

**New forms of service delivery for municipalities, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work**  
**CEMR/EPSU**

**New forms of service delivery for municipalities, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work**

**Final Report**

by

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The Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) investigates the impact of privatisation and liberalisation on public services, with a specific focus on water, energy, waste management, health and social care sectors. Other research topics include the function and structure of public services, the strategies of multinational companies and influence of international finance institutions on public services. PSIRU is based in the Business Faculty, University of Greenwich, London, UK. Researchers: Prof. Steve Thomas, Dr. Jane Lethbridge (Director), Dr. Emanuele Lobina, Prof. David Hall, Dr. Jeff Powell, Sandra Van Niekerk, Dr. Yuliya Yurchenko

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## FINAL REPORT

### **New Forms of Service Delivery for Municipalities, the Contribution of Social Dialogue and Good Practice for Well-being at Work'**

This is the final report of the 'New Forms of Service Delivery for Municipalities, the Contribution of Social Dialogue and Good Practice for Well-being at Work' project. After outlining the background and aims of the project, the main findings of the project are set out under a series of themes that have emerged during the project.

The project aimed to:

1. Explore new policies and forms of restructuring in public service delivery and link it to trends and policies on health and safety at EU level;
2. Identify the challenges and opportunities for public sector workers and employers of new forms of work organisation and technological developments;
3. Jointly evaluate and diagnose how social partners can be supportive in these reform processes;
4. Highlight the relationship between restructuring and the well-being at work and the prevention and implementation of health and safety;
5. Provide knowledge and practices in relation to 'good restructuring' in the public sector and the role of social partners.

The project adopted a methodology of exploring four issues - digitalisation, migration, recruitment and retention and occupational safety and health - which were felt to encapsulate the tensions of restructuring LRG services, the requirements for an effective way of addressing health and safety and the role of social dialogue. Four reports and the discussions in four seminars focused on these issues and showed that there are some commonalities between these issues which can form the basis for a more detailed understanding of new forms of service delivery in local and regional government (LRG) and the promotion of occupational safety and health (OSH).

The report has six sections:

1. Policy context;
2. New forms of service delivery;
3. Social inclusion;
4. Austerity policies;
5. Social dialogue;
6. Conclusion and Recommendations.

## 1. Policy context

In 2014, the European Commission published a “Quality framework for restructuring and anticipation of change” which proposed ‘fiches’ for employees, employers and social partners with good practices on how to deal with restructuring. It recommended that frameworks for worker involvement to anticipate and prepare for change should be drawn up, and measures to help individual workers should be developed e.g. to increase their skills and mobility. <sup>1</sup>

The EU Social Dialogue Committee Local and Regional Government (LRG) was involved in these discussions, and issued a joint response to the European Commission’s Green Paper COM (2012) 7 “Restructuring and anticipation of change: what lessons from recent experience” in March 2012 for the local and regional government sector. <sup>2</sup>

In particular, the effects of restructuring within municipalities were felt strongly due to pressures on municipal finances and new forms of public service provision. Additionally, with the emphasis given by the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) published in November 2011, where modernising public administration is one of the five priorities by the Commission and Council for action. The 2012 AGS said: “the quality of public administration at EU, national, regional and local level is a determining element of competitiveness, and an important productivity factor. The on-going pressure on public finances is driving major changes and restructuring of the public sector. What is a challenge must be turned into an opportunity. Although public sector reform cannot be achieved overnight there is a need to give it a new impetus under current circumstances”.

In 2014, the European Commission published a ‘Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014 – 2020’ which identified key challenges and strategic objectives for health and safety at work and presented key actions and instruments to address these. This new Framework aims to ensure that the EU and social partners continue to play a role in the promotion of high standards for working conditions and well-being at work both within Europe and internationally, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

## 2. New forms of service delivery

Digitalisation, migration, demographic changes and OSH needs have created new forms of service delivery at LRG level. These factors operate in different ways but have all led to pressure to deliver services in new ways. An influential factor is the interaction of national and local policies. This project found that the relationship between national /federal policies and local / regional government influenced the role that LRG could take but not just in a reactive, top-down way. There is growing evidence to show that LRGs can also influence and shape public policy, especially when trying to deliver appropriate public services for the local population.

### 2.1 Digitalisation

This report draws on two definitions of digitalisation. First, digitalisation has been defined as the “*adoption or increase in use of digital or computer technology by an organization, industry, country, etc*”.<sup>3</sup> Second, and in a broader sense, digitalisation has been defined as “*economic and social transformation triggered by the massive adoption of digital technologies to generate, process, share and transact information*”.<sup>4</sup> These two definitions start to capture the impact of digitalisation in that it is a transformative process which had only just started to impact on local and regional government. The term e-government is defined as “*using information and communications technologies to support modernised, joined up and seamless public services*.”<sup>5</sup>

A 2012 EU report on digitalization in Europe measured progress in four government service clusters.

1. Income generating for government e.g. taxation
2. Registration e.g. births, marriages, deaths
3. Service returns – health, social, libraries
4. Permits and licences – building, education, passport.<sup>6</sup>

The adoption of digital technologies in government and specifically municipal services has been gradually expanding since the 1990s. These definitions show that there is a difference between digitalisation, which refers to the use of digital technology, and e-government, which uses information and communications technologies, to improve delivery of public services.

Table 1 shows the type of public services which are being digitalised in LRG. These are examples of e-government, where digitalisation is applied to existing public services. However digitalisation provides opportunities for sharing information in new and different ways, which can provide new ways of delivering public services. For example, Transport for London (TfL) (London, UK) has used new technologies to analyse passenger flows so that services can be planned better. Disruption is reduced. TfL pioneered integrated ticketing, for example, the ‘Oyster’ card, which is a type of ‘smart transport card’. It has also introduced driver-less transport. There are improved inter-modal connections, allowing passengers to move from one mode of transport to another. These changes have also led to changes in staffing and the loss of jobs in ticket offices.

**Table 1: Digitalised services by federal/ central, regional and local government**

LG = Local Government; RG = Regional Government; FG = Federal Government; CG = Central Government

	Germany FG/RG	Finland	Denmark	Estonia	Italy	UK CG	France	Croatia
Income taxes								
Social security			LRG		RG			
Personal documents – passport			LRG					
Driving licence								
Car registration	LG						CG/ LG	
Application for building permission	RG	LRG	LRG	LG	LG	CG/ LG	CG/ LG	
Declaration to police	F/RG							
Public libraries	F/LRG	LRG & other agencies				CG/ /LG	CG/ LG	
Certificates births marriages	LG		LRG	LG			CG/ LG	
Announcement of moving	LG			Cent/ LG	LG			
Health related services	n/a		LRG		Cent/ RG			

Source: EC e-government factsheets 2015 <sup>7</sup>

A second example is the town of Lomma, Sweden with 23,000 inhabitants, which has 2,700 companies with 1,700 companies run by a single owner. In 2014 “*My municipal engagement*” made municipal services available 24/7. These included about 30 e-services, for example, water consumption, child care, building permits. As these e-services were used more often, this led to an increased awareness of the value of internet access, which led to a demand for fast and reliable broadband connections. “Broadband in Lomma” was set up supported by local neighbour ambassadors groups.

