

**Summary**

# Accessible family counselling

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*The family counselling service is supposed to be a service for the whole Norwegian population, and especially to families needing guidance and advice on relationship problems and other difficulties. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) have given some guidelines about accessibility, stating that all Norwegians should have less than two hours travelling time to their nearest family counselling office. The analyses in this report shows that the service is quite accessible with car, but less so with public transport. The accessibility is lowest in the northern parts of the country. We find that an efficient measure would be to upgrade all sub-offices, giving them a fuller service and more extended opening hours.*

## The accessibility varies both geographically and between transport modes

The Institute of Transport Economics (TØI) has investigated how accessible the family counselling service is to the population in Norway. The service is organized in 90 office locations, of which 57 are full-service offices and 33 are sub-offices with more limited services and opening hours. The purpose of the family counselling service is to offer advice and guidance to families.

TØI has used travel times measured with Google Maps and Entur to investigate how accessible the family counselling offices are. In general, the accessibility is quite good: Over 90 per cent of the population can reach their nearest office within two hours both with car and with public transport.

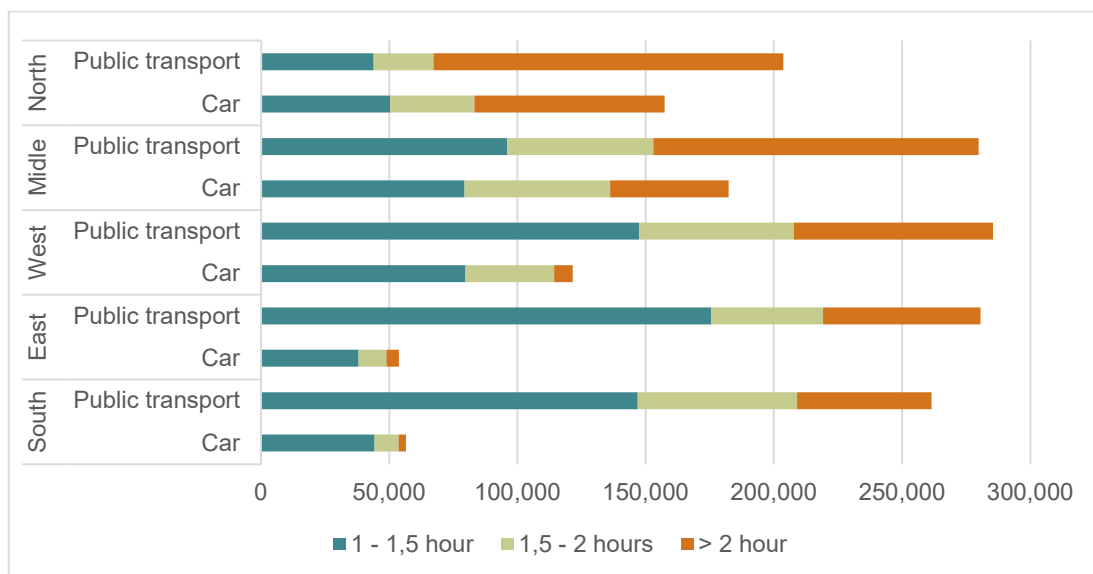


Figure S.1: Number of people with 1-1,5, 1,5-2 and over 2 hours travel time to their nearest office, with car and public transport, per region.

However, we find large variations, especially between the northern parts of the country and the southern parts (figure S.1). In the north, only eighty per cent can reach their office within two hours with public transport.

Some offices are especially inaccessible, such as Øst-Finnmark, Mosjøen, Lofoten og Vesterålen, Bodø, Alta and Sør-Trøndelag. At the same time, we find that sub-offices offer a significant compensation for people who lives far from their nearest full-service office.

## **The offices are appropriately located**

To investigate how well the offices are located, we have measured the point in each region that the population can reach with the least need to travel with car (measured in travel times). The analyses shows that most of the offices are located quite near this “transport minimum” point. In only a few cases, the office could be relocated to be more accessible to the population.

## **Measures to increase accessibility**

Based on the analyses, we recommend some measures to increase the populations’ accessibility to the family counselling service. The measures are listed below, in prioritized order.

1. Extend the service and opening hours of sub-offices
  - Most of the sub-offices are located in areas where the main office is less accessible. Upgrading the sub-offices to main offices would therefore increase accessibility for a large part of the population
2. Establish new offices
  - Some places have low accessibility, and also lack a sub-office. Here a new office could increase the accessibility. In Sør-Trøndelag there could be a need for one or two new offices.
3. Relocate offices
  - To relocate offices would have a smaller effect, as most of the offices are located in the most accessible location in each region. An exception is the office in Kirkenes (Øst-Finnmark). Moving this office to Varangerbotn would increase the general accessibility in the region.
4. Taxi of public transport improvements
  - There are large differences in travel times with car and public transport. This indicates that a taxi service for people who are not able to travel by car could be efficient. In addition, the analyses shows a need for more efficient public transport services in many parts of Norway.