



Safe and healthy working conditions and workability for everyone

Policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work until 2030

Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2019:4

Policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work until 2030

Safe and healthy working conditions and workability for everyone

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

ISBN: 978-952-00-4045-1

Cover pictures: Tuula Holopainen, Irmeli Huhtala, Rodeo, Shutterstock

Layout: Government Administration Unit, Publications

Helsinki 2019

Description sheet

Published by	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	15 March 2018	
Authors	Riitta Sauni, Ministerial Counsellor, Health/Medical Affairs (editor)		
Title of publication	Policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work until 2030 Safe and healthy working conditions and workability for everyone		
Series and publication number	Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2019:4		
ISBN PDF	978-952-00-4045-1	ISSN (PDF)	1797-9854
Website address (URN)	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-4045-1		
Pages	22	Language	English
Keywords	Occupational safety and health, occupational health, occupational safety, workability, OSH administration		
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work until 2030 specifies the strategy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and guides the activities of the ministry and its administrative branch to ensure healthy and safe work at all workplaces regardless of the form of employment.</p> <p>Working life, the contents of work, the ways and modes of working as well as Finland's workforce are undergoing a transformation. What working life is like and how those involved in it are doing affect the welfare of individuals, the productivity and competitiveness of organisations, and the social sustainability of society.</p> <p>The safety management as well as workability and wellbeing at work plays a key role in developing the work environment, reducing disability as well as promoting health and wellbeing. At every workplace, the employer, staff and occupational health care will collaborate in taking measures that promote workability and return to work. Particular attention must be paid to supporting persons with partial workability in remaining at work and finding employment.</p> <p>The policy has three focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future challenges concerning occupational safety and health, and wellbeing at work • Safe and healthy working conditions • Promoting functional capacity, workability, and employability <p>Extensive cooperation is required to achieve these goals. This policy, prepared in collaboration with the institutions in the administrative branch, labour market organisations and other partners, is an example of such cooperation.</p>			
Publisher	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health		
Distributed by/ publication sales	Online version: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Publication sales: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi		

Kuvailulehti

Julkaisija	Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö	15.3.2018
Tekijät	Lääkintöneuvos Riitta Sauni (toimittaja)	
Julkaisun nimi	Työympäristön ja työhyvinvoinnin linjaukset vuoteen 2030 Turvallisia ja terveellisiä työoloja sekä työkykyä kaikille	
Julkaisusarjan nimi ja numero	Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön julkaisuja 2019:4	
ISBN PDF	978-952-00-4045-1	ISSN PDF 1797-9854
URN-osoite	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-4045-1	
Sivumäärä	22	Kieli englanti
Asiasanat	Työsuojelu, työterveys, työturvallisuus, työkyky, työsuojeluhallinto	
Tiivistelmä	<p>Työympäristön ja työhyvinvoinnin linjaukset vuoteen 2030 täsmentävät sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön strategiaa ja ohjaavat ministeriön ja sen hallinnonalan toimintaa, jotta työ olisi terveellistä ja turvallista kaikilla työpaikoilla työnteon muodosta riippumatta.</p> <p>Työelämä, työn sisältö, työntekemisen tavat ja muodot sekä työvoima muuttuvat. Se, millaista työelämä on ja miten työelämässä voidaan vaikuttaa yksilöiden hyvinvoinnin lisäksi organisaatioiden tuottavuuteen ja kilpailukykyyn sekä yhteiskunnan sosiaaliseen kestävyYTEEN.</p> <p>Turvallisuusjohtamisella sekä työkyvyn ja työhyvinvoinnin johtamisella on merkittävä rooli työympäristön kehittämisessä, työkyvyttömyyden vähentämisessä sekä terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin edistämisessä. Jokaisella työpaikalla työnantaja, henkilöstö ja työterveyshuolto toteuttavat työkykyä ja työhön paluuta edistäviä toimenpiteitä yhteistyössä. Osatyökykyisten henkilöiden työssä pysymiseen ja työllistymiseen on kiinnitettävä erityistä huomiota.</p> <p>Linjauksissa on kolme painopistettä:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Työsuojelua, työturvallisuutta ja työhyvinvointia koskevat tulevaisuuden haasteet• Turvalliset ja terveelliset työolot• Toiminta- ja työkyvyn sekä työllistymiskyvyn edistäminen <p>Tavoitteiden toteutumiseksi tarvitaan laajaa yhteistyötä. Nämä linjaukset, joita on valmisteltu yhdessä hallinnonalan laitosten, työmarkkinajärjestöjen ja muiden yhteistyökumppaneiden kanssa, ovat esimerkki tällaisesta yhteistyöstä.</p>	
Kustantaja	Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö	
Julkaisun jakaja/ myynti	Sähköinen versio: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Julkaisumyynti: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi	

