



Article from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

## Sweden and the HLPF 2019

Published 05 July 2019

The UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable development will meet in New York on 9-18 July 2019.

The theme will be "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth is the following:

- Goal 4 - Quality education
- Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- Goal 13 - Climate action
- Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions

Goal 17 to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development is reviewed every year.

To find out more about Sweden's main messages for each of the goals that are being reviewed at HLPF, click the respective link above.

Sweden will host a side event together with Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on tackling climate-related security risks, conflict and equalities. For more information visit <https://www.sipri.org/>



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sustainable pensions: Improved basic protection for pensioners and a gradual increase in retirement age

Published 24 June 2019

The Government wants to raise pensions. The Government and the Working Group on Pensions have therefore proposed a number of pension measures in bills submitted to the Riksdag on 28 May. The Working Group on Pensions includes the governing parties – the Swedish Social Democratic Party and the Green Party – and the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party and the Christian Democrats.

## Basic protection for pensioners

The basic protection for pensioners consists of the guarantee pension, the housing supplement for pensioners and maintenance support for elderly persons. The guarantee pension and housing supplement by far cover the most people. These different forms of support are means-tested to varying degrees and are also partially directed at different groups of pensioners.

## Government proposes improved basic protection

To improve the basic protection for the least well-off pensioners, several different proposals aim to improve the financial situation for around 830 000 pensioners.

The basic level of the guarantee pension will be raised by SEK 200 per month for everyone who receives the guarantee pension. Pensioners who have not worked or have a low pension for some other reason are entitled to the guarantee pension.

The housing cost ceiling in the housing supplement for pensioners will be raised from SEK 5 600 to SEK 7 000 for those who are unmarried, and to SEK 3 500 for those who are married. This higher ceiling means that the housing supplement will better cover current housing costs while also making it easier for older people to move to housing that is adapted to their needs.

It is suggested that these proposals enter into force on 1 January 2020.

## Income throughout life and basic protection

The main principle of the pension system is that a pension is based on the individual's earned income throughout their life, the 'lifetime earnings principle'. The basic protection for pensioners is a departure from this principle. Through the basic protection and housing supplement, individuals who have not worked, or who have worked very little, can receive a higher pension. The proposals aim to strengthen the financial situation of the least well-off pensioners.

## Women benefit from the new proposals

The pension system itself is gender neutral and any differences between women's and men's pensions are largely based on previous employment income. Women on average have lower pensions than men because women generally earn less than men, work more part-time, assume more responsibility for unpaid domestic work and are on sick leave more. Women on average also leave working life earlier than men. Around 80 per cent of current pensioners receiving the guarantee pension and housing supplement are women. The proposal to raise the basic level of the guarantee pension by SEK 200 per month is expected to increase the individual disposable income of almost half of today's women pensioners. This investment to enhance the basic protection is estimated to cost a total of around SEK 2.2 billion.

## Increasing life expectancy

We are living longer. In the past 50 years, life expectancy has increased by around 7 years for women and 8.5 years for men. We eat better and live

healthier, and new pharmaceuticals prevent and cure previously fatal diseases.

Since the new pension system was introduced in the mid-1990s, life expectancy has increased by almost three years. This is good news, but it means that pensions as a proportion of final wages are falling because they have to last longer.

## Gradual increase in retirement age necessary

To guarantee adequate pensions today and in the future, the retirement age needs to gradually rise, while working life also needs to become more sustainable. The Government proposes introducing a new concept: the 'target age for retirement'. The target age aims to serve as a benchmark for deciding when to retire. The target age mainly aims to replace today's well-established standard age of 65 with a retirement age that takes account of the increasing life expectancy in Sweden.

There is no fixed retirement age in the Swedish pension system and, like today, it will remain possible to decide when to retire, as long as a person has reached the minimum age.

A first stage that is now being proposed is to raise the minimum age for drawing a national pension by one year in 2020, from age 61 to 62. It is proposed that the legislative amendments enter into force on 1 December 2019.

The Government has previously proposed that the right to remain in the labour market should be raised in two stages, by one year in 2020 and by an additional year, to age 69, in 2023.

## Sustainable working life

Long-term, secure and sustainable pensions require a greater shift than simply making changes to the pension system. A more gender-equal, sustainable and flexible working life is required. It is vital that people are not worn out in the labour market but, on the contrary, are able to go the distance. In order to achieve a sustainable working life and manage future skills supply and long-term sustainable pensions, the opportunity to adapt during working life is key. It must be possible to change course several times in life, perhaps by working with something else or reducing working hours.

The age at which a person starts working is also important. We are studying longer, which also currently leads to later entry into working life in Sweden than in our neighbouring Nordic countries.

## Investing in better working environments

The Government is proposing and implementing several measures to achieve a more sustainable working life. High demands in the workplace increase the risk of leaving working life prematurely. Physical demands and ergonomically inadequate working environments also increase the risk. This particularly affects women, who have a higher rate of sickness absence and more health problems, and leave working life earlier than men.

In January 2016, the Government adopted a national work environment strategy for 2016–2020, setting out the direction of the work for the coming five years.

