

## **Barnahus**

The Norwegian “barnahus” model (Children’s Houses) is aimed primarily at police reported incidents of violence and sexual abuse against children under the age of 16 and other particularly vulnerable victims and witnesses.

The role of the Children’s Houses staff is to coordinate and facilitate the police interview with the child, to evaluate the child’s need for psycho-social assistance, and to provide short term treatment to those in need. The staff must have child-related competence and competence in intellectual impairment and other disabilities.

In 2015, the Criminal Procedure Act (“Straffeprosessloven”) was amended, and new regulations for facilitated interviews were brought into force. The new main rule is that Children’s Houses should be used for facilitated investigative interviews with children under the age of 16 and other particularly vulnerable victims and witnesses in cases involving sexual abuse, direct and indirect physical violence, homicide and gender mutilation.

Children’s Houses are organised as separate units within the police district where they are localised, and a regular staff is/are employed as civilians in the police district.

The staff comprises social workers and therapists, usually clinical psychologists. In most Children’s Houses, the staff are generalists, meaning that the person designated to the case is responsible for both coordination related to the investigative interview and providing treatment.

The police, as well as staff at Support Centers for Victims and staff at the Children’s Houses provides information to victims of violence, including persons with disabilities, on their rights. They also provide information on their eventual right to compensation under the Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes Act.

The Norwegian Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority works to provide information on the right to compensation for victims of violence including persons with disabilities. Information is provided through webpages and brochures, in a clear language and form.

There are now 11 Children’s Houses across Norway, which provide custom designed facilities for the facilitated hearings (police interviews) and other services to support child witnesses.

In order to increase capacity, make the travel shorter for the children and reduce waiting time for the police interviews, we have established three subdivisions of the children's houses, located in Mosjøen, Kirkenes and Førde.