Presentationsblad

Utgivare	Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet	15.3.2018	
Författare	Medicinalrådet Riitta Sauni (redaktör)		
Publikationens titel	Policy för arbetsmiljö och välbefinnande i arbetet till år 2030. Säkra och sunda arbetsförhållanden samt arbetsförmåga för alla		
Publikationsseriens namn och nummer	Social- och hälsovårdsministeriets publikationer 2019:4		
ISBN PDF	978-952-00-4045-1	ISSN PDF	1797-9854
URN-adress	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-4045-1		
Sidantal	22	Språk	engelska
Nyckelord	Arbetarskydd, arbetshälsa, arbets säkerhet, arbetsförmåga, arbetarskyddsförvaltning		
Referat	<p>Policyn för arbetsmiljö och välbefinnande i arbetet till år 2030 preciserar social- och hälsovårdsministeriets strategi och styr verksamheten vid ministeriet och inom dess förvaltningsområde för att arbetet ska vara sunt och säkert på alla arbetsplatser oberoende av hur arbetet utförs.</p> <p>Arbetslivet, arbetets innehåll, arbetssätten och arbetsformerna samt arbetskraften förändras. Hurdant arbetslivet är och hur människor mår i arbetslivet inverkar inte bara på individernas välbefinnande utan också på organisationernas produktivitet och konkurrenskraft samt samhällets sociala hållbarhet.</p> <p>Säkerhetsledning och hälsofrämjande ledarskap har en betydande roll i utvecklandet av arbetsmiljön, minskandet av arbetsoförmåga och främjandet av hälsa och välbefinnande. På varje arbetsplats genomför arbetsgivaren, personalen och företagshälsovården i samarbete åtgärder som främjar arbetsförmågan och återgång till arbetet. Särskild vikt bör fästas vid möjligheterna för personer med partiell arbetsförmåga att fortsätta arbeta eller få arbete.</p> <p>Policyn innehåller tre fokusområden:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framtida utmaningar för arbetarskyddet och säkerheten och välbefinnandet i arbetet• Trygga och sunda arbetsförhållanden• Främjande av funktions- och arbetsförmåga samt anställbarhet <p>För att målen ska nås behövs brett samarbete. Denna policy, som har beretts tillsammans med inrättningar inom förvaltningsområdet, arbetsmarknadsorganisationer och andra samarbetspartner, är ett exempel på sådant samarbete.</p>		
Förläggare	Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet		
Distribution/ beställningar	Sähköinen versio: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Julkaisumyynti: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi		

Contents

The premises and principles of the policy	9
Objectives of the policy lines	10
The relationship between the policy and the Ministry's strategy	11
Focus areas of the policy	12
1. We rise up to the future work challenges concerning occupational safety and health	12
The elements of change.....	12
A change in the employer–employee relationship	12
The ways people work are changing.....	13
Change in the contents of work	13
Summary	13
2. Our goal is to ensure safe and healthy working conditions	14
Summary	17
3. We promote functional capacity, workability, and employability.....	18
Summary	20
Indicators	21
Information sources	22
The relationship between the policy of the environment and wellbeing at work, and the ministry's strategy and action plans	22

The premises and principles of the policy

This policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work aims at extending the duration of careers and allowing people to continue in their work for longer than currently. This requires a seamless transition to working life among young people, no long interruptions in the middle of careers caused by disability, and no premature ends to careers due to disability. Improving people's ability, willingness and possibilities to work is a key condition for extending careers. Work should be appealing and it should promote health, and workability and functional capacity. A good and healthy work environment promotes the wellbeing of employees. It supports sustainable development, improves the productivity of companies and other organisations, and fosters the social and economic sustainability of society. Trust and cooperation as well as a high level of competence of employees and making full use of their skills at workplaces are among the strengths of Finnish working life that lay a good foundation for wellbeing at work.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH) updated its strategy in the autumn of 2017. This policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work specifies the strategy. This document incorporates the national policy referred to in the Convention of the International Labour Organization ILO, the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health. Finland ratified the convention in June 2008. The policy has also taken into account national and international views of the transformation of working life and its impacts on occupational safety and health.