**Table 2: Innovations in digital services**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Project</b>
<b>France</b>	Education	<p><b>Collèges Connectés</b></p> <p>Part of a the strategy to bring schools into the digital era, 72 middle schools (pupils from age 11 to 15 years) have been selected to receive support for integrating digital technology into their teaching and the school administration. These 72 pilot “<i>collèges connectés</i>” are meant to be innovation and change leaders</p>
<b>Spain</b>	Municipal	<p><b>City Council Innovation Plan, Malaga</b></p> <p>The aim is to simplify structures, processes, proceedings and tasks across the municipality of Malaga, create a good governance culture and better use of resources.</p>
<b>Finland</b>	Municipal	<p><b>New administrative model of the municipality of Utajärvi</b></p> <p>The new integrated management system is used to both implement the strategy and assess its implementation. The new model organises the work of elected representatives in accordance with Deming’s PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act). Political matters are clearly separated from operational tasks allowing elected representatives to focus on essential issues. Therefore, officials will take more responsibility in clear-cut, non-political matters, such as taking and implementing operational decisions. Residents participate more in preparatory work through hearings and can express their opinions through an electronic feedback system.</p>
<b>Italy</b>	Justice	<p><b>INSIDER</b></p> <p>I.N.S.I.D.E.R. (Illegal Detecting Network Security Intelligence and Resources) is an investigation and intelligence system that aims to improve legality and competitiveness of the region of Calabria. It is a tool designed for the police and the justice administration to identify the boundaries between legal and illegal businesses.</p>
<b>Sweden</b>	Health	<p><b>IT support for advanced care at home</b></p> <p>This project supports advanced medical home care through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Advanced care in the home provided by hospital staff, needs a different kind of support to hospital care. The initial focus of the system was for palliative care of terminally ill patients, but the scope has now been widened.</p>
<b>Germany</b>	Childcare/ Family	<p><b>AMILIENWORKSTADT</b></p> <p>Aims to improve the quality of education and care for children, advance educational equality for children with a migrant background and from socially disadvantaged families, facilitate stronger participation of families in the daily routine of child care facilities, build-up parental competencies, develop an integrated approach in working with families and a neighbourhood network to support families.</p>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Health	<p><b>Manchester Health Trainer Programme</b></p> <p>Links the National Health Service and local partners in order to train and employ individuals as local health trainers in disadvantaged and at-risk communities. These individuals have little or no work experience, but local knowledge and insight into their neighbourhoods, along with a passion for helping others to improve their health.</p>

Source: EU Observatory of Public Sector Innovation

Table 2 shows the range of public services which can be improved with new ways of sharing information. These range from improved home health care to the development of new ways of organising public administration. These new ways of delivering public services may change the relationship between the service user and the public sector worker. The impact of digitalisation on public services is only slowly being understood. With the introduction of new technologies there will be continuous opportunities for delivering public services in new ways but these need to be evaluated from both the user and worker perspective.

## 2.2 Migration

**Table 3: Definitions**

- **Asylum seeker** - someone fleeing persecution or conflict and seeking international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees.
- A **refugee** is an asylum seeker whose claim has been approved.
- An **economic migrant** has left their country in search of improving their economic position.<sup>8</sup>

All three groups are often described as migrants but not all migrants are refugees or asylum seekers. The term ‘third country national’ has been used in this report to refer to asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants.

Migration policies within the EU are fragmented. The EU2020 strategy acknowledges the importance of labour migration to address labour shortages. It has been estimated that 66 million labour migrants will be needed by 2020. Germany will have a shortage of 2.4 million workers. Other countries, such as France, Italy and the UK will experience labour shortages after 2020. However there is a more ambiguous approach to recognising the human and social rights of migrants. Since 2014, the European Commission (EC) has had responsibility for migration policies covering legal migration, illegal migration, borders, visas and a Common European Asylum System. These consist of policies to:

- Address asylum by ensuring EU legislation is uniformly applied at Member state level by the development of the Common European Asylum System;
- Support legal migration and integration to EU states which meet labour market demands and integrating third country nationals;
- Enable the return of migrants which combats irregular migration;
- Promote solidarity between Member states so that those most affected by migration can be supported across the EU through, for example, an Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund which supports Member states in managing migration flows.<sup>9</sup>

Although there is now clearer EU level responsibility for migration policies, there are strong political pressures at Member State level to impose national migration policies. For example, Estonia, Hungary and Romania have all published national migration policies since 2014.<sup>10</sup> The UNHCR critique of the Hungarian Strategy reported that “The vision that the integration capacity of municipalities should be examined is not translated into objectives”, an indication that municipal involvement in migration policies in Hungary had not been implemented and a sign that LRGs often have an ill-defined role to play in dealing with migration issues.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 4: Number of asylum applications made in January – December 2015**

Country	Number of asylum applications
Germany	442,000
Hungary	174,000
Sweden	156,000
Austria	86,000
Italy	83,000
France	71,000
Netherlands	43,000



<b>Belgium</b>	39,000
<b>UK</b>	39,000
<b>Switzerland</b>	38,000
<b>Finland</b>	32,000
<b>Norway</b>	30,000
<b>Denmark</b>	21,000
<b>Bulgaria</b>	20,000
<b>Spain</b>	15,000
<b>Greece</b>	11,000
<b>Poland</b>	10,000
<b>Other</b>	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,325,000</b>

Source: Eurostat in Bew Research Center (2016)

There have been some changes in the demographic structure of migrants. Until 2015, the majority were single men but in 2015 there was a large increase in the number of families with children, who have more complex needs. In 2016, young men have once again become the largest group of migrants in many countries. One of the immediate effects of the increase in the number of migrants is the increased costs of receiving such large numbers of people but integrated approaches are needed at local, regional, national levels to address the increased demands for public services. The practical strategies required to deal with these large numbers need to include housing, education, health and other related services, most of which are the responsibility of local and regional authorities.. The quicker that migrants are integrated, then the sooner they become self-sufficient, employed and pay taxes.<sup>12</sup>

The new ways of delivering public services for third country nationals has involved LRGs in creating new legislation to protect their rights, setting quotas, working with other stakeholders to integrate existing services as well as working with groups in different ways. For example in Italy, until recently a country of emigration, although Emilia-Romagna had some limited provision for immigrant services (social assistance, housing and social disadvantage) after the 1998 Turko-Napolitano Law, more funds were transferred to the region, which were used to develop annual programmes for immigrants. The regional government began to formulate legislation to support migrants' rights (2004 *Norme per l'integrazione sociale del cittadini stranieri immigrati – Law for social integration of immigrants*). The focus has been on language training, cultural mediation, legal rights and channels for representation. The centre-left government has worked in partnership with civil society organisations.<sup>13</sup>

In other European countries, local authorities work to implement integration measures at local level. In Austria, provincial governments set annual quotas for residential titles and municipalities and district commissions implement integration measures at local level. In Spain, regional authorities and autonomous regions cooperate over migration policies and in Sweden, county councils and municipalities cooperate on immigration policies. Norway has tried to strengthen links between central and local government to support municipal districts with high rates of low income families with poor housing. In the Netherlands, holders of residence permits are entitled to accommodation in a municipality of their choice as well as training, social security benefits, study grants and family unification. This arrangement places local authorities at the centre of the resettlement process.<sup>14</sup>

LRGs may also start to operate in different ways. Bilbao, Spain, where the number of third country nationals has increased recently, has adopted an "intercultural city strategy and an intercultural action plan".<sup>15</sup> A local strategy aims to increase integration and managing diversity within the city, based on an overall goal of inter-culturalism. The Local Action Plan draws stakeholders together through different activities, for example, training, networking, employment, housing and education. Bilbao, with the Spanish government and NGOs has

organised a network of institutional collaboration to meet asylum seekers who are to be resettled from other European countries.<sup>16</sup>

An example of some of the dynamics between UK central and local government in relation to immigration policies can be seen in the work of local authorities with children of migrants who do not have any access to public funds. A recent study looked at how local authorities in England have approached the provision of the 1989 Children Act which “requires local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children ‘n need’, within their families, including a child whose parents whose parents have ‘no recourse to public funds (NRPF)’”.<sup>17</sup> The practice of local authorities in meeting these requirements varies across the country. Some give greater priority to the needs of the children while others focus on the immigration status and credibility of the parents. Over 3,391 families were supported in 2012/13, a rise of 19% on the previous year. However, the level of support provided by local authorities is basic. Accommodation is provided but in Bed and Breakfast hotels or private rented accommodation which is often unsuitable for children. Subsistence payments are very low, lower than levels for other groups, including refused asylum seekers. A large percentage of families had pending applications to remain in the UK and the majority were found to be entitled to remain in the UK. Local authorities are having to provide a safety net for families excluded by central government immigration policies.<sup>18</sup>

