



Enhancing Pressure Ulcer Prevention

A Knowledge Translation Approach
in Wheelchair Cushion Selection



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Legal Framework and Scope of Assistive Devices in Norway

In Norway, the provision of assistive devices is regulated by the National Insurance Act §10 (Folketrygdloven). The Act grants individuals with long-term functional impairments (lasting more than two years or in cases of terminal care) the right to borrow (free of charge) assistive devices when these are necessary to compensate for reduced functional ability and to support participation in daily life.

Assistive devices are provided through the Nav Assistive Technology Centres, which operate nationwide. The devices remain the property of the state, and must be specifically designed to address functional impairments. Products commonly used by the general population or available through regular commercial markets are excluded.

The overarching aim of the system is to promote independence, safety, participation, and equal opportunities across life domains such as housing, education, employment and everyday activities.

Assistive devices cover a wide range of functional areas, including:



Mobility and movement (wheelchairs, walking aids, seating systems).



Housing and environmental adaptations (accessibility solutions, technical aids for the home).



Hearing (hearing aids, assistive listening devices).



Vision (magnification devices, visual aids).



Cognition & communication (memory aids, communication devices).



Assistive devices for reading and writing difficulties.



Assistive devices for speech, language and communication difficulties.



Assistive devices and adaptations for work, education and daily living.



Prostheses, orthoses and wigs.

EXAMPLE: Framework Agreement for Pressure Redistributing Seat Cushions

- National framework agreement, primarily valid for four years, with possible revisions.
- The current agreement includes 37 pressure-redistributing seat cushions across 8 sub-contracts, covering different user needs.
- Cushions differ in materials and properties (foam, air, gel, or combinations) and are suitable for both children and adults.
- The tender applies only to pressure injury-preventive seat cushions, primarily for wheelchair users.
- Cushions for hygiene purposes (bathing or toileting) are excluded.
- Suppliers must ensure nationwide delivery of products, accessories, and spare parts.
- Each of the 8 sub-contracts constitutes a separate competition.

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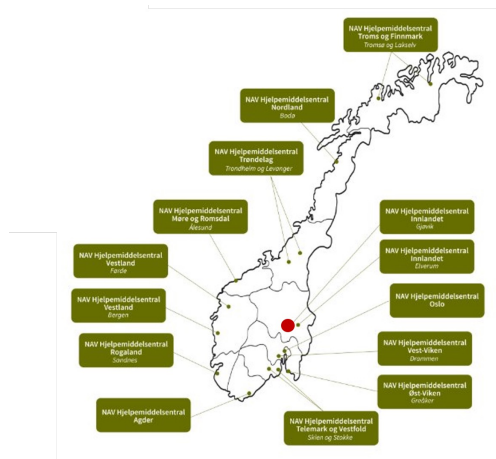
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Background for project

In Norway, assistive devices are provided through the National Insurance Act.

Individuals with a substantially reduced functional ability and long-term needs may apply for assistive devices. This system is managed by 14 Nav Assistive Technology Centers nationwide. Most applications are submitted by Occupational Therapists.



Seat cushions

National framework agreements regulate procurement. Pressure-redistributing cushions are included.

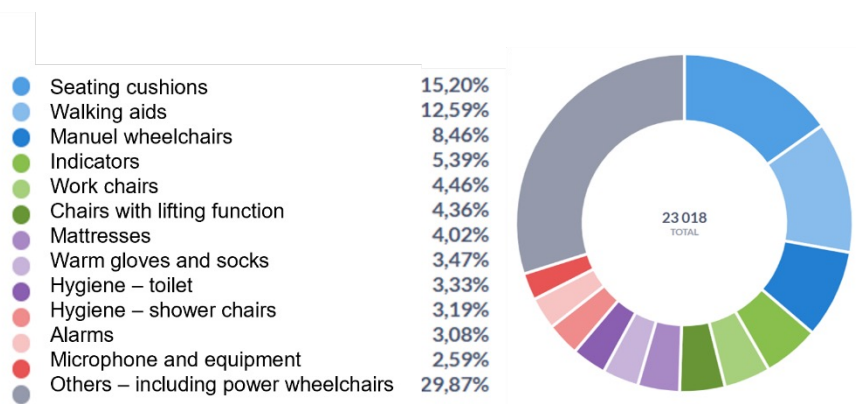
Annual expenditure:
~ **USD 7 million.**



Picture: Shutterstock

Key challenge

Many assistive devices are returned within a short time period. In 2025, pressure-redistributing seat cushions represented 15% of all returns within 30 days. Main reasons for returns: incorrect size & change in users need. Seat cushions are not recycled. Today's practice environmentally unsustainable.



Overall aim:

- **Right cushion the first time - based on users need**
- **More sustainable assistive device management**

Project rationale – with KTA model

High replacement and return rates led to the initiation of a Knowledge Translation Project aiming to reduce unnecessary exchanges.

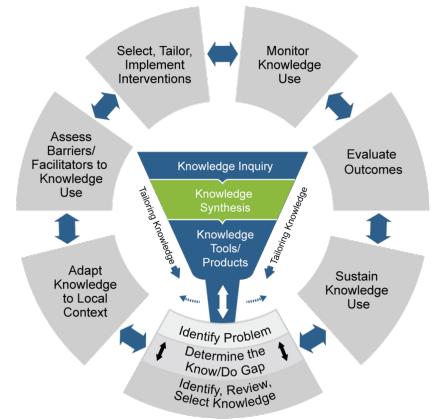


Figure: KTA model: Graham et al. 2006

Evidence-based approach

Clinical guidelines from **EPUAP/ NPIAP/ PPIIA** highlight the importance of systematic pressure ulcer risk assessment. The Braden Scale as a recommended assessment tool.

Digital solution

Digital application portal redesigned to support structured risk assessment, with: Braden Scale integrated and validation check for mismatch in size cushion and wheelchair.

Future implementation

New national framework agreement for seat cushions in autumn 2026.

Standardized training for:

- Advisors at all 14 centers
- Municipal therapists
- Digital application solution update
- Updated website with educational resources