

Nordic Welfare Forum

A proposal by the Nordic Welfare Watch

A Nordic Welfare Forum will be held biannually. A formal joint Nordic forum does not exist today for addressing future challenges in the welfare systems.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will be divided in two arenas. One will be a venue for entering into discussions on urgent welfare issues which are at the top of the list of the political agenda (pressing issues/urgent themes). The second will be a platform in which to introduce results from academic circles regarding impending challenges which have not as yet risen to the top of the political agenda.

The agenda will contain issues to which the countries should respond most urgently, e.g. predictions on the quality of life, future challenges such as the refugee crisis, social integration, care of the elderly, teenage issues, child poverty and others (top down). The themes are determined by the Council of Ministers of Health and Social Affairs and Senior Officials Committee for Health and Social Affairs.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will also be a channel for discussions on future challenges which are less apparent (bottom up). This could be implemented, e.g. by having an open window in discussion groups for introducing research and making open calls for papers from academics. This way the Nordic Welfare Forum will become a popular platform in which research in the field can be aired.

A Nordic Welfare Forum will be the venue for publishing the Nordic welfare indicators (NOVI), i.e. approximately 30 joint indicators that are expected to generate debate and political focus. In the years when the Nordic Welfare Forum does not assemble, the NOVIs could be made public, e.g. in connection with the meetings of the Council of Ministers for Health and Social Affairs.

The participants in the Nordic Welfare Forum would be representatives from the welfare institutions, the public administration, major interest organisations, academics, non-government organisations, politicians and others.

The Nordic Welfare Forum will be a joint Nordic cooperative project with the Nordic Welfare Center (NWC) being responsible for arranging and organizing practical matters.

If it is felt that the name Nordic Welfare Forum is too similar to the annual Northern Future Forum, there are possible alternatives, e.g. Nordic Welfare Summit/Nordic Welfare Challenges.

It will be clear this autumn which of the 30 Nordic welfare indicators will be proposed in the Nordic Welfare Watch project.