housing needs exceed the limitations of social housing availability, long-term social housing schemes are still used. One of the aims in this area has been to develop small units emphasising the residents' participation in daily chores.

4.2 Types of support and assistance services

The comprehensive reform of parts of the social legislation in 1998 meant improved opportunities for assistance and support tailored to the individual citizen's needs. With the reform, new support measures were introduced and the old concept of institutions was formally abolished. The different support and assistance schemes include aids, general practical support and personal help and support schemes.

4.2.1 Aids and practical support

Persons with permanent disabilities can be granted aids when said aid considerably improves and eases the person's daily life or facilitates their work performance. There is no predetermined legal limit as to what can be defined as an aid so long as its purpose meets the provisions of the Social Service Act. An aid can for example be a crutch or a wheelchair, special clothing, special tools or orthopaedic footwear. The assistance will normally be granted as a loan, as a cash benefit or be given to the person to keep.

The principle of compensation essentially characterises a vital factor as regards the possibility of obtaining aids. There are no legal limits on how many aids an individual may be granted. The local authority grants individual benefits based on a specific assessment of the situation and irrespective of the person's income or capital wealth. With few exceptions, for example artificial limbs and orthopaedic footwear, the assistance is granted as a benefit in kind and is issued free of charge to the recipient. Aid can be granted as durable consumer goods, personal help, home help, training, public paid help from relatives, as well as obtain a subsidy towards extra costs caused by the disability.

A disabled citizen can also be granted support towards purchasing consumer durables e.g. washing machines or kitchen hardware if the goods contribute to the person's ability to perform every day functions.

Based on the assessment of the disabled citizen's functional capacity, a person with permanent physical or mental disabilities may obtain compensative subsidies for the extra costs caused by the disability. The reimbursement scheme is only active if the extra costs are not related to other activities such as an employment plan or hospital related services, then the extra costs are covered by other legislation.

4.2.2 Personal help and support:

Depending on the needs of the disabled citizen there are different kinds of personal help and support available.

- a. Firstly, home help is granted for a fixed number of hours for practical and personal help with, for example, personal hygiene, cleaning and shopping. Home help is granted if it is considered necessary in order to facilitate a citizens' ability to function in his or her own home.
- b. It is possible to obtain help to maintain or better a person's physical or mental skill through training e.g. fysio- or ergotherapy. There are some interfaces between the obligations placed with the regional level and the public health system and the obligations placed with the municipalities.
- c. The municipalities are also obliged to offer socio-pedagogical support for citizens which includes a broad spectrum of supportive measures such as daily or social skills training and rehabilitation. Socio-pedagogical support is granted irrespective of type of accommodation, but is often an integral part of an accommodation scheme.
- d. Relief of relatives is offered to a spouse, parent or other close relative caring for a person with a severe disability in the home. Relief assistance is either offered in or outside the home.
- e. A citizen with extensive care needs, attendance and supervision due to a permanent disability. The citizen must be able to administer the scheme as employer, but all expenses are covered.
- f. Attendance schemes are offered to citizens in order to enable the disabled citizen to participate in certain activities which would otherwise be impossible or difficult. The attendance scheme gives the citizen with disabilities the right to 15 hours attendance a month. It is up to the disabled citizen to determine how the attendance scheme is to be used.
- g. Support and contact person schemes have legal basis in the Danish Service Act and cover practical help for deaf-blind citizens and those with a mental handicap. The two "contact person" schemes are not identical; the support and contact persons' tasks differ from one citizen to another.

4.3 Special educational; employment; activity- and social intercourse schemes

The separation between daily life and daytime activities is regarded as a contributing factor towards a complete and full existence and this also applies to citizens with a disability. Depending on the extent of the disability, there are different schemes for employment, education and other daytime activities. As in the case of all service schemes for disabled citizens, the main focus is on self-reliance and improvement or maintenance of a person's attachment to the arrangements for the general population. Concepts of inclusiveness and integration in relation to the surrounding society are central.

