

English summary
of Fafo-rapport 2020:02

Trouble in the interfaces
Coordinated effort
directed at vulnerable
children and young people

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A comprehensive welfare state helps ensuring that most children in Norway enjoy sound living conditions during childhood. However, there is increasing concern in relation to the children and young people for whom this is not the case, and who experience a variety of challenges related to poor childhood circumstances. The concern is related to children and young people who are currently living in difficult situations, as well as for how childhood circumstances are impacting on children and young people's ability to cope with adult life, their education, health and participation in working life.

While the welfare state's services contribute to good childhood circumstances for the majority, the service provision does not always appear to be adequate when the child's needs of follow up are more complex. There are a number of single-sector services aimed at children and young people and a number of services that provide follow-up in different areas. Nevertheless, children and young people do not always receive the follow up they need. Several supervisory reports have shown that failure to collaborate on the follow-up of vulnerable children and young people is a problem. In summary, these reports point to the fact that children and young people have not received the follow-up they have needed due to lack of collaboration between the different services. They also point to problems caused by a lack of structure and systems in ongoing collaborative efforts and problems stemming from a lack of follow-up of the collaboration between services and the coordination of efforts on behalf of those concerned.

This report takes a municipal perspective of cross-sectoral collaboration and development with a view to fostering a more coordinated effort vis-à-vis vulnerable children and young people. However, the local authorities do not operate as autonomous actors; their organisation and activity in many ways reflect the structures of the welfare state.

On behalf of the government's 0-24 Partnership, Fafo has created a knowledge base for the work on improving the quality of cross-sectoral work in the local authorities. The knowledge base has been prepared as a PowerPoint presentation and notes for use by those involved in the 0-24 Partnership initiative (Hansen, Jensen & Fløtten 2019). The initiative to develop the knowledge base was followed up with a survey of the 60 largest municipalities and all the Oslo districts on developments in organisation and practice in relation to promoting better cross-sectoral collaboration and a more coherent and early-stage intervention vis-à-vis

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vulnerable children and young people, and their families. In this report, we draw on the knowledge base and survey to discuss how to successfully improve cross-sectoral collaboration.

The research questions for this report are two-fold:

- **What is the situation in the municipalities?**

What do we know about municipal organisation and initiatives for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration aimed at vulnerable children and young people? What are the barriers to better collaboration and a more coherent follow-up? What factors are important for fostering better collaboration and a coordinated effort?

- **What is the need for innovation?**

Based on the knowledge base, the question is which innovative measures can be envisaged for facilitating a more effective, early and coordinated effort vis-a-vis children and young people.

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