



About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 20 January

Read more about the Government's COVID-19 measures in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

Restrictions to remain for a further two weeks

At a press conference held 26 January 2022, the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden presented their renewed assessment of the current situation regarding the spread of infection, the pressure on the healthcare sector, and the impact on society. The rate of infection in Sweden is still very high and the number of confirmed COVID-19 infections continues to rise. The assessment is that the spread of infection has not yet reached its peak, but that the Omicron variant results in a milder form of illness than previous variants. This means that a lower proportion of those infected suffer from serious illness.

If the situation stabilises, most of the restrictions may be lifted on 9 February.

Extension of the scheme for compensation when a school or preschool closes

The Government has decided to extend the regulation on temporary parental allowance due to the COVID-19 disease to the end of March 2022. This means that one parent can receive temporary parental allowance if the parent needs to be absent from paid work in order to care for a child when, for example, a preschool or school is closed in certain situations associated with the COVID-19 disease. The extension also includes the scheme for a certain preventive temporary parental allowance for parents of certain children who have recently become seriously ill and who need to be protected from infection by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars are extended up to and including 31 May 2022.

The Government has issued extensions of the COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars until 31 May 2022, after the Riksdag voted in favour of the Government's proposal for an extension. The Riksdag also gives notice to the Government to respond with a proposal to the effect that the laws shall apply only up to and including 31 March 2022.

The Government has decided on the participant limit for general gatherings, public events, trade fairs, and private gatherings in rented premises.

The Government has decided on tighter restrictions due to the increased spread of infection from COVID-19 and the strained situation in the healthcare sector as a result of the pandemic. As a result of the request by the Public Health Agency of Sweden, a participant limit of 500 people is now being introduced for general gatherings and public events, including trade fairs, held indoors. An option for sectioning is being introduced so that the participant limit will apply to each section. The participant limit will apply when vaccination certificates are used.

In addition, the participation limit for private gatherings held in rented premises is being lowered to 20 people. However, this does not apply if the premises are used for memorial services in connection with a funeral ceremony since the participant limit will remain at 50 people.

Extended support for companies, culture and sport

The Government has proposed further measures to the Riksdag aimed at reducing the spread of infection, safeguarding healthcare resources for testing and vaccination, and mitigating consequences for Swedish jobs and companies. Among other things, this includes the extension of support for companies, culture and sport, as well as the reintroduction of compensation for qualifying deductions.

Stricter infection control measures were introduced on 12 January 2022

Stricter infection control measures were introduced on 12 January 2022 due to the significant increase in community transmission at the same time as an increase in pressure on the healthcare sector. The overall assessment is that

Sweden is in a situation where it is necessary to take certain additional infection control measures in the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures.

Restaurants and bars and other activities with large crowds shall have the option to use vaccination certificates.

The Government has decided that restaurants and bars and activities where the risk of crowding and spread of infection is particularly high shall have the option to use vaccination certificates as an infection control measure. The use of vaccination certificates is intended to reduce the spread of infection as well as its consequences for society.

Several important vaccination initiatives decided on for 2022

The Government has decided on several important initiatives for the purpose of increasing vaccination coverage in Sweden. Among other things, the Government has tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden to carry out a national theme week on vaccination against COVID-19 at the beginning of 2022. The county administrative boards are also being given an extended and clarified assignment to assist the regions in the vaccination programme, to implement vaccination communication initiatives and to participate in the national theme week. The goal is for vaccination coverage in the country to be as high and evenly distributed as possible.

The Government and SKR agree on continued and strengthened handling of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) have entered into two new agreements for continued effective vaccination efforts and continued large-scale testing and contact tracing. The state reimburses the regions for each vaccination and test carried out. In addition, the regions will receive almost an additional SEK 200 million to increase vaccination capacity, among other things.

Vaccinated in third countries may soon receive COVID vaccination certificates

The Government has decided that the Swedish eHealth Agency will be allowed to sign an agreement with the National Government Service Centre, which means that people with their place of legal or registered residence in Sweden but who have been vaccinated in a third country will have access to a vaccination certificate. The service is expected to be in place no later than

1 February 2022.

More infection control measures from 23 December 2021

More infection control measures were introduced on 23 December in accordance with Government's action plan for the introduction of infection control measures. The reason is the increased spread of infection from COVID-19 in society and the increased pressure on the healthcare sector.

Measures from and including 23 December 2021:

- Indoor general gatherings and public events with more than 20 participants must only have seated audiences, regardless of whether vaccination certificates are used or not. Without vaccination certificates, group size is limited to a maximum of 8 people with a distance of 1 metre between groups. There is an exemption to this for religious gatherings.
- Indoor general gatherings and public events with more than 500 participants require vaccination certificates and group size limited to a maximum of 8 people with a distance of 1 metre between groups. General gatherings and public events with 500 participants or more can therefore not be arranged without a vaccination certificate.
- For restaurants and bars, the requirements are for seated serving and a distance of 1 metre between groups. This also applies to nightclubs.
- For trade fairs and indoor shopping venues, the requirement is for at least 10 square metres per person.
- For indoor culture and recreational activities, such as museums, art galleries and gyms, the requirement is for at least 10 square metres per person, with the exception of activities aimed at children and young people born in 2002 or later, for example training and competition.
- Between 23 December 2021 and 16 January 2022, advice was introduced to culture, sport and recreation associations against organising or participating in camps, cups or other major indoor activities whose participants do not normally meet in other circumstances. Individual activities, matches and one-day competitions in leagues or equivalent can be carried out. The advice does not apply to professional sport.
- General advice to work from home is being reintroduced.
- Infection control measures are recommended for adult education in order to avoid crowding and large gatherings. The general rule is for education to be conducted on an in-person basis, but universities and higher education institutions may use distance learning as a tool to

prevent crowding at teaching premises.

The requirement for a medical certificate to receive disease carrier allowance is being temporarily removed

Government has decided to temporarily remove the requirement for a medical certificate to receive disease carrier allowance from 27 December 2021. The decision is part of Government's work to introduce more infection control measures in order to limit the spread of infection in society.

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Government Offices of Sweden

About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 10 December



About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 23 September

Read more about the Government's COVID-19 measures in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

Restrictions are being lifted but the COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars have been extended

Further restrictions are being lifted in connection with implementing Stage 4 of the Government's plan for the removal of restrictions. Among other things, the Government has decided to remove the participant limit for general gatherings, public events and private gatherings from 29 September 2021.

Parliament has extended the COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars up to and including 31 January 2022 in order to continue to have continued readiness to deal with the pandemic.

The following are being removed as we enter Stage 4:

- Participant limit for general gatherings and public events.
- Participant limit for private gatherings in, for example, rented premises.
- The Public Health Agency of Sweden's regulations on infection control measures (including distance between groups at restaurants and bars), announced with the support of the COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars, have been repealed.
- The Public Health Agency of Sweden's advice to work from home and the government assignment to government agencies for more people to

work from home have been withdrawn.

The following apply after Stage 4 has been implemented:

- General requirements on operators regarding infection control measures in accordance with the COVID-19 Act, the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars, and the Restrictions Ordinance, will remain in force. This involves, for example, that the spaces at the disposal of the organiser should be arranged in a way that is safe from an infection control point of view.
- People with symptoms should remain at home and test themselves, and employers should then facilitate their working from home
- There are special recommendations for people who are not vaccinated on taking precautions in order to avoid becoming infected and spreading the COVID-19 disease. This involves continuing to keep their distance from other people, and in particular to avoid close contact with people in risk groups and people who are 70 years of age and older. In accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act, a great responsibility lies with the individual not to spread communicable diseases.

Extension of the scheme for compensation when a school or preschool closes

The Government has decided to extend the regulation on temporary parental allowance due to the COVID-19 disease to the end of January 2022. This means that one parent can receive temporary parental allowance if the parent needs to be absent from paid work in order to care for a child when, for example, a preschool or school is closed in certain situations associated with the COVID-19 disease. The extension also includes the scheme for a certain preventive temporary parental allowance for parents of certain children who have recently become seriously ill and who need to be protected from infection by COVID-19.

Temporary measures in social insurance

The Government has taken several temporary measures in social insurance due to COVID-19. Compensation to employers for sick pay costs, compensation for qualifying deductions, and compensation to self-employed for qualifying days, deferred requirements for medical certificates from day 8 to day 15 during a period of illness, and compensation to people who belong to a risk group and relatives to risk groups, are valid up to and

including 30 September. These measures are being brought to an end due to the fact that 70 per cent of the population have been vaccinated.

Continued readiness to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic

The Government is proposing major initiatives in the Budget Bill for 2022 to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic because it is still a major challenge in Sweden as well as globally. Among other things, additional funding is proposed for vaccines and vaccinations, large-scale contact tracing and testing, as well as strengthening the capacity of public authorities that have key tasks in the management of the pandemic. The Government is also proposing extended exemption in health insurance for deferred care and rehabilitation, and to extend the scheme for compensation when a school or preschool closes due to the pandemic.

Strengthened support in order to increase vaccination coverage

On 15 September, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Government presented an additional agreement regarding initiatives to increase vaccination coverage. The aim is that the vaccination coverage in Sweden should be as high and as evenly distributed as possible.

Vaccination certificate as infection control measure

On 10 September, the Government Offices proposed how vaccination certificates could be used as an infection control measure in the event of a worsened infection situation.

Proposal for state compensation for personal injury caused by vaccination against COVID-19

The Government is proposing a new law on state compensation for personal injury caused by an approved vaccine against the COVID-19 disease. The purpose of the law is to ensure that anyone who has suffered an injury caused by vaccination against COVID-19 should receive compensation equivalent to other compensation available for injury from pharmaceutical products.

The National Board of Health and Welfare shall conduct a review of the conditions for regional infection control.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked by the Government to conduct a review of the conditions for and capacity of the

regional infection control units, and medical officers for communicable disease control, to carry out their assignments. The regional infection control units and medical officers for communicable disease control have a central role in Swedish infection control and have responsibility for the infection control efforts in the areas in which they operate.

Investigation into how an improved legal basis can be created in order to manage future pandemics or epidemics.

A special investigator shall review the Communicable Diseases Act and analyse the need for new provisions for future pandemics. The investigator shall also investigate issues on disease carrier allowance, infection control for certain groups in the social services, and the scope of the Act on the Register of National Vaccination Programmes, and more.

Regional differences in health and social care of patients with the post COVID-19 condition shall be identified.

The Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis has been tasked to identify any regional differences in health and social care of patients with remaining or late symptoms as a result of COVID-19 infection, so-called post COVID-19 condition. A key issue is how the different needs of patients are met with the starting point that healthcare should be equal throughout Sweden.

The Swedish eHealth Agency shall investigate whether more vaccinated groups can be issued with a vaccination certificate

The Swedish eHealth Agency has been tasked by the Government to investigate the possibility of a so-called manual procedure for issuing vaccination certificates in cases where normal procedures do not work. For example, for Swedes who were vaccinated in third countries but have moved back to Sweden or are staying here for a long time.

The Government has signed more vaccine agreements

The Government has decided to further secure the long-term availability of vaccines against COVID-19 by entering into pre-purchase agreements of vaccine doses with manufacturers NovaVax and Sanofi. In total, it involves up to 7.1 million doses that, subject to approval, are expected to be primarily delivered during 2022-2023.



About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 23 June

Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. Read more about the recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

Extension of social insurance measures

The Government has decided to extend several social insurance measures on account of COVID-19. They are the standard deduction for employees, compensation to sole traders for the first 14 waiting days, compensation to risk groups and certain relatives of risk groups, the period exempted from a doctor's certificate and compensation to employers for high sick pay costs. The measures apply until and including 30 September 2021. Exemptions in health insurance when care or rehabilitation is cancelled are now extended to 31 December 2021.

Vaccination of children from 16 years recommended

The Public Health Agency of Sweden announced on 22 June that they recommend vaccination of children from the year the child turns 16. The Public Health Agency of Sweden also recommends vaccination of certain children from the age of 12 who, for example, have certain chronic lung diseases.