Like Italy, Ireland is country which has changed from being a country of emigration to one of immigration. The city of Dublin launched a City Wide Integration Framework in 2008 which brought together stakeholders to make integration central to policies and services rather than setting up separate services for third country nationals. This Framework presents the economic and social advantages that third country nationals can bring to the city. The impact of the global financial crisis on Ireland has led to the cutting of national funding for local integration initiatives. Local authorities are now expected to put integration into local development plans. Dublin City Council set up a Public Participation Network which provides opportunities for local groups to influence and contribute to decision-making bodies in the Council, particularly migrant community groups.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.3 Recruitment and retention

The Member States of the European Union are expected to undergo some significant demographic changes in the period up to 2060. Overall, population will reach a peak in 2050 and then decline slightly (Table 5). Life expectancy is expected to increase for both men and women with a slight convergence of rates (Table 6).<sup>20</sup>

**Table 5: Proportion of different age groups in the population**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2050</b>	<b>2060</b>
<b>EU population</b>	<b>507m</b>	<b>526m</b>	<b>523</b>
<b>Young people (0-14)</b>	<b>15%</b>	-	<b>15%</b>
<b>15-64</b>	<b>66%</b>	-	<b>57%</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>18%</b>	-	<b>28%</b>
<b>85%</b>	<b>5%</b>	-	<b>12%</b>

Source: EU (2015)

**Table 6: Life expectancy rates for women and men**

		<b>2013</b>	<b>2060</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>life expectancy</b>	<b>83.1</b>	<b>89.1</b>
<b>Men</b>	<b>life expectancy</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>84.7</b>

Source: EU (2015)

An ageing population affects labour markets because of a decrease in young people entering the labour market and a reduction in older workers due to retirement. Until recently, retirement ages were fixed, usually with different ages for women and men. Retirement was the point at which workers could claim their pension. This was part of a national welfare system which was designed when life expectancy was shorter and men formed the largest part of the workforce. With the increasing participation of women in the workforce, patterns of employment have changed. Although there are some significant differences between countries in terms of the share of women in the workforce, even where the national levels of female participation in the workforce are low, there are still a large number of part-time workers.<sup>21</sup>

Although the total labour supply is expected to stabilise by 2023, it will decline by 8.2% between 2023 and 2060. The working age population is expected to decline because many people of working age are expected to retire but smaller numbers of younger workers will enter the workforce. Although the labour supply will decrease, rates of employment among different groups will increase, with rates for women and older workers rising most rapidly (Table 7).

These demographic changes have been the focus of EU policies. The Barcelona Targets (2001) aimed to increase access to child care across the EU by 2010. Although these were only partially met, there has been an increase in the proportion of women in the workforce.

**Table 7: Employment rates**

		<b>2013</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2060</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>employment rate</b>	<b>68.4%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>employment rate</b>	<b>62.6%</b>	<b>67.3%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>rate older workers</b>	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>60.9%</b>	<b>67.1%</b>

Source: EU (2015)

One of the major public policy issues in Europe is how to expand the workforce and encourage older people to remain at work for longer. This has been recognised by OECD in 'Live Longer Work Longer' (2006), which outlines ways of encouraging work at an older age. In the short term, the EU aims to increase the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75% by 2020.<sup>22</sup> Member States are expected to promote the labour market participation of young people, older workers, low-skilled workers and legal migrants. They must also make employment more attractive - focusing on flexicurity, worker mobility and work-life balance - and promote self-employment, entrepreneurship, plus job creation, including in the areas of care and green jobs.<sup>23</sup>

Local and regional governments employ over 17 million workers across Europe to deliver essential public services (CEMR), the majority of them women.<sup>24</sup> The effect of these demographic changes in local and regional government needs to be considered in the context of some important employment policy changes which have taken place in many European countries. The introduction of equal opportunities policies in the 1960s/ 1970s resulted in an expansion of women workers in the local government workforce. In addition, changes in technology and increasing levels of education have changed the entry point into public administrations. The use of computers and photocopiers led to a decrease in the number of basic administrative jobs previously held by young entrants. Fewer school leavers enter public administration but increasingly more highly educated older people, including women, have entered the workforce. The impact of public management reforms has led to the devolution of employment responsibilities to external agencies makes it more difficult for public authorities to monitor trends within the workforce.<sup>25</sup>

In England, the Timewise Pilot Programme is funded by the Local Government Association (LGA) in partnership with Timewise, a company specialising in the promotion of flexible working. It aims to support local authorities to work with Timewise and create flexible working arrangements, which will attract and retain a workforce by using flexible working to encourage applicants. The scheme will contribute to the creation of a more diverse workforce and is expected to increase productivity in the context of budget cuts. Local authorities which become part of the Timewise scheme will be expected to share the learning from this new workforce practice with local employers.<sup>26</sup>

Flexible working can benefit people of all ages, especially women. Camden Council (London, UK) advertises all its posts as open to flexibility and as a result new staff have started with flexible working arrangements. Stoke City Council (UK) found that the retention rate for skilled workers who returned from maternity leave has improved. 36% of employees returned to work after maternity leave and all are still in post. Stoke City Council has found that Timewise has improved the way in which it meets the needs of its older workers because of an emphasis on workforce planning, the 'shape' of the organisation and job redesign. An example of this can be seen in the way Stoke City Council has started to work, in a project funded by the Department of Health, with local employers to ensure that workers who have caring responsibilities, mainly women, remain in employment.<sup>27</sup> Flexible ways of working are likely to benefit women.

An EU report, published in 2013, entitled 'Working Together for Europe's young people – a call to action' asked national governments to develop strategies to reduce youth unemployment together with other stakeholders. Local authorities have the potential to play an important role in national strategies.<sup>28</sup> In 2013, in response to this report, CEMR called for the establishment of an EU-Starter initiative which would promote youth engagement in local public services. The EU Starter would offer a year of work experience in a public institution or non-profit organisation to young Europeans without a job, training or an education. This would provide work experience and training as well as contributing to the delivery of public services. This initiative was aimed at regions with youth unemployment rates of more than 10%. Each candidate would be given a one-year contract with pay and social security which would be renewable for a year.<sup>29</sup>

The use of apprenticeships has been traditionally been one way of supporting young people to enter the labour market. The current unemployment crisis for young is again emphasizing the importance of apprenticeships. European countries have different policies towards apprenticeships, influenced by the effectiveness of vocational education and training systems. For example, Germany, has a well-developed system of apprenticeships, including federal public sector apprenticeships in 130 occupations. Several German lander have set up schemes to encourage young third country nationals to apply for apprenticeships. 'Berlin

needs you!' is an example of a municipal government campaign to recruit young third country nationals. It is an initiative of the Commissioner of Berlin for Integration and Migration and is coordinated by BQN Berlin, the Vocational Qualification Network for Immigrants in Berlin. The scheme offers training in 12 occupational fields and over 100 qualified jobs and operates as a partnership between schools, public administration and companies. An evaluation in 2012 found that there had been a gradual increase the number of trainees from migrant families in Berlin. In 2012, 19.3% of trainees in public administration and public companies had a migration background, compared to 8.6% in 2006.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.4 Occupational safety and health (OSH)

**Table 8: Terminology**

<p><u>Occupational health and safety (OSH)</u> – safety, health and welfare of people at work</p> <p><u>Workplace health promotion (WHP)</u> – the combined efforts of employers, workers and society to improve the health and well-being at work. This can be achieved by: improving work organisation and work environment; promoting active participation of all stakeholders in the process; and encouraging personal development.<sup>31</sup></p>
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When analysing the OSH and well-being measures that local and regional government are responsible for promoting, it is useful to consider two basic models of workers' health:

- The labour approach to health in the workplace;
- The public health approach to health in the workplace and local communities.