The Council of the European Union has encouraged the EU Member States to revise their national strategies in light of the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategic Framework (2014–2020). A communication from the Commission, Safer and Healthier Work for All (1/2017), also highlights the modernisation of the EU's occupational safety and health legislation and policy. The European Pillar of Social Rights describes an overall strategy on the Commission's current employment and social protection systems. As part of this strategy, key measures that could promote the EU's strategic framework on safety and wellbeing at work have been determined at the EU level.

Objectives of the policy lines

Working life, the contents of work, the ways and modes of working as well as Finland's workforce are undergoing a transformation. What working life is like and how those involved in it are doing affect the welfare of individuals, the productivity and competitiveness of organisations, and the social sustainability of society.

This policy aims at fostering healthy and safe work at all workplaces regardless of the form of employment. This policy extends to the year 2030 and is updated regularly. While the policy guides the operations of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and its administrative branch, meeting the objectives will require extensive cooperation. This policy, prepared in collaboration with the institutions in the administrative branch, labour market organisations and other partners, is an example of such cooperation.

All interested parties are invited to participate in implementing this policy. Inclusion is encouraged to improve the synergy between different agents and the effectiveness of measures. As the topic of safe work environments and wellbeing at work is connected to other administrative branches and their policies, cooperation between different sectors is necessary for achieving the desired impacts.

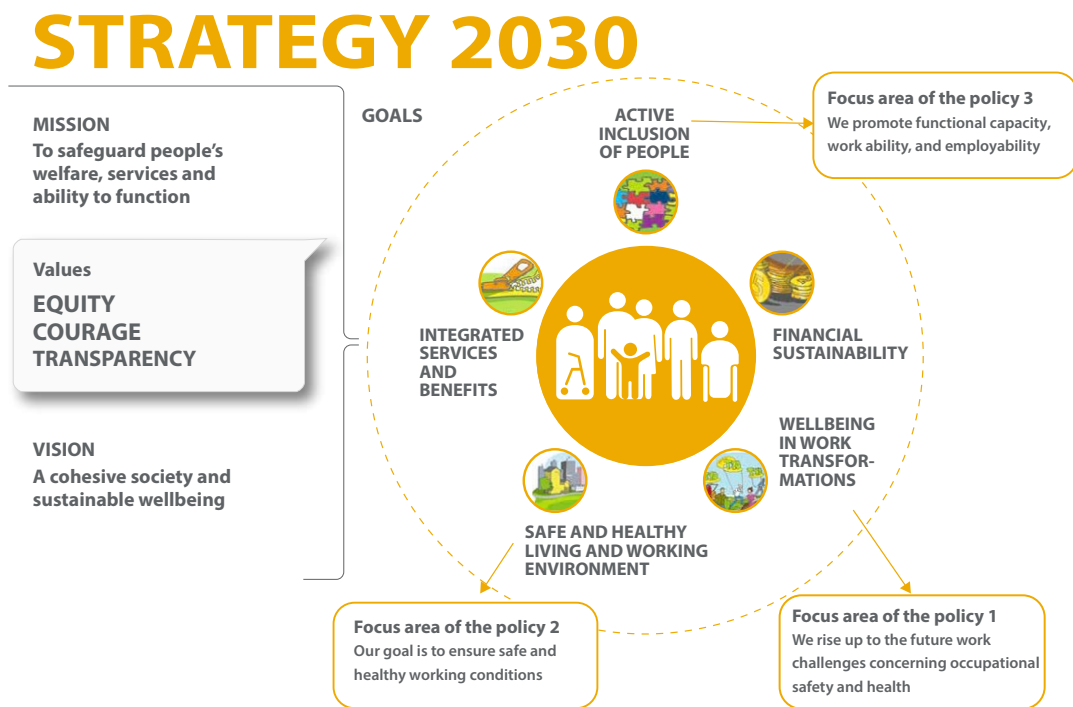
Cooperation between the employer and employees at the workplace is key to developing health and safety at work. Occupational health care is a statutory partner of workplaces supporting the health and workability of employees, therefore also affecting the productivity of work. Occupational health care serves as an expert body for employers in assessing hazards and risk factors, contributing to the prevention of risks.

