

Fagforbundet, Norway:

Fighting for workers in for-profit care and social services



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Norwegian Union of Municipal
and General Employees

Four more years – of privatisation

- Norway's right-wing coalition claimed victory in general election in September
- The political push to privatisation of public health services will not only continue, but may increase



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Issues for workers and unions

- Lack of recognition of trade unions by employers
- Low pay
- High workloads
- Insufficient staffing levels
- Little access to training
- Health and safety (including psychosocial risks)
- Fragmentation of employers and their confederations
- Explicit anti-union attitudes



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Impact on our members

- The Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees, Fagforbundet, is the Largest union in the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO)
- Nearly 360,000 members, 75% women
- Sectors prone to privatisation, like social services, kindergartens and public cleaning, are typically female dominated
- Pension is a major issue. It's one of the areas where private companies offering services to municipalities can make profit.
- Currently no collective agreement on pension that applies to both for- and non-profit companies.
- Fagforbundet aims to include pension in the collective agreement, especially within the health sector.



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Orange Helse in Bergen

- Some of the foreign employees did not have sufficient knowledge in Norwegian language to carry out their work in a safe manner.
- Not paid according to the wage agreement
- Not paid for over-time, two cases of working double shift without getting compensated.
- Breach of agreement on work time and rest
- Breach of agreement on off-days and Sundays
- Employees were muzzled and not allowed to discuss wages or working conditions



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Impact on the citizens



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Market domination, not «greater choice»

- The political argument of seeking to create competition and «greater choice» does not hold water
- Mainly four companies are competing to provide elderly care centres to municipalities: Aleris, Attendo, Norlandia and Unicare.



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Fagforbundet's response

- Local tripartite cooperation, creating a culture of trust and cooperation in the municipalities
- Formalised local cooperation through contracts with mayors of the Labour Party, and other politically affiliated parties
- Build alliances, finance think-tanks
- Counter lobbyism from the for-profit companies with communication campaigns



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Remunicipalisation

- In recent years, more than 20 services have been de-privatised and brought back into public hands.
- A wave of de-privatisations came after a change in political leadership in many municipalities after the local elections of 2015.
- Local tripartite cooperation, between the trade unions, the municipal administrations and the local politicians has been fundamental in these remunicipalisation processes.
- “Reclaiming Public Services: How cities and citizens are turning back privatisation” examples from many countries, including Norway



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