An understanding of these two models will help to appreciate the scope of local and regional government in promoting occupational safety and health and well-being in public services.

**Table 9: Labour and public health models of workers' health**

<b>Labour approach</b>	<b>Public health approach</b>
Occupational health	All workers
Labour contract	Beyond the workplace
Employer responsibility in the workplace	Responsibility of everyone
Negotiation of work-related issues between employers and trade unions	All health determinants Other stakeholders Health protection not subject to collective negotiations

Source: HIREs project report 2010<sup>32</sup>

These two models of workers' health show that the traditional labour approach is focused on the workplace and trade union/ employer negotiations. The public health approach takes a more holistic view of health which is not just limited to the workplace. It involves a wider range of stakeholders and health protection is not subject to collective negotiations. The importance of considering these two models lies in the increasing insecurity of work and the role of local and regional governments in influencing some of the determinants of health. These approaches should not be considered mutually exclusive but can provide LRG with insights into how to approach the promotion of OSH and well-being in local public services.

Women form the majority of workers in local and regional government (LRG) in Europe. There is evidence to show that women are exposed to different occupational health risks and problems. For example, women workers in education and health care are "exposed to organisational risks such as monotony, high demands and limited authority (which have been linked to fatigue, depression and unhealthy behaviour)".<sup>33</sup> Women are also strongly

affected by third party workplace violence because they form the majority of the workforce in public services where they have to interact with clients and service users.<sup>34</sup>

There is a growing understanding of how occupational health and safety measures have to incorporate gender sensitivity to be effective. A gender sensitive approach looks at the different working situations of women and men as well as gender relations in organisations, including differences between groups of female and male workers.<sup>35</sup> Gender mainstreaming aims to integrate the needs of women as well as men into OSH policies. Gender mainstreaming “should cover design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.”

The 2014-2020 EU Strategic Framework identifies a series of challenges, which are relevant to local/ regional governments:

1. To improve the implementation record of Member States, especially increasing the micro and small enterprises to put effective and efficient risk prevention measures in place.
2. To improve the prevention of work-related diseases by tackling existing, new and emerging risks and to assess the changes in work technologies and impact on organisation of work
3. To tackle demographic change and making workplaces accessible for older people

The Strategic Framework recognises the important role that social partners play in implementing OSH strategies. The need for improved inter-sectoral working is highlighted which should cover education, public health, environment, industrial policy and equal opportunities policies.<sup>36</sup>

The implementation of the EU 2014-2020 strategy has to be seen in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy which aims to deliver growth which is smart, sustainable and inclusive. The 2020 strategy is focused on five goals in the areas of employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy. The emphasis on employment and innovation has particular implications for OSH and well-being at work.

The problems of effective implementation of the EU Directives has still not been fully addressed by all Member States. In addition, LRGs are not always given specific implementation responsibilities in national OSH legislation. LRGs have responsibility for OSH in their own workforces and often for the local workforces in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). They are also responsible for policy areas linked to the Europe 2020 strategy such as education and training, entrepreneurship, labour market, infrastructure and energy efficiency, which have OSH implications. Appendix A shows how LRGs feature in national OSH legislation. In some countries, LRG has a very specific role in the inspection and regulation of OSH but in other countries it has a less well defined but supportive role. All Member States had to align their OSH legislation with the 1989 European Framework Directive. Most countries have added or revised legislation since then because awareness of OSH risks has increased in the last two decades as well as the recognition of new OSH risks. The role that LRG has in the implementation of OSH legislation influences the way in which OSH is addressed.

The recognition of the value of workplace health promotion has generated reviews of the evidence of what works from both an employee/worker and an employer perspective. Although a recent literature review looked at evidence from a wide range of workplaces, not only LRG, some of the findings are still relevant. Active involvement of workers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of OSH programmes is likely to lead to greater participation. Employers and senior managers need to show commitment. A holistic approach which combines both organisational and individual measures helps workers to recognise the value of individual action.<sup>37</sup>

From an employer perspective, successful workplace health promotion can contribute to improved productivity rates and decreased levels of absenteeism and sickness disability costs. Workplace health promotion and resulting improvements in health can lead to a reduction in staff turnover and improvements in recruitment of new workers. There are links between worker health and increased risks of workplace accidents and injuries.<sup>38</sup> These findings about the motivation of both workers and employers are relevant in considering how austerity policies and organisational restructuring are affecting the promotion of OSH and well-being.

Some examples of how LRGs are addressing OSH issues are set out below. Initiatives have been taken at European, national and local level which have implications for LRGs. The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE) developed a joint European project to explore tri-partite dialogue between government, employers and trade unions in individual countries. Three projects looked at third party violence in the workplace in Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary. The project in the Czech Republic aimed to raise awareness and capacity building on challenges regarding social dialogue, decent work and threats and violence. The social partners were the Union of Employers' Associations, the Centre of Development Activities Trade Union of Health Services and Social Care of the Czech Republic and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. The threats and incidence of third party violence in the health services in the Czech Republic are continuing to grow. Health care workers feel under pressure from clients, patients and employers. They fear for their jobs. Employers feel under pressure because of a lack of funding. Any attempts to resolve third party violence have to be underpinned by social dialogue between employees and employers. The main intervention was teaching health workers not to respond to aggression with their own aggression and being supported in developing strategies to prevent violence from patients, clients and family members.

In Denmark, the Municipality of Aabenraa worked with a local kindergarten, Vuggestuen Kernehuset and the Trade Union of Educators (BUPL) to set up a project which would reduce the incidence of muscular-skeletal disorders and retain older workers. Child care involves frequent lifting and repetitive movement which puts physical strain on workers, often resulting in workers leaving the workforce. The project started by commissioning a work ability analysis. An occupational therapist observed each worker for several hours and then recommended what was needed to improve the way in which they worked. This included changing the height of tables and chairs, allowing workers to have more time off and achieve a better work-life balance and introducing a better workload allocation system to reduce the number of repetitive tasks. As a result, workers continued to work for longer, overall health improved and the incidence of muscular-skeletal disorders has dropped. The success of the project depended on trade union and management commitment, the use of an external expert, individualised work analysis and the use of a variety of measures.<sup>39</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

Digitalisation, migration, demographic changes and OSH strategies are all creating new ways of delivering public services. These new forms of services have implications for public sector workers. New jobs may be created or existing jobs may change and there are extensive OSH implications in many of new ways of delivering services. The next section looks at how LRGs have special responsibilities to promote social inclusion which also result in new forms of public services.

### 3.Social inclusion

LRGs have a pivotal role to play in promoting social inclusion. As mentioned in the introduction, LRGs are taking an active role in both formulating and implementing public policies, especially for issues that directly affect the citizens and workforce of LRG. One of the most immediate issues is migration but LRG is also concerned with the expansion of digital inclusion, the promotion of services and employment that addresses the needs of different age groups and expanding the responsibility for OSH from its own workforce to other local workforces.

