



The European way(s) back to work

International Conference, 28 – 29 June 2007, Lucerne

Information Technology as a tool for quality in the public administration

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8. juni 2007

J.nr. 06-4877-99

Internationalt og politisk
sekretariat/ARY

Tale - Forum

Information Technology as a Quality Tool in the Public Administration

1. Introduction

Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The public sector in Denmark works well and efficiently.

We have good schools and good hospitals, and the care of the elderly works well. It works so well that 8 out of 10 users are satisfied with public services. Nevertheless we are faced with a great challenge. The public sector may be good. But it is not good enough in terms of people's expectations. And especially not in terms of people's expectations for the future.

Danes are getting richer. We have become used to buying what we like – more or less. The expectations of the Danes are on the increase. Therefore the public sector has to be able to follow suit.

Denmark has one of the highest tax pressures in the world. Therefore politicians wish to send the clear signal, that this is not just a question of spending more money. Instead we need to improve the public sector by coming up with new ideas. We have to find new ways, that put people at the centre of things. We need to find new ways to increase user satisfaction.

It is a question of quality – of course we have to be efficient – but citizens are also entitled to openness, transparency and high professional standards. In order to be able to live up to this, the new technologies, and especially information technologies, are essential tools for us. This applies to all of the public sector.

Also in the National Board of Industrial Injuries, we are trying all the time to keep the system open and transparent to the injured person. At the same time we have to process claims as quickly as possible to ensure a quick return to the labour market. And we have to maintain quality and legal security.

Today I am going to talk about how, in order to meet quality demands, we use information technology, and especially the electronic exchange of information between authorities. – That is, how we use IT to create a system that is open and transparent to the injured person.

I am going to talk about three very different initiatives. Though very different, they are all initiatives where, by means of IT, we not only generate efficiency and enhance legal security, but also create transparency and openness for the citizen.

The three initiatives are:

That we generate efficiency and provide the citizen with a simpler system, by means of electronic information between the Board and local authorities.

That we actively use our own website, using IT is a tool for creating openness and transparency, for the individual injured person, as well as for the public.

And that we use IT to combat underreporting of cancer cases and thereby enhance legal security for people, who have contracted cancer from going to work.

2. Electronic exchange of information

ADVIS systemet

The first initiative I am going to talk about, is that we work with electronic information between ourselves and the local authorities, who in Denmark administer other social laws, than workers' compensation. The initiative was started in 2006 and involved a few local authorities – now almost all of them are involved. In this way, we get to know, if the injured person has an ongoing claim with the local authority regarding daily sickness benefits or rehabilitation – and the local authority is informed, if we are processing a workers' compensation claim. This has the effect that we are able to get information from each other very quickly.

This is important, for in this way, case processing can become quicker – for ourselves and for the local authority. This means, that the injured person is able to return to the labour market sooner. But it also means, that when authorities communicate, the system becomes simpler and more transparent to the injured person.

Hjemmesiden

The other initiative I am going to talk about, is how we use our website actively. First of all, we have made it possible for injured persons to keep an eye on their own claims. In this way, the person in question can see how far we have got. This can be done, because we have digitalised our processing of claims – and now the injured person is actually able to watch from the sideline. This creates transparency and openness for the injured person.

We have also made a special theme page on our website. This page focuses on case processing times, and there is a

detailed FAQ-section regarding concrete case processing. This we have done, because the public is interested in case processing times, and case processing times also attract political attention. And we have done this, in order to create openness around the Board and in order to give the general public the chance to keep themselves informed.

The last initiative I am going to talk about today is the field of cancer.

3. Kræftregister

Like in many other countries, we have found, that there is substantial underreporting of work-related cancer cases. We know this, because in Denmark we have a unique official record of cancer diseases, the National Patient Registry, where all diagnoses and tissue samples are kept. Also cancer cases are listed here.

There may be perfectly good reasons why cancer cases are not reported to the Board – for instance if they are not related to work.

But there are two cancer diseases, that are almost always work-related – pleural mesothelioma and sinonasal adenocarcinoma. Here the most of the cases are due to exposures in the work environment from asbestos and wood dust.

The Workers' Compensation Act is quite clear on this point – doctors have a duty to report diseases if they suspect that the disease was caused by work. And therefore we should receive claims from the majority of people, who get pleural mesothelioma or sinonasal adenocarcinoma.

And yet our experience is, that we only receive claims in connection with about half the cancer cases.

We have tried to inform doctors that they have to report these claims – but it has not solved the problem. And it is a problem, for it means that there are a number of people, who do not get the compensation they are entitled to – money that might come in handy in a situation with serious illness.

We are determined to solve the problem. We will ensure, that people get the compensation to which they are entitled. And we are going to do it by using IT.

Therefore the Danish Parliament recently enacted a bill that makes it possible to electronically exchange information with the National Patient Registry. The Act takes effect on Monday.

In practical terms this means, that the Board will get access to parts of the Patient Registry. Access is only for the diagnoses pleural mesothelioma and sinonasal adenocarcinoma. The Board can then electronically extract information on diagnoses and is informed, at the same time, of the names of persons, who have the diagnosis in question. We then contact the injured person and ask him or her, if they want us to process the case as a workers' compensation claim.

This programme can in time be expanded to include other cancer diseases.

This is a very simple solution to a very serious problem. But by means of IT, we can ensure that people, who get cancer from going to work, also get the compensation to which they are entitled. Information technology helps us enhance the legal security of the individual.

I have now been talking about three very concrete and very different initiatives, where we create higher quality in the public sector by means of information technology.

I have been talking about electronic information between the National Board of Industrial Injuries and local authorities – how IT can be used as a tool creating efficiency and providing the citizen with a simpler system.

I have been talking about how we actively use our website, and how IT is a tool for creating openness and transparency, for the individual injured person, as well as for the public.

And I have been talking about, how we use IT to combat underreporting of cancer cases, and thereby enhance legal security for people, who contract cancer from going to work.

4. Konklusion

You all represent different organisations.

Some are public, some are private – and some are somewhere in between.

And we do not all work in the same field: Some only deal with compensation for industrial injuries, some deal with prevention and workers' compensation, and some have medical treatment as their field.

But we do have one thing in common: the demands made on our organisations are increasing. And the demands made on our work, are getting tougher. It is no longer enough just to solve the task for which, we were brought into this world.

We have to solve our tasks to meet the demands made by our users. We need to create a connection across sectors, so that the administration becomes understandable. We need to be professional, we need to be efficient, and we need to ensure that users get the benefits and compensation payments, to which they are entitled. And at the same time we need to be

open and transparent, so that the public will be able to follow what we do, and see, how we solve our tasks.

In order to enhance quality, we need to play on more strings – but information technology is one essential tool for reaching our objectives.

Thank you.



Information Technology as a Quality Tool in the Public Administration

National Board of Industrial Injuries



Outline

- Electronic exchange of information between the Board and local authorities
- The website as a tool for transparency and openness
- Electronic access to the Patient Registry – for cancer cases



The website

- Digitalization of case processing – the injured person is able to watch his/her own case
- Theme page on case processing times



Electronic access to the Patient Registry

- All cancers reported to the Patient Registry
- Board access is only for pleural mesothelioma and sinonasal adenocarcinoma
- The Board contacts the injured person to ensure the entitled compensation

Conclusion

We need to ensure:

- Efficiency
 - High standard of legal rights
 - Openness
 - Transparency
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- Information technology an essential tool for reaching goals