Digital vaccination certificates for travel in the EU ready from 1 July

The new digital vaccination certificates for COVID-19 will be launched on 1 July. Soon this digital service will also contain certificates that the holder has tested negative or has recovered from COVID-19.

State compensation for personal injuries caused by vaccines against COVID-19

The Government is proposing a law on state compensation for personal injuries caused by vaccines against the disease COVID-19. The point is to guarantee anyone affected compensation corresponding to other compensation for approved injuries caused by medical products.

Commission to assess and report coming needs of vaccines against COVID-19

The Government is commissioning the Public Health Agency of Sweden to assess, give reasons for and report coming needs of vaccines against COVID-19 in Sweden. Its assessment should cover two scenarios for needs and be given on a quarterly basis for the period from 2021 until and including 2023. The scenarios are to be based on different assumptions about how long vaccination gives protection, the spread of infection, the impact of new virus variants on the need for vaccines and which groups may need to be vaccinated.

SEK 20 million for increased information about vaccination

Information targeted at groups where the propensity to get vaccinated is low needs to be strengthened further to contribute to higher vaccination coverage against COVID-19. In an Additional Amending Budget the Government is proposing that the Public Health Agency of Sweden be given a further SEK 20 million in 2021 for this purpose.

Further SEK 1.5 billion for testing and tracing

The Government is proposing in an Additional Amending Budget that a further SEK 1.5 billion be allocated in 2021 to meet the need for continued PCR testing, antigen testing and tracing of COVID-19 infection.

Certain sickness benefit for preventive purposes and certain disease carrier benefit for more risk groups

The Government has adopted amendments to the Ordinance on certain sickness benefit for preventive purposes and certain disease carrier benefit on account of the illness COVID-19 which mean that individuals with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and stroke are added to the list of risk groups. The amended Ordinance entered into force on 1 June.

Unchanged forecast for vaccination against COVID-19

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden's updated forecast, the assessment continues to be that all adults and also children for whom vaccination is recommended will have been offered at least one dose of vaccine by 5 September 2021.

The Government's plan for phasing out restrictions

The Government has produced a plan in five stages for the adaptation and phasing-out of the restrictions put in place on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stage 1 started on 1 June and involves a number of relaxations. The final stage, Stage 5, means that restrictions and recommendations introduced on account of COVID-19 will essentially come to an end. The Government is keen to ensure that the restrictions are phased out responsibly, and with preparedness to handle a situation in which transmission rises again.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden uses three levels as its basis for the continued adaptation of COVID-19 restrictions. The Government determines each of these levels, following dialogue with the Public Health Agency, based on an overall assessment of the infection situation, the burden on health care and vaccination rates.

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About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 21 May

Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. Read more about the recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

More precise regulations for public gatherings and events

The Government has decided to introduce a more precise adjustment of the participant limit for various arrangements on 1 June, based on the risk of crowding and COVID-19 transmission.

For indoor arrangements, the general rule will be for the participant limit to remain at eight participants. If the participants receive assigned seating, up to 50 participants will be allowed. For outdoor arrangements, a maximum of 100 participants may attend unless there is assigned seating. If so, up to 500 participants will be allowed.

A special limit will be introduced for recreational races and similar sports events, where a maximum of 150 may compete simultaneously.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden will be able to decide to lower regional participant limits. County administrative boards will continue to be able to impose limitations on events in individual cases if there is an extensive spread of infection or if there is good reason to expect this.

Markets will be regulated in the same way as other trading venues rather than as a public event. Similarly, permanent funfairs will only be covered by the regulations for amusement parks and zoos, which means that they will not be subject to the participant limitations set out in the Limitations Ordinance. These activities must limit the number of visitors on the basis of

the square metre area available to visitors (20 square metres/person).

Read more on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website.

The instructions to public authorities on taking additional measures to increase the percentage of employees who work from home will be extended until 15 September 2021. Public authorities are to ensure that only employees whose physical presence is necessary to conduct operations are present in the agency's premises.

Additional SEK 150 million to urgent transports due to the pandemic

The Government has proposed allocating an additional SEK 150 million so that regions and municipalities can continue to apply for compensation for additional costs that arise for urgent transports due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The application period for compensation will be extended until the end of the year.

Unchanged forecast for COVID-19 vaccinations

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden's updated forecast of 14 May, it is still expected that all adults, and all children for whom vaccination is recommended, will be offered at least one dose of vaccine by 5 September 2021.

Additional SEK 40 million vaccine doses to Sweden in 2022 and 2023

The European Commission has negotiated a new agreement with Pfizer/BioNTech that the Government has decided to join. This means initially an additional 20 million vaccine doses to Sweden in 2022 and 2023, with an option for an additional 20 million doses during the same period.

The new agreement is extensive and includes the possibility of switching to an updated vaccine, which can be seen as insurance against possible future mutations.

Disease control measures in long-distance public transport by train and bus extended

Travel with long-distance public transport by bus and train is expected to increase during the summer months, with the risk of increased congestion and hence an increased risk of infection. The restrictions to prevent the spread of infection must therefore remain in place. The disease control

measures will be extended from 1 June 2021 until 14 August 2021. An evaluation will be made on 15 June to determine whether the regulation should be repealed as of 1 July, based on the epidemiological situation and the impact on health care.

The limitation means that the operator or organiser of public transport by bus and train must ensure that the number of passengers on a vehicle trafficking routes longer than 150 kilometres does not exceed half of the vehicle's seating capacity.

The Government proposes extension of social insurance measures due to COVID-19

The Government has proposed the extension of several measures in the social insurance system. This includes compensation for the standard deduction for sick days for employees, compensation to self-employed individuals for the first 14 waiting days, compensation to risk groups and certain relatives of risk groups, and periods for which a doctor's certificate is not required.

The measures will be in effect from now until 30 June 2021, and extended until 30 September 2021 in accordance with these proposals. The Government intends to present these proposals to the Riksdag in a coming amending budget.

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About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 6 May

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The Swedish eHealth Agency will develop a service for issuing proof of vaccination following vaccination against Covid-19

On 23 April, the Swedish Government tasked the Swedish eHealth Agency with developing a service for issuing proof of vaccination to those who have been vaccinated against Covid-19. The aim of the remit is that an infrastructure should be in place by 1 June to allow individuals who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 in Sweden and who have a Swedish e-ID to request proof of vaccination that meets the EU's specifications. It is expected that the service will be ready for use by 1 July when the statutory conditions for using the service will be in place in both Sweden and the EU.

The Government also tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden on 23 April with developing a service to transfer information held in the national vaccination register about administered Covid-19 vaccines to the Swedish eHealth Agency.

The remit will be reported on by 15 June 2023.

Bill circulated for comment on exemptions in health insurance in the case of deferred care

One of the Government's measures during the pandemic is that the assessment of working capacity against regular work in health insurance after day 180 and day 365 of the sickness period can be deferred when care

or rehabilitation has been deferred due to the pandemic. The reason for this is to avoid people losing their financial security. Since uncertainty remains about the course of the pandemic and its long-term impact on waiting lists and waiting times, a new bill is now being circulated for comment. The proposal involves extending the temporary exemption if necessary from 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2022.

Sweden borrows 200 000 vaccine doses from Norway

Sweden and Norway reached an agreement on borrowing vaccines on 22 April. Norway will lend 200 000 doses manufactured by AstraZeneca to Sweden. Since March, Norway has chosen to pause the use of AstraZeneca's vaccine in anticipation of an expert group's investigation. During this pause, Norway has built up a stock of AstraZeneca vaccines. In order that vaccines which can save lives should not be stored unnecessarily, Norway has offered to lend doses to Sweden while awaiting the expert group's statement. The vaccine can start to be used in Sweden during the last week of April. Sweden will return the same number of AstraZeneca vaccine doses to Norway later on.

Guidance ahead of adapting restrictions

On 29 April, the Government tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden with further developing and concretising under which circumstances restrictions and infection control measures should apply within society. This guidance will form the basis for the Government's work to draw up a national plan for how and when restrictions at national level can be gradually adapted, eased or discontinued. The Agency will report on this remit no later than 12 May.

Adjusted forecast for vaccination against Covid-19

On 30 April, the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced its updated forecast, whereby all adults and those children for whom vaccination is recommended will have been offered at least one dose of a vaccine by 5 September. The main reason for adjusting the previous forecast is that the Agency has recommended a continued pause in using the Janssen vaccine for the entire population.

Proposal regarding public gatherings and events is circulated for comment

The Government aims to be able to increasingly ease restrictions in the event

of an improved epidemiological situation and when the burden placed on healthcare permits such an easing. On 30 April, a proposal on new participant restrictions at events such as sporting, leisure and cultural activities was circulated for comment. One requirement for the proposal to enter into force is that the infection situation and the healthcare situation permit this. The Government emphasises that this proposal should not be seen as an easing of the existing restrictions.

For indoor events, it is recommended that the maximum number of participants should generally remain at eight. If participants are allocated seats, it is recommended that the maximum number of participants should be 50. A maximum of 100 participants is recommended for outdoor events where participants are not allocated seats, or a maximum of 500 participants for outdoor events with seated participants. It is proposed that a special limitation should be introduced for running races and similar sports competitions, with a maximum of 150 athletes participating at a time.

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About the Government's COVID-19 measures, 22 April

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Extension of measures in social insurance

On 22 April the Government decided to extend several measures in social insurance on account of COVID-19. They are the standard deduction for employees, compensation to sole traders for the first 14 waiting days, compensation to risk groups and certain relatives of risk groups and the period exempted from a doctor's certificate as well as compensation to employers for the part of sick pay costs above the normal level. The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. The measures apply up to and including 30 June 2021.

Continued serious state of infection means that restrictions are extended

The spread of infection in Sweden continues to be at a high level and the situation in health care is serious. On 22 April the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced that a number of disease control measures are being extended for a further period.

- The Government is waiting to go ahead with new rules for public gatherings and events. The Public Health Agency of Sweden now makes the preliminary assessment that these rules can enter into force on 17 May.
- The Government has previously decided to enable the municipalities to

ban people from being at a specified place if there is a clear risk of crowding at that place. A person who breaches regulations on bans on being at a specified place can be sentenced to a fine. Nor is it appropriate to, for example, have dinners with friends or go to look at Valborg bonfires, since this means that the risk of crowding increases.

- The Public Health Agency of Sweden intends to extend certain temporary disease control measures introduced pursuant to the Temporary Pandemic Act and the Restaurant Act. This applies to the regulations that would have expired on 2 May, including those that eating and drinking establishments may only stay open until 20.30 and those setting a maximum of one person per group at eating and drinking establishments in shopping centres and department stores. These are now extended up to and including 16 May.

The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden presented guidelines for vaccinated individuals

On 16 April the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden presented information about guidelines for vaccinated individuals. The guidelines apply to everyone who has received at least one dose of vaccine when at least three weeks have passed since their first shot.

A person who has been vaccinated has good protection against serious illness and can, for example, visit shops. On account of the spread of infection in society, people who have been vaccinated have to continue to keep a distance, since crowding increases the risk of spread of the infection.

Read more on the website of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Major budget funding to combat the spread of COVID-19 and address the effects of the pandemic

The Government is proposing a number of measures in the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill to continue combating the spread of COVID-19 and addressing its effects. Municipalities and regions receive additional funding for measures in health care, including vaccinations, testing and tracing, medical transport services and compensation for deferred care and COVID-19-related care. The National Board of Health and Welfare, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Health and Social Care Inspectorate also receive reinforced resources to address the pandemic. Funding is also allocated for monitoring compliance with the temporary Act on communicable disease

control measures at eating and drinking establishments.

Extended compensation period for personal protective equipment for personal assistants

The Government decided on 14 April to extend the period when private providers of personal assistance can apply for compensation for protective equipment for personal assistants. As a result of the Government's decision, the grant may also be paid for costs incurred from 1 May 2021 until and including 30 June 2021.

The maximum amount of grant payable is SEK 500 per person and month for which national attendance allowance has been granted. A total of SEK 85 million has been allocated for the purpose in 2020–2021.