Labour market organisations play an important role in disseminating information and influencing decision-making. Finland has good and long traditions in tripartite cooperation, which improves the efficiency of policy implementation. Each ministry steers the operations in its administrative branch. The implementation of the policy requires active cooperation between ministries. The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, National Institute for Health and Welfare, and other research and educational institutions produce new knowledge and increase competence in working life. The Centre for

Occupational Safety contributes to increasing competence and supports the development of activities at workplaces. Workers’ Compensation Center coordinates the implementation of occupational accidents, and prevents and compiles statistics on occupational accidents and diseases. The Finnish Work Environment Fund provides funding for research, development and publicity that improve working conditions as well as the safety and productivity of work communities. The areas of occupational safety and health of the Regional State Administrative Agency supervise compliance with occupational safety and health legislation, provide information, and support workplaces.

The relationship between the policy and the Ministry’s strategy

This policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work implements the strategy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The below figure presents the connections between the focus areas of the policy and the Ministry’s strategic goals.



Focus areas of the policy

1. We rise up to the future work challenges concerning occupational safety and health

The transformation of work is highlighted in a Government Report on the Future (part 1, 2017) and the new strategy by the administrative branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The future of work is also the theme of the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2019. ILO considers the biggest factors underlying the transformation of working life at the global level to include changes related to technology, age structures, climate and globalisation. There is need to identify, prevent and minimise the potential risks of new technology and modes of working. On the other hand, the positive opportunities these changes provide must be utilised. The Nordic Council of Ministers is preparing a report of the work of the future, to be completed in 2019. In 2016, a Nordic working group on the future published a report, "Diversity of future workforce and work tasks - challenges to OSH", which deals with the meaning of the transformation of work from the perspective of occupational safety and health. Similarly, the Working Life 2025 report of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health describes the change from the perspective of occupational safety and health, and wellbeing at work. The report also presents measures by the occupational safety and health administration that allow responding to the future challenges in time.

The elements of change

A change in the employer–employee relationship

When the lines between the roles and responsibilities in traditional paid employment are blurred, the relationship between the employer and employee also becomes less clear-cut. In the future, a person's employer is increasingly likely to be his or her client, community of colleagues, or a platform. If an individual has no employer, taking personal responsibility for safety and health at work gains prominence. The fragmentation of work may lead to

new ways of working, such as cooperatives and platforms, a sharing economy and co-production. New ways of utilising communality include virtual working communities. The workforce is also changing as a result of the ageing of the population, and national and international migration, for instance.

The ways people work are changing

Work becomes fragmented, different roles are mixed, and work practices become increasingly individual. The changes are concerned with the permanence of employment relationships, the places of work, working hours, the time and duration of work, the scope of work tasks, working approaches and the intensity of work, the level of responsibility included in work, and career opportunities.

Even though the pace at which work is changing seems slow, it may accelerate in the future. There are industries which have remained unchanged and which will continue to be less affected by the transformation of work in the future. By contrast, other industries have undergone revolutionary changes. There has been a significant increase in subcontracting, temporary work and collaborative workplaces. There is a need for international cooperation, e.g. in creating rules of play for work carried out on different platforms.

Change in the contents of work

The nature of work, workplaces and job descriptions are changing. Routine work is decreasing while the amount of work requiring both a lot, and little, proficiency is set to increase in the future. The acceleration of technological development, robotics, and the development of ICT can be anticipated to continue. The physical strain caused by work is likely to decline or at least change. At the same time, work becomes increasingly mentally stressful and the demands of brainwork gain emphasis. Artificial intelligence will also supplement work requiring a high level of competence. Digitalisation and automation of work may allow people to focus on solving meaningful problems. People are more likely to change their tasks and professions during their careers. As work is changing, people are required an ability to learn, motivation and opportunities to continuous learning as well as human-centred planning of work.