In addition, the Government has implemented several action programmes to reduce sickness absence, increased support to research on working life, signed an agreement with the social partners on healthier workplaces and provided extra funding to occupational health services.

## First pensions in 1913

When the decision on the first pensions was adopted in 1913, life expectancy was less than 60 years. At that time, the retirement age was set at 67. In 1976, it was lowered to 65. The new pension system, introduced around 20 years ago, has no fixed retirement age. Despite this, many people still believe that the earlier retirement age of 65 also applies today.

## Income pension, premium pension and guarantee pension

The income-based pension is the main part of the national pension system and is based on total earnings throughout a person's life. The longer you work, the higher pension you receive. Income includes salaries, sickness benefit, unemployment benefits, etc.

The premium pension is also based on lifetime earnings. It is placed in funds and everyone may choose the funds into which this money will be placed.

The guarantee pension is there for those who have had little or no income from work during their life. It is linked to the price base amount, calculated annually by Statistics Sweden, based on price-level changes in society. The size of the guarantee pension also depends on how long a person has lived in Sweden. To receive the full guarantee pension, a person must have lived in Sweden for 40 years.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Social insurance agreement signed with Japan

Published 16 April 2019

On 11 April, Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll and Japan's Ambassador Shigeyuki Hiroki signed a social security agreement between the two countries. The agreement coordinates the Swedish and Japanese public old-age, survivors' and disability pensions systems (for Sweden, sickness and activity compensation). Japan is one of Sweden's largest trade partners outside the EU.

"The world is getting smaller, and labour market mobility is increasing year on year. Japan is one of our largest trade partners outside the EU, and around 3 000 Swedes work in Japan. This agreement not only increases security for the individual, it is also beneficial for businesses in both countries", says Ms Strandhäll.

## Agreement between Sweden and Japan coordinates pension benefits

The agreement encompasses public old-age and survivors' pensions and invalidity benefits, and governs whether a person must be insured for such benefits in Sweden or Japan. As the agreement coordinates the Swedish and Japanese regulatory frameworks, individuals will not lose their accrued social insurance rights, primarily pension rights, when they move between the two countries.

From a Swedish perspective, the agreement will make it easier for Swedes working in Japan to receive Japanese pension payments in the future if they

return to Sweden. At present – before the agreement enters into force – a Swede has to have worked in Japan for 10 years to receive Japanese pension payments in Sweden.

The agreement also makes it possible to combine Swedish and Japanese insurance periods, making it easier for an individual to meet the conditions on which entitlement to a benefit may be based.

## Agreement important for Swedish businesses in Japan

Around 3 000 Swedes work in Japan. This agreement will lead to advantages for Swedish businesses and Swedes working in Japan. Thanks to the agreement, businesses will not have to pay social security contributions for the benefits in question in both countries, meaning they avoid ‘double’ social security contributions.

It will also enable businesses to post workers to the other country for up to five years. For the duration of the posting, the worker will continue to be covered by their home country’s legislation on the benefits in question. Self-employed individuals are also covered by the posting regulations.

Family members who accompany a posted worker to the other country will also be covered by their home country’s legislation on the benefits in question for the same period, as long as they themselves do not work in the other country.

## Approval required from both parliaments

Following the signing of the agreement, an application agreement will be negotiated. This is necessary so that the authorities in each country are able to process actual cases.

Next, the countries’ parliaments will need to approve the agreement before it can enter into force. In Sweden, this means the Government submitting a government bill to the Riksdag.

## The aim of social security agreements

Social security agreements aim to coordinate parts of the public social insurance systems when an individual moves between Sweden and the other



country involved. The intention is that an individual only needs to be insured in one of the countries. This means that people do not lose the social security benefits they have accrued, and social security contributions do not have to be paid in both countries.

Most commonly in such agreements, the basic premise is that individuals are insured in the country in which they work. They usually contain provisions on equal treatment, entitlement to payment of benefits in the other country, combining insurance periods, and administrative assistance between authorities. The rules on combining insurance periods make it possible for Swedish insurance years to be used to meet insurance requirements in the other country.

## Sweden's social security agreements with other countries

Sweden has concluded social security agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Cap Verde, Chile, India, Israel, Morocco, the Philippines, Serbia, South Korea, Turkey and the United States. The social security systems within the EU are also coordinated.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Annika Strandhäll on health care investments

Published 23 August 2018

In this film, Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll talks about health care investments made between 2015 and 2018. The Government has made investments in cancer care, mental health services, women's health, health care accessibility and quality, and other areas.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# Government agencies and authorities respond to effects of drought and heat

Published 09 August 2018

Rescue services, government agencies and local authorities are engaged in intensive efforts in response to the forest fires raging around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heat wave. More information about these efforts is available below. Crisis preparedness is part of the remit of every government agency and authority.

## Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) manages coordination and national priorities for international support. The MSB maintains constant preparedness and can provide reinforcement resources, both equipment and expertise, if requested by rescue operations leaders or county administrative boards. The MSB is also in regular dialogue with neighbouring countries and the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre concerning international resources.

The MSB has forest fire depots (with hoses, motor pumps and six-wheel ATVs) located around the country, which are being used for several of the fires.