4.3.1 Education

In Denmark, education is compulsory for nine years, this includes children with a disability. Disabled children's' basic education is subject to Danish Act on the Folkeskole (public primary schools). The Folkeskole is obligated to be able to teach disabled children in the extent that the children are able to receive education by applying compensatory means. Approximately 10% of all

children in Danish primary schools receive some kind of special education or compensatory measures. For children with severe impairments there are specialised schools. In 2007 an Act was passed giving disabled youths a legal claim to receive three years of supplementary education in specialised youth educational schools for disabled that are not able to receive education on ordinary terms. The Municipalities are responsible for providing both ordinary and specialised educational offers for disabled children and youths.

4.3.2 Occupational schemes

On the subject of employment schemes there are several possibilities for special arrangements for citizens with disabilities to be employed on the ordinary labour market, both in the private or public sector. If the disabled citizen is not able to maintain a job under these special arrangements there are specialised job-services organised as sheltered jobs. These sheltered jobs were historically arranged in relatively large scale sheltered workshops where assembly related activities were carried out and the groups primarily making use of these offers were mentally disabled. Sheltered job arrangements are currently being differentiated and the target groups broadened cf. the devise of equalisation of opportunities. There has also been an enhanced focus on specialising the efforts to facilitate jobs under special conditions on the ordinary labour market through offering special counselling to both the workplace and the disabled citizen employed.

4.3.3 Other day-time activities

As an alternative to the sheltered job-arrangement, other day-time activities are offered disabled citizens. The types of arrangements vary according to the target group, and range from clear-cut social intercourse schemes to more structured activities such as hobbylike activities.

In principle these activities are targeted at citizens who are unable to maintain a sheltered job. However, in practice different day-time activities and schemes are used either as an alternative or supplement to the special job arrangements.

4.4 Current tendencies in Danish Disability policies and social service

The Danish welfare state has over the last 25 years or more developed a new form of governance, based on a political culture where civil society is included as organised interests in networks interacting with the politico administrative authorities. In this way citizens in the welfare society have been integrated in the political processes and are playing a major role in the policymaking procedures. In 2001 the access to influence of citizens as users and relatives of users of social services was formally institutionalised with a legal demand that all serviceunits have to organise user/relative to users councils.

4.4.1 Free choice

In 2002 the Government launched a major reform program on "Welfare and free choice" which contains proposals on how to increase the citizens' free choice within a range of public service areas, such as free choice of suppliers of homecare to elderly and disabled people. The reform program was expanded in 2004 to constantly oblige the Municipalities and Regions, within the frame of the law, to seek solutions to expand the citizens' free choice of suppliers to social welfare.

4.4.2 Accessibility

Over the past few years, the concept of accessibility has become one of the most central concepts in the disability policy debate – both in Denmark and internationally. The concept of accessibility has changed meaning from being synonymous with physical access for wheelchair users to being the

overall key concept describing the varied and complex process which has to do with adjustment and organisation of all the activities in society in such a way that from their starting point they include also the needs of disabled people.

5 Organisational model of the disability services in the Municipality of Aalborg

In the City of Aalborg, the service, care and support for disabled is a shared responsibility between several departments. Two departments stand out as they have specialised responsibilities related to adult citizens (< 18 years with disabilities), one is the Department of Health and Sustainable Development, which has a cross-departmental coordinating and policy formulating role, the other is the Department of the Elderly and Disabled. The tasks of the latter are related to provision of specialised social services targeted disabled citizens and will be described in the later sections of the chapter.

5.1 Disability Policy and cross-departmental coordination

The department of Health and Sustainable Development is a project organised coordinating body which was established as a consequence of the structural reform and amalgamation into the new Municipality of Aalborg in January 2007. One of the primary tasks of the department is secretariat function for the different councils and boards, including the local Disability Council. The disability Council in the Municipality has existed since 1991 and is presently composed after the same concept as in other municipalities in Denmark. The council consists of 7 members that represent the different organised interests on disability and 7 members representing the local government, all elected for a period of 4 years.

The responsibilities of the Disability Council and as such the Department of Health and Sustainable Development are related to the overall formulation of disability policy efforts in general and political objectives at local level. The council is eligible for hearing in relevant matters and serves as supplier of information and guidance for the local government in matters related to disability policy.