Proposed extension of disease control measures in long-distance public transport

The Government has previously adopted special restrictions for long-distance public transport. These provisions are temporary and expire at the end of May 2021. On account of the continued uncertain state of infection, a consultation is now being held on a proposal that the regulations should continue to apply until and including 14 August 2021.

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About the COVID-19 virus, 6 April

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Proposal to extend the COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink

The Government sees a need to strengthen long-term preparedness for the continued potentially serious spread of infection in autumn 2021. Therefore, on 6 April, a memorandum was circulated for consultation proposing extending the temporary COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink. It is proposed that both Acts continue to remain in force until the end of January 2022.

Major budget investments to combat the transmission of COVID-19 and manage the effects of the pandemic

On 6 April, the Government announced it was proposing a number of measures to continue to combat the transmission of COVID-19 and manage its effects.

- Extra funding will be allocated to municipalities and regions for healthcare measures, including vaccinations, testing and contact tracing, patient transport and compensation for deferred healthcare and healthcare related to COVID-19.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) will also be given greater resources to tackle the pandemic.
- Funding will also be allocated to monitor compliance with the Act on

temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink.

- During the pandemic, many children and young people have been deprived of activities and social interaction with people their own age. Holiday activities can help to alleviate this situation and improve their lives. The Government therefore proposes a targeted government grant of SEK 200 million to municipalities for this purpose. The grant can support holiday activities that are free of charge and COVID-safe for children and young people aged 6 to 15 in 2021.

The Government proposes extending social insurance measures introduced due to COVID-19

On 6 April, the Government proposed extending social insurance measures introduced due to COVID-19.

The measures are intended to help people with COVID-19 to stay at home, thereby limiting transmission. The measures currently apply until 30 April 2021, and it is now proposed that they be extended from 1 May to 30 June 2021 in a forthcoming supplementary amending budget.

Benefits to vulnerable groups extended

The Government intends to extend the opportunity for certain vulnerable groups and certain family members of vulnerable groups to receive benefits. This is to ensure that people at risk will be able to return to work safely following vaccination. The Government also intends to extend the opportunity to receive benefits for parents of children who have recently been seriously ill and for parents when schools or preschools are closed. The periods will be extended such that there is no gap in benefit payments.

The measures to be extended are:

- Certain preventive sickness benefits to certain at-risk groups
- Certain disease carrier allowances to certain close relatives of people in at-risk group
- Certain preventive temporary parental allowances for parents of children who have recently been seriously ill
- Certain temporary parental allowances when schools or preschools are closed

No doctor's certificate required until day 15

The Government intends to extend the abolition of the requirement to produce a doctor's certificate during the first 14 days of illness for all those on sick leave. This reduces the burden on the healthcare services and reduces the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

Exemptions in the health insurance system to be extended in the event of cancellation of treatment or rehabilitation

The Government intends to extend the provision that enables exemptions to be granted from the assessment against an individual's normal work on day 180 and day 365 in the sickness allowance system when treatment or rehabilitation is cancelled.

The provision previously applied until 30 June 2021 and the Government now intends to extend it until 31 December 2021 in line with the proposal in a forthcoming spring amending budget.

The Government proposes extending grants to employers for sick pay

On 1 April, the Government proposed extending compensation to employers for the proportion of sick pay costs that exceeds the normal rate. The proposal will be submitted in a forthcoming amending budget to the Riksdag.

The Government intends to extend compensation to employers for the proportion of sick pay costs that exceeds normal levels. This measure due to COVID-19 seeks to provide financial support to employers and businesses.

The Government proposes extending support to air ambulance services

On 2 April, the Government proposed earmarking SEK 12 million to extend the temporary government grant to services transporting patients by air ambulance. The purpose of the government grant is to ensure that the healthcare service has sufficient access to air ambulances around the clock during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The government grant was introduced for the period 1 January – 30 June 2021, and the Government proposes that this period be extended until 15 August 2021.

The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions have agreed an amending agreement on vaccination against COVID-19

On 1 April, the Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) presented an amending agreement on vaccination against COVID-19 due to changed circumstances regarding the delivery of vaccines.

The aim is for all people resident in Sweden aged 18 or over, and people under the age of 18 who, following an individual medical assessment, should be vaccinated, to be offered a first dose of vaccine against COVID-19 as soon as possible, and, for the vaccines that require two doses, a subsequent second dose in line with the vaccination interval recommended by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

As previously, when this target can be attained is dependent on deliveries from vaccine manufacturers.

Continued work on vaccination certificates

The agreement makes the division of responsibility for work on vaccination certificates clear. The State's undertakings involve developing the technical services required, funding the above undertakings and issuing vaccination certificates to all inhabitants who order such a certificate once the system is operational.

Since 1 January 2021, the regions have had to register all vaccinations against COVID-19 in the national vaccination register (NVR) kept by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Exactly when the vaccination certificate system can be brought into use will depend on the progress of overarching European cooperation, but the ambition is for the system to be in place in June.

Sweden supports the UN's Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

On 26 March, a Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines was presented at the United Nations in New York. The Declaration received the support of more than 170 countries, including Sweden. This is an important step in equitable and effective management of the pandemic. COVID-19 vaccination has begun in more than 140 countries, but access remains patchy and major challenges remain to ensure that everyone is able to access a vaccine as soon as possible.

It is in everyone's interest that not only the rich countries are able to

vaccinate their populations but that vaccination is rolled out across the world. This is a question of solidarity and of putting an end to the pandemic and its serious indirect effects as quickly as possible. Sweden has taken an active role in work to ensure global access to vaccines, partly by supporting the global vaccine initiative COVAX.

The National Board of Health and Welfare is to analyse the healthcare backlog

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with analysing the backlog of healthcare needs that has arisen as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The backlog of healthcare needs will be summarised and reported in a national status report.

Extended restrictions due to COVID-19

There is a risk of yet another peak in cases in Sweden in spring 2021. Therefore, on 18 March the county administrative boards and the Public Health Agency of Sweden were tasked with developing forms for existing regional and local cooperation in the face of a potential rise in transmission.

The Government has also decided to task the county administrative boards with expanding their reporting on supervision of implementation of the temporary COVID-19 Act, and also of how the county administrative boards are adapting their supervision efforts to changes in the spread of COVID-19. This is to ensure that the rules are enforced in order to reduce crowding in the establishments concerned and ultimately reduce the risk of increased transmission.

As a result of the serious and uncertain situation, the Government will continue to urge municipalities and regions to keep closed non-essential services to which the public has access where these are not regulated under the Restrictions Ordinance. Municipal gyms and sporting facilities, swimming pools, museums and art galleries are not covered by this mandate, as these are covered by the Restrictions Ordinance.

As before, sporting, leisure and cultural activities for children and young people are exempt, provided that the regulations and general recommendations can be complied with. This also applies to activities for young people of upper secondary school age. However, it is still not yet the time to arrange competitions or matches. This mandate will be extended until 1 April and may be extended further.

Mandate regarding potential surplus PPE

On 11 March, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with assessing Sweden's opportunities to sell or donate potential surplus PPE and healthcare materials needed in treating the disease COVID-19. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is to assist in this assessment and be responsible for operational management. This mandate applies until 31 December 2021.

The Government seeks to increase the borrowing limit for vaccines

On 10 March, the Government proposed that the Public Health Agency of Sweden's borrowing limit for purchasing vaccines and other emergency investments be raised from SEK 4.5 billion to SEK 11 billion for 2021. The aim is to create greater scope for signing agreements with manufacturers of vaccines against COVID-19 and thereby safeguard Sweden's needs in the long term.

Mandate to keep a list of regulations issued under the COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink

On 4 March, the Government tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden with compiling a list of regulations issued by administrative agencies or municipalities pursuant to authorisations in the Act on special restrictions to prevent the transmission of the disease COVID-19 (the COVID-19 Act) and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink.

Remit to continuously evaluate and spread awareness of the scientific backing regarding long-term effects of the disease COVID-19

On 4 March, the Government decided to task the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) with continuously evaluating and spreading awareness of the scientific backing regarding the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects from the disease COVID-19.

Compensation for personal injury caused by the COVID-19 vaccine

On 4 March, the Government submitted for consultation a draft of a new Act on state compensation for injury that may arise as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines used in Sweden have been tested and approved. If, nevertheless, personal injury were to arise as a consequence of a vaccine, it will be possible to apply for compensation from the Swedish Pharmaceutical Insurance. Currently all approved vaccines used in Sweden are covered by this insurance.

Review of long-term effects of COVID-19

On 4 March, the Government tasked SBU with continuously evaluating and spreading awareness of the scientific backing regarding the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects from the disease COVID-19.

This remit includes developing a method for continuously publishing the scientific data on treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects. SBU is to particularly pay attention to the effects of COVID-19 on children.

Furthermore, SBU is continuously to identify areas where there is a need for research on treatment and rehabilitation for long-term effects of COVID-19. SBU is also to monitor and evaluate the work of other international actors on this issue.

Extending the reimbursement period for PPE for personal assistants

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, personal assistants have incurred additional costs. Therefore, on 4 March, the Government decided to further extend the period in which private providers of personal assistance can apply for reimbursement of the costs of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Pregnancy allowance for pregnant women with risks in their working environment

A pregnant woman may be entitled to pregnancy allowance if her work is physically demanding or if there are risks in the work environment and the employer is unable to reassign her to other duties. The employer is responsible for the working environment and for deciding whether a pregnant woman should not remain at work due to risks in the working environment.

On 26 February 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare announced that COVID-19 poses a particular risk to pregnant women in weeks 20–36 of pregnancy. This risk factor is therefore included in assessing entitlement to pregnancy allowance.

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About the COVID-19 virus, 4 March

Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. Read more about the recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

New measures to reduce the spread of infection

On 4 March the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced further measures to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The Government's previous call to municipalities and regions is extended. Services that are not essential and that the public has access to, and that are not regulated under the Restrictions Ordinance, should stay closed. The Government's assessment is that this call must continue to apply until at least 21 March 2021.

Pursuant to the Pandemic Act, the Government also decided on 4 March to amend the Restrictions Ordinance.

- First, municipalities are allowed to issue bans on being at certain places if there is a clear risk of crowding. This can, for instance, involve parks, bathing areas or municipal grill spots.
- Second, communicable disease control measures will now be required for services like amusement parks, zoos, theme parks, museums and art galleries.

The amendments to the ordinance enter into force on 11 March 2021.

Extension of the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments

In a bill The Government also proposes extending the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments to the end of September 2021. This means it is proposed to apply for the same period as the Pandemic Act.

Extension of temporary measures in health insurance

On 26 February the Government decided to extend measures previously announced in health insurance on account of COVID-19. The measures are intended to reduce the spread of infection, reduce the burden on health care, enhance financial security and alleviate the consequences for employers.

Here are the temporary measures that the Government has decided to extend until 30 April 2021:

- compensation at a standard amount of SEK 810 for the sick pay standard deduction;
- compensation to sole traders for their first 14 waiting days at a standard amount of SEK 810 per day;
- compensation to employers for the part of sick pay costs that is above the normal level.

New recommendations for vaccinated individuals at care homes for older people

At a press meeting on 25 February the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced new recommendations for vaccinated individuals living in care homes for older people. The Government also gave information about a new vaccine agreement that more than doubles the number of vaccine doses from Moderna to Sweden. These doses will be delivered in quarters 3 and 4.

Restricted opening hours for eating and drinking establishments and stricter general advice

The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden made an overall assessment on 24 February that further measures are needed to prevent a third wave. As a first step, this will mean a national restriction of the opening hours of all eating and drinking establishments to 20.30. The amendments entered into force on 1 March 2021. However, eating and drinking

establishments can be open for collection or home delivery after 20.30.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden is going to decide on further restrictions on the number of people allowed to be in shops, shopping centres and gyms. The advice already in place to sports associations is to refrain from arranging camps, matches, cups or other competitions, with certain exceptions for sport for children and top-level sport, for example. This restrictive advice needs to be repeated and tightened since spread of infection has been identified.