The MSB can also provide personnel with collaboration and leadership

expertise to reinforce actors' management functions.

The MSB reinforces relevant county administrative boards' staffing and their reception of international support. Moreover, the MSB can provide housing solutions, hygiene facilities such as showers and toilets, and high-capacity pumps – resources that include accompanying expertise.

More information about ongoing events and measures relating to the forest fires is available on the MSB website

Information about the forest fires from county administrative boards, municipalities and rescue services is gathered at [www.krisinformation.se](http://www.krisinformation.se), the national website for emergency information. Important public announcements (in Swedish only) are published on this website.

- [Krisinformation.se](http://www.krisinformation.se) website

## Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

Swedish Armed Forces, including the Home Guard

The Swedish Armed Forces is providing continued support in the form of personnel and equipment, in response to expressed needs.

More information is available on the Swedish Armed Forces website

## Swedish Transport Administration

The Swedish Transport Administration is assisting with firefighting equipment and staffing resources, especially tracked vehicles equipped with water tanks and fire suppression equipment, and personnel to staff this equipment. At the moment, the Swedish Transport Administration is supporting rescue services at forest fires in Gävleborg, Dalarna and Jämtland counties. Traffic is impacted in the affected counties and traffic information is being updated regularly.

More information is available on the Swedish Transport Administration website

## Swedish Coast Guard

The Swedish Coast Guard has specially equipped marine patrol aircraft, two of which are now being used to assist rescue services and the MSB with

patrolling, documentation and directing other aircraft resources in connection with the forest fires. The Coast Guard has also produced special maps of the fires.

More information is available on the Swedish Coast Guard website

## Swedish Police Authority

The Swedish Police Authority is providing local support from each region and police from unaffected regions. The Police Authority's main task in connection with the fires is to save lives and reduce injuries. This involves cordoning off areas, directing traffic and evacuating residents in accordance with rescue service decisions. The National Operations Department has taken decisions concerning nationwide special events in order to support regions with national resources, where necessary, and prepare for potential decisions concerning nationwide special events. The fires are primarily affecting the Mitt, Nord and Bergslagen police regions. The Police Authority has decided to reinforce resources in the central police region Mitt with a number of police officers from the Öst, Väst Syd and Stockholm police regions.

More information is available on the Swedish Police Authority website

## County administrative boards

The county administrative boards are monitoring the forest fires and coordinating efforts between local actors and national level. They are also coordinating county information to the media and the public. County administrative boards also take decisions about fire bans and provide information to the public. All county administrative boards are closely monitoring access to animal feed and water in each county. The grazing and hay harvesting situation is extremely serious in several counties. Some county administrative boards have provided resources to other affect counties. The MSB's assessment is that resources to deal with the ongoing forest fires are currently available at county administrative board level.

County administrative board website

## Municipal rescue services

All municipal rescue services are providing assistance based on their

capacity. The number of firefighters and other personnel working to contain the ongoing fires in Sweden is constantly changing. A large number of volunteers, Home Guard personnel, police, and others are also assisting.

## Svenska kraftnät

Svenska kraftnät is the government agency that ensures Sweden has a secure electricity supply. Its remit includes ensuring that the country's electricity supply is prepared to handle extreme events, such as fires, that may entail serious strains on society. The electricity system is monitored around the clock. Svenska kraftnät is monitoring the ongoing forest fires closely and is in dialogue with rescue services on the ground and, when necessary, can provide emergency equipment to restore the power grid. This includes tracked vehicles equipped with wireless communications, such as the Raket system. These mobile command and communication units (MOLOS) are operated by Sweden's Voluntary Radio Organisation as instructed by Svenska kraftnät.

[Svenska kraftnät website](#)

## Swedish Board of Agriculture

The Swedish Board of Agriculture is working actively to find solutions to alleviate the situation for affected farmers. These solutions include exemptions from regulations, higher advance payments from support funds to help liquidity, and more. For example, the Board has granted an exemption allowing farmers to take feed from grassland that otherwise must not be harvested.

[More information is available on the Board of Agriculture website](#)

## National Food Agency

The protracted drought in large parts of the country is creating major problems for agriculture. This also means that everyone must conserve drinking water. At present, around 80 municipalities have introduced a ban on watering. Thus, it is equally as important to save municipal drinking water as private well water. Water is needed for many important activities, such as food production, hospitals and agriculture.

The National Food Agency is cooperating with the Swedish Board of

Agriculture and other authorities to manage the difficult situation of farmers.

More information is available on the National Food Agency website

## Swedish Forest Agency

The Swedish Forest Agency is supporting firefighting efforts by providing map data, landowner contact information and equipment such as hoses, pumps and drones. The Agency can also provide staffing resources and coordinate the exchange of information between the forestry sector, the MSB and other government agencies and actors, as well as provide status reports to landowners and the public. The Agency can also conduct inventories and offer support and guidance to affected forest owners.

More information is available on the Swedish Forest Agency website

## Swedish Work Environment Authority

Heat can impact employee attentiveness and judgement, which can lead to an increased risk of accidents. The Swedish Work Environment Authority is responsible for issues regarding work environment and working hours, and monitoring legal compliance. At present, the Authority is providing information about relevant risks, work environment responsibilities, preventive measures and applicable regulations. For example, the Authority has gathered information on its website about temperature and climate conditions at workplaces. The Authority is monitoring and analysing developments to prepare for additional measures.

