

# Devoted to Serving the JWC Community

**By May Linn Bie**

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The Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) Community Support team is made up of two sections, namely the Community Services Section (CSS) and the Host Nation Support Office (HNS), which both reside in the Base Support Branch of the Support Directorate. Together, CSS and HNS work as one integrated team to provide the entire JWC community of around 1,100 personnel and family members with the best help and support during their time in Norway.

Relocating to a new country can be challenging and involves a lot of change for the whole family. It can entail feelings of uncertainty and stress, but also offers excitement and new experiences. When transferring to Norway and during the stay, the Community Support team is there to guide and support newcomers. More specifically we help the newcomers navigate the special NATO arrangement with Norway when it comes to the healthcare system, taxes, banking, utilities, customs and import regulations, schooling, language barriers and even driving rules. Basically, we provide newcomers with top tips and essential tools to set them up for a good start. We also work in close cooperation with the various national support elements on-site in our joint mission of supporting staff members and their families.

An important part of what we do is to share information with newcomers and existing staff and families on available local community organizations. The CSS has long-established networks and connections with local organizations.

There are also internal JWC clubs for various activities. Their doors are always open to new members. Several events and activities are held on and off the base throughout the year. These are organized by CSS, the library, or the various clubs and associations, such as the Friendship Club, or the Jåttå Community Club, which has a fully equipped bar and function room. In addition, the CSS has a good collaboration with the Morale and Welfare Service provided by the U.S. 426th Air Base Squadron Services. The CSS Activities Programme is very popular and well attended. It is an integral link between the Stavanger community and the JWC, as it provides JWC community members with varied and inclusive activities suitable for everyone.

On average, the CSS activities consist of 20 to 25 events per year, e.g. family bowling, curling, climbing, husky farm trip, ski trips, boat trips, Welcome BBQ, the Egersund Christmas Market trip, the Oktoberfest, and an annual JWC Ball.



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**ABOVE**  
The JWC Community Services and Host Nation Support staff members

**BELOW**  
Horse riding at Tryggvi Icelandic Horse Farm, and surfing course in Hellestø beach

Additionally, our Welfare and Sports Assistant can help facilitate a healthy lifestyle through administration of gym memberships at one of Norway's largest gym chains, and special arrangements with some of the swimming pools in the area. There is also a small gym facility on the JWC premises and a well-equipped sports centre at the Norwegian naval base, Harald Hårfagre, in Madla. The JWC sports clubs include orienteering, bicycle, chess, football, sailing and fishing. As part of morale and welfare services, the community area includes a commissary called the Central Cellar. The shop caters for the basic needs of our expats, who appreciate a good selection of international brands and products.

Norway is blessed with beautiful scenery, and the Norwegians know how to enjoy what nature has to offer. The passion is contagious: Newcomers soon find themselves joining the rest of the JWC community on outdoor activities and breathing in the fresh air. To take full advantage of the countryside, the JWC Military Cabins Club also has a number of mountain cabins available for hire to club members.

The coastal city of Stavanger has an abundance of historical buildings, museums, and cultural activities. Tracing Vikings in Stavanger is quite fun and interesting. Also known as the "oil capital of Norway", Stavanger is a multiethnic and multicultural melting pot. Offshore drilling in Norway began in 1969 and that is when the Stavanger area became the centre of the new industry. It enriched Stavanger in many ways. In 2008, the Stavanger region was the European Capital of Culture.





**ABOVE**  
An aerial view  
of Stavanger

Today, Stavanger has more than 144,000 inhabitants and ranks as the fourth-largest city of Norway. The neighbouring municipality of Sandnes is also close to Stavanger and has a population of around 80,000. It lies at the end of Gandsfjord and is known as Norway's bicycle city due to the old establishment of bicycle manufacturer Øglend DBS. With the smaller municipality being equally close to the JWC, quite a few staff members also choose to live in Sandnes. At CSS, we also facilitate exploring the local area and getting to know its history via ticket sale to local museums, amusement parks and cinemas, to name but a few.

Lastly, CSS continuously stays in touch with the JWC community with news and updates via email, the community support website, and a membership-only social media site. Every year we see members leaving and new ones arriving. Our mission is to make their arrival, stay and departure as seamless and enjoyable as possible. ✦

**BELOW**  
The JWC International  
Day and Welcome BBQ



**May Linn Bie** has been the Head of the Community Services Section since 2019. Prior to that she worked in the oil and gas industry and carried out humanitarian work in the UN system.