Continued national restrictions

Sweden is still in a very serious and uncertain situation regarding the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the Government saw a need, after a dialogue with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, to retain a number of restrictions and recommendations.

On 18 February they announced that the winter sport break weeks must not be an opportunity for greater spread of infection. If people do travel, it is important to travel and act in as infection-proof a way as possible. This includes keeping a safe distance, refraining from new contacts, avoiding visiting places along their route where crowding may develop and following the rules in place.

The Government has called on regions and municipalities to keep services that the public has access to and that are not essential closed. This call applied until and including 7 March 2021. The Government's assessment is that there will continue to be a need for new or modified measures along with the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Proposal for new restriction measures pursuant to the temporary Pandemic Act

The Government has proposed new measures pursuant to the temporary Pandemic Act for COVID-19. If the state of the infection gets worse, the Government sees a need to make it possible to close various services. The Government also proposes new restrictions on services like zoos and museums.

The Government is also preparing proposals for a new system for public gatherings and events that will make more accurate rules possible when the state of the infection permits this. It was proposed that these proposals enter

into force on 11 March 2021.

Compensation period for additional costs extended

Health and social care have been under severe strain this winter due to the pandemic. Regions and municipalities are therefore given the possibility of also applying for compensation for additional costs that arose in December 2020. The present ordinance only permits compensation up until 30 November.

Against the background of the increased spread of infection and the high pressure on health and social care in December 2020, the Government's assessment is that the compensation period should be extended to also include December 2020. The Government is therefore allocating an additional SEK 1 billion.

Restrictions introduced for long-distance public transport

Anyone operating or organising public transport by bus or train, with a route exceeding 150 kilometres, has to take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of infection. The number of passengers on the bus or train must not exceed half the number of seats on the bus or train. The provisions do not apply retroactively. A person who has booked a seat before entry into force, will be able to travel as planned, even if the occupancy level is higher. The Government is implementing this measure pursuant to the Pandemic Act and has obtained views from the Public Health Agency of Sweden during work on the measure. The entry-into-force dates of the provisions are 14 February and 31 May 2021.

Support to health care for dealing with people with long-lasting symptoms after a COVID-19 infection

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned to develop support for health care in dealing with patients with long-lasting symptoms after having had a COVID-19 infection. This support should also be able to include municipal health care. The National Board of Health and Welfare may use SEK 3 million to carry out this commission in 2021.

SEK 4 billion to the regions for deferred care and COVID-19-related care

On 11 February the Government commissioned Kammarkollegiet (Swedish

Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency) to pay the regions SEK 4 billion in 2021. The regions will use this funding to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care. In the Budget Bill for 2021 the Government announced spending of SEK 4 billion to the regions to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care resulting from the pandemic.

The purpose was to support the regions in coping with the necessary recovery. Against the background of the increase in the spread of infection that has taken place since late autumn 2020, there is a need to ensure that health care has the necessary resources and that patients whose care has been deferred receive the care they need within a reasonable time.

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About the COVID-19 virus: Extensions of national restrictions

Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. The spread of infection with the virus that causes the disease COVID-19 is still at a very high level and health care is still under strain.

The Government has therefore decided on further extensions of national restrictions announced on 21 January and 4 February.

Extended ban on the sale of alcohol after 20.00

The ban on the sale of alcohol at eating and drinking establishments after 20.00 is extended up until 14 February. On Friday the Government will open a consultation on the proposal that the ban should continue to 28 February. After that it proposes extending the ban on serving alcohol after 22.00.

Continued home working

The commission to government agencies to take further action to increase the share of their employees working from home is extended to 31 May 2021. Only employees whose physical presence is essential for the conduct of agency activities should be in the agency's premises.

Adjusted recommendation to upper secondary schools

The recommendation of the Public Health Agency of Sweden concerning upper secondary schools is extended but adjusted. The adjustment means that instruction should be conducted as a combination of remote or distance instruction and some face-to-face instruction. This applies as of 25 January until and including 1 April 2021.

Extended recommendation on face masks in public transport

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has recommended face masks in

public transport, as of 7 January 2021, at times when there is often crowding
This will apply throughout the spring.

Continued closure of non-essential services

The Government is continuing to call on regions and municipalities to keep services that the public has access to and that are not essential closed until and including 21 February 2021. What non-essential services means is determined by each region and municipality on the basis of their own regional and local needs and circumstances. However, the Government considers that it remains important that sport, recreation and culture activities for children and young people, held both outdoors and indoors, continue to stay open. This now also applies to activities for young people attending upper secondary school.

In addition to this, the Government is preparing more measures under the Pandemic Act. This work will give great weight to the assessments made by the Public Health Agency of Sweden. The proposals will be referred for consultation in February.

Temporary Pandemic Act provides more powers for communicable disease control measures

On 8 January the Riksdag decided to adopt the new temporary Pandemic Act that is intended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection more effectively. Using the new Act the Government adopted a new ordinance – called the "Restrictions Ordinance" – which introduces legally binding rules for gyms and sports centres, swimming baths, shops, shopping centres and places for private gatherings as of Sunday 10 January.

[Read more about the COVID-19 act](#)

Negative COVID-19 test required to enter Sweden

The Government decided on 3 February that foreign nationals must present a negative COVID-19 test for ongoing infection when entering Sweden, irrespective of where they are travelling from. The purpose is to reduce the risk of the spread of infection with the new variants of the coronavirus that have been discovered in several countries.

SEK 175 million to the county administrative boards to increase supervision

To enable the temporary Pandemic Act to have the effects being sought, it is important to give the county administrative boards additional resources to enable them to conduct supervision work. On 26 January the Government therefore proposed an increase of SEK 174.6 million in the appropriations of the county administrative boards. It also proposed distributing a further SEK 82 million to the municipalities, regions and county administrative boards for work including supervision of crowding at eating and drinking establishments. The Government is also proposing extending the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments until 30 September 2021. This enables the Government to continue to regulate communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments during the period when the Pandemic Act is in force.

SEK 100 million for swift transport due to COVID-19

Health care is under heavy pressure due to the pandemic and access to hospital beds is under strain in many parts of the country. Patients may need to be moved between hospitals by air or road transport to relieve hospitals experiencing high pressure. For the municipalities this can involve swift transport between, for example, care homes for older people, or homes with special services for people with disabilities, and hospitals. On 27 January the Government proposed allocating SEK 100 million to enable regions and municipalities to continue to apply for payments for additional costs that arise for swift transport due to COVID-19.

SEK 1.4 billion for quick tests

Testing and tracing is under way on a large scale in Sweden, and it is important that society has access to a range of tools and methods to break infection chains and press down transmission of the infection. At the same time, it is important to maintain a correct picture of the state of the infection in the country. The advantage of quick tests is that they give a test result straightaway, sometimes after as little as 15 minutes. As part of continued action to meet the need for large-scale testing for COVID-19, the Government is proposing allocating SEK 1.4 billion in 2021 to the use of quick tests. The Government has previously allocated SEK 7.5 billion to large-scale PCR testing and tracing in 2021.

The Government wants to break older people's isolation

Many older people are alone and isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here pensioner organisations fill an important function in supporting their

members and in contributing to activities and breaking isolation. To strengthen their work, the Government is proposing increasing the government grant to these organisations by SEK 15 million in 2021.

Swedish Medical Products Agency receives an additional SEK 24.6 million

On account of COVID-19 the Swedish Medical Products Agency has intensified work to secure access to medical products and devices. It is important that this work is able to continue. The Government therefore announced on 26 January that it is reinforcing the Agency's funding by an additional SEK 24.6 million in 2021.

State signs agreement on injuries resulting from vaccination against COVID-19, 14 January

People who have suffered injuries as a result of vaccination against COVID-19 will receive compensation from Swedish Pharmaceutical Insurance in the first place. However, this only applies to vaccines from pharmaceutical companies affiliated to Swedish Pharmaceutical Insurance. In the case of a vaccine or vaccines not included in Swedish Pharmaceutical Insurance, the Government intends to shortly present a legislative proposal to the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) that will be based on the same principles. The intention is for the protection to be at the same level as for vaccines included in the Pharmaceutical Insurance.

Extended compensation period for protective equipment for personal assistants

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased costs for personal protective equipment for personal assistants. On 12 January the Government therefore proposed extending the period for compensation applications by five months; it is allocating SEK 25 million to this measure. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Additional SEK 5.5 billion for testing for COVID-19 in 2021

Sweden needs to be able to continue to maintain large-scale testing and tracing of COVID-19 as important tools for combating the spread of infection in the country. On 12 January the Government therefore proposed allocating an additional SEK 5.5 billion to large-scale PCR testing and tracing for COVID-19 in 2021. This means that the Government has now

allocated a total of SEK 7.5 billion this year, since SEK 2 billion had already been allocated. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Review of the National Board of Health and Welfare's compilation of risk groups

On 28 January the National Board of Health and Welfare was given a commission to continuously review and update its previous compilation of identified groups running the greatest risk of developing a particularly serious disease if they get COVID-19. The commission will remain in place for as long as required in view of compensation to risk groups.

Corona-related measures in health insurance

To prevent more people losing their sickness benefit at Day 180, the Government decided on 4 February to temporarily stop the Day 180 examinations. After Day 180 the insured person will also have their work capacity examined in relation to work for their present employer instead of in relation to work normally found in the labour market. This will apply up until Day 365 of their sickness period. The ordinance entered into force on 8 February 2021.

The Government has also decided to extend the compensation to people in risk groups due to COVID-19 and to certain relatives of risk groups. At the same time, it is extending the benefit period for preventive parental benefit that can be paid to parents of certain children who have recently been seriously ill.

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About the Government's work for a re-regulated gambling market

To bring order to the gambling market and strengthen protection for consumers, a new Gambling Act was introduced on 1 January 2019. The Act includes stronger regulation of gambling advertising and the introduction of a national licence system for gambling operators. The Government is now continuing its work to address the remaining challenges

About the licencing system

The Gambling Act is based on a licencing system where all operators in the Swedish gambling market must have a licence, and where operators without a licence will be excluded. Those who are granted a licence have a far-reaching obligation to protect players from excessive gambling. The regulation applies to all gambling available in Sweden, which also includes gambling over the internet intended for the Swedish market.

Under the Act, the Swedish Gambling Authority, which is the supervisory authority, can take action against gambling operators that do not comply with the Act. These measures can be injunctions on correcting operational shortcomings or deciding on prohibitions combined with fines, penalties or, as a last resort, revoking a licence. Alongside the Swedish Gambling Authority, the Swedish Consumer Agency is the supervisory authority for the Gambling Act's marketing rules.

Spelpaus.se

When the licencing system was introduced, the Swedish Gambling Authority set up Spelpaus, a self-exclusion list that all gambling operators with a Swedish licence must connect to. Via www.spelpaus.se, people can exclude themselves from gambling for money and, in doing so, stop receiving direct marketing material about gambling. This exclusion applies to all licenced

gambling operators in Sweden offering registered gambling.

Stronger regulation of gambling advertising

Under the Gambling Act, a degree of moderation is to be employed when advertising gambling. This means that gambling operators must ensure that advertising is kept within reasonable limits and that it may not be directed to people under the age of 18. It is also prohibited to send direct advertising to someone who has excluded themselves from gambling. The prohibition also applies to advertising that is sent digitally, if this can be considered to be personalised in a similar manner as, for example, emails.

Despite the new Act and the requirement concerning moderation, consumers are still exposed to aggressive gambling advertising. The Gambling Market Inquiry was therefore tasked with proposing rules to further limit gambling advertising. In addition to these matters, the Inquiry was also to consider greater opportunities to exclude illegal gambling and new financing models for the horse industry and the sports movement. In December 2020, the Inquiry presented its final report and in January 2021, the proposals were circulated for comment.