More information is available on the Swedish Work Environment Authority website.

The social partners are monitoring compliance with labour legislation such as the Annual Leave Act and collective agreements that may regulate working hours, for example.

Swedish Work Environment Authority website

## SOS Alarm

Response times for the emergency number 112 are increasing, and the system is under pressure. SOS Alarm has heightened its level of

preparedness, producing status reports each day (at 06.00, 09.00, 15.00 and 20.30) and enabling measures to be taken when necessary. SOS Alarm is urging people to refrain from calling the emergency number 112 if they are not in acute or immediate need of help.

More information is available on the SOS Alarm website

## National Board of Health and Welfare

The National Board of Health and Welfare works to strengthen the preparedness of health, medical care and social service providers before, during and after serious incidents. In light of the ongoing heat wave and the many serious forest fires in the country, the Board is working with other government monitoring agencies.

More information is available on the National Board of Health and Welfare website

## Public Health Agency of Sweden

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides targeted advice for municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors to use in their efforts to reduce health risks associated with heat waves. This advice is then passed on to the individuals concerned.

More information is available on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website

## Lantmäteriet

Lantmäteriet, the government agency that produces maps of Sweden, is currently using its expertise to support other agencies. It has established a 'geo cell' in Färila, Sweden, staffed by Lantmateriet personnel with GIS expertise, and equipped with hardware such as computers, printers and plotters that can compile, analyse and print out maps based on the needs of rescue services, the police, county administrative boards and the MSB. Lantmäteriet takes part in regional collaboration conferences and the national collaboration conferences for government agencies.

Lantmäteriet website



## Swedish Post and Telecom Authority

The Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) is collaborating with other government agencies and societal actors, providing regular status reports on electronic communications. PTS is in regular contact with sector actors and has convened a meeting of the National Telecommunications Coordination Group (NTSG). PTS has also assigned a radio frequency permit to Polish rescue services.

More information is available on the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority website

## Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth is reaching out to businesses and organisations in the hospitality industry to enable them to inform tourists about the serious situation in Sweden and current conditions.

Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth website

## Swedish Maritime Administration

The Swedish Maritime Administration has had an ongoing dialogue with the MSB for the past week concerning the type of support the Administration can provide to fight the fires raging around Sweden. The Administration is supporting the MSB by coordinating society's combined resources. This involves overall planning, leadership and strategies for system managers, staff functions and prioritising society's resources from a national perspective. It also includes aircraft coordination and logistics support, which may entail optimising fuel supplies of the aircraft resources taking part.

More information is available on the Swedish Maritime Administration website

## Meteorological and Hydrological Institute

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) issues heat warnings when a period of high or extreme temperatures is expected. High temperatures put a strain on the body, creating problems particularly for risk groups.

Heat warnings on the SMHI website

SMHI and the Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) collaborate and provide continuous updates on the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage risk service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website

## Geological Survey of Sweden

The Geological Survey of Sweden (SGU) monitors groundwater trends and publishes up-to-date maps showing how much groundwater levels differ from normal monthly levels.

Groundwater levels on the SGU website

Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management has national responsibility for supervision guidance on drinking water and groundwater protection, and water-related activity (including withdrawing water for watering/irrigation).

Water guidelines on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

Information about water shortages on the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management website

## Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and actions individuals can take.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

## Medical Products Agency

The Medical Products Agency is responsible for approving and regulating medicinal products and natural remedies, and for the supervision of medical devices. Advice from the Medical Products Agency about storing medicinal

products during periods of prolonged heat is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website.

More information is available on the 1177 Vårdguiden website



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Heatwave and health

Published 01 August 2018

Sweden is experiencing unusually high temperatures this summer. Heatwaves can cause problems for people's health. Exposure to heat carries with it different risks for different individuals.

Risk groups are above all elderly people, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, young children, pregnant women and people on medication.

The Government is in continuous contact with the relevant agencies. Weekly meetings at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions provide the Government with updates on what the various agencies are doing to help elderly people and others in the heat. The meetings will continue as long as the current situation persists.

Private individuals can contact their county council and 1177 Vårdguiden for information and advice about various heatwave-related health risks. Advice about the heatwave (in Swedish) on the 1177 Vårdguidens website

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides advice for different target groups that can be used by municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors in health and medical care services.

Public health advice in English on preventing health effects of heat from The World Health Organisation, WHO

High temperatures can influence the growth of bacteria in drinking water and food. The National Food Agency website has information and advice.

Information (in Swedish) on The National Food Agency's website





Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# Cooperation to combat effects of drought and heat

Published 20 July 2018 Updated 08 August 2018

The prolonged heat and drought have impacted many sectors of society. There have been numerous forest fires, the agricultural sector has been severely affected by the drought and groundwater levels have dropped. The extreme temperatures can also cause health problems, especially among older people and the sick. The Government is following developments closely and taking the necessary decisions. The Government Offices is in continuous contact with the responsible government agencies.