Summary

There is good reason to prepare for an increasingly rapid transformation of work. The transformation of work is underlined by megatrends, such as digitalisation, globalisation, changes in population structure, climate change, immigration and urbanisation. Automation, robots and artificial intelligence as well as the development of the sharing

and platform economy are at the core of the transformation, changing the contents of work, the ways people work, and the relationship between employers and employees. There is need to identify, prevent and minimise the potential risks introduced by the new technology and modes of working, and to evaluate how these will affect people's health. On the other hand, the positive opportunities prompted by these changes must also be utilised. The change in the workforce, affected by factors such as changes in the age structure, immigration and multiculturalism, must be taken into account and perceived as a strength in the working life.

GOAL:

We will have comprehensive and smoothly working statutes that safeguard employees' health and safety at work in all situations and can be adapted to the situation in the working life at any given time. Necessary changes will be made in cooperation with labour market partners in a controlled manner. The organisations steering health and safety at work, and employers, employees and entrepreneurs as well as others involved in the working life will be capable of renewing themselves as well as collaborating in building trust and creating rules in working life.

2. Our goal is to ensure safe and healthy working conditions

According to a preliminary estimate by the Finnish Workers' Compensation Center, insurance companies paid damages for occupational accidents that had occurred to a total number of around 104,000 employees in 2017. This makes the frequency of occupational accidents around 29.5 accidents per one million working hours. Compared to the status in 2008, the number of occupational accidents has declined by around 13 per cent, and the frequency of occupational accidents by around 10 per cent. Based on current information, a total of 14 employees died in occupational accidents in 2017. While this rate is record-breakingly low, it is not possible to make conclusions on a permanent decline in the number of occupational accidents based on a single year.

There has been a gradual decrease in diagnosed and suspected occupational diseases within the previous decade. According to the Finnish Register of Occupational Diseases, the relative incidence of occupational diseases, i.e. the number of cases per 10,000 employees, declined from 28.2 to 17.7 between 2005 and 2014. There are at times considerable differences between counties, and these are explained by factors such as changes in the industrial structure and the number of employees. An examination of the numbers per sector revealed that the highest number of cases of diagnosed or suspected occupational diseases occurred in vehicle manufacturing. Of all occupational groups, metal, casting and machine shop work were most risky in terms of occupational diseases.

Annually, the occupational safety and health authority received around 1,500 reports of a diagnosed or suspected occupational disease or some other work-related condition.

Mental strain has increased during the period in which studies have been conducted on the quality of working life (1977–2013). Women's work has become more mentally straining than men's. The change in the physical strain at work has been noticeably smaller than in the mental strain. According to the latest quality of work life survey (2013) it would seem that physical strain has decreased especially in women's, but also in men's, work. According to the most recent Quality of Work Life Survey, 32 per cent of respondents found their work physically extremely or fairly straining. Similarly, 48 per cent found their work emotionally extremely or fairly stressful. The level of strain varies between industries, professions and work tasks. The psychosocial strain of work is projected to increase as a result of the transformation of work.

As the working life changes, assessing the risks at the workplace becomes increasingly challenging. This requires cooperation between everyone working at a workplace, such as those employed and subcontracted by a company together with their main contractor. When a main implementer requires its partners to use approaches that promote occupational safety, good practices are spread efficiently.

The International Social Security Association (ISSA) has launched the Vision Zero campaign, which emphasises that all occupational accidents and diseases are preventable as long as the correct measures are taken in time. The campaign's prevention approach consists of three dimensions: safety, health and wellbeing at work. In its strategy for working life 2016-2020, Sweden has set zero fatal accidents as its goal. In Finland, the Zero Accidents forum has worked successfully ever since 2003. In this context, zero is not a numeric goal but rather indicates a vision that is aimed at. This is a matter of a process for constructing a culture of prevention.

In addition to the transformation of work, major structural changes are currently underway in society. The aim is to ensure safe and healthy working conditions now and in the future regardless of the sector or size of a company. There is still need for investing in eliminating work-related fatalities and other occupational accidents, occupational diseases and work-related illnesses. At the level of workplaces, the cooperation between the agents involved in occupational safety and health, and wellbeing at work is developed to pay attention to the factors affecting occupational safety and workability, particularly psychosocial stress factors. The aim is to support the strengths of working communities and individuals, including human and social capital. The aim is to increase these and the ways in which they are utilised, support workability, and promote an encouraging and innovative culture. Good working conditions have a positive impact on wellbeing and

productivity of work. The policy is used in an aim to strengthen the planning of work and working environment, and detecting stress factors early on at the workplace.