In the City of Aalborg a local Disability Policy was formulated and passed by the local Government in 2002. The Local Disability Policy identifies focal areas of the relevant departments, such as the Technical and Environmental Department; The Mayor's Department; the Department of Family and Employment; Department of Education and Cultural Affairs; Department of the Care of the Elderly and Disabled. Each Department has formulated a plan for implementation of the focal points regarding equal access and opportunities for disabled citizens.

5.2 Specialised Services and the Department of the Elderly and Disabled

The specialised social services for disabled citizens are placed with the Department of the care for the Elderly and Disabled. The Department is responsible for social and health related matters connected with senior citizens (+65) and disabled residents (+18⁴). The department is divided into three functionally separated areas:

Area of social care assessment: responsibilities related to the granting of social benefits to senior citizens and to adult disabled citizens.

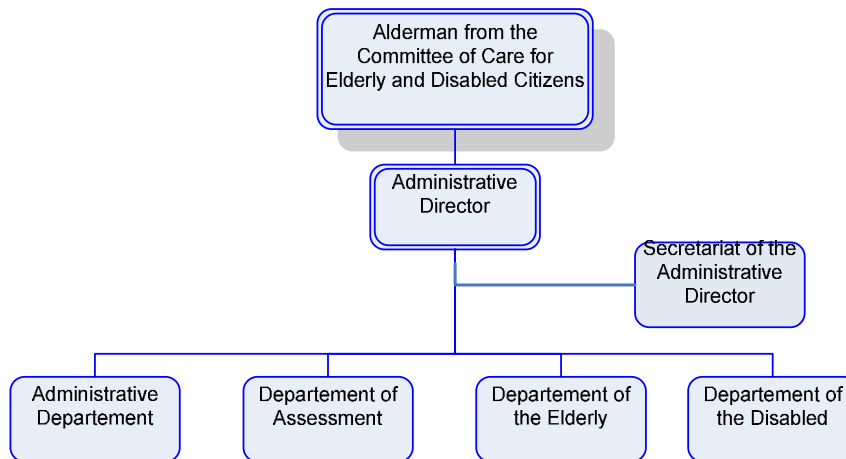
⁴ Kun i forhold til målgruppen døve og autismespektrumforstyrrelser har Ældre- og Handicapforvaltningen forpligtigelsen i forhold til børn og ungegruppen.

Area of senior citizens: responsibilities related to the provision of home-care, nursing homes, district nursing, training and activity related services, cleaning and meal-service and providing practical aids and appliances to the senior citizens.

Area of disabled citizens: responsibilities related daytime and 24-hour care and support for disabled citizens, day-time activities and special employment programmes for disabled citizens.

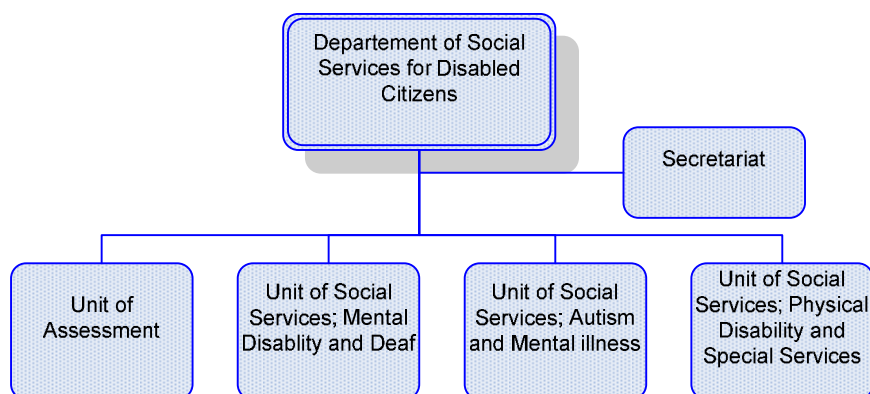
5.2.1 Organisational structure

The overall organisational structure of the department can be illustrated in the following organisational chart:



The Department of Disability is again sub-divided into three areas arranged after different target groups; the area of deaf and mentally disabled/retarded; the area of Autism and mental illness; the area of physical disability and special services. This subdivision to some extent facilitate specialisation within the different target groups; both regarding the professional qualifications of the employed and the contents of the specific services. On the other hand the division calls for coordination across target groups and service units, which is managed through a number of mechanisms described in detail in chapter 7.