In view of the forest fires around the country, the widespread drought and the ongoing heatwave, intensive efforts are under way among rescue services, government agencies and municipalities.

## Efforts to stop the forest fires

At present, several forest fires are raging around the country and the rescue services are making tremendous efforts to protect people, property, forests and the functioning of society.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is coordinating relevant agencies and supporting municipal rescue services, together with the Swedish Armed Forces and the county administrative boards, by providing reinforcements in

terms of equipment, staff and expertise.

Via the EU, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has requested assistance in the form of firefighting aircraft from other European countries.

The work of the authorities is crucial to combating the fires. But everyone also carries a personal responsibility. In many parts of the country, fire bans are in place. Remember to check whether a fire ban is in place where you are.

EU Civil Protection Mechanism

Information about the forest fires at [krisinformation.se](http://krisinformation.se)

Information about the forest fires on the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency website

## Efforts to support agriculture

The Government is closely following developments in the agriculture sector and continues alongside government agencies and other actors to seek solutions to the challenges emerging so as to alleviate the situation for farmers. For example, the Government will provide SEK 1,2 billion in national funds to strengthen the liquidity of our farmers. Sweden is also an active dialogue with the EU about exemptions and other solutions to alleviate the situation for Swedish farmers.

## Heatwave and health

The heatwave can cause problems for people's health. Exposure to heat carries with it different risks for different individuals. Risk groups are above all elderly people, the chronically ill, people with disabilities, young children, pregnant women and people on medication.

The Government has ongoing contact with the relevant government agencies and local authorities. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs holds weekly meetings with the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. These meetings bring the Government up to date on what the government agencies are doing to help older people and others cope with the heat. The meetings will continue as long as the current situation persists.

Private individuals can contact their county council and 1177 Vårdguiden for information and advice about various heatwave-related health risks.

Advice about the heatwave (in Swedish) on the 1177 Vårdguidens website

The Public Health Agency of Sweden provides advice for different target groups that can be used by municipalities, county councils, regions and private actors in health and medical care services.

High temperatures can influence the growth of bacteria in drinking water and food. The National Food Agency website has information and advice.

## Water levels and water supply

The Government is closely following developments in groundwater levels and water supply and has continuous contact with the responsible agencies. Municipalities are responsible for the public supply of drinking water.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency provides general information about water shortages, drought and what measures people can take themselves.

Information about water shortages (in Swedish) on the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency website

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) and the Geological Survey of Sweden collaborate and provide continuous updates about the risk of water shortages in their 'water shortage risk' service.

Water shortage service (in Swedish) on the SMHI website





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Reforms for increased security and welfare in the Budget Bill for 2018

Published 27 September 2017

In the Budget Bill for 2018, the Government presents a range of proposals to increase security and welfare in Sweden. Here you can learn more about the proposals related to the areas of responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

## Children's rights

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

## Summit on ending violence against children

In February 2018, Sweden will host the Solutions Summit, a high-level gathering bringing together representatives of governments, international organisations and other actors working to end all forms of violence against girls and boys. The Summit is part of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, of which Sweden is a member, launched at the initiative of UNICEF and WHO.

## Disabilities

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

## Increased standard amount for assistance allowance

The Government intends to increase the standard amount for assistance allowance by 1.5 per cent. This is a higher adjustment than in 2017, when the standard amount was increased by 1.05 per cent.

## Improved interpretation services in working life

The Government is investing in greater access to interpretation services in working life. The aim is to strengthen the labour market opportunities of women and men who are deaf, deaf-blind or have a hearing impairment. The Government intends to allocate SEK 15 million per year for this purpose in 2018–2020.

## Gender equality

The proposals are presented in expenditure area 13 'Gender equality and integration of newly arrived immigrants'.

## Multi-year investment to combat honour-related violence and oppression

The Government intends to make a coordinated, multi-year investment to prevent and combat honour-related violence and oppression comprising measures worth SEK 100 million in 2018 and SEK 57 million per year in 2019–2020.

## Appropriations to the new gender equality agency

The Government has decided to establish a gender equality agency to help ensure strategic, coherent and sustainable governance, and effective implementation of gender equality policy. The agency, which will be located in Gothenburg and open on 1 January 2018, has been allocated SEK 80 million for 2018.

## Social insurance

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 10 'Financial security for the sick and disabled'.

## Higher ceiling in the sickness insurance system

The ceiling for the sickness benefit qualifying income will be increased from seven and a half times to eight times the price base amount from 1 July 2018.

1. The housing supplement and the special housing supplement will be increased from 1 January 2018.
2. Tax will be reduced for people receiving activity and sickness compensation from 1 January 2018.
3. Guarantee compensation will increase by SEK 300 from 1 July 2018.

## Improvements for people receiving activity and sickness compensation

The Government proposes reforms in three different areas that improve the financial situation of people receiving activity and sickness compensation.

4. The housing supplement and the special housing supplement will be increased from 1 January 2018.
5. Tax cuts for people receiving activity and sickness compensation will apply from 1 January 2018.
6. Guarantee compensation will increase by SEK 300 from 1 July 2018.

