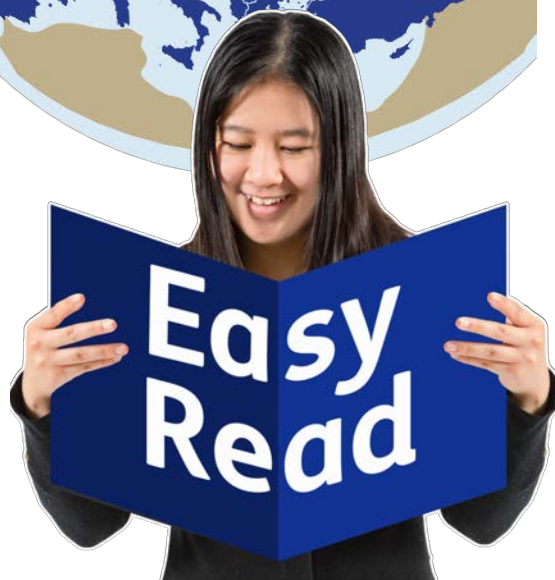


# People's right to live independently



Case study  
report: **Finland**



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# Introduction



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has been looking at the situation of people with disabilities in Finland.



They have been studying:

- People who used to live in **institutions**



An **institution** is where people with disabilities live together away from other people.



- What it is like to live in an **institution**



- What it is like to live in the **community**



The **community** is where all different people live close to each other. They live close to their families and friends.



- What helps more people with disabilities live in the community



- What is stopping people with disabilities from living in the community



- What should be done about it



This is the report of the study.

# The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights



This report has been written by the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights**.



We help to make sure everyone in the **European Union** can use their rights.



The **European Union** is a group of 28 countries in Europe who work together.



**Fundamental Rights** are things that everyone has.



For example, the right to vote and the right to get married.

# How we did it



A group of people working for the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights did the study in Finland.



They spoke with many different people including:

- People with disabilities



- Their families



- Social workers



- Politicians



We asked people what it is like to live in an institution and the community.

# Finland



In Finland many people with disabilities live in the community.



Some people with disabilities live in institutions.



In Finland around 1000 people with disabilities lived in institutions in the year 2015.



The government wants to close all institutions for people with disabilities by the year 2020.

# Living in an institution



People said that living in an institution is very different from living in the community.



In institutions:

- Every day is similar



- People cannot decide what to do each day



- It is difficult to make friends outside the institution



- It is difficult to have privacy



# Living in the community



In the community people can decide what to do each day.



It is easier to:

- Make friends



- Decide what you need and what you like.



- Get the help you need. You don't have to share your support with other people.

It is better for people with disabilities to live in the community because:



- They can take part in many activities



- They can feel equal to other people



- They can have more space and privacy



- They are free to move



- They can meet other people



- They can make decisions about themselves



People with disabilities who live in the community are often happier. They have a better life.



In Finland people with disabilities and people without disabilities can live in the same apartment block.

This makes people with disabilities feel part of their community.

This helps them to feel less lonely.



## Moving from institutions

Some people with disabilities are leaving institutions to live in the community.



Just after people with disabilities leave the institution they often get a lot of help. Someone helps them the whole day.



After some time, they often need less help. Someone helps them for a few hours each week.



## Younger and older people

Living in the community is very different for younger people and older people with disabilities.

They need different things. They want to do different things.

# What helps more people with disabilities live in the community?



People said:

- Being able to say what they think about moving to live in the community



- Being able to say what they think about the help they get in the community



- Getting the right information



- Planning the move to live in the community

## Information

Information on how to learn to live in the community is available for:



- People with disabilities
- Families of people with disabilities
- People working with people with disabilities



The information helps:

- People with disabilities to feel safe



- Local government staff know how to help people with disabilities to move from institutions to live in the community



- People with disabilities know what to do after they move to live in the community



## Planning the move

Living in the community is a big change and they need to prepare.

Politicians want to help people with disabilities to move from an institution to live in the community.

## Attitudes



An **attitude** is the way that people think about something.



People in the community think that people with disabilities are the same as other people.

People with disabilities can feel part of the community.



## Safety

The homes where people with disabilities live are safe and comfortable.

# What stops more people with disabilities living in the community?



We asked what stops people with disabilities leaving institutions to live in the community.



People said:

- Sometimes there is not enough money
- People with disabilities and their families do not always have enough information.
- People working in national and local government do not work together enough.
- Sometimes people working in institutions are afraid of losing their job.





- Some staff don't think that people can choose things for themselves.



- Some people do not want to live close to people with disabilities. They are afraid of them.



- Some families of people with disabilities are afraid that people will get hurt in the community.



- Sometimes people with disabilities who live in the community feel lonely and unhappy.

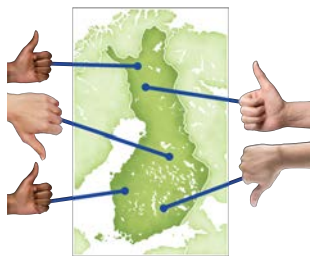


- Sometimes for some people with disabilities it is difficult to make new friends.



- There is not enough help for people with disabilities who live in the community with:
  - Healthcare
  - Support like personal assistants





- Transport

- People with disabilities in Finland who live in different cities get different kinds of help.



- People with disabilities are not free to choose where to live when they move to the community. Someone else chooses for them.



- People working in institutions do not have enough information on how to help people with disabilities who live in the community.



- Moving from an institution to live in the community can be difficult for:

- Older people with severe disabilities



- People with disabilities who need more support than others

# What to do next?



People had lots of ideas about how to help people with disabilities to live in the community.



- People with disabilities need to be able to say what they think and how they feel about things



- We need to share information about the rights of people with disabilities



- People with disabilities are not all the same. Each person will need different things



- All the people who work with people with disabilities need to work together more.



- The Government needs to:
  - Make a plan for how to work together more



- Give more money for support for people



## More information

People with disabilities need to know what it is like to move from an institution to live in the community.



## The community

We need:

- People in the community to speak more to people with disabilities and not be afraid of them
- To organise meetings so people can meet each other





- More people with disabilities on TV programs, on the radio, in newspapers and in films



- Parents of people with disabilities to allow their children to live in the community



- People with disabilities to say what they think and what they want



- To help people to take risks and learn from their mistakes



- People with disabilities to have more choice

- More money for

- Houses for people with disabilities
- Support workers



# For more information

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