

Sweden – ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

Academic networks and resources

[Swedish academic network for disability research](#)

Journal: [Forskning om funktionshinder pågår](#) (in Swedish Disability Research in Progress]). Four issues per year. Free of charge.

Swedish researchers also participate in the [Nordic Network for Disability Research](#). This association provides opportunities for networking amongst disability researchers and holds an international academic conference every two years.

Journal: [Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research](#)

Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

The former [Disability Ombudsman](#) (HO) has from 1 January, 2009 been replaced by [Discrimination ombudsman](#). The Government appoints the Discrimination Ombudsman. There is a central office to assist the Ombudsman in her/his work. The Ombudsman is the name used to represent both the Ombudsman personally, and the Ombudsman and the Office of the Ombudsman together. The Ombudsman is a government authority.

[Handisam - The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination](#). Handisam has two paramount tasks: co-ordination and acceleration. The co-ordinating role includes, for example, supporting the sectoral authorities tasked with implementing the national plan for disability policy. Work on the action plan is followed up and evaluated. Handisam is the Government's staff and expert authority. The accelerating role means, among other things, developing knowledge concerning accessibility in the community and in particular ensuring that the public sector sets a good example.

The [National Agency for Special Educational Support](#), acts to improve the opportunities for young disabled people and adults to a good education.

Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

[The Swedish Disability Federation](#) is the voice of the Swedish disability movement towards the government, the parliament and national authorities. The co-operative body consists today of 43 national disability organisations with about 500,000 individual members.

Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:

[The Swedish National Association of the Deaf](#)

[The Swedish Federation of People with Mobility Impairments](#)

[The Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing People](#)

[The Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired](#)

[The Independent Living Institute](#)

National law and strategy

Sweden has ratified the [United Nations Convention](#) and the [Optional Protocol](#).

Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include:

There are four important Acts prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Disability Ombudsman has the task to see that this legislation is complied with and that court action is taken when necessary.

[The Prohibition of Discrimination in Working Life of People with Disability Act](#) (1999:132)

[Equal Treatment of Students at Universities Act](#) (2001:1286)

[The Prohibition of Discrimination Act](#) (2003:307)

[Act on the prohibition of discrimination and other degrading treatment of children and pupils](#) (2006:67)

[Act \(1993:387\) concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments](#) includes ten measures for increasing the welfare for some people with impairments.

[From patient to citizen: a national action plan for disability policy](#) (Government Bill 1999/2000:79), which was passed by the parliament 31 May 2000. According to the Bill the objectives of disability policy are: a society based on diversity; a society designed to allow people with impairment of all ages full participation in the life of the community; equal opportunities in life for girls and boys, women and men with impairment.

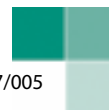
Facts and figures

Data on population indicate that:

15.7 % of the general population age 16-65 (919,000) have a disability of which 47.3% male and 52.7% female. Of these 60.5% reported reduced work ability, i.e. 9.5% of the total population. More women than men reported reduced work ability (10.9% vs. 8.2%). The most common forms of impairment are: Mobility (31.9%); Allergy (20.2%); Mental (9.3%); Hearing (8.6%) (Statistics Sweden, SCB 2007:2 Labour market situation for disabled persons 2006)

Data on employment indicate that:

In 2006, 67% of disabled persons were in the labour force, compared to 80.3% of non disabled population. Among disabled people with reduced work ability 56.6% were



in the labour force (year 2000 60.9%) compared to 80.3% (year 2000 79.6%) for general population.

The unemployment rate among disabled people with reduced work ability was 8.7% compared to 4.3% for general population (Statistics Sweden, SCB 2007:2 Labour market situation for disabled persons 2006)

During 2000-2007 the rate of disabled people passing from employment with wage subsidy to non-subsidised employment has varied around 0.40%. There is no difference between the sexes. ([Handisam](#))

Data on education indicate that:

There is a difference between disabled and non-disabled people in highest level of education achieved. 47.6% of disabled people completed upper secondary level (compared to 44%) and 30.2% completed postsecondary education (compared to 34.3%). (Source: SCB 2007:2 Labour market situation for disabled persons 2006)

Data on accessibility indicate that:

Indicators compiled by The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination ([Handisam](#)) and Swedish Survey on Living Conditions: Report 97 *Disabled 1988-1999* ([Statistics Sweden](#)) suggest that:

At the end of the 1990s 81% of the population aged 25-64 lived in housing without wheelchair access, while the corresponding percentage for people with severe mobility impairment was 66% ([Statistics Sweden](#))

Two thirds of local municipalities estimate that there is a lack of housing with special service to people with disabilities (2008). Information on accessibility in the general housing supply is lacking ([Statistics Sweden](#))

The rate of TV programs with text has increased and reached 68% in 2007 (calculated on programs of Swedish origin – programs of foreign origin all have text in Swedish). The number of hours of programs with sign interpretation or on sign language is low (123 hours in public service during 2007, children's programs about 30 hours per year) ([Handisam](#))

Information on accessibility to theatres, libraries and museums is lacking ([Handisam](#))

60% of government authorities have a plan of action regarding accessibility ([Handisam](#))

50-60% of vehicles used in county public transport (länstrafiken) have one or more basic accessibility arrangements, such as as automatic written and spoken information on stops, low floor, lift/ramp to enter and exit a vehicle. ([Handisam](#))

[Data from the MeAC accessibility survey](#) (2007) showed that

None of the selected public or commercial websites passed even the automatic evaluation

The main emergency number was accessible by text phone, text and video relay were also available.