## Proposal for sickness benefit pending a final decision

The aim of the proposal is to ensure that people on sick leave will not have their benefit suspended retroactively.

Under the proposal:

- A matter concerning sickness benefit may not be decided to the detriment of the insured without informing the insured of the content of the upcoming decision and giving them an opportunity to comment on it.
- Sickness benefit qualifying income will apply during the time the insured is waiting for the final decision.
- If sickness benefit has been paid previously, it will be paid until Försäkringskassan (Swedish Social Insurance Agency) has made a final decision.

## Proposal for enhanced rehabilitation to promote return to work

The Government and the Left Party have together proposed measures to stimulate and ensure early assessment of rehabilitation needs and early measures for adaptation and workplace rehabilitation. The aim is to strengthen the individual's access to rehabilitation.

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 11 'Financial security for the elderly'.

## Higher housing supplement for pensioners

The housing supplement, the special housing supplement and maintenance support for older people will be increased from 1 January 2018. The Government is investing SEK 655 million annually and 290 000 pensioners will be affected by the increase, 75 per cent of them women.

## Tax cut for pensioners

On 1 January 2018, taxes will be cut by up to SEK 5 000 per year for 75 per cent of people over the age of 65. This will apply to 1.5 million over 65s, which means that 3 out of 4 older people will receive tax cuts in 2018.

The proposals outlined below are presented in expenditure area 12 'Financial security for families and children'.

## Increased child allowance

The Government proposes that child allowance and extended child allowance be increased by SEK 200 per month per child from 1 March 2018.

## New age-differentiated maintenance support

The Government wants to raise maintenance support for older children to improve the situation of families with children with the greatest financial needs. This is a twofold initiative for teenagers aged 15 and over, and children aged between 11 and 14.

## Health care

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

## **Patient billion – enhanced health care guarantee in primary care and patient contract**

The Government wants to support the introduction of an enhanced health care guarantee in primary care to improve patient accessibility. SEK 1 billion per year will be allocated for this in 2018–2021. The 'Patient billion' will also support the introduction of a patient contract to promote a more coherent approach to planned care. This is particularly important for patients with complex care needs and frequent contact with health care providers.

## **Good working conditions and new working methods for health care staff**

The Government is investing to improve conditions for health care staff and develop health care activities. When health care staff have more time to provide their patients with treatment and care, patient safety is strengthened. SEK 2 billion will be allocated per year in 2018–2021 for this purpose.

## **More investments in maternity care**

To address the problems and shortcomings experienced in maternity care, the Government proposes that the current investment be extended and expanded by SEK 1 billion per year up to 2022.

## **Increased general dental care subsidy**

The Government intends to double the general dental care subsidy from SEK 300 to SEK 600 for the 22–29 age group, from SEK 150 to SEK 300 for the 30–64 age group, and from SEK 300 to SEK 600 for the over 65s.

## **Free cervical cancer screening**

The Government is investing in free cervical cancer screening to ensure that no woman feels she is unable to afford a pap test.

## **Initiatives to improve mental health**

The Government sees a major need to expand investments in mental health services and mental health. It is therefore strengthening efforts in this area by providing SEK 650 million in 2018 and SEK 1150 million per year in

2019 and 2020.

## **Strengthened child health services**

The Government wants to increase accessibility to child health care services for groups with poor general health and poor dental health. SEK 137 million per year will be allocated for this purpose in 2018–2020. These funds will also be used to develop vaccine information and communication efforts to increase vaccination levels. The Government also intends to take a decision concerning the inclusion of the rotavirus vaccine in the national vaccination programme for children.

## **Social welfare services**

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

## **Free holiday activities and swimming lessons**

The Government is investing in free school holiday activities. It intends to allocate SEK 250 million per year in 2018–2020 to enable the municipalities to offer free activities during school holidays.

## **Support to older people with considerable health and social care needs**

Older people with multiple illnesses and those in great need of care require the involvement of many different actors. Organisational changes are required and health care and social services need to be coordinated. The Government proposes that SEK 12 million per year be allocated for these initiatives in 2018–2020.

## **Falls prevention**

Falls are the leading cause of accidental death, hospitalisation and visits to emergency departments. To achieve the goal of halving the number of fall-related accidents, the Government intends to enhance prevention efforts.

## **Staff reinforcements in social care for children and young people**

The Government's ongoing investment to increase staffing levels in social care for children and young people will continue as planned. In 2018–2020, the Government intends to invest an additional SEK 250 million per year to strengthen initiatives for children subjected to or at risk of abuse.

## **Reinforced appropriation to the National Board of Institutional Care**

Over the last three years, demand has been very high for residential care places provided by the National Board of Institutional Care (SiS). To enable SiS to expand its capacity, the Government intends to increase the administrative appropriation by SEK 40 million in 2017, SEK 110 million in 2018 and SEK 150 million per year in 2019–2021.

## **Central government initiative to combat acute homelessness**

In 2018–2021, the Government will provide the municipalities with SEK 25 million per year as support for their work to combat acute homelessness.