Follow-up and supervision

When the proposed new Gambling Act was presented to the Riksdag in April 2018, relevant government agencies were instructed to evaluate and analyse the effects of the Act and to ensure that the industry complied with it.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management is tasked with following up and evaluating re-regulation of the gambling market. The follow-up and evaluation should examine matters such as the effects on public health, consumer protection, the State's revenues from gambling, and the financing of purposes in the public interest. The Swedish Agency for Public Management is to report the results of its follow-up and evaluation by 1 April each year until 2022.

Inquiry for stronger measures against unlicensed gambling and match fixing

An inquiry was appointed in November 2020, tasked with identifying obstacles and proposing solutions to enable more effective supervision of illegal gambling. The remit also includes examining how to strengthen efforts against match fixing. The inquiry is to present its report by 30 June 2021.

Other regulations in the gambling act

In addition to the licencing system and stronger regulation of advertising, the Gambling Act contains several other measures:

- Offering bonuses is to be limited to the first gambling instance.
- A new offence on cheating (match fixing) has been introduced.
- Players must specify a maximum amount limit.
- A panic button for immediate self-exclusion from online gambling has been introduced.
- The prohibition against credit for gambling has been tightened.
- To exclude unlicensed operators from the market, it is now possible to block payment transactions between gamblers and unlicensed gambling operators.
- The Swedish Gambling Authority can order internet service providers to place warning messages on websites that offer unlicensed gambling.
- The scale of penalties for unlawful gambling and promoting such activities has been raised.
- Promoting gambling without a licence, such as through advertising, has been criminalised.
- Gambling that requires a licence is taxed at 18 per cent. Gambling for purposes in the public interest will continue to be tax exempt. If a player wins money on an unlicensed gambling website, the winnings must be taxed.
- Certain forms of gambling remain reserved for the State and the public interest sector. This applies to gambling on offline casinos, gambling on slot machines, and lotteries and bingo.

Earlier inquiries

The inquiry ‘A re-regulated gambling market’, which led to the new Gambling Act, is the third of its kind and was appointed during the previous electoral period. Earlier, the Lottery Inquiry (SOU 2006:11) and the Gambling Inquiry (SOU 2008:124) completed their work and presented their findings to the Government, with no further measures taken.

What happens next?

The Swedish Agency for Public Management will present the annual report on its remit to follow-up and evaluate the re-regulation of the gambling market by 1 April 2021.

The referral bodies are to submit comments concerning the Gambling Market Inquiry’s proposals by 30 April 2021.

The inquiry for more effective supervision of illegal gambling and match fixing is to present its proposals by 30 June 2021.

Published 27 January 2021



About the COVID-19 virus: for older people, people with health conditions and health and social care staff, 21 december

Here you can read more about current measures in health and social care and health and social care staff. This is the seventh article in a series about the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in response to the COVID-19 virus.

Vaccination against COVID-19 started on 27 December

Now that the European Commission has approved Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine, the vaccine can begin to be transported to Sweden, and vaccination was started at care homes for older people on 27 December. Sweden is receiving 9 750 doses in the first delivery, and they will be allocated to all the country's regions. As deliveries are increased, more and more people will be vaccinated. The common objective of the Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) is that everyone over 18 years and everyone under 18 years who is in a risk group will be offered vaccination in the first half of 2021.

The 180-day examination in sickness insurance to be stopped

The Government is proposing a temporary stop in the assessments in relation to work normally found in the labour market that have to be made at Day 180 in a sickness case under the present regulations. This is to prevent people with a long-term COVID-19 illness and other people who have sickness benefit from losing it, for example. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Further national restrictions to stop the spread of the infection

Limit travel, avoid crowding and celebrate Christmas and New Year in a small group — that is the stricter advice from the Public Health Agency of Sweden ahead of the Christmas holidays. On 14 December stricter national regulations and general advice were also introduced about everyone's responsibility for preventing COVID-19 infection. At the same time, the local general advice in place up to now in Sweden's regions expired.

At a press meeting on 18 December further restrictions were presented to reduce the spread of infection; they include a ban on the sale of alcohol at eating and drinking establishments after 20.00, a maximum of four people in groups at restaurants, a ban on crowding in shopping centres, shops and gyms, remote or distance instruction at upper secondary schools, the closure of all non-essential state, municipal and regional services such as swimming baths up until 24 January (libraries, museums and swimming baths) and recommended use of face masks in public transport at certain times as of 7 January. Read more on the website of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Consultation started on draft of a temporary Pandemic Act

The Government has started a consultation on a draft of a temporary Pandemic Act for COVID-19. The purpose is to give the Government and other authorities better possibilities of taking measures to slow down the spread of infection, without placing restrictions on activities that can be held in an infection-proof way. This can, for example, involve limiting the number of visitors or opening hours or, as a last resort, closing certain activities. The temporary act will apply in addition to the Communicable Diseases Act and the Public Order Act. The proposal is for the Act to enter into force on 15 March 2021 and to cease to apply 31 March 2022.

More than SEK 9 billion for vaccines – no vaccine charge for individuals

Sweden has reached advance agreements with several vaccine manufacturers. The Government has made several announcements about vaccinations for COVID-19, including that there will be no vaccine charge for individuals and that the ambition is to offer vaccine to everyone over the age of 18 at the rate permitted by access to vaccines. Vaccination will be based on need. In its vaccination plan the Public Health Agency of Sweden has decided that older people, people in risk groups and staff in health and social care have priority.

The Government has announced that central government is taking and will continue to take great responsibility for vaccine and vaccination costs. SEK 300 million has been allocated to the regions' ongoing preparations. The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have reached an agreement on vaccination for COVID-19; the agreement means, for instance, that central government undertakes to pay for vaccines and vaccinations while the regions are responsible for carrying out the vaccinations. Along with previous announcements, the agreement means that central government is providing more than SEK 9 billion for vaccines and vaccinations.

As part of Nordic cooperation, Sweden has undertaken to sell Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine on to Norway and Iceland on behalf of the EU. This sale does not affect the doses already allocated to Sweden, and relates to doses that EU Member States have jointly made available to Norway and Iceland in a spirit of solidarity.

The Government welcomes the COVID-19 Commission's interim report

On Tuesday 15 December the COVID-19 Commission presented its first interim report, focusing on the spread of infection in health and social care for older people, to the Government. The COVID-19 Commission's conclusions show that almost 90% of the more than 7 500 people who died in Sweden were 70 years or older, and almost half of them were living in special housing. The general community spread of the coronavirus is identified as the single most important cause of its spread in the care of older people.

The Commission's conclusions identify structural shortcomings in the care of older people and find that these services were ill-equipped to deal with a pandemic, partly on account of inadequate regulatory frameworks, organisational deficiencies, staffing and a lack of medical expertise. The Government welcomes the COVID-19 Commission's interim report, which will be an important starting point for future reforms; intensive work is already under way for more robust care of older people and more robust legislation in the area.

Central Government and SALAR agree on rapid tests

Antigen tests, called 'rapid tests', can be used to supplement PCR testing when there is a need for greater test capacity. They can, for instance, be used in sensitive settings such as special housing for older people or to

maintain regular activities in out-patient care at an emergency clinic for patients who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking care for some other reason. Central government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have reached an agreement that means that central government will co-finance the use of antigen tests and the regions undertake to carry out the testing.

Extension of temporary measures in sickness insurance

The Government intends to propose and adopt an extension of temporary sickness insurance measures on account of COVID-19. The measures are intended to reduce the spread of infection, reduce the burden on health care, enhance financial security and alleviate the consequences for employers. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. At present, the temporary measures apply until and including 31 December 2020. Here are the extensions that the Government intends to decide on:

- compensation at a standard amount of SEK 810 for the sick pay standard deduction;
- compensation to sole traders for their first 14 waiting days at a standard amount of SEK 810 per day;
- compensation to employers for the part of excess sick pay costs above the normal level;
- requirement of a doctor's certificate deferred from the 8th to the 15th day of a sickness case.

The measures are being extended up to and including 30 April 2021.

The Government has previously announced that exemptions in sickness benefit from the examination in relation to work normally found in the labour market when care or rehabilitation is cancelled are being extended to 30 June 2021. The Government will revert in the above matters.

Government decision to extend temporary parental benefit

On 17 December the Government decided to extend the temporary measures on account of COVID-19 that apply to temporary parental benefit. The measures are intended to reduce the spread of infection, reduce the burden

on health care and enhance financial security. The measures are being extended up to and including 30 April 2021.

The measures covered by today's Government decision are:

- temporary parental benefit in conjunction with school closures;
- preventive temporary parental benefit for parents of certain rece
- seriously ill children who need to be protected from infection;
- exemption from the requirement of a doctor's opinion to prove the need for special care and supervision for the right to temporary parental benefit in certain situations for children aged between 12 and 16 years.

Reinforced research in health and welfare equips Sweden for the future

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of medical research and innovation. Thanks to rapid action by researchers all over the world, several vaccines have already been developed. In its bill on research and innovation the Government presents investments in health, welfare and life sciences of around SEK 0.5 billion per year – investments that will contribute to Sweden being better equipped to face any new pandemics and other health challenges.

SEK 500 million for crisis support to health and social care staff

The outbreak of COVID-19 had resulted in challenges and a high workload for staff in welfare services. The Government considers that it is very important that they are offered support to work through their experiences of the pandemic. A total of SEK 500 million will be paid to Sweden's municipalities and regions for crisis support, talk support or trauma support for the professions that have experienced negative impacts of the pandemic in their work.

The Government proposes extending exemptions in the rehabilitation chain

Because health care has had to make a transition on account of COVID-19, many patients have had their care and rehabilitation postponed. The Government is therefore proposing an extension of the temporary exemption from the examination in relation to work normally found in the labour market at Day 180 and Day 365 of the rehabilitation chain when care,

treatment or rehabilitation is cancelled or postponed.

Updated scenarios for the development of COVID-19

The Government has commissioned the Public Health Agency of Sweden to continuously update scenarios for what the development of the COVID-19 outbreak may be like in the future. At the same time, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the county administrative boards were commissioned to propose action that may be needed on the basis of the updated scenarios and to produce plans for how this action can be implemented. Developing scenarios is an important tool for authorities and other actors in society in planning their work and measures to reduce the spread of the infection.

At the same time, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is to produce descriptions of potential impacts on society.

Personal assistants receive compensation for personal protective equipment

COVID-19 has resulted in additional costs for purchases of personal protective equipment for personal assistants. The Government has therefore adopted a new ordinance that means that compensation for protective equipment will be paid retroactively for the period 1 February 2020 to 30 November 2020. A total SEK 50 million is being allocated to this purpose.

Continued programme of large-scale testing

Sweden also needs to be able to continue to maintain large-scale testing and tracing of COVID-19 as important tools for combating the spread of infection in the country. The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have therefore agreed to extend their testing and tracing agreement. The extended agreement applies to the whole of 2021 and means that central government will meet the costs and contribute through the national testing capacity of the Public Health Agency of Sweden. The regions undertake to perform testing and tracing on the basis of the recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

The Government is extending the commission of the county administrative boards to assist the regions, in consultation with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, in the continued work of testing for COVID-19. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is also given an extended commission to ensure that conditions are in place for large-scale testing for COVID-19 throughout the

country.

Possibility of local bans on visits to care homes for older people

In the middle of November the Government saw an increase in the spread of the infection, and the people living in the country's care homes for older people are those who need to be protected to the greatest degree from the virus. The Government therefore decided that, when required, the Public Health Agency of Sweden may decide on local bans on visits to care homes for older people. The decision means that we now have one more tool for combating the infection. The ordinance entered into force on 21 November 2020 and applies until 28 February 2021.

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About the COVID-19 virus: for older people, people with health conditions and health and social care staff, 16 november

Here you can read more about current measures in health and social care and health and social care staff. This is the sixth article in a series about the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in response to the COVID-19 virus.

Maximum of eight participants should be normative for all of society

The coming weeks are crucial to stop the spread of infection. Given the situation we are now in, the Government considers that more measures are required. Therefore the Government is now proposing a ban on holding public gatherings and events with more than eight participants, and that the previous exemption for eating and drinking establishments be removed,

Alcohol sales banned after 22.00

Local general advice now applies in large parts of the country. However, the Government's assessment is that this advice is not being followed to the extent necessary to break the spread of infection. For this reason, the Government is proposing that serving, in the meaning of the Alcohol Act, of spirits, drinks, wine, strong beer and other fermented alcoholic beverages be prohibited between 22.00 and 11.00.