All sub-units related to service production receive technical and specialist support from a Secretariat consisting of professional consultants, financial advisors, strategic development consultants and other relevant staff. The secretariat is also responsible for the communication between the administrative level and the political level in the Department



In sum the area of Disability within the Department of Care for the Elderly and Disabled consists of various administrative levels.

- Level 1: The committee of Care for the Elderly and Disabled – a political subunit of the Municipal Council, consisting of democratically elected officials, is in charge of outlining the general policy goals for the area. The alderman from the Committee of the Elderly and Disabled functions as the daily leader of the administrative Department.
- Level 2: The chief executive director of the Department of the Elderly and Disabled; highest administrative authority.
- Level 3: The executives of the different Areas within the Department of care for the Elderly and Disabled, among these the executives of the area of Disabled Citizens.
- Level 4: In the area of the Disabled Citizens this level is comprised of the leaders of the four main units portrayed in the organisational chart
- Level 5: Consists of the leaders of the service producing units within the service units.
- Level 6: Consists of the secondary leaders of the service producing units.

5.2.2 The formal organisational structures of the area of disability services

In 2007, several new responsibilities were transferred to the Municipality of Aalborg in the context of the structural reform causing an extensive enlargement within the area of disability services. The budget growth in the sector of services for disabled citizens in the two years preceding the local government reform in 2007 was, in general terms, an approximate 3 % growth rate, whereas the budget from 2006 to 2007 was expanded with some 101 %. In relative measures this means a doubling of the activities within the Municipal sector of disability services. In one of the major service areas, accommodation facilities, the number of placements grew from approximately 325 in 2006 to 806 in 2008. The accommodation facilities in 2006 accounted for 66% of the total budget, changes in the budget structure does not render it possible to estimate the percentage for 2008.

A general trend, prior to 2007, was that more specialized services were executed in the old counties. As a result the Municipality of Aalborg is the main supplier of a number of specialised services both to citizens of the Municipality of Aalborg and to citizens of other municipalities in the region. In the cases of specialised services for the deaf with additional impairments and citizens with autism spectrum related disorders the Municipality of Aalborg carries the regional obligations of supplier.

The transfer of new responsibilities was accompanied by the implementation of a new administrative structure for the area. The model is based on principles of separation of economic/financial and task/executing authorities mainly between the assessing authority and the executing authorities in the Department. The underlying idea is to allow the executing authorities to focus on developing services and documenting the delivery of services; while the assessing authority focus on defining and assessing the needs of the citizens and specify the services level needed.

The administrative model can be conceived of as part of trends of increased market orientation in the service producing public sector – by separating authorities the private providers in social services are given equal possibilities to compete with the public service units. The underlying assumption is that competition between service units will contribute to the optimizing of service production and provide a sound starting point for the effective use of public resources. Furthermore the administrative model contributes to the financial management of public expenditures as the

authorities granting services are also financial accountable. The administrative model is currently the point for departure for approximately 60 % of all municipalities in the area of social services for adults.

A distinctive feature of the disability area is that the tasks of granting and assessing individual services is dependent on expert knowledge, which generally is concentrated with the professionals in the service delivering units in question. The Committee of Elderly and Disabled decided to implement the administrative model at level 3 cf. sections 6.2.1, which is indented to promote the dialogue between the two areas hereby improving conditions for the optimal use of professional as well as financial resources.

5.2.3 Strategic planning tools – Development plans and target management

The separation of authorities in the Department of Social Services for Disabled Citizens mainly focuses on the relation between financial control, citizens' individual need based rights and the delivery and evaluation of the latter. In this context short term goals of meeting the demands for service production is intrinsic in the administrative model. Long term strategic planning and capacity controlling at a larger scale calls for further attention in order to be included in the public management and service production as such.

In the Municipality of Aalborg, the administrative model is supplemented with some degree of target and value based management. Through annual formulations of a strategic "Budget and Goals" document and of "development plans" the common goals and measures for implementation in the service producing units are formulated and coupled with the financial measures. These documents contribute to both the visualisation of the correlation between financial measures and goals/service levels achievable within this framework and; the development of common understandings of the long term goals for the service production in the Department. The target groups of the Development Plan are essentially citizens, employees and the politico administrative level. The development plans serve as a political declaration of intent between the citizens, politicians and the executing level including the employees.

