

Sweden

SOCIAL SERVICES INDEX

RECOMMENDATION

Introduce new social services legislation for improved child welfare

It is imperative that the proposed new social services legislation is introduced as soon as possible. There is a need for reform in legislation to clearly support the shift **in focus to early intervention, preventive measures, and the provision of services** without extensive childcare investigations when deemed applicable. The transition needs **to receive adequate financial funding**. There is also a need to ensure that legislation covering secrecy and confidentiality allows relevant collaboration between social services, the police, and schools in the best interests of the child.

SOCIAL SERVICES POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The [Social Services Act \(SoL\)](#) provides regulations concerning social services. The Act mandates municipalities to provide social services and support. Since 2001, the Act (SoL) has undergone several amendments, focusing on specific areas or populations to ensure their social inclusion.

The Swedish Act on Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (Disability Act)(LSS)(SFS 1993:387), introduced in 1994, governs services for people with disabilities in addition to the Social Services Act. People with disabilities receive help through the SoL, but [LSS](#) legislation provides that they will be offered more support when needed. legislation applies to individuals in three groups:

- People with intellectual disabilities
- People with significant and permanent intellectual functional disabilities following brain damage as an adult
- People with other serious and permanent functional disabilities not related to normal ageing face considerable difficulties in everyday life and require substantial support or services. Individuals in these groups can apply for specific types of support.

In accordance with the above legislation, municipalities are granted the authority to develop **their own guidelines for service provision**, ensuring compliance with the legislative requirements. These guidelines offer detailed descriptions of the services available and the approaches/methods employed in their delivery. Municipalities are obliged to promptly deliver services following a decision, ensuring that beneficiaries have

the right to access services within a maximum timeframe of three months from the decision date.

Although **there is no single catalogue or portfolio**, municipalities can refer to several regulations and general guidelines primarily issued by the [National Board of Health and Social Welfare](#). The National Board of Health and Welfare provides information concerning services designed for specific groups, such as services tailored to meet the needs of older individuals. In addition, it employs a broad definition of homelessness, ranging across four situations that people may find themselves in for various lengths of time.

- Situation 1 - Acute homelessness
- Situation 2 - Institutional or assisted living
- Situation 3 - Long-term living arrangements organised by Social Services
- Situation 4 - Private short-term living arrangements.

The National Board of Health and Welfare [provides a user-friendly platform](#) that enables individuals to assess their eligibility for social assistance and calculate the precise level of support they are entitled to. Moreover, their website provides information dedicated to supporting parents, offering insights into the different types of support that social services can provide for children and young individuals.

Instead of a single strategic social services plan, there are various plans governing different aspects of social services. Government grants often accompany strategic plans. These grants are often allocated to organisations entrusted with coordinating various aspects of the strategy and its implementation. However, they are frequently of a short-term nature and are deemed inadequate by municipalities responsible for implementing the strategy.

Recently, SALAR, in collaboration with the municipalities, has undertaken an extensive [mapping exercise](#) to identify the interventions offered within social services. The mapping was carried out to find out which interventions are provided, how they are provided, and which interventions could be provided without an assessment process in the event of a change in legislation. This mapping was deemed necessary as a result of the proposal for new social services legislation in the report "[Sustainable social services – A new social services law SOU 2020:47](#)." The inquiry's major proposals encompass preventive and easily accessible social services, comprehensive planning for specific interventions, knowledge-based social services, and the possibility of implementing interventions without prior means-testing. Although not a conventional strategic plan, the report serves as a guiding compass, outlining the overall direction for social services.

Main Agencies

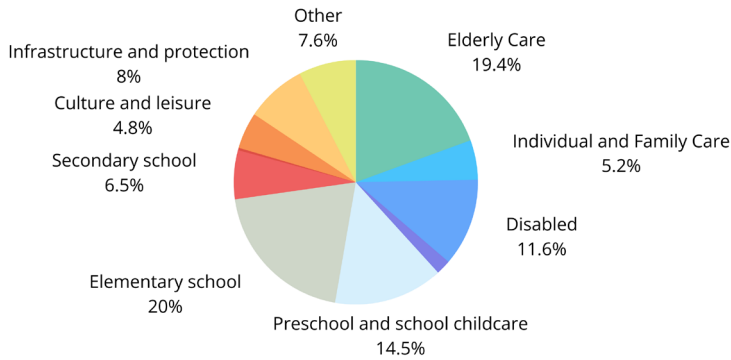
The [Ministry of Health and Social Affairs](#) bears the responsibility for a wide range of societal welfare issues, encompassing public health, medical care, and social insurance. Ensuring financial security for individuals during illness, old age, or when raising young children is part of its core mandate. The Ministry's responsibility extends to matters concerning individual and family care, support for individuals with disabilities, and care for older persons.

