

Summary and main findings

The report, prepared on behalf of The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), investigates and analyses challenges facing the municipalities when taking part in the apprenticeship system and vocational training. It focuses on health care and child- and youth worker training, as areas of particular importance to municipal government. The project had three main themes; 1: Value creation¹ through hiring apprentices 2: Adult education 3: The importance of local training agencies

The report is based on data from a qualitative study of selected municipalities, county municipalities and local training agencies in the counties of Østfold, Oslo and Sogn & Fjordane. In addition, two surveys were applied; one of all Norwegian training agencies, and one of almost 600 public and private enterprises.

A key finding is that the apprenticeship system in the municipal sector is both perceived and practised in a completely different way than in the private sector. Key characteristics distinguishing the apprenticeship system in the municipalities from that in the private sector are:

- Value creation in the public welfare services is something very different from value creation in private enterprises
- Employment structures in the municipal nursing and care sector differ from those of traditional areas of apprentice ships, with a large presence of part-time and temporary employment
- Employment legislation protects traditional recruitment patterns and prevent the integration of apprentices and skilled graduate workers who have completed their training.
- Standards of good training in the care sector, with ideals of academic (in-school) training and instruction, differ greatly from the norm found in the private sector, where training typically takes place through participation in the work process
- Apprentice intake is separated from recruitment of personnel to the local services
- While apprentices are paid by the municipality, but work in a local service institution, there is no link at all between wages and productivity

Apprenticeship programs in the care and nursing sector do not seem to have replaced older education practices, but instead have contributed to a process of layering. The municipalities pay apprentices' wages, while workplaces within municipal services offer them training, just as they have always done with students. The municipal services seem to have little incentive to recruit apprentices if they have to pay them. The fact that the central administration in the municipalities cover all costs for apprentices also limits the apprentice intake, because this is an extra cost for the municipalities. However, low-levels of youth applicants (18 year olds) for apprenticeships suggest that these problems are not pressing at present. However, these low-levels of youth applicants also mean the apprentice system is very dependent on recruiting adult candidates. This is challenging, as municipalities also face problems of recruiting a sufficient number through the adults' scheme, the Certificate of practice.

The local training agencies are drivers for vocational education and recruitment of apprentices in the municipal sector, and for securing quality in training. Most municipalities prefer to be a member of a

¹ The performance of actions that increase the worth of goods or services.

local training agency, but we also observed a tendency where in particular larger municipalities preferred to train apprentices independent of the training agency system.