In sum the organisational structure of the Department of the Elderly and Disabled to some degree has build in mechanisms for internal coordination and information sharing. The formal documents: Development Plans and the strategic Budget documents to some extent function as communicative materials both in relation to the citizens and in relation to the employees and leaders of the service units.

5.3 Inclusiveness as a policy and specialised services – an intersection for disabled citizens

Inclusiveness as a fundamental principle in Danish disability policy and in effect that the main objective is to adapt general services for other citizens to the needs and capacities of citizens with disabilities, poses a challenge related to the coordination in the intersection between the "ordinary" service production and the specialised social services for disabled citizens.

The Department of the Care for Elderly and Disabled Citizens manage the social services for adult disabled; however several services are cross-departmental tasks and are managed as such. The interfaces count the services for disabled citizens that do not receive social pension and children and youngsters under the age of 18.

In practice this means that citizens with a disability, depending on factors such as age and source of income etc., are entitled to different services from different departments. The Department of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Department of Family and Employment are the main players in handling the (assessment and evaluation regarding) educative and supportive service schemes targeted children and youngsters with disabilities and special needs. The assessing and evaluating authority for services and schemes related to employment for adults that are not receiving pension of any kind as well as the financial responsibilities rests with the Department of Family and Employment. In effect the service producing units are not always placed with the same Department as the assessing authority.

These cross departmental tasks are being coordinated through written agreements of cooperation. These agreements draft out the interfaces of the responsibilities and procedures for coordination primarily between the Department of Family and Employment and the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Department of Elderly and Disabled. The agreements are formally revised every two years and they are supplemented by a continuous contact between the expert professional councillors in the Secretariat of the Area of Disabled Citizens and the secretariats in the other departments.

6 Structures for technical support and information sharing

It is not possible to single out one entity or body responsible for the generation and accumulation of knowledge and information in the sector of disability services. To some extent these mechanisms are integrated into the different organisational structures and management tools, and to some extent these mechanisms are institutionalised separately. In the following chapter some of the central channels for information and analytical coordination and support will be characterised. To some extent it is useful to make a distinction between the differences in objectives of the mechanisms for coordination, some mechanisms are aimed at analysing and developing the social services others are primarily aimed at the execution of social services.

6.1 Internal coordination and knowledge sharing in the Municipality of Aalborg

In the Department of Care for Elderly and Disabled different mechanisms with the objective of coordination and development of social services are established. The primary source of coordination is both horizontal and vertical level institutionalised meetings in the Department of Care for the Elderly and Disabled. These meeting based mechanisms count both committees of employee representatives, leader/executive boards, and users/relatives committees. Furthermore it general assemblies are held with the objective of communication between the serviceproducing units and the politico administrative level.

Regarding the coordination of expert knowledge within the Department, the experiences are that mechanisms for charting expert competencies are time-consuming and ineffectual. The Consultants in the Secretariat of the Department of Disability Services provide expert consultancy and guidance of the professionals in the different service producing units and in effect the consultants are a contributing source to the sharing of information and development of new methods and approaches to social services and horizontal knowledge accumulation in the sector.

The long term strategic planning is formally carried out in the by and large participatory processes surrounding the development of the 'Development Plans' and the 'Strategic Budget document'. More specific strategic long term planning on specific topics is also conducted in working groups. The working groups are as a main rule composed with representatives from employees, leaders and

secondary leaders of the service producing units; user- and/or relative representatives; and representation of the relevant civil society organisations and organised interests. This type of planning reflects the Danish tradition for interest representation in policy processes.

The working groups contribute to heighten the informative level of the decision-makers at the political level. Furthermore some of the inherent obstacles in the implementation process are dismantled because the implementing agents have shared concepts of preferable solutions. The integrative force of working groups so to speak reduces uncertainties related to the implementation process in general and promotes the development of optimal solutions and developments. The working groups however are cost-intensive as the process of creating consensus is time-consuming for all parties.