People both grow and are brought up into a safety culture ever since their childhood, and this should be included as a topic in early childhood education and care. Vocational education and training, the early years in one's career and orientation with work play a key role in introducing safe working methods as everyday practices right from the get go. Different management training should include the principles of safety and workability management. The aim is to increase working life capabilities through means such as training and communications as well as by utilising network-like collaboration.

It is important to detect and reduce the risks and exposure introduced by new technology and working approaches. One of the three main challenges outlined by the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategic Framework 2014–2020 is “to improve the prevention of work-related diseases by tackling new and emerging risks without neglecting existing risks”. For example, the risk assessment tool of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has determined the key new, increasing and alarming risks related to the psychosocial working environment, musculoskeletal system, hazardous substances, and management of occupational safety. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has also included the new risks and their prevention in its programme.

Changes in demography, globalisation and international migration affect the culture of workplaces. The diversity of workplaces must be perceived and utilised as a resource factor of workplaces. It is important to take the needs of different employee groups into account. It is particularly important to take care of vulnerable groups, such as ageing and young employees, and those with an immigrant background and partial workability.

There is a need for measures that can be used to effectively reduce violence and threat thereof at workplaces. While this change must be accomplished in workplaces, there is also need to influence societal attitudes. Having each workplace comply with the obligations of the current Occupational Safety and Health Act can be set as the minimum target level. Putting an end to harassment and other inappropriate treatment referred to in the Act is of primary importance. Harassment and inappropriate treatment cause psychosocial strain, sickness absences, and a loss of productivity.

Employers must actively promote the equality between their employees and gender equality, and prevent any discrimination occurring at workplaces. The aim is that workplaces use genuinely non-discriminatory approaches whether in the context of recruitment, career advancement, division of work tasks, deciding on wages and benefits, access to training, or developing the work community.

The measures taken by a workplace for balancing work with other aspects of life have a positive effect on employees' wellbeing as well as the operations of the workplace. Finding a balance between work and other parts of life can be particularly fostered by arrangements related to working hours, training of managers, and strengthening employee's personal coping methods. In turn, this will improve the wellbeing at work of personnel and the productivity of the company. The importance of a balance between work and other aspects of life is emphasised as the caring responsibilities of employed people are projected to increase in the future.

Summary

In Finland, long-term efforts have been put in occupational safety and the healthiness of working conditions. Nonetheless, we continue to have a need for investing the reduction of occupational accidents, occupational diseases and other work-related diseases, and harmful strain. The risk assessment and management must pay comprehensive attention to physical, chemical, biological, bodily, mental, and social risks. At the level of workplaces, the cooperation between the agents involved in occupational safety and health, and wellbeing at work is developed to pay attention to the factors affecting occupational safety and workability, particularly psychosocial stress factors. The collaborative activities in occupational safety and health lay a foundation for effective workplace activities. As new challenges emerge, the activities must be safeguarded. It is important to detect and reduce the risks and exposure introduced by new technology and working approaches. For instance, the transformation of work will lead to an increase in work-related challenges concerning cognitive ergonomics. We wish to disseminate a culture of prevention that integrates safety, health and wellbeing at work.

GOAL:

Work will be healthy and safe regardless of industry, mode of work, or size of workplace. Occupational health and safety issues will be integrated into the strategic management of an organisation. Each person transitioning into and involved in working life, whether as an employer, employee or entrepreneur, will have sufficient competence in occupational health and safety. Each occupational accident and work-related disease or impediment can be prevented with measures based on identifying occupational hazards and managing risks.

3. We promote functional capacity, workability, and employability

According to a projection by Statistics Finland, without immigration, the dependency ratio of Finland's population would climb to 73 by 2025 and 79 by 2040. The current (2018) population dependency ratio is 53. This means that there are 53 children or pensioners per one hundred employees. Taking care of the workability and functional capacity of people of working age, career lengths, and the opportunities of those with partial workability to be involved in working life is significant to the national economy.