#### 3.1 Digitalisation

Governments have prioritised the development of income generating services in e-government but are gradually expanding other types of services which require citizen-government exchanges. Table 10 shows the different levels of internet access and the use of the internet to access information and upload and send forms in eight countries. Businesses have higher levels of internet access than households in all of the eight countries. Household levels of internet access range from 65% in Croatia to 93% in Denmark. The percentages of individuals searching for information, downloading forms or returning filled forms show much lower rates. This suggests that although household access to the internet is increasing to over 80% of households, the percentage of individuals taking advantages of e-government is growing much more slowly. In some countries, the individual percentages for searching, downloading and returning filled forms has dropped over the last four years, for example Italy, France and Estonia.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 10: Levels of household internet access and participation in e-government activities**

	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Croatia</b>
<b>2013 Household Level internet access</b>	89%	90%	<b>93%</b>	83%	73%	90%	83%	<u>65%</u>
<b>Individuals obtaining information</b>	52%	76%	<b>81%</b>	48% <sup>10</sup>	20%	40%	48%	<u>17%</u>
<b>Individuals downloading forms</b>	32%	<b>60%</b>	49%	25%	<u>16%</u>	31%	40%	18%
<b>Individuals returning filled forms</b>	16%	56%	<b>66%</b>	32%	11%	34%	44%	<u>10%</u>
<b>Business level internet access</b>	98%	<b>100%</b>	99%	96%	98%	95%	99%	n/a

Source: European Commission E-government factsheets<sup>41</sup>

Many digital services involve a direct interface between citizen and municipality. This raises questions about the level of digital involvement of the local population within municipal boundaries. In the UK, 9 million people are considered to be digitally excluded.<sup>42</sup> Older people, people with disabilities and people in low income groups are most likely to



experience problems in accessing the internet, whether because of lack of access to hardware and/or lack of digital skills.<sup>43</sup> When introducing digital services for basic services, provision for the digitally excluded population will have to be addressed by local governments, but more research is needed to understand how people use the internet for particular types of services, especially at local municipal levels.

A study by Berger (2014) looked at the experience of introducing mandatory e-government in Denmark.<sup>44</sup> The Danish government passed a Public Digital Post law in 2012 which made it mandatory for citizens to receive electronic messages from the public sector, which were given the same status as paper letters. This study explored the attitudes of clerical staff who were involved in implementing this change. Staff were critical of how this change had been implemented in local government, feeling there had been a lack of preparation in relation to procedures, strategies and information provided to staff and citizens. The main finding was that staff were concerned about citizens who did not have access to computers or who were unsure about how to use them, most often older people, people who were unwell and the unemployed. Staff felt unable to solve the problems of their users and this made staff feel that their 'public sector ethos' was under threat. This also increased their workload and reduced the quality of their working life. No longer could they feel that they were helping citizens access services because they were implementing a system that was more complex and created barriers that made access more difficult.

In seminar discussions, several issues were raised about how to digitalise public services. The right legislative environment has to be created. Investment in infrastructure has to be a priority. A holistic, integrated view of public services and a locally rooted process also helps to make the needs of users central to the process. A greater understanding of "digital poverty" is needed so that measures to support people without broadband connections and computers can be put in place. In rural areas, where it is most difficult to get access to broadband, more flexible rules about state aid are needed. LRGs will have to find additional funding to promote digital inclusion.

### **3.2 Migration**

Europe has predicted labour market shortages by 2020. Many local and regional authorities are aware of the pressures on the local labour market and its role in economic development. One of the most significant strategies that local authorities can pursue is to support the integration of migrants into the local labour market. Once migrants can earn their living and start to pay taxes, they are able to make a contribution to society and the economy. LRGs are recognizing that they have to ensure that public services are provided in a safe and appropriate way for third party nationals.

Labour market statistics show that there are significant differences between third country nationals, intra-EU migrants and nationals in terms of economic activity rates, unemployment rates, temporary work contracts and over-qualification rates (Tables 11 & 12). The activity rates for Intra-EU migrants is higher than for either third country nationals or for the reporting country, which is reflected in economic activity rates of both women and men.<sup>45</sup> Unemployment rates among third country nationals are higher than among the reporting country population. Similarly, a higher percentage of third country nationals have temporary work permits than either intra-EU migrants or national citizens.

**Table 11: Activity rates, unemployment rates and temporary work permits in Europe**

Activity rates	Activity rates		Unemployment rates		Temporary work permits
	Men	Women	2012 All	Young people	
Third country nationals	80%	57%	21.3%	35%	24%
Intra-EU migrants	85%	71%	12.2%	23%	18%
Reporting country	78%	66%	9.8%	14%	13%

Source: OECD Working Paper No 159 Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 pp.15-17

It is not just a lack of language skills and education that affects the position of third country migrants in the labour market. The lack of recognition of the qualifications is a major barrier that affects their progress in the labour market. Table 12 shows that 39% of foreign citizens are over-qualified for their employment/ jobs compared with 31% of intra-EU citizens and 19% of national citizens. There is also a difference in the over-qualification rate of third country citizens when divided into countries of origin with a high and medium/ low development index. Third country citizens from countries with medium/low development index have even higher levels of over-qualification.

**Table 12: Over-qualification rate in Europe**

<b>Over-qualification rate</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Foreign citizens</b>	39%
<b>Intra-EU citizens</b>	31%
<b>Third country citizens</b>	38% (high human development index) 53% (low/medium development index)
<b>National citizens</b>	19%

Source: OECD Working Paper No 159 Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 p. 17

The differences between activity rates, unemployment rates, temporary contracts and over-qualifications point to a need for action to integrate migrants into the local labour market. Two examples of how local authorities have supported third country nationals to enter the labour market are outlined below.

In Barcelona, Spain, the Immigrants mutual support association (*Associacio d'Ayuda Mutua d'Immigrants a catalumya* (AMIC-CGT)) is part of the Immigrants, Foreigners and Refugees Support Service (SAIER) of Barcelona City Council. Although it is a municipal service, workers belong to different branches, which deal with different issues, e.g. employment and training, social services, legal issues, residence and work-permit card processing and language. The main aim of AMIC is to help third country nationals to have their country of origin qualifications recognized in Spain which will enable them to work in Spain. This can also lead to occupational training for potentially highly skilled workers. In addition, third country nationals are given information about education and training courses, training centres and access requirements. Unemployed third country nationals with low or medium level qualifications are provided with opportunities to requalify and access other occupations because they may have limited Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills and weak language skills.<sup>46</sup>

Migrants are supported in looking for work through information and tools. Migrants are given about 45 minutes of one-to-one interviews to provide information and guidance. This will include a skills gap analysis and recognition of needs. The services user and counsellor then build a learning pathway to strengthen the professional profile. Alternatively the

services user may describe their background and the counsellor will explain the Spanish educational system and the opportunities provided. UMIC also cooperates with other integration services. Staff working in this services are all graduates and have specialist skills/ expertise, knowledge, for example, immigration, inter-cultural education, social policy, cultural mediation, public administration, social work, sociology of immigration.<sup>47</sup>

The education department of the city of Malmo, Sweden has run a Centre for Validation of Occupational Skills since 2000. This provides support for third country national who do not have documental evidence of qualifications/ skills. With a recognition of their skills, third country nationals do not have to repeat formal learning of their existing skills but continue with learning Swedish and securing a job. Service users are 'mapped' with a counsellor. They then contact the Validation Centre, which identifies their skills and assesses their level of competence. Other integration programmes, for example, language teaching and the establishment of internships, contribute to the process of supporting the third country national into the labour market. Staff working in this Centre have backgrounds as guidance counsellors and other skilled crafts. They do not have multi-cultural training but are trained as tutors.<sup>48</sup>

Germany, has a well-developed system of apprenticeships, including federal public sector apprenticeships in 130 occupations. Several German lander have set up schemes to encourage young third country nationals to apply for apprenticeships. 'Berlin needs you!' is an example of a municipal government campaign to recruit young third country nationals. It is an initiative of the Commissioner of Berlin for Integration and Migration and is coordinated by BQN Berlin, the Vocational Qualification Network for Immigrants in Berlin. The scheme offers training in 12 occupational fields and over 100 qualified jobs and operates as a partnership between schools, public administration and companies. An evaluation in 2012 found that there had been a gradual increase the number of trainees from migrant families in Berlin. In 2012, 19.3% of trainees in public administration and public companies had a migration background, compared to 8.6% in 2006.<sup>49</sup>