6.2 Regional coordination, knowledge sharing and development

The former counties where to a large extent responsible for the more specialised services for disabled citizens, this meant that the expert specialist competencies were concentrated in the regional level. This gave a possibility for specialising in small areas and disabilities and enhanced the basis for development of professional milieus. These milieus have to some extent been fragmented with the structural reform, in effect there have been established a number of mechanisms in the slipstream of the structural reform in 2007 to maintain and develop the professional milieus and information sharing mechanisms across administrative levels, for example professional networks and focus groups, with participation of councillors from the municipalities and the network groups are organised according to development within different service areas and target groups.

In the regional organisational structure much attention is on the coordinating role of the region. First the “Contact Committee” is the most central body for coordination between the regional and municipal level. The committee consists of the chairperson of the regional council (political body) and the mayors of the municipalities and handles coordinating activities related to the cooperation between the municipalities and the tools for regulating the latter. Furthermore several committees have been established and function as advisory bodies for the regional council.

The overall tools for managing and coordinating the cooperation between municipalities and the region are the “annual municipal reports” and the “framework agreements”. The annual municipal reports clarify the municipality’s expected demand on services, anticipated demands regarding the contents of the services and a clarification of changes in demands and supply of services in the following five year period. The framework agreement is drawn up annually and, by and large, clarifies the total changes in contents and demands regarding social services in the region.

The municipal reports and the framework agreements are compulsory political tools and are executed equally in all five regions in Denmark, which contributes to the overall national perspective. The political intent was to secure the coordination of services at a regional level and formalise means of transparency for citizens in the sector after the delegation of responsibilities after the 2007 structural reform. Parallel agreements are made in the area of health care, where the responsibilities are shared between the municipalities and the regions.

Experiences from the first two years of the new administrative structure in the Municipality of Aalborg indicate that the Municipal Reports and Framework Agreements are somewhat inflexible and time-consuming tools. Additionally the quality of the tool is reduced by the fact that the

agreements only include the services of the former counties and hence does not give a full overview of the total changes in demand and supply in the sector. All things being equal the lack of planning tools at the regional level in the longer run will add to the uncertainty in the municipal planning of services and thus serve as an incentive for the municipalities to handle the demand for services internally in the municipality. In effect the cross-municipal and regional specialisation will potentially be reduced in favour of smaller more encompassing service units in the Municipalities.

Both in the Municipality of Aalborg and the North Region, efforts have been put into the development of tools forecasting and statistical analytical material regarding developments in the sector. In the Municipality of Aalborg efforts are to some extent curbed by the absence of adequate IT-solutions for sharing and managing information; these IT-solutions are in the making.

6.2.1 Qualitative regional development and research

On the subject of more qualitative research and development at the regional level, a regional social research and evaluation centre (JYFE) was established in 2000 by the former counties of Jutland. The activities of JYFE are carried on by the municipalities and regions in northern and central Jutland and are funded by the central government. The objective of JYFE is to facilitate an array of practice rooted research and evaluation projects in the social area. One of the methods in the first year after the structural reform has been to create professional network groups, where professionals are gathered according to their field and participate in educative activities and systematic information sharing and networking. Network groups have been established within the areas of disability, autism, abuse, acquired brain-damage, social psychiatry and, evaluation.

In the past years the regions have cooperated in the elaboration of a Danish quality model for the regional accommodative schemes in the social area. The objective is on the basis of the experiences with the model at the regional level to develop the model to be applied in the Social Sector in full. In sum efforts both at the regional and municipal level are presently centralised in management and creating spaces for the maintenance of professional competencies. As far as the mechanisms for communication with the public in general it is standard to use the internet as a source of

7 National institutions of development and knowledge sharing

Relevant to this analytical note, there are especially two organisational structures that play a central role in development and knowledge sharing and as national research and consultancy agents.

7.1.1 The National Board of Social Services

The first is The National Board of Social Services is an independent subdivision of [the Ministry of Social Welfare](#) and was founded on January 1st 2007. The Board aims to promote new development and initiatives in the area of social services while also supporting and counselling local authorities in providing services to citizens, i.e. children, young people, socially marginalised groups, elderly and disabled.

The Danish Parliament decides the political social and welfare initiatives to be implemented in Denmark. The National Board of Social Services is in charge of ensuring that such initiatives are implemented accordingly by the local authorities to counsel and assist local authorities. In addition, the Board offers specialist consultancy and specialist assessments in complicated and specialised individual cases in the field. In such cases, the Board also offers specialist consultancy to citizens.