The ban does not apply to special housing (for example, care homes for older people) or room service at hotels or minibars in hotel rooms. The proposal is that the ordinance should enter into force on 20 November 2020 and apply until 28 February June 2021.

Survey of how COVID-19 has affected the right to home care services while away on holiday

The Social Services Act requires municipalities to also offer home care services to people staying in the municipality temporarily. The National Board of Health and Welfare will now make a survey of how these provisions have functioned in practice during the pandemic.

Some municipalities have said that in spring and summer 2020 it was difficult to deliver social services owing to the outbreak of COVID-19. The Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and Welfare to survey how this has affected the possibilities for private persons to obtain home care services during temporary holiday stays and when staying in seasonal homes. As part of this survey, the Board is also to describe how consultations have been held between residential municipalities and municipalities of stay. The Board is to present its report by 15 February 2021.

Extended benefit period for certain risk groups

The benefit period of the benefits payable to certain risk groups, certain close relatives of risk groups and parents of certain children who have recently been seriously ill as a result of COVID-19 is now being extended from 90 to 184 days. This means that benefit can be paid for all days in the period from 1 July until and including 31 December 2020.

Reinforced communication to the public about COVID-19

The spread of the infection has increased in Sweden in the autumn. The Government is therefore commissioning the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the county administrative boards and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to jointly coordinate, strengthen and develop communication measures directed at the public. This applies especially to the introduction of local general advice in the regions. This communication should be aimed especially at the groups and situations where the spread of the infection is increasing or risks increasing, and where compliance with advice and recommendations is judged to be deficient. These authorities will also produce a communication strategy to ensure that communication at national, regional and local level is coordinated and that there is clarity that there may be regional adaptations and focuses.

Follow-up of vaccinations against COVID-19

Safety, quality and efficacy are fundamental requirements for all vaccines introduced in the EU. The safety requirements for COVID-19 vaccines are as high as for all other vaccines in the EU.

It is important to follow up vaccines when they come into use after being approved by the European medicines agencies. The Government is therefore proposing a legislative amendment making it possible for all vaccinations for COVID-19 to be registered in the national vaccination register at the Public Health Authority of Sweden. Its purpose is to make it easier for the Public Health Authority of Sweden and other actors to, for instance, follow up the safety and effect of the vaccines and vaccination coverage in the various target groups.

Commission to secure access to medical products and devices

On account of COVID-19 the Swedish Medical Products Agency has intensified work to secure access to medical products and devices. The Agency has, for instance, worked on specific amendments to its regulations, questions concerning the transfer of medical products between pharmacies and regions, exemptions from charges for COVID-19-related clinical trials and central coordination of matters concerning medical products and devices at national level between government agencies, regions and municipalities.

The Medical Products Agency is receiving SEK 14.7 million to enable this work to continue. The funding is to be used to strengthen work on securing access to medical products and devices and to expand information measures and collaboration. The Agency is to present its report by 31 March 2021.

SEK 3 billion for more testing for COVID-19

At present large-scale testing is being conducted throughout the country. This provides good possibilities of discovering any carriers of the disease and of effective infection tracing. Applied together, large-scale PCR testing and infection tracing are important tools to press down the infection and obtain a correct picture of the state of the infection in the country. The Government is therefore allocating a further SEK 3 billion in 2020 to meet the need for large-scale testing during the remainder of the year.

Compensation for personal protective equipment for personal assistants

COVID-19 has resulted in additional costs for personal protective equipment for personal assistants. The municipalities were already able to apply for compensation for that additional cost. Now the Government is proposing a

new government grant ordinance so that private providers operating personal assistance services can also apply for compensation. SEK 50 million will be allocated to this initiative. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Extension of the Act on temporary disease prevention measures at eating and drinking establishments

The spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is continuing in Sweden and the rest of the world. To reduce its rate of spread the Government is proposing an extension of the Act on temporary infectious disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments until 31 May 2021.

National Board of Health and Welfare to support the work of the regions on borrowing health care professionals

The Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and Welfare to follow and support the work of the regions on putting ways of working in place for borrowing health care professionals from one another. This commission also includes analysing whether there is a need to develop a national staff reinforcement resource.

Commission to analyse the possibilities of infection-proofing more events

In the autumn the Government has worked for a more sustainable and precise regime that makes gatherings and events possible – at the same time as the risk of infection can be limited in a satisfactory way. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has now been given two commissions for further work in this area: first, to analyse the possibilities of amending the banning ordinance and, second, to continuously review and, when required, adapt general advice or recommendations as to how different types of events can be organised safely. The advice or recommendations can, for example, apply to cultural and sports events, exhibitions, amusement parks and jumble sales.

Published 27 November 2020



About the COVID-19 virus: for older people, people with health conditions and health and social care staff, 25 September

Here you can read more about current measures in health and social care and health and social care staff. This is the fifth article in a series about the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in response to the COVID-19 virus.

Crisis support for staff in health and elderly care who worked with COVID-19 patients

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a lot of pressure on health care services and elderly care. Staff have had an extremely heavy and often stressful workload and have worked very hard. The risk of mental ill health may have increased. This is why the Government proposes funds to support staff in regional and municipal health care and elderly care in its autumn amending budget for 2020. This will make money available for crisis support, counselling and trauma support. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Visiting ban at homes for older people ends on 1 October

In Sweden the ban on visits to special housing for older people ended on 1 October. This decision was based on a lower spread of the virus in the community, the measures already taken in elderly care services, and new government agency regulations and recommendations.

Billions set aside to continue fighting COVID-19 in 2021

In 2020, the Government has set aside almost SEK 7 billion to support large-

scale testing throughout Sweden and promote active contact tracing. In recent weeks, more than 100 000 tests for active COVID-19 infection have been carried out each week. Testing and contact tracing are important tools in fighting the pandemic and they need to continue in 2021 too. In the Budget Bill for 2021 the Government therefore proposes SEK 2 billion for continued testing and contact tracing in the regions. The Government also proposes increasing funding to the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare in 2021. This will help ensure continued access to personal protective equipment and other measures. The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Sweden to host EU reserves of protective and medical equipment

Sweden is one of the six countries chosen to host the EU's reserves of emergency medical equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE). The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency will be responsible for these reserves in Sweden, which are part of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and its operative capacity, known as rescEU. The EU has chosen the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Defence Materiel Administration to host reserves of medical equipment, such as ventilators, and personal protective equipment, such as face masks and protective gowns. This equipment can be used in times of crisis when EU Member States do not have enough supplies of their own to meet their needs.

Sweden takes part in global mechanism for buying COVID-19 vaccines

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) have started the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX) to guarantee that future COVID-19 vaccines are shared fairly among every country in the world. Sweden will take part in COVAX, together with the European Commission and other EU Member States.

Extension of COVID-19-related social insurance measures

Since the pandemic struck, the Swedish Government has taken many measures in the area of social insurance to lessen the impact of the pandemic. These measures aim to prevent the spread of infection, ease the pressure on health care, strengthen financial security and lessen the consequences for employers. Other measures allow parents to stay home

with their children if schools are closed. The Government has proposed extending these COVID-19-related sickness insurance measures and temporary parental benefits. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

SEK 4 billion to manage delayed care

During the first few months of the pandemic, health care had to make changes to provide care to patients who were critically ill with COVID-19 or other acute illnesses. Many scheduled visits and operations had to be delayed. To help health care services get back on track after COVID-19, the Government proposes in the Budget Bill for 2021 that the regions be given SEK 4 billion in 2021 and in 2022. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

New regulation helps patients who could not go to the dentist because of COVID-19

The Government has decided to adjust the national dental care subsidy to compensate patients who could not go to the dentist during the COVID-19 pandemic. A new compensation period started for these patients on 1 September 2020. This period will extend for the same number of days that were lost.

Survey of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on family carers

The Swedish Family Care Competence Centre has been given SEK 1 million to identify the impact that COVID-19 has had on family carers, staff supporting family carers and financial support given to family carers. The Centre will propose immediate and long-term support measures during the current pandemic and future crises and pandemics.

Evaluation of care for long-term COVID-19 symptoms

Little is known about the long-term health impacts of COVID-19 on the group of patients who have symptoms long after their initial illness. And little is known about how large this group is, since other illnesses and health problems may sometimes be involved.

This is why the Government has instructed the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services to carry out a systematic review of patients with long-term COVID-19 symptoms. This

includes compiling the scientific data available on care, treatment and rehabilitation. International data and experience in this area will also be studied.

Scenarios for new COVID-19 outbreaks

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been instructed to create different scenarios, both national and regional, of how COVID-19 could spread in Sweden over the coming year, focusing on the final months of 2020. The different scenarios must contain key assumptions, number of cases and death rates.

COVID-19-related measures in social services

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden will investigate the need for regulations in some social services. This includes services targeting older people and people with disabilities.

Review of homes for older people presented

In June, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate reviewed all 1 700 homes for older people in Sweden. This review found that 40 municipalities were particularly vulnerable, with almost 70 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths occurring in homes for older people.

Published 19 October 2020



Reforms to increase welfare in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' areas of responsibility – the Budget Bill for 2021

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government presents a range of proposals in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' areas of responsibility to increase welfare in Sweden. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Reinforcement of the role of health and medical care services in civil defence

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes an investment of SEK 442.5 million in 2021 to strengthen the capacity of health and medical care within the framework of civil defence. In 2022, SEK 593 million will be allocated and in 2023 and onwards, more than SEK 1 billion will be allocated per year. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

New regulation to help patients who could not visit the dentist because of COVID-19

An adjustment to the national dental care subsidy will compensate patients who have not been able to go to the dentist during the COVID-19 pandemic. A new compensation period will start for these patients on 1 September 2020, extending for the same number of days that were lost.

Additional funding for the National Board of Health and Welfare's emergency supplies

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Board of Health and Welfare was instructed by the Government to purchase personal protective equipment, medical devices and other equipment to secure availability in the event that the municipalities' and regions' own capacity is insufficient. The Government is allocating SEK 160 million in the autumn amending budget for 2020 and SEK 122 million in the Budget Bill for 2021 to the National Board of Health and Welfare to secure national supplies. This will also facilitate the Board's inventory management of personal protective equipment, medical devices and other equipment.

The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Additional funding for continued COVID-19 response

Efforts to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic remain a high priority for the Government.

The National Board of Health and Welfare plays a central role in the preparedness of health care and social services, and in Sweden's management of the pandemic. The Government wants to ensure the Board's continued and effective COVID-19 response and is allocating SEK 45 million in the Budget Bill for 2021 to the Board's administrative appropriation for its work next year.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden is tasked with ensuring effective control of communicable diseases in Sweden, and the Agency is working intensively to manage the pandemic. The Government has allocated additional funding to the Agency in 2020 for its ongoing COVID-19 response.

The Government wants to ensure a continued and effective COVID-19 response at the Agency in 2021 as well. In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government therefore proposes increasing the Public Health Agency's administrative appropriation by SEK 50 million for the Agency's response to the pandemic next year.

The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The Government wants to reduce pharmaceuticals emissions

Emissions can be reduced by setting environmental standards in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals. The Government is therefore allocating SEK 5 million in 2021 to start a pilot project for an environmental premium in the pharmaceutical reimbursement system. A pilot project of this kind would give Sweden the opportunity to take a leading role in the transition to stricter environmental standards in pharmaceutical production. In 2022 and 2023, SEK 11 million and SEK 3 million, respectively, will be allocated.

The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Special mental health function

On 30 January 2020, the Government instructed the Public Health Agency of Sweden to submit proposals on how to establish a special mental health and suicide prevention function at the Agency. It is proposed that funds to create and run this function be transferred to the Public Health Agency's administrative appropriation to streamline the Agency's financing. It is proposed that the Agency's appropriation increase by SEK 10 million for this purpose. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The proposals is presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services'.