### **3.3 Recruitment and Retention**

The impact of the recession in Europe has affected young people most strongly, with growing levels of unemployment among young people. Austerity policies have contributed to this increasing level of unemployment. There are 5.5 million young people unemployed in Europe. The EU response has been to promote several Europe wide initiatives.<sup>50</sup> An EU report, published in 2013, entitled 'Working Together for Europe's young people – a call to action' asked national governments to develop strategies to reduce youth unemployment together with other stakeholders. LRGs have the potential to play an important role in national strategies.<sup>51</sup>

In 2013, in response to this report, the European Council of Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) called for the establishment of an EU-Starter initiative which would promote youth engagement in local public services. The EU Starter would offer a year of work experience in a public institution or non-profit organisation to young Europeans without a job, training or an education. This would provide work experience and training as well as contributing to the delivery of public services. This initiative was aimed at regions with youth unemployment rates of more than 10%. Each candidate would be given a one-year contract with pay and social security which would be renewable for a year.<sup>52</sup>

The use of apprenticeships has been traditionally been one way of supporting young people to enter the labour market. The current unemployment crisis for young people is again emphasizing the importance of apprenticeships. European countries have different policies towards apprenticeships, usually influenced by the effectiveness of vocational education and

training systems. For example, Germany, has a well-developed system of apprenticeships, including federal public sector apprenticeships in 130 occupations.

In England, local authorities have played an active role in promoting apprenticeships as part of a wider strategy to engage the under-25 year olds who are not currently in employment, education or training (NEETs). Although the national Youth Contract scheme, with £1 billion funding, aimed to increase the number of vulnerable young people in education and work, only 27% participants have been able to enter education or employment.<sup>53</sup> However in pilot schemes which have been run by local authorities, over 57% of young people entered employment and / or education, which is a much higher success rate.<sup>54</sup>

Leeds City Council has worked with local employers to expand the number of apprenticeships and to promote them to local young people. As an employer, Leeds City Council created apprenticeships for young people so that they can access entry-level jobs. Apprenticeships within the City Council have also been used to allow existing workers to retrain for new roles. In a four year period, 883 staff undertook an apprenticeship to gain new skills. 149 were aged 16-24. Leeds City Council set up a partnership with Leeds City College to run a two week employability skills training course for young people and a six week placement work placement at the City Council.<sup>55</sup>

Both these examples show how local authorities in England have been playing a role in the creation of jobs and apprenticeships for local young people. The creation of employment for young people within local authorities is part of a wider set of initiatives to support young people who are not in employment, education or training living locally. Local authorities are better able to influence local employers and educational institutions to provide integrated systems to support young people but they have less influence on the quality and sustainability of jobs which young people need. Although local authorities can provide a few apprenticeships it is becoming more difficult as cuts in local authority budgets are reducing the role of local authorities in service provision and commissioning. Whether local authorities are able to play an active role in economic development is unclear although this is a strategy that many local authorities are pursuing.

One example of an initiative to address both retaining older workers and integrating younger workers has been developed by the FNV, a Dutch trade union. FNV launched the 'Generation Pact to combat the crisis' report in 2013. It was written by trade unionists working in the municipal, private and semi-public sectors. The Pact aimed to integrate FNV's bargaining practices on younger and older workers. Younger workers needed extra measures to address the problems of the economic crisis and older workers also needed measures to encourage them to remain in the workforce. Skills from younger and older workers have to be successfully combined to create benefits for workplaces. Younger workers can learn from older workers but older workers can also benefit from the energy that younger bring through new knowledge and ideas. Employment should be distributed across the generations. There are several measures which result in decreasing working hours and flexible retirement arrangements for older workers and increased mentoring/ coaching for younger workers. This involves a transfer of hours from older workers to younger workers. Older workers have a lighter work load. Craft and professional skills of older workers in part-time jobs will be maintained. New, younger worker have to be trained and mentored by older workers. The Generation Pact required tripartite collaboration at local level to increase employment benefits and planning by municipalities to increase the recruitment of young workers. Twenty five municipalities have generated action plans to re-organise work. Benefits include older workers working fewer hours and being able to transfer knowledge and young workers being given 'real' jobs.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.4 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

Local and regional authorities can play different roles in promoting OSH and well-being, for their own workers as well as for the local community. In some cases, LRG may be the initiator of the project but in many cases, it is one of several agencies which works to support social dialogue and the promotion of OSH and well-being. This is partly determined by whether LRGs have been given special roles in implementing OSH legislation and the LRG role in the promotion of decent work and well-being.

Decent work can be defined as:

“Decent work is about equal access to employment without discrimination, receiving a living wage, security in the workplace, social protection, when, for example, ill or pregnant, and the freedom to assemble and organize. Decent work is achieved through the implementation of four strategic objectives: Creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and, promoting social dialogue with gender equality as crosscutting objective.”<sup>57</sup>

LRGs have the potential to contribute to these four strategic objectives and the following examples illustrate the range of projects which have been implemented in Europe.

In Scotland, the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives aims to “work with employers to enable them to understand, protect and improve the health of their employees. This also means they will be better placed to support those with health problems who have re-entered work, to remain in work”.<sup>58</sup> There are four medium term outcomes which cover: a healthier workforce; decreased sickness absence and presenteeism in workplaces; safer and healthier workplaces and; improved productivity of individuals.<sup>59</sup> The Scottish Convention of Scottish Local Authorities is a partner and the Centre works very closely with local authorities.<sup>60</sup> This is an example of a project which has national aims but its implementation is dependent on close working with local authorities.

In Lithuania, in 1993, Lithuanian Government issued a Decree ‘Regarding the Immediate Measures for Improvement of Safety at Work’. It recommended the establishment of a specialist for safety at work called ‘inspector consultant for safety at work’ from 1994. These posts would have knowledge of both OSH requirements and local communities which would help to reduce safety management and risk assessment practices.<sup>61</sup> Regional authorities were given responsibilities to manage occupational health and safety at local level.

### 3.5 Conclusion

LRGs are in a good position to promote social inclusion as part of their wider mandate. Improving digital inclusion involves working with local communities as well as with the private ICT sector. Working towards the integration of third country nationals has to involve new ways of working through the creation of legislation, alliances and coalitions, which build on existing integration strategies. Similarly LRGs have been supporting the integration of young people into the labour force through training and apprenticeships. With OSH, LRGs are becoming more active in promoting OSH for their own workforces as well as for their local communities.

## 4. Austerity

Austerity policies have had a tangible impact on many LRG services since 2010 and are often dictating new ways of working. This can be seen in the adoption of e-government services and the struggle for resources to integrate third country nationals.

### 4.1 Digitalisation

Digitalisation and the adoption of e-government has been further promoted by central and local regional governments as a way of modernising public services and reducing costs. The nature of the work and how the work is delivered can change dramatically when digitalisation takes place. For example, the inputting of data may become a more routine and monotonous process. Previous personal contact either face-to-face or by telephone may be reduced, which leads to a decline in job satisfaction and often a loss of control over the labour process.

A Finnish study (2014) which looked at the future of work identified a range of occupational health problems that emerge from using information communications technologies more frequently and the resulting changes in the way in which work is organised.<sup>62</sup> There is a change from face-to-face communities working in the same space to networked communities operating across space, with people operating in many different relationships. Supervisory and managerial work is beginning to be scattered across different work communities. There are a growing number of organisational changes taking place which create stress among the workforce. The bonds that have previously linked people to a workplace have become more complex and often link an individual worker to one or more workplaces. This can create stress among workers which can be a cause of ill-health. Increasingly workers' careers are influenced by mobile communities and this may mean that they have several forms of employment, including operating as an entrepreneur. These multiple forms of employment will require new forms of institutional structures and regulation. This creates uncertainty for the individual worker.

As part of austerity policies but also as part of the 'modernisation' of public services, LRGs have introduced digital systems which change the way in which information is stored and the way in which services are delivered. Research which examined the impact of digitalisation on the labour process has found that it can result in a worker having less control over their work process. This can affect their level of stress, the level of job satisfaction and sense of being valued.