SOCIAL SERVICES INVESTMENT

According to 2022 data, €24.1 billion was invested in social welfare services. This was invested in four main areas of social welfare provision: individual and family services, services for older people, services for people with disabilities, and financial assistance.

While data specific to the percentage of public social spending in 2022 is currently unavailable, [OECD Statistics](#) indicate that 23.7% of the budget was allocated to public social spending in that year.

2022 Municipalities' costs



SOCIAL SERVICES COVERAGE

Long-term Care

Residential Care

In 2022, there were 82,000 older people in residential care facilities. The National Board of Health and Welfare does not collect statistics on the number of people assessed as having needs for long-term care support or how many assessments result in a decision of ineligibility for long-term care. This information is collected individually by each municipality.

As an indication of the level of eligibility during 2022, the City of Stockholm assessed applications from 3,011 people for residential care: 399 or 13% were considered ineligible. From the 399 ineligible cases, 102 appealed against the decision, and 30 cases, or 29%, were ruled eligible by the courts.

Despite what the law says, 4,474 people did not have access to a residential care placement within three months.

It can be assumed that all needs are met, although a relatively small but not insignificant

number of people have to wait for a place to become available. The inspection authority (IVO) records the number of individuals who wait for over three months to receive a placement. This [figure](#) has declined over the last few years.

Day Centres

In 2022, 10,015 people over 65 years of age (less than 0,5% of this age group) attended day centres (publicly financed active ageing centres) following their needs assessment. During 2022, 16,375 people were assessed as being in need of a day centre place (representing less than 1% of the age group).

Home Care

148,000 older people received home care in 2022. There is no available data on the total number of people assessed as having needs for long-term support.

292 people did not receive access to home care support within three months.

On average, each person receives 34.2 hours of home care per week.

Support Services for People with Disabilities

Sweden lacks a registry of people with disabilities, making it challenging to assess the total number.

The current estimated number is approximately 59,267 (including 1,173 people under 18) who receive long-term support through the SoL legislation.

In Sweden, there are two different types of services for persons with disabilities: **Support services** (Boendestöd) and **Home Help** (Hemtjänst). Support services are designed to help the individual to be more active and take part in social activities. A total of 29,469 people with disabilities receive support services in their own homes, including

106 children. A total of 15,061 people with disabilities received home care, including 123 children.

Technology and Telecare Services

In 2023, 278,965 older people received telecare services.

Minimum Income Schemes

43% of households, including both adults and children, received support on average for more than ten months. The number of people receiving social assistance, meaning **minimum income benefits**, was approximately 300,000, 2,9% of the population.

The average benefit paid to households during 2022 was 8,995 SEK/month (approximately €752).

Child Protection Services

In 2021, 26,200 children were taken into care. Of these, 18,700 were placed in foster care, **representing 71% of the total children in care.**

Services for Female Victims of Violence

According to 2019 data, 282 centres provided sheltered accommodation for women victims of violence.

In total, there were 1,653 places for women and 2,385 places for children in these centres.

Services for Homeless People

According to 2022 data, 17,500 individuals had some type of long-term housing arrangement organised by Social Services. According to estimates, there are 143 persons per 100,000 inhabitants in this situation.

According to 2017 data, 5,900 were acutely homeless. Around 650 were sleeping outdoors or in a public space. More than 5,700 individuals had private short-term living arrangements in other persons' homes, and 4,900 were staying at various kinds of facilities and had no place to live after their scheduled discharge or if they moved.

Sweden does not have a dedicated programme for social housing. However, the country operates a system of social contracts, where municipalities rent apartments from property owners and sublet them to tenants who are unable to find affordable housing.

Acknowledgement: ESN would like to thank Graham Owen from ESN member in Sweden, Board of the Swedish Association of Social Services Directors, for the information provided in this document.

Published: November 2023

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