Both public television channels provided national language TV programs with subtitling, (90%). and some programmes with signing (2%).

Both commercial TV channels provided national language programs with subtitling (35%) but neither provided signing or audio description.

Both of the two main banks were installing talking ATMs.

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:

Disposable income among disabled people did not differ noticeably from those of other people, although they experience day-to-day economic difficulties more than the general population due to extra expenses for medical care, drugs, transport etc. The group is also more dependent on daily help than other people (Ds 2002:32).

During the second half of the 1990s, income standard (measured by an index) was 180 for the general population aged 25-64 as compared to 199-142 among disabled people aged 25-64 with index above 180 reported for people with heart diseases and people with hearing impairment and index below 180 for other groups of disabled people, with the smallest index reported for people with mental disorders (Swedish Survey on Living Conditions: Report 97 *Disabled 1988-1999* [Statistics Sweden](#))

11% of the general population aged 25-64 were considered poor as compared to 5% (vision impaired) but 26% (mental disorders) among disabled people (second half of the 1990s). (Swedish Survey on Living Conditions: Report 97 *Disabled 1988-1999* [Statistics Sweden](#))

Data on attitudes indicate that:

14% of all disabled persons felt discriminated against because of disability. For those with reduced work ability the corresponding figure was 21%. (Source: SCB 2007:2 Labour market situation for disabled persons 2006)

In 2001, 6% of respondents identified themselves as disabled, compared to the EU15 average of 5% ([Eurobarometer 54.2](#))

In 2008, 11% had witnessed discrimination on grounds of disability during the preceding 12 months as compared to the EU average of 7% (Special Eurobarometer 296, [Eurobarometer 54.2](#))

On a 10-point 'comfort-scale' people in Sweden had a comfort level of 9.7 with the idea of having a disabled person as neighbour in 2008. Corresponding EU figure was 9.1 (Special Eurobarometer 296, Eurobarometer 54.2)

The [2007 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe](#) showed that 64% of people knew someone who was disabled (compared to 55% EU average) and 88% acknowledged that being disabled tended to be disadvantage in society (EU average 79%).

Disability discrimination was viewed as widespread by 53% (EU average 53%); 23% thought that disability discrimination was more widespread than five years ago. 69% thought that not enough was being done to combat discrimination in general (EU average 51%).



77% thought that more disabled people should be in the workplace (EU average 77%) and 80% thought specific measures on equal opportunities were needed in this field.

Data on public spending indicate that:

In 2005 Sweden spent 6.0% of GDP on incapacity related benefits compared to the OECD average of 2.6% ([OECD Social Expenditure Database](#))

Central and local public spending regarding measures according to Act 1993:387 and 389 (concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments) was 41,9 milliard Swedish Crowns in 2006 (SOU 2008:77 page 21

In 2006, disability benefits accounted for 14.9% of all benefits expenditure (both cash and in kind benefits) compared to an EU27 average of 7.5%, the highest proportion of any EU country (European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics)

Social protection

Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the [MISSOC](#) database December 2008):

Disability benefits

The most important disability benefits are:

Disability pension: A person is entitled to sickness benefits (for people aged 30-64 years) or activity support (for people aged 19-29 years) when having at least one-quarter reduction in working capacity. This measure has replaced the early retirement pension. Activity support is paid at the rate of 223 SEK per day if the person does not fulfill requirements for unemployment. If requirements are met the amount is between 320 SEK to 680 SEK per day. Maximum 196,800 SEK/year

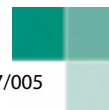
Disability allowance: An allowance to cover substantial extra costs in day-to-day life as a result of impairment. Disability allowance is 36, 53 or 69% of a price-base amount set annually by the government, which varies from one year to the next. The percent varies depending on the need of help and the amount of extra costs. In 2008 the values were: 14,760 SEK (36%); 21,730 SEK (53%); 28,290 SEK (69%).

Persons, who need more than 20 hours in a week personal assistance in their daily life, have the right to assistance benefits for the financing of personal assistants. Assistance benefits are based on the number of hours negotiated and the amount per hour was 237 SEK for 2008.

Wage subsidy: employer's grants for employment of persons with work impairment. The aim of this social support is that persons with work impairment will obtain and keep a job that they would otherwise not have maintained. Wage subsidies are paid to the employer towards salary costs up to 16,700 SEK per month.

Rehabilitation and re-training

Appliances and aids are supplied by local health authorities



Rehabilitation benefit is paid after a sickness period if a person takes part in vocational training. The benefit is paid with the same amount as sickness cash benefit.

Preferential employment and quotas

No special quota rules exist for disabled persons

Long-term support and care

Responsibility for welfare lies with the local municipality (in co-operation with other bodies when needed), for instance homecare, shopping, meals, assistive aids and equipment can be provided to elderly and people with disabilities. Adaptation of the home and hiring of a relative as care worker is also a responsibility of the local municipality.

Act 1993:387 and 389 (concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments) underpin long-term support and care of people with lasting physical or mental impairment. Measures include advice and personal support, personal assistance, escort service, help from contact person, relief service in the home, temporary stay away from home, supervision for schoolchildren, family home or residential arrangements with special service for young people and for adults, daily activities.

Additional information

Useful sources of more detailed information about the situation of disabled people, and the policies and support available, include:

Further information and [a fact sheet](#) (in English) are available from the [Swedish Institute website](#).