The number of new disability pensions dropped by 26 per cent within the ten-year period between 2007 and 2016. This is the result of goal-oriented and long-term activities for preventing disability, and the activities are worth continuing. Nonetheless, the careers of 18,800 persons were cut short by a premature disability pension in 2016. Extending work careers continues to be a key national challenge. In addition to permanent disability, attention must be paid to temporary disability apparent in sickness absences, which reduces career lengths from the middle. According to the survey on working hours conducted by the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), the share of absences due to illness or accidents in the theoretical regular working hours was 4 per cent in 2015.

According to the data of the Finnish Centre for Pensions, 34 per cent of the new disability pensions in 2016 resulted from musculoskeletal causes and 28 per cent by mental health disorders. The statistics by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland also show a similar trend: in 2016, 31 per cent of the days of sickness allowance was paid based on musculoskeletal diseases and 27 per cent based on mental health disorders. These disease categories are the most significant causes of disability, and measures must be targeted at the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of these conditions to reduce disability.

Particular attention must be paid to supporting persons with partial workability in remaining at work and finding employment. It has been estimated that 1.9 million Finns of working age have some type of disability or chronic disease. Of these, 600,000 Finns estimate that the disability or disease affects their work and opportunities for finding employment. Too often, disabilities or chronic diseases prevent people from entering or re-entering working life. Providing persons with partial workability with an opportunity to participate in working life increases equality, reduces unemployment, and cuts expenditure on disability pensions.

The loss of the labour input and expenditure on medical care of working age population are both significant to Finland's national economy. In 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health estimated that these resulted in the total costs of EUR 24 billion to workplaces, general government finances and the employees themselves. The earlier that problems

can be intervened in, the more effective the actions. Health promotion is cost effective and should be emphasised.

Financial losses and financing the expenditure form a complex entity, which often makes identifying the need for preventive measures and targeting these actions challenging. Particularly in the context of small workplaces, companies perceive sickness absences, presenteeism (working while sick), occupational accidents, and disability pension cases as random incidents. A further challenge faced by smaller workplaces is concerned with their smaller amount of resources compared to large companies. Indeed, the different needs and challenges of various target groups should be taken into account when allocating societal measures.

There is also considerable variation in the reasons behind loss in labour input. Individual cases may be underlined by issues ranging from the conditions in the working environment, hereditary factors, or lifestyles. In order to be more successful in promoting and supporting workability, there is a need to better recognise the roles and opportunities of workplaces, employees and different public sector actors as well as to set common objectives.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) perceives the workplace as an important arena for health promotion and an opportunity for preventing non-communicable diseases (WHO 2010). In Finland's conditions, occupational health care plays an essential role in implementing and brokering the interventions carried out at a workplace. While health promotion and lifestyle changes have been traditionally perceived as part of the prevention of diseases, they are also highly significant for promoting and maintaining workability, and recuperating from work. At best, work may serve as a resource and rehabilitative element if work is correctly dimensioned, and healthy and safe to workers.

The development policy lines of the Government Resolution: Occupational Health Care 2025 have paid attention to the transformation of working life and work, the reform of the social welfare and health care service system, and the currently valid legislation. The development policy lines provide a frame and direction for measures carried out in the long term. Occupational health care is a key partner at workplaces in promoting health, the working environment and workability, and preventing disability.

Supporting workability and preventing disability in a goal-oriented manner requires social welfare and health care as well as growth services to promptly identify partial workability and launch measures that support workability. This development plays a significant role in renewing the social welfare and health care services for people of working age as well as the social security system. Access to employment, return to work, and continuing at work must be set as the key goal of the services available for working age population.

Summary

From both a human and economic perspective, it is important that we take care of the workability and functional capacity of people of working age, career lengths, and the opportunities of those with partial workability to be involved in working life. To lengthen careers, efforts must be made to prevent both permanent disability as well as temporary disability apparent as sickness absences. Musculoskeletal conditions and mental health disorders are the most significant causes of both temporary and permanent disability. There is a particular need to target preventive measures promoting return to work to these areas when aiming to reduce disability.

The management of workability and wellbeing at work plays a key role in reducing disability as well as promoting health and wellbeing. Promoting health and wellbeing occurs in cooperation of multiple administrative branches and practical actors. Particular attention must be paid to supporting persons with partial workability in remaining at work and finding employment. The opportunity of persons with partial workability to participate in working life increases equality, reduces unemployment, and cuts expenditure on disability pensions.