## **Habilitation compensation**

As of 2018, the Government intends to provide municipalities with a grant of SEK 350 million for their efforts related to habilitation compensation.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

# Innovation partnership programmes impact Swedish innovative environments

Published 04 September 2017

The collaborations, initiatives and projects that have resulted so far from the five innovation partnership programmes were presented when the National Innovation Council met on Monday 28 August. Together, the project managers and the Council looked to the future and discussed critical success factors, goals and opportunities for developing these partnerships. The experiences of partnership working, where the business sector, academia and organisations work together strategically, were highlighted and discussed by the Council.

The innovation partnership programmes originated from the three social challenges that the National Innovation Council highlighted at the beginning of the electoral period: digitalisation, life sciences, and environmental and climate technologies. The Council has followed the work over the year and provided input, stressing for example the importance of joining forces to increase skills supply.

The innovation partnership programmes were launched on 1 June 2016. The partnership groups associated with the programmes focused on identifying challenges and opportunities for each programme and priority setting of important areas for joint action. Several working groups have been established and a number of concrete partnership projects have been



developed.

Within the framework of a partnership project, available public resources and co-financing from the business sector can be used jointly to meet specified priorities. Even so, the Government has provided additional funds for measures related to the innovation partnership programmes, including through the Research and Innovation Bill adopted by the Riksdag in early 2017. These funds are primarily channelled through programmes and calls for projects from the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems, the Swedish Energy Agency and the Swedish Research Council Formas.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Changes to the subscription service for content concerning health care, public health and sport

Published 01 June 2017

Changes will be made to the subscription service for some areas on [government.se](http://government.se) from 2 June. This includes 'Health care' becoming a subscription area of its own, while 'Public health and sport' will be combined within a single area. In order to continue to receive the content you want, you may need to update your subscription on [government.se](http://government.se).

As a result of the changes:

- If you wish to continue to subscribe to content on public health, you will need to add the area 'Public health and sport' to your subscription.
- If you wish to continue to subscribe to content on health care, you do not need to do anything: you will continue to receive it, but under the category of 'Health care'.
- If you wish to continue to subscribe to content on sport, you do not need to do anything: you will continue to receive it, but under the category of 'Public health and sport'.

## How to change your subscription

You can change your subscription from Friday 2 June, as follows:

1. Click on the 'Change your subscription' link found at the bottom of any subscription email from the Government. You will be taken straight to the web page entitled 'Subscribe via email'.

2. Click on 'Select area'. Your previous choices will already be checked. You can now add or remove your areas of interest, e.g. 'Public health and sport' or 'Health care'.

3. Click on 'Create/change subscription'.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Gender-equal pensions

Published 14 February 2017 Updated 14 February 2017

The Working Group on Pensions takes a holistic approach on gender-unequal pensions. Within the framework of the ongoing review of pensions, a project – ‘Gender-equal pensions’ – was carried out, aimed at tackling the challenge presented by the large differences in women’s and men’s pensions.

The differences in pensions between women and men are relatively large, larger than the pay differences between the sexes. The national pension system is in itself gender neutral, and the differences therefore have their roots in factors outside the pension system. These differences existed when the pension reform was carried out 20 years ago and will exist for a long time – even if both working life and gender-unequal social structures were changed tomorrow.

The project has investigated nine different sub-areas and the impact they have on women's and men's pensions. Based on this kind of analysis, measures will then be considered on how to achieve more gender-equal pensions.

## The nine sub-areas are:

- The income gap for pensioners – income disparities between women and men
- The importance of basic protection for gender-equal pensions
- Occupational pensions' contribution to the pension gap
- The importance of the 'widow's pension' for gender-equal pensions
- The impact of part-time work on pensions
- Why do women leave working life earlier than men?
- Shared pension rights between spouses

- Transfer of premium pension rights between spouses
- Pension rights for childcare years and studies and how they contribute to gender-equal pensions.

The analyses were presented at a seminar and in a memorandum on 21 June 2016.

## Action plan for gender-equal pensions

Pensions reflect people's lifetime earnings. Even if, from an international perspective, Sweden is a relatively gender-equal country, women still have lower salaries, they work part-time to a greater extent, have a higher rate of sickness absence and take more responsibility for the family. This means that a woman's lifetime earnings are lower, which can also be seen in their pension statement. In light of the differences that exist between women's and men's pensions, the Working Group on Pensions (the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, the Moderate Party, the Centre Party, the Liberal Party and the Christian Democrats) decided in May 2015 that a special review of pensions should be carried out from a gender-equality perspective.

In a first step, an analysis of the pension gap has been done from nine different perspectives. The analysis was presented in the report 'Gender-equal pensions?' (Ds 2016:19) in June 2016. The communication was subsequently circulated for comment to a number of public authorities, and a relatively large number of comments have been received. Based on the analysis carried out and the comments received, the Working Group on Pensions has adopted an action plan for further work: Action plan for gender-equal pensions.

## Discussions with the social partners on a longer working life

Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll appointed Göran Hägglund and Göran Johnsson as process coordinators for a dialogue with the social partners that the Working Group on Pensions has decided should be the starting point for work on measures for a longer working life. The report 'Statement of intent on a longer working life' was presented in September 2016.