SEK 1.5 billion to maternity care and women's health

The Government is investing in increased access and quality in women's health care and maternity care. In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes increasing funds to maternity care and women's health by SEK 500 million in 2021 and estimates that SEK 500 million will be allocated in 2022. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Higher pensions and lower taxes to strengthen pensioners' financial situation

The Government has proposed several measures in the Budget Bill to strengthen the financial position of pensioners. Pensions will be raised through a new benefit, while taxes will be further reduced for people over 65. The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Stimulate and accelerate developments in the area of disabilities

The Government wants to remove obstacles to accessibility to achieve the national disability policy objective. In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government therefore proposes allocating SEK 23 million per year to stimulate and accelerate developments in the area of disabilities.

The funds will be used to stimulate the implementation of universal design, i.e. creating more accessible solutions that work for more people, regardless of disability. Municipalities and regions are also deemed to need support in their efforts to implement disability policy. Moreover, improved statistics are needed to shed light on how the living conditions of people with disabilities are developing.

Increased security at National Board of Institutional Care homes

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes that the National Board of Institutional Care receive an additional SEK 110 million in 2021 and an additional SEK 100 million per year after that. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

SEK 100 million per year to strengthen cancer care

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes strengthening cancer care by providing an additional SEK 100 million per year in 2021–2023. The Government's investment to strengthen cancer care will thus amount to SEK 600 million per year from 2021 to 2023. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

The Government reinforces ambulance care

Ambulance care will be made more equitable and effective throughout the country. In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes an investment of SEK 100 million to reinforce ambulance care in 2021 and equivalent amounts in 2022–2023. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Investments to increase social justice

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes investments to

increase social justice in society. These include a recovery bonus for staff in health and social care, an investment in social measures in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, higher maintenance support for single parents and increased funding for housing allowance. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Record-high rise in standard compensation provided for personal assistance

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes that the standard amount for assistance allowance be adjusted upwards by 3.5 per cent. It is therefore proposed that the standard amount be set at SEK 315 per hour in 2021. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Increased resources to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency to reduce processing times

In order to continue the efforts under way to improve the quality and legal certainty of processing and to remedy the long processing times for care allowance for children with disabilities and compensation for additional costs, the Government proposes in the Budget Bill for 2021 that the Swedish Social Insurance Agency be allocated SEK 120 million in 2021, SEK 100 million in 2022 and SEK 80 million in 2023.

Almost SEK 1.2 billion to tackle mental ill health and strengthen psychiatric services

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes allocating SEK 1 177.5 million in 2021 to strengthen mental health, psychiatric and suicide prevention services. An equivalent amount will be allocated in 2022. Together with previously announced allocations, this is an investment of more than SEK 2 billion in 2021. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Targeted funding for continuity of care and increased resources to primary care

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes increasing funding to primary care and directing funding towards ensuring continuity of care. The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Package of measures to combat fraud and abuse in the welfare systems

Vigorous efforts are required to combat tax fraud and abuse, and to maintain confidence in the welfare systems. The Government therefore proposes that SEK 189 million be allocated for this purpose in 2021. The proposal is based on an agreement between the Government, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Subsidies for foster home placements

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes allocating SEK 250 million per year in 2021–2022, and SEK 200 million in 2023, to a targeted government grant to Sweden's municipalities. These funds will subsidise the cost of foster home placements. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Job stimulus measures in social assistance and investment to combat incorrect disbursements and fraud in unemployment insurance

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes an investment of SEK 100 million as of 2022 for increased job stimulus measures in social assistance and allocating SEK 30 million to efforts to stop incorrect disbursements and fraud in unemployment insurance. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

SEK 31 million to language training for staff caring for older people

Being understood is essential in order to feel safe and secure. The need to strengthen Swedish language skills among staff in care of the elderly has gained visibility during the ongoing pandemic. In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government therefore proposes a targeted investment to improve the vocational language skills of staff in care of the elderly. The proposal is presented in expenditure area 16 'Education and academic research'.

SEK 4 billion to manage postponed care

To help health care services get back on track post-COVID-19, the Government proposes in the Budget Bill for 2021 that SEK 4 billion be allocated to the regions in 2021 and in 2022. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

Historic budget initiative to reinforce care of the elderly

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes additional funding of SEK 4 billion per year to Sweden's municipalities to reinforce care of the elderly, while funding to the Care of Older People Initiative will increase by SEK 1.7 billion, to a total of SEK 3.7 billion in 2021. All in all, this is the largest investment ever in care of the elderly in Sweden.

All of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' proposals are presented in expenditure area 9 'Health care, medical care and social services', with the exception of: sickness insurance, which is presented in expenditure area 10 'Financial security for the sick and disabled'; pensions, which are presented in expenditure area 11 'Financial security for the elderly'; and financial support to families, which is presented in expenditure area 12 'Financial security for families and children'.

The proposal on language training for staff caring for older people is presented in expenditure area 16 'Education and university research'.

Published 25 September 2020



About the COVID-19 virus: for older people, people with health conditions and health and social care staff, 24 June

Here you can read more about current measures in health and social care and health and social care staff. This is the fourth article in a series about the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in response to the COVID-19 virus.

Ban on visits to care homes for older people extended

The Government has decided on an extension of the ban on visits to care homes for older people on account of the COVID-19 virus. The ban runs up to 31 August 2020. At the same time, the Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and Welfare to develop the support for assessing how exemptions can be made from the ban on visits.

Preventive sickness benefit for risk groups

The Government's ordinance means a right to compensation of up to SEK 804 per day for people who belong to risk groups and for family members of people who belong to risk groups. The benefits are paid for the period when the person refrains from work to avoid being infected by the COVID-19 disease or infecting family members with that disease. The ordinance entered into force on 1 July 2020.

Relaxation of restrictions in the summer

In recent weeks the number of people needing care in hospital has decreased, and several regions have been able to increase their tracing and testing. In view of this and of the phase Sweden is now in, the Government is able to give new information about conditions for travel in Sweden this

summer. As of 13 June people without symptoms can travel in Sweden.

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden, it is the social contacts, and not the trips themselves, that spread infection, so it is important that everyone continues to take great personal responsibility and to follow the advice about caution and social distancing. The situation is still serious and the other restrictions concerning, for example, crowding in restaurants, bars and cafés and recommendations for risk groups remain in place. If the curve of severely ill people turns upwards again, new restrictions may be introduced.

Consequences of COVID-19 for social services to be analysed

The Government has commissioned the Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis to analyse the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the services provided by the social services in individual and family care. The commission will both cast light on the consequences from a short-term perspective and include a prospective analysis looking one year ahead.

SEK 30 million to counter the consequences of isolation

Older people risk being hit particularly hard by the consequences of the outbreak of COVID-19. To counter the consequences of isolation, the Government is providing SEK 30 million in funding for the municipalities. This funding can, for example, be used for digital solutions in services for older people.

National Board of Health and Welfare to be commissioned to analyse cause of death statistics

The Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and Welfare to analyse how statistics concerning causes of death linked to the outbreak of COVID-19 are reported in Sweden and other countries. The commission also includes comparing and reporting corresponding statistics between regions, municipalities and other relevant geographical divisions in Sweden.

Government providing SEK 5.9 billion for expanded testing and tracing

The Government wants to see a strong increase in testing and tracing. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is therefore being commissioned to speedily ensure, in consultation with the regions and country administrative

boards, that conditions are in place for large-scale testing for COVID-19 throughout the country.

At national level, the Public Health Authority of Sweden is to support regions, country administrative boards, municipalities and other actors by ensuring that all the necessary structures for testing and the consequences of testing are in place in the near future. At the initiative of the regions, the country administrative boards are to assist the work of the regions on ensuring a speedy expansion of testing capacity. The boards are to provide this assistance in consultation with the Public Health Agency of Sweden. The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions share the same overall view of testing and tracing. They have signed an agreement on the implementation of increased testing.

Municipalities to be given full responsibility for the supervision process

The Government is allocating a total of SEK 82 million to strengthen the process concerning supervision of infectious diseases control in restaurants, bars and cafés in order to reduce the risks of further community transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Under the proposal, the municipalities will be responsible for the whole supervision chain, from inspections to decisions. When required, the regional medical officer for infectious diseases control will still provide the municipalities with advice in terms of infectious diseases control.

Payments for digital care in national schedule

The Government has decided to make it possible temporarily for care providers under the national schedule of payments to be paid for digital health care contacts. The purpose is to reduce the number of non-essential physical visits to health care, thereby reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It is up to every region to make their own decision as to whether they want to make use of the possibility of digital health care contacts provided by the ordinance amendments. If they do, the region and care providers have to agree on the payment level for digital health care contacts.

Impact on cancer patients to be analysed

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been commissioned by the Government to analyse how cancer patients are affected by COVID-19. The Board will, for instance, analyse whether patient demography and the course of the disease are the same for cancer patients as for other groups. At the same time, the reporting dates for a number of the Board's ongoing

government commissions are postponed on account of COVID-19.

Government's vaccine strategy

Ensuring access to any future vaccine for COVID-19 has high priority for the Government. The Government has therefore produced a vaccine strategy consisting of three parts: the Government's further international work, a new vaccine coordinator and a commission to the Public Health Agency of Sweden to produce a national vaccine plan. Richard Bergström is the new vaccine coordinator. His appointment runs until 2022, and he will already present an initial interim report in August.

Information material for children and young people particularly susceptible to infection

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been commissioned to produce and spread information material for health care and school health services. It will deal with targeted action for children and young people who are particularly susceptible to infection. The purpose of the information material will be to serve as support for the profession in connection with assessment and advice about preventive measures to reduce the risk of infection for children and young people who are particularly susceptible to infection.

The National Board of Health and Welfare will assist the Agency with its knowledge, and experience and the Board will also spread the information material to professions in the relevant services.

Published 06 July 2020



Government introduces temporary responsible gambling measures

The Government has adopted a temporary ordinance on responsible gambling measures targeting forms of gambling with particular risks, such as online casinos and slot machines.

“As a result of the prevailing pandemic, we’re seeing a mix of circumstances that, taken together, create great risks regarding gambling. These must be offset. With these measures, the Government is strengthening protection for Swedish consumers,” says Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi.

Serious financial consequences have followed in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak with increased risk of unemployment, sick leave and financial uncertainty. The pandemic thus increases the risk of mental ill health as well as gambling problems and greater indebtedness.

The ordinance adopted today contains temporary provisions stating that the deposit limit for gambling on online casinos may not exceed SEK 5 000. A corresponding loss limit will apply when gambling on slot machines.

It will also be mandatory for players to set limits on gambling time when gambling on online casinos and slot machines, and bonuses offered by licence holders operating online casinos and slot machines may not exceed SEK 100.

The temporary ordinance will enter into force on 2 July and expire at the end of 2020.



About COVID-19: For older people, people with health conditions and health care and social services staff

Here you can read about measures, advice and restrictions that concern older people, people with health conditions, risk groups and health and social care staff. This is the third article in a series about the work of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in response to the COVID-19 virus.

More clinical studies about COVID-19

More clinical studies linked to COVID-19 are needed, and Swedish patients need access to the new medicines that are being developed. The Government has therefore instructed the Swedish Research Council to temporarily bolster activities concerning clinical studies in Sweden. Researchers will receive greater support so that more studies linked to COVID-19 can be conducted in the Swedish health and medical care system.

Shorter waiting lists not required to be eligible for the ‘waiting list billion’

The Government considers that the focus in all regions right now should be on COVID-19 and helping patients who are acutely ill. It has therefore decided to remove the requirement of shorter waiting lists to be eligible for the ‘waiting list billion’ in 2020.

Expanded digital contact channels to safeguard mental health

The Government considers that the COVID-19 pandemic can affect people’s mental wellbeing. It is therefore important that contacting mental health

services is easy. The Government wants to support effective communication among care services, patients and relatives in cases where physical visits are not possible as a result of the spread of COVID-19.