GOAL:

The management of workability and promotion of wellbeing will be part of the management of companies and other organisations. Work must be scaled according to those engaged in it. Taking care of one's personal workability will be part of everyone's working life capabilities. At every workplace, the employer, staff and occupational health care will collaborate in taking measures that promote workability and return to work. The job retention and employability of persons with partial workability will be supported.

Indicators

Goal	Indicator	Verification
Raising the average age of retirement	The average age of retirement	Finnish Centre for Pensions
Reducing occupational accidents	The frequency of occupational accidents	Workers' Compensation Center
Reducing occupational and work-related diseases	The incidence of occupational and work-related diseases	Finnish Register of Occupational Diseases
Reducing harmful work-related strain	Experienced physical and mental strain	The quality of work life survey, Statistics Finland
Reducing long-term disability	Number of people seeking a disability pension	Finnish Centre for Pensions, Social Insurance Institution of Finland
Reducing short-term disability	Sickness absences in relation to working hours performed	Sickness absences in relation to working hours performed
Increasing participation in employment among persons with partial workability	People on full and partial disability pension	Finnish Centre for Pensions, Social Insurance Institution of Finland
Promoting physical workability	Workability in relation to the physical demands of work	Working Life Barometer
Promoting mental workability	Workability in relation to the mental demands of work	Working Life Barometer
Reducing emotional abuse and workplace bullying	Emotional abuse or workplace bullying	Working Life Barometer
Managing risks related to wellbeing and safety at work	Management systems	VERA
Work must be attractive	The attractiveness of work	Working Life Barometer (health and wellbeing indicator, Working Life 2020*)

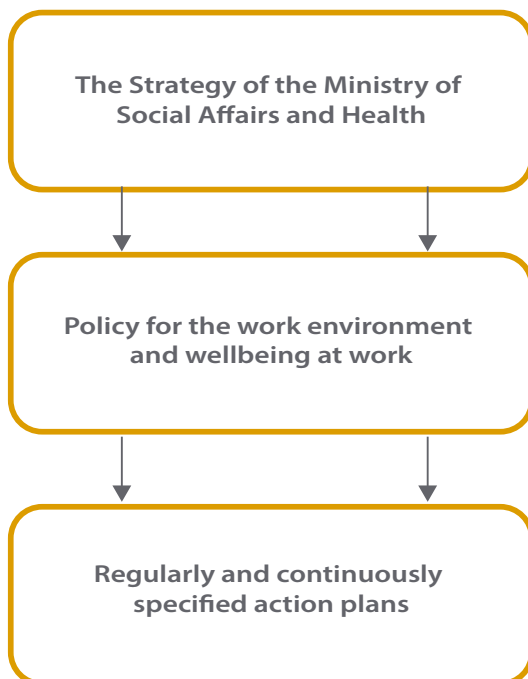
*The questions in the Working Life Barometer:

- I feel strong and energetic in my job
- I am excited about my job
- I feel satisfied when I have been focused on my job

Information sources

- Statistics from the Finnish Centre for Pensions once per year
- Statistics from the Social Insurance Institution of Finland once per year
- The Working Life Barometer of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment once per year
- The Quality of Work Life Survey of Statistics Finland once every 5 years (most recently published in 2013)
- The Finnish Register of Occupational Disease of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health once per year
- Statistics from the Workers' Compensation Center once per year
- Statistics Finland, sickness absences: ordered data
- Statistics Finland, experienced physical and mental strain: ordered data
- Vera, an ICT system of OSH inspectors (in real time)

The relationship between the policy of the environment and wellbeing at work, and the ministry's strategy and action plans





The policy for the work environment and wellbeing at work until 2030 specifies the strategy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health "A cohesive society and sustainable wellbeing". This policy aims at fostering healthy and safe work at all workplaces regardless of the form of employment. This policy extends to the year 2030 and is updated regularly. While the policy guides the operations of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and its administrative branch, meeting the objectives will require extensive cooperation. This policy, prepared in collaboration with the institutions in the administrative branch, labour market organisations and other partners, is an example of such cooperation.

Internet: stm.fi/en/publications

PUBLICATION SALES:
julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi

ISSN PDF 1797-9854
ISBN PDF 978-952-00-4045-1