The National Board of Social Services aspires to help securing the welfare of children, young people, socially marginalised groups, elderly and disabled, and to insure that related initiatives reflect scientific research and meet standards of efficiency and documentation.

The National Board of Social Services is responsible for a variety of other projects such as managing the [Social Services Gateway](#) ("Tilbudsportalen") an internet portal aiming to give an extensive overview of all social services for disabled citizens nationwide; analyses concerning the [Consolidation Act on Social Services](#) and; tasks related to follow-up and innovation in the field of specialist consultancy in its entirety.

A special unit within the National Board of Social Services is, the Special Education Services & Research and Documentation Centre – "VISO". The tasks of the centre is to support the local authorities, institutions and citizens with free of charge special knowledge on disabled people in the most complicated and specialized cases. VISO is also responsible for sharing their knowledge to all relevant parts in the social area and the public schools special advice area.

7.1.2 The Danish National Centre for Social Research

Secondly, another centre playing a central role as regards to research in the social field in general is The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI). SFI has been generating and disseminating knowledge to empower political and administrative decision-makers. SFI is currently the largest Danish research environment on social welfare. SFI uses its own and international research as a basis for studies on specific policies and issues for the ministries, public agencies, etc. that needs social science studies in social welfare.

7.2 Non governmental organisations

Disabled Peoples Organisations - Denmark (DPOD) is a Danish umbrella organisation with 32 member organisations, representing 320,000 people in Denmark. Along with the local Council of Handicap Affairs (Handicaprådene) the DPOD is playing a major role in policy and lawmaking procedures in Denmark in general on a central, regional and local level alike.

DPOD as an organisation seeks to advance the lives and human rights of persons with disabilities in the developing world. This is done in cooperation with the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) who funds the activities through the Mini programme that DPOD administers.

8 Contemporary national and regional programs regarding disabled people.

In general the Government, with the Ministry of Social Welfare - as overall responsible - launches various programs to develop the social welfare sector

This work is being carried out by The National Board of Social Services (as mentioned in section 1.2.1.1) The board aspires to help securing the welfare of children, young people, socially marginalised groups, elderly and disabled, and to insure that related initiatives reflect scientific research and meet standards of efficiency and documentation.

The National Board of Social Services is responsible for a variety of other projects such as managing the Social Services Gateway ("Tilbudsportalen"), analyses concerning the Consolidation Act on Social Services and tasks related to follow-up and innovation in the field of specialist consultancy in its entirety.

On regular basis programs is being launched to analyse, describe, evaluate or develop specific social welfare areas in order to constantly secure the best possible social welfare for the citizens.

In 2007, The National Board of Social Services launched a project called "Coordinating case officer/social worker for the disabled". The project is being carried out during the period 2007-2009. The project will, with the cooperation of four local authorities develop devise techniques, tools and procedures to coordinate case management of disabled people services within the local authorities. The introduction of a coordinating case officer would ensure a comprehensive overview of treatment and/or activities/services allow direct access to administrative bodies and ensure that legal rights are adhered to. The functions of the "coordinating case officer" have been developed in a manner which allows implementation in all local authorities in Denmark when the project ends in 2009.

9 Statistical information

In Denmark mechanisms for screening and diagnosing have been developed and specialised in the past 25 years. The abilities to detect and specify disabilities as early as possible in a persons life has been a focus area in recent years. The efforts regarding functional improvement and stimulation are all things being equal crucial at an early stage in relation to the life story of a person with disabilities.

Approximately 2.5% of the general population are disabled, the distribution on target groups is as follows: 0.75 % mentally disabled/mentally retarded; 1,00 % psychologically disabled/mental illness and 0.75 % physically disabled.

One general trend regarding the public employed workers in the sector of services for disabled citizens is that the salary is relatively higher than in other care sectors e.g. elderly. The general workweek is 37 hours/week and working hours after 14 pm and night hours count relatively more, which means that the total number of hours in the workweek can be reduced depending on the working hours. The general rule is that every worker irrespective of his or her type of employment is entitled to six weeks of holiday annually.