The Government has therefore instructed the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency to provide SEK 24 million to the regions to develop and strengthen digital contact channels to activities that receive patients with mental health issues.

The three metropolitan regions – Stockholm Region, Region Västra Götaland and Region Skåne – will each receive SEK 2 million. The other regions will each receive SEK 1 million.

Analyse risks in health and social care

The Government wants to limit the negative repercussions of COVID-19 and to strengthen knowledge and preparedness for the future when it comes to communicable diseases. It has therefore instructed the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) to particularly analyse the implications of COVID-19 for quality and safety in health and social care.

IVO is to submit an interim report to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs by 13 December 2020. The final report is to be submitted by 1 December 2021.

Starting at the end of April and throughout May, IVO is conducting 1000 inspections of care facilities for older people in all of Sweden's municipalities. The aim is to enhance learning in care for older people and to facilitate the implementation of improvement measures.

Expanded opportunities for temporary parental benefit

The opportunities to receive temporary parental benefit have been expanded in a new ordinance. If it should be necessary to close e.g. preschools and schools to limit the spread of the virus, parents who have to stay home from work to care for children will be eligible for temporary parental benefit. In such situations, parents will receive approximately 90 per cent of the daily allowance they would normally receive in temporary parental benefit.

The new ordinance also contains an exemption from the requirement of a medical opinion to verify the special need for care or supervision if temporary parental benefit is to be paid when a child between the ages of 12 and 16 is sick. The need must still be verified, but it can be done by some

other means than a medical opinion.

The ordinance entered into force on 25 April 2020 and applies to temporary parental benefit from that date. The ordinance will cease to apply at the end of September 2020.

Identifying particularly vulnerable risk groups

The Government has instructed the National Board of Health and Welfare to identify those groups that are at the greatest risk of becoming seriously ill should they contract COVID-19. These groups may have a particular need for protection against infection.

The National Board of Health and Welfare presented its final report on 17 April 2020. The report shows that there are groups of individuals who may need particular protection against infection since they are either at risk of becoming seriously ill should they contract COVID-19, or are more susceptible to viral infections. Work on this issue is under way and the Government intends to provide more information at a later date.

Number of tests for COVID-19 to increase dramatically and more groups to be tested

At the instruction of the Government, the Public Health Agency of Sweden has developed a strategy on how to increase the number of tests and how more essential groups can be tested without it impacting on the most prioritised groups: patients and health and medical care staff.

Government removes reporting requirements for municipalities and regions

To make it easier for municipalities and regions, considering the difficult situation they find themselves in, the Government has decided to remove the requirements on reporting in 2020 concerning five agreements between central government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALAR).

This means that municipalities and regions do not have to provide data on the results of the initiatives in question. The reporting requirements on SALAR remain in place. Certain payments will also be made earlier than planned.

Government appoints national coordinator for clinical studies on

COVID-19

A number of medications are currently being used against COVID-19, but our knowledge is still imperfect. It is therefore extremely important that clinical studies are used to develop more knowledge about which medicines can be effective in the treatment of people who have contracted COVID-19.

Sweden has been given the opportunity to participate in the WHO Solidarity Trial that aims to test the effectiveness and safety of medicines currently being used to treat COVID-19 patients. Swedish university hospitals have expressed interest in the study and have established a network for participation.

The Government has appointed senior physician and associate professor Soo Aleman as national research study coordinator for the Swedish part of the WHO Solidarity Trial.

Published 11 May 2020



Work in the areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance with regard to the COVID-19 virus

There is now an ongoing outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Swedish Government is following developments carefully and is in continuous contact with the responsible authorities. Below is a selection of the Government's decisions and initiatives that have been taken so far in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' areas.

Responsible authorities instructed to limit the spread of infection

The Public Health Agency of Sweden coordinates communicable disease control at national level and provides daily updates regarding the situation in Sweden. The National Board of Health and Welfare supports and coordinates the health and medical care preparedness of the various regions. The Government is in daily contact with these agencies. The Government has issued the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden several instructions on limiting the spread of SARS-CoV-2. The Government will ensure that the expert agencies and the health and medical care system have the resources necessary to limit the spread of the virus.

Delivery of face masks to medical care services

On 19 March, the National Board of Health and Welfare signed a contract a medical and safety technology company to secure sizable deliveries of face

masks to Swedish medical care services.

“Some 200 000 extra face masks per month is a substantial increase on current deliveries. This is a significant contribution in this situation. It is a long-term solution, based on domestic Swedish production,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

More intensive care beds in hospitals

The Government has instructed the National Board of Health and Welfare to establish a coordination function for intensive care beds. Regions around the country are working to increase intensive care capacity. As national coordinator, the task of the National Board of Health and Welfare therefore concerns supporting the work to meet the needs at national level. The National Board of Health and Welfare is to gain a picture of the national situation with regard to existing intensive care beds and access to intensive care beds from public and private care providers. The Board is also to support the regions in coordinating and increasing the number of beds.

National procurment centre for protective equipment and medical equipment

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been appointed as the national procurment centre for medical equipment, protective equipment and certain medico-technical equipment. Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren and Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan have met with the manufacturing industry and discussed what equipment it can deliver.

Sick pay standard deduction discontinued and medical certificate requirement suspended

The Government has proposed to temporarily discontinue the sickness benefit standard deduction. This means that sick pay is paid from the first day at home. The purpose of this change is to encourage people to stay at home even when they have mild symptoms.

Employees are to be able to receive compensation for the sickness benefit standard deduction from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. This applies during the period from 11 March until 31 May 2020.

To relieve the pressure on the health and medical care system, the Government has proposed to temporarily suspend the medical certificate requirement from the eighth day of sickness. This applies from 13 March until further notice.

Information to social services personnel

On 12 March, the Government decided to instruct the National Board of Health and Welfare to disseminate information on SARS-CoV-2 to all social services personnel: support and service for persons with certain functional impairments, personal assistance and elderly care.

Published 20 March 2020



Agreement on social security between Sweden and Japan enters into force on 1 June

On 1 June, the agreement on social security between Sweden and Japan enters into force. The agreement coordinates the Swedish and Japanese public old-age and survivor's pensions systems, and sickness and activity compensation.

“I am very pleased that the agreement on social security between Sweden and Japan is now entering into force. The agreement will increase security for Swedes who live and work in Japan, and be important for Swedish companies,” says Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi.

The social security agreement between Japan and Sweden now entering into force means that it will be easier for Swedes working in Japan to qualify for a Japanese pension, and they will also be able to receive Japanese pension payments if they move back to Sweden. From a Swedish perspective, the agreement is particularly important for Swedes who work in Japan for less than 10 years.

For Swedish companies doing business in Japan, the agreement means less red tape. Moving between the two countries will also be easier when a posted employee is covered by the home country's social security system and the employer pays the social security contributions required by the agreement in the home country.

Under the agreement, posted employees and their accompanying family members are covered by the home country's legislation for up to five years for the current old-age and survivor's pensions, and sickness and activity compensation. It is easier for family members when the whole family is covered by the same social insurance system.

Sweden and Japan have been negotiating a social security agreement for several years. The agreement was signed on 11 April 2019 and adopted by the Riksdag on 27 October 2021. The agreement enters into force on 1 June 2022.

Published 01 June 2022



Agreement on social security between Sweden and Japan enters into force

On Monday 28 March, an exchange of notes took place between Swedish Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi and Japanese Ambassador to Sweden Noke Masaki to enable the social security agreement between Sweden and Japan to enter into force on 1 June 2022. The agreement, adopted by the parliaments of both countries, coordinates the Swedish and Japanese public old-age and survivor's pension systems, and sickness and activity compensation.

“Japan is an important country for Sweden. This social security agreement, which primarily covers pensions, reinforces the already exceptionally strong trade ties and excellent relations between Japan and Sweden. The agreement will be important for employees who move between the two countries and for Swedish companies, and consequently for jobs and growth,” says Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi.

The social security agreement between Japan and Sweden will make it easier for Swedes working in Japan to qualify for a Japanese pension and they will also be able to receive Japanese pension payments in Sweden if they move back to Sweden to settle permanently. From a Swedish perspective, the agreement will be particularly important for Swedes who work in Japan for less than 10 years. Until this agreement enters into force, an employee has to have worked in Japan for at least 10 years to receive Japanese pension payments in Sweden.

For Swedish companies doing business with Japan, the agreement means less red tape. Moving between the two countries will also be easier when a

posted employee is covered by the home country's social security system and the employer pays the social security contributions encompassed by the agreement in the home country. Japan is Sweden's second largest trading partner in Asia and the fourth largest export market outside the EU.

Under the agreement, posted employees and their accompanying family members are covered by the home country's legislation for up to five years for the current old-age and survivor's pension, and sickness and activity compensation. It is easier for family members when the whole family is covered by the same social insurance system.

Sweden and Japan have been negotiating a social security agreement for several years. The agreement was signed on 11 April 2019 and adopted by the Riksdag on 27 October 2021.

Published 29 March 2022



Government Offices of Sweden

Change of government, 30 November 2021

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government takes place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty the King. The Council of State begins at 13.00.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 22 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

Ministry of Employment

Eva Nordmark, Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

Johan Danielsson, Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment

Ministry of Finance

Mikael Damberg, Minister for Finance

Max Elger, Minister for Financial Markets

Ida Karkiainen, Minister for Public Administration

Ministry of Defence

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

Ministry of Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth, Minister for Infrastructure

Khashayar Farmanbar, Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Ministry of Justice

Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Integration and Migration

Ministry of Culture

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Minister for Culture

Ministry of the Environment

Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Karl-Petter Thorwaldsson, Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Anna-Caren Säterberg, Minister for Rural Affairs

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Social Security

Ministry of Education and Research

Anna Ekström, Minister for Education

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom, Minister for Schools

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation

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Published 30 November 2021



Government Offices of Sweden

Sweden's new Government

Today in the Riksdag, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven announced the ministers who will serve in the Government. The change of government will take place at a Council of State at the Royal Palace presided over by His Majesty The King. The Council of State will begin at 14.15.

Sweden's new Government consists of the Prime Minister and 21 ministers.

Prime Minister's Office

Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

Ministry of Employment

Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

Minister for Gender Equality and Housing, with responsibility for urban development, anti-segregation and anti-discrimination

Märta Stenevi

Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson

Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg

Published 09 July 2021



Medical certificate requirement during sick pay period to be suspended

The Government is proposing to temporarily suspend the medical certificate requirement from the eighth calendar day of a sick pay period.

“The Government is prepared to take the measures necessary to reduce the pressure on health and medical care services and to stop the spread of infection in society. The Government expects that temporarily suspending the requirement of a medical certificate during the sick pay period is a measure that will do exactly that,” says Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi.

At present, to be entitled to sick pay an employee is required to submit a medical certificate from the eighth calendar day of a sick pay period. Reduced working capacity is then verified by means of a certificate from a doctor or dentist. In the event of an outbreak of a disease that poses an extensive threat to public health, the Government considers there is cause to temporarily suspend the requirement of a medical certificate so as to reduce the burden on health and medical care services.

The Government will shortly present a legislative proposal for the Riksdag to consider.

The proposal is a policy agreement reached between the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party and the Swedish Green Party.



Sickness benefit qualifying day temporarily discontinued

(New version) Due to the COVID-19 virus, the Government has announced that the sickness benefit standard deduction will temporarily be abolished in that the central government will pay sickness benefit for the first day of sickness. The ultimate aim of this measure is to reduce the spread of infection in society. The new regulation is in effect from 11 March until 11 May 2020.

“To reduce the risk of spreading infection, it is important that those who are sick do not go to work. In the current situation, it is reasonable for central government to take financial responsibility for the first day of sickness to help individuals,” says Minister for Social Security Ardalan Shekarabi.

This measure means that an employee can apply for central government reimbursement for the first day of sickness after the fact. The application is made retroactively to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency. The employer deducts the standard deduction as normal.

Self-employed persons will also receive compensation for a qualifying day. The full details of this proposal will be made clear in the additional amending budget that the Government will adopt in the near future.

This is a policy agreement reached between the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party and the Swedish Green Party.