Nygren (2012) explored the impact of a new digital system for dealing with municipal business and documents in a Swedish municipality by looking at both workers' and managers' perception of the process.<sup>63</sup> The study looked at the introduction of a new ICT system in the HR department. The increased use of computer work made the workers feel undervalued and unable to use their professional skills. There is a greater volume of work which is more monotonous caused by the ICT. Workers perceive themselves as active agents before the introduction of digitalisation but as victims after its introduction. Gender, skills and IT become bound together. The implementation of digitalisation needs to consider how to introduce digitalisation "*without making the employees feel powerless, insignificant or socially isolated in order to get employees on board. As part of this it is crucial not to make these feelings feminised*".<sup>64</sup> There is a lack of research into the OSH implications of digitalisation of jobs.

## 4.2 Migration

The EUROMED (2012) survey of public service workers and their work with migrant users of services found that there had been a gradual deterioration of services with increasingly difficult working conditions, especially in initial reception services, where there was a lack of equipment and inappropriate premises. Public service workers were not receiving adequate training and information which made it more difficult to deliver public services.

Workers at a reception centre in the Bobigny prefecture Paris region, which had 1200-1600 users each day, reported that they were set quotas that were impossible to meet. There was lack of mediators for departments which deal with applications for naturalisation, asylum and other services. There was only a two day training on immigration policy and foreigners' rights. Offices are inadequate, with no heating and no windows. There was a high turnover of staff and high rates of sick leave. Workers were instructed not to talk to Arabic speakers in Arabic although they were allowed to speak English. As a result of these poor working conditions, service users received inadequate and often incorrect information which caused delays with applications. These inadequate services combined with long queues of service users resulted in aggressive behaviour towards public service workers.<sup>65</sup>

In Spain and Portugal, public service workers reported that the quality of public services had deteriorated. Efficiency was measured quantitatively rather than focusing on quality. They also reported a lack of training and information, a lack of inter-cultural mediators and interpreters. Relations with management had deteriorated, with an increase in worker-management conflicts. Workers felt that their work was being undermined, their skills were no longer valued and a climate of mistrust was fostered by management.<sup>66</sup>

Both these examples show that there is a lack of training and adequate resources for public service workers responsible for migration policies. The effect of austerity has been to reduce the resources available for these services as well as adopting approaches to service delivery which emphasize quantity over quality. These changes have affected the ability of workers to do their jobs and the relationships between migrants and public service workers.

In contrast, in Venice, where services report directly to the police, better working conditions were recorded. Cultural mediators and interpreters were obligatory, which resulted in an improved service. There was an emphasis on the "transmission of knowledge and skills between colleagues". Public service workers had also campaigned to keep their offices in an historic building because "foreigners also have the right to something beautiful".

Austerity has affected many of the basic services which local authorities provide for third country nationals. In the Netherlands, the cuts to funding for social integration have been dramatic. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Integration has had a 80% cut in its budget for integration of third country national. Resources for language and orientation courses will drop to a tenth of their budget between 2010-2015.<sup>67</sup>

In Spain, also affected by the global economic crisis, there were reductions to the Spanish Integration Fund, which was distributed to municipalities and regions. Support for health and education funding increased which reduced the size of cuts to the integration budget.

In the UK, extensive cuts to public funding after 2010 were made, including the budget of the Department of Communities and Local Government. This has affected local authority budgets and local public services. Language programmes for third country nationals were cut and eligibility defined much more narrowly, with an emphasis on third country nationals paying their own fees. NGOs which support third country national integration policies have had their grants cut. Legal aid has been cut, which has affected third country nationals.<sup>68</sup>

In contrast, Portugal, a country strongly affected by the global financial crisis, has maintained levels of funding for integration of third country nationals. The budget for the High

Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue increased after 2010. It included new measures such as making third country national eligible for basic literacy training offered to the beneficiaries of Social Insertion Income, establishment of an Immigrant Entrepreneur programme and mentor programme and ensuring social assistance for third country nationals living in extreme poverty whatever their residence status.<sup>69</sup> In 2015, the National Association of Local Authorities worked with the National Migration and Frontier Service in drawing up a Memorandum of Understanding to implement a National Action Plan.<sup>70</sup>

The gradual deterioration of public services is affecting the experience of migrants in the process of applying for asylum and other welfare rights. Migration policy, social policy and access to decent employment should be seen as inter-related. Third country nationals are needed by many European countries to become part of the workforce, especially health and social care, and this future requirement needs to inform the actions of LRG.

### 4.3 Recruitment and Retention

The global financial crisis and resulting austerity measures have had an impact on employment in local authorities, to varying degrees. In several countries, e.g. UK, Sweden, Greece, austerity policies have caused a dramatic decline in the number of jobs, with local government workers either losing their jobs or not being replaced, and changes in the way in which local authority services are delivered. In other countries the impact on local government has been less severe.

Hastings *et al* (2015), as part of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation research project which looked at the effect of austerity measures introduced in 2010 on three local authorities in England, found that one of the strategies adopted to deal with budget cuts was the adoption of increased efficiency measures. These included the reduction of 'back office' and fixed costs, income generation and savings from external providers as well as the redesign of front-line services, which all had an impact on the workforce. Jobs are often outsourced to external providers and changes in the pattern of work followed the introduction of new types of front line jobs.<sup>71</sup>

One of the main ways of generating efficiencies was through the reduction of jobs. In the three case studies the reduction was between 18% and 36% of the total workforce. However, the scope for continued efficiencies declined over time. By 2014, the opportunities for improved efficiency were much more limited. Respondents from the three local authorities reported that the effect of later efficiencies would be longer lasting. Staff reductions were seen as one of the areas which, over time, would have a negative effect on the ability of councils to function adequately. Respondents felt that at a time of massive change to the way in which councils were run, greater capacity was needed, not less. As more senior and long standing staff left, this reduced organizational know-how and tacit knowledge.<sup>72</sup>

A second strategy was to reduce and change the role of the council in the provision of services. Generic call centres and the use of digital communications as a substitute for face-to-face contact between council workers and citizens were the two most commonly adopted changes. These have affected the workforce with new forms of working and often less control over the labour process.

The Kiruna Regional Administration (RA) in Sweden, which had an age management policy, was affected by a fall in tax revenues and so the number of employees fell from 1830 in 2008 to 1595 in 2010. Temporary staffing levels were reduced and redundancies were introduced. However, due to strict rules in the Swedish labour market which uses a 'last in, first out' principle, this would have meant that more young workers would have left. Young workers often do not return when there is a skills shortage. Kiruna RA offered a programme



of voluntary redundancy for older workers aged 61 or more with an offer of 25% of salary until age 65 for voluntary departure, taking out their final pension entitlements through redundancy. This arrangement covered about 20% of the redundancies that were needed.

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Austerity measures have had a major impact on local government workforces in several countries. Efficiency and restructuring strategies have reduced jobs, introduced new ways of working and increased outsourcing of many 'back-office' services, which have altered the nature of work within local government.

#### **4.4 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)**

Budget reductions have led to cuts in the number of jobs as well as increased workloads when there is a failure to replace workers. Some local authorities have outsourced public services so that workers are moved to a private sector employer. This has implications for the economic security of the workers as well as increased work pressures and new forms of work organisation. All these changes are recognised as affecting the health of individual workers.

Organisational restructuring has several impacts on LRG. There is growing evidence that the impact of organisational restructuring on the health of workers is long-lasting. The HIRES project examined the experiences of organisational restructuring in both private and public organisations and companies. It found that during restructuring both employers and employees concentrated on the employment aspects, e.g. loss of jobs, redundancies, work allocation and relocation, but did not consider the "social relationships of every individual". Social relationships are now recognised as having an impact on health and the breakdown of social relationships can have a damaging effect on an individual. The result of the loss of social relationships during restructuring can often be felt within the community. New forms of work organisation can depend on good inter-personal relations but there is little training to prepare workers for these changes. There is rarely a health impact assessment of organisational restructuring.

