

## Senior competence in the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

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Active ageing is about recognising and valuing senior resources in working life. A step towards this goal is to promote an awareness of the potentials and resources of older employees, and thus prevent forced early exclusion from working life. If age and experience make older workers valuable in working life, we need to understand in which ways this “senior competence” is valuable.

The competence of seniors is valuable for the enterprises for being more than and different from, the theoretical knowledge of e.g. employees straight out of schools and universities. In addition to the theoretical knowledge, seniors have practical knowledge acquired through experience. What this practical and tacit knowledge consists of and how it is being used needs to be explored in a workplace setting as it will vary with types of jobs and work tasks.

The empirical data for this exploration is a set of individual and group interviews in a Norwegian public sector enterprise, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. The question discussed was: “What are the particular senior competences in this workplace and how/when is it being used?” Through the interviews experience-based competence can be defined as knowledge of the organisation and how its work is organised, the story of how the organisation has developed into the organisation it is today, knowledge about types of cases that occur seldom, knowledge about procedures and precedents and experiences with former organisational change processes. Social competence can be defined as the ability to interact with target groups of the organisation in a flexible and competent way. Methods knowledge can be defined as knowledge of how the work is carried out.

Actionable knowledge consists of these valuable components, but in addition, the participants pointed to areas where age can be an advantage: Relational skills and the security and authority of age.