

Sweden's work to combat men's violence against women

Stopping men's violence against women is a priority issue for the Swedish Government. In 2016, a ten-year national strategy to prevent and counter men's violence against women was adopted. The strategy applies to the period 2017–2026 and particularly emphasises preventive measures.

The strategy addresses violence against women and girls based on their gender. It also addresses violence to which women and girls are particularly exposed or which has a particularly severe impact on women and girls in general. Men and boys may also be exposed to violence by their relatives, including honour-related violence and oppression, as well as prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. Conversely, women and girls may expose their relatives to violence, for example in an honour context, and commit crimes related to prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes, such as soliciting. Measures in the strategy also aim to counter this. The national strategy covers all aspects of the vulnerability of LGBTIQI persons to domestic violence, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes.

The strategy's four objectives are:

- Increased and effective prevention efforts against violence.
- Improved detection of violence and stronger protection for and support to women and children subjected to violence.
- More effective law enforcement.
- Improved knowledge and methodological development.

The strategy is being implemented through action plans. The latest covers the period 2021–2023 and consists of 99 measures covering both prevention of violence and support and protection for victims. It also includes initiatives to tighten up legislation.

Examples of actions in recent years

In 2018, Sweden's sexual offences legislation was amended. Among other things, the amendments mean that the threshold for a criminal offence is set to whether participation in a sexual activity is voluntary or not. It is therefore no longer necessary for the offender to have used violence or threats, or taken advantage of the victim's particularly vulnerable situation, in order to be convicted of offences such as rape.

In 2021, a new offence – violation of a child's integrity – was introduced in the Swedish Criminal Code. Violation of a child's integrity means that it is a punishable offence to expose a child to witnessing certain criminal acts, such as violence and sexual offences in a domestic context.



In 2022, some aspects of the criminal law on men's violence against women were tightened. For example, the minimum penalties for the offences of gross violation of integrity and gross violation of a woman's integrity, which include repeated violence committed against a close relative, were increased. At the same time, legislation on non-contact orders was also tightened.

In 2022, a new offence – honour-based oppression – was introduced in the Swedish Criminal Code. This offence includes the introduction of a special, stricter scale of penalties for repeatedly committing certain criminal acts against a person with an honour motive.

An inquiry has been commissioned to review the protection of victims of violence under tenancy law. The aim is to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for victims of violence to remain in their shared housing.

State subsidies to women's and girls' shelters, their national organisations and other organisations working with similar support for victims of violence have been increased and made permanent. This is to ensure that the organisations are in a good position to work in the long term. From 2022 onwards, SEK 150 million will be allocated annually for this purpose.

Regional agencies have been given permanent resources to support the implementation of the national strategy on men's violence against women.

A national centre against honour-related violence and oppression has been set up. One of the tasks of the centre is to regularly investigate the extent of honour-related violence and oppression in Sweden and to monitor the development of society's efforts in this area.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been assigned to provide long-term support to municipalities in their efforts to help victims of violence to find permanent housing. This includes developing methodological support, convening an expert group and allocating funds to municipalities in this area.

The Swedish Police Authority has been tasked with strengthening the skills of its staff in dealing with people with mental health problems linked to crime in close relationships.

A national violence prevention programme was adopted in 2022. Organisations, municipalities and regions can now apply for funding to develop their violence prevention efforts. In light of this, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been tasked with translating and adapting evidence-based violence prevention programmes.

A regulation has been introduced in the Swedish Social Services Act stipulating that social welfare committees must work to help people who have subjected close relatives to violence or other abuses to change their behaviour.

Schools have an important role to play in helping to create a culture of consent, where sex is based on mutual consent and sexual harassment is not normalised. Curricula therefore include reinforced wording on sexuality, consent and relationships and honour-related violence and oppression. The reinforced wording emphasises that teaching in this area of knowledge should be recurrent and contribute to promoting pupils' health and well-being, and also strengthen their ability to make informed and independent choices.

Victims of violence will have access to quality sheltered housing throughout the country and the rights of accompanying children will be strengthened. The 2022 Budget Bill announced a reform introducing sheltered housing as a new form of placement in the Social Services Act, with increased quality requirements.

Based on a government mandate, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency conducted a survey of 86 women living with protected personal data. Almost all of the women interviewed in the survey have had their protected personal data disclosed by public authorities.

Beginning in 2023, an additional SEK 50 million will be allocated annually to preventive measures to combat honour-related violence and oppression. An annual government grant totalling SEK 20 million will be established to help organise women and girls in socially disadvantaged areas.