A ten year study of organisational downsizing and employees' health in ten local authorities in Finland found that downsizing did have an impact on both mental and physical health.<sup>74</sup> There was a strong association between downsizing and reduced self-rated health. The rate of decline of self-rated health was faster in employees who had experienced downsizing. Employees remaining in employment experienced increases in musculoskeletal symptoms. These were more severe immediately after staff reductions. There was also an increase in absences due to musculoskeletal symptoms for two years after the downsizing. The study found that workers in downsized organisations were more likely to suffer from increased mental and physical health problems. There were three mechanisms that help to explain this increase in ill health. Downsizing resulted in:

- “(i) alteration in characteristics of work, e.g. job insecurity, job demands, job control;
- (ii) adverse effects on social relationships e.g. social support and ;
- (iii) behaviour prejudicial to health, e.g. smoking, excessive alcohol.”<sup>75</sup>

It is the impact of the changes in the characteristics of work that are similar to the introduction of digitalisation. This case study was part of the HIRES project (Health in restructuring) (2010) and illustrates the need to assess the health impact of organisational restructuring.

Public management reforms have been the focus of change in LRG and have been recognised as a source of stress at work. LRG workforces are predominantly female and aged 40+ and have an increased incidence of long term chronic conditions and disabilities, which will all impact on OSH and well-being. The outsourcing of local government services

makes the oversight of OSH more complex for local government employers. As LRG workforces are outsourced to different private companies, the responsibility for OSH is less clear.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

LRGs have been affected by austerity policies and the full effect of the reductions in spending have still not been fully understood. Austerity has increased the digitalisation of public services but there is still much to be learnt about the effect on OSH and how service users respond. For third country nationals, austerity policies have had a direct effect on the services which they use and the public sector workers delivering these services. Pressure on public services more widely have influenced attitudes to third country nationals negatively. Young people have been disproportionately affected by the financial crisis and LRGs have focused on supporting young people into employment. Older people employed by LRGs have often lost their jobs as a result of budget cuts. The long term health effects of austerity policies and organisational restructuring will be felt by public sector workers.

## 5. Social dialogue

This section sets out four case studies of social dialogue which illustrate how social partners have worked together to address some of the issues emerging from digitalisation, migration, changing demographic structures and the promotion of occupational safety and health.

### 5.1 Digitalisation

In a study of the Salo Region Municipal Merger in Finland, there was extensive preparatory work with both trade unions and managers. Working parties, with both trade unions and managers, were set up in every municipality involved. Involvement of staff at all levels and stages of mergers have been found to be one of the most important elements of good practice. Support, fairness and transparency were important principles that informed the merger process with different types of support and information offered to employees and managers.

### 5.2 Migration

The City of Amiens Contract Commitment Diversity *Contrat engagement diversité* (CED) or fixed term job contract shows how social partners can work together to support third country nationals into employment. The City of Amiens, the General Council of the Somme and Amiens University Medical Centre work in partnership to offer people subject to discrimination opportunities to train, qualify and seek employment. This group of three local organisations also work with other partners, e.g. National Centre for Local Administration, the public employment services, National Association for Adult Training, regional council and the state. The *Contrat engagement diversité* (CED) is a fixed term job contract which aims to increase experience, skills and professional networks. The programme is aimed particularly at young people and targets third country nationals as well as ethnic minorities and people from other disadvantaged communities. Apart from the recognition of qualifications, local authorities have become involved in the creation of internships which provide third country nationals with work experience which helps their integration into the labour market as well as improving the integration into society. This initiative helps to provide a public network of skills, support and training, access to professionals, jobs and enterprises and good career development support. The contract creates a commitment between the host institution and the job seeker but also draws on access to other employment contracts, e.g. Apprenticeship contract, the access pathway to local authority careers.<sup>76</sup>

### 5.3 Recruitment and retention

The Best Agers Lighthouse project created local age management partnerships in several Baltic States. An example of Norrbotten County Council, Sweden shows the benefits of a local age management partnership in a region with a scattered population with recruitment problems in the local public dental service. Dentists, dental hygienists and dental nurses work together. In Norrbotten there is a lack of dental nurses because there are no training institutions in the area and many dental nurses have retired early. The age management partnership started with an information session for human resource (HR) managers and unions in the County Council and municipalities in Norrbotten. A reference group for the project was formed. In May 2013 meetings with all managers and employees at the seven clinics participating in the intervention were held. Information was gathered through a questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews and a 'post-it session', which informed an action plan which integrated age management into the HR strategy. All managers attended a one-

day seminar on age management and all staff at the clinics had a two-hour training on age management. Further development work on strategies and opportunities for employees aged 55+ to work until the age of 65 or longer began in 2014, which include working with occupational health to introduced a check-up for all employees. <sup>77</sup>

## **5.4 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)**

In Lithuania, a secondary school in Vilnius (Vilnius Pilaites Secondary School) has worked with nine stakeholders (Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius Municipality, Centre of Social Assistance, Vilnius Pedagogic University, Lithuanian Children's Line, SEB Bank, Lawin Chambers, Company Cilija and other local authorities and police to develop a project which aimed to manage the social factors that influenced the behaviour of students at school, for example bullying, drug and alcohol abuse. Solutions were developed by teachers, parents and pupils working together. The project developed a School Bullying Reduction Strategy, set up a School Team for Preventive Work, extensively revised Rules of Pupils' Behaviour of the Vilnius Pilaites Secondary School and trained school staff to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme. The appointment of class teachers recognised the role that they play in school OSH. <sup>78</sup>

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

New ways of working have emerged as a result of new/ changes in technology, new ways of delivering services to meet needs of third country nationals and demographic changes. Social dialogue plays an important role in the promotion of new practices in all four topics.

The need for transparency and accountability emerges in all four topics. This places particular pressure on LRGs to make their own decision-making more transparent as well as following institutional systems of transparency and accountability. More information and consultation is needed.

LRG can play a lead role in promoting social inclusion, whether digital inclusion, social inclusion of third country nationals and social inclusion of older/younger people. LRG is best suited to promoting integration because of its responsibilities towards local populations.

The relationship between LRG policy/ implementation and national level policy/ implementation is becoming more important, for example, LRGs have taken a lead in migration policy when there was no national leadership.

LRG has responsibility for recruitment and retention and OSH in its own workplaces as well as the local community.

OSH is a theme that both cuts across three topics – digitalisation, migration and recruitment and retention. LRGs also have a responsibility to promote OSH among workplaces in their localities as well as to their own workforces.

Data collection is needed to assess the impact of digitalisation, understand how third country communities are changing, evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and retention and assess OSH issues. Data collection also contributes to transparent decision making.

Training, monitoring and evaluation are important for each topic.

## 6. 2 Recommendations

This report has shown that new forms of service delivery, good practice for OSH and social dialogue have to be interlinked if the needs of both services users and public sector workers are to be met. There are several recommendations:

- Achieve a shared understanding by social partners of the nature of the problem, e.g. OSH issues;
- Establish an effective information and consultation process with all key stakeholders, e.g. when introducing digitalisation for services users and workers;
- Implement actions in an open and transparent way so that all stakeholders understand what is being done, e.g. how resources are being allocated for social integration of third country nationals;
- Gather adequate data to both inform an analysis of a problem and to oversee the implementation of a solution;
- Make public services accountable to the local population, e.g. designing and delivering services and employment policies which reflect local demographic trends;
- Design and implement monitoring and evaluation strategies, e.g. new forms of digital services and impact on labour process;
- Provide adequate training for workforce when introducing new forms of services delivery, e.g. new ways of addressing OSH problems.

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