## Working Group on Pensions: how it works

The Working Group on Pensions consists of representatives of the parties that support the pension agreement (the parties in government and the Moderate Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats), chaired by Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll. The other members are: Tomas Eneroth (Social Democratic Party), Fredrik Lundh Sammeli (Social Democratic Party), Lars-Arne Staxäng (Moderate Party), Solveig Zander (Centre Party), Mats Persson (Liberal Party), Lars Gustafsson (Christian Democrats) and Rickard Persson (Green Party).

The Working Group on Pensions is tasked with safeguarding the pension agreement and preserving the pension reform and its fundamental principles. The Working Group on Pensions is to consult on issues concerning the pension reform and, if necessary, take initiatives to adjust the pension system. The head of the Working Group is the government minister with the main responsibility for the national pension system.

## The Swedish Pensions Agency administers the national pension

The Swedish Pensions Agency administers the national pension and related pension benefits, and provides information about them. The Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate ensures that the Swedish Pensions Agency conducts its administration with due process and efficiency.

[Swedish Pensions Agency website](#)

[Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate website](#)

## Background: Pensions

The national pension is called the 'statutory pension', which covers everyone who has worked and lived in Sweden. The amount a person receives as their pension depends on how much they have earned, how long they have worked and how earnings in Sweden have grown.

The national pension consists of:

- Income pension
- Premium pension
- Guarantee pension.

In addition to this, most people receive an occupational pension from their employer. People may also have private pension savings with banks or insurance companies.

## Income pension, premium pension and guarantee pension

The income pension is the main part of the national pension system and is based on total earnings throughout a person's life. Income includes salaries, sickness benefit, unemployment benefits, etc.

The premium pension is also based on lifetime earnings. It is placed in funds and everyone may choose the funds into which this money will be placed.

The guarantee pension is there for those who have had low or no income from work in their life. It is linked to the price base amount calculated annually by Statistics Sweden. The size of the guarantee pension depends on how long a person has lived in Sweden. To receive the full guarantee pension, a person must have lived in Sweden for 40 years.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Gender-equal parenting and good conditions for children to grow up in, a review of parental insurance

Published 22 February 2016 Updated 22 February 2016

An Inquiry will conduct a review of the rules for parental leave and parental insurance. The purpose is to identify problems and propose measures so that parental insurance can contribute to a greater extent to gender equality in the labour market and gender-equal parenting and can keep contributing to good conditions for children to grow up in.

## Comment by Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll:

Why is the review of parental insurance being conducted right now?

"It is simply high time. Parental insurance has been in place for over 40 years, and although changes have been made along the way, society itself has changed quicker than the design of the insurance. By conducting a review, we will be able to see how the insurance needs to be changed to better enable modern and gender-equal working and family life. Everyone must have the same opportunities to use parental insurance regardless of whether they run their own company or are employed.

Women claim three quarters of parental benefit days and also carry out the majority of unpaid work in the home. They work part-time more often, have poorer career development, take more sick leave, and their pensions are 30 per cent lower than men's pensions. The Inquiry will examine how we can



facilitate the use of parental insurance for various family constellations, and will analyse the need to simplify."

The Government chose to collect the views of referral bodies at an early stage. Why was that?

"In this work, attitudes and approaches need to change. A number of actors in society must take responsibility for this development. For this reason, we wanted to involve the referral bodies as early as the start-up phase. It is also a way for us to ensure from the very beginning that we do not miss any wise thoughts and important perspectives. Now we are ready to tackle this major and important task, and I am full of expectation ahead of the proposals that the Inquiry will submit."

The Inquiry will present its findings on 1 October 2017.

Opinion piece: Adapt parental insurance to suit modern working life

## Committee terms of reference

An Inquiry will conduct a review of the rules for parental leave and parental insurance. The purpose is to identify problems and propose measures so that parental insurance can contribute to a greater extent to gender equality in the labour market and gender-equal parenting and can keep contributing to good conditions for children to grow up in. (Decision at a government meeting on 4 February 2016.)

## Summary

An Inquiry will conduct a review of the rules for parental leave and parental insurance. The purpose is to identify problems and propose measures so that parental insurance can contribute to a greater extent to gender equality in the labour market and gender-equal parenting and can keep contributing to good conditions for children to grow up in. Parental insurance must be adapted to a modern labour market and its requirements, and provide conditions for a good balance between family and working life. It must also be designed to be effective regardless of the form a family takes.

The Inquiry is to submit proposals for a design of parental insurance that is fit-for-purpose, clear and easy to administer, that helps achieve the subsidiary objectives of gender equality policy concerning economic equality and an even distribution between parents of unpaid housework and care

work, and that focuses on the best interests of the child.

The principle of loss of income is to remain one of the cornerstones of parental insurance.

In carrying out the assignment, the Inquiry Chair is to do the following:

- Analyse and propose measures needed to achieve an even distribution between parents with regard to parental leave, parental benefits and temporary parental benefit.
- Analyse whether age limits for the right to parental leave, with or without parental benefits, are well-balanced and whether there is need for change.
- In particular, analyse the conditions for and consequences of reserving further months for which a parent cannot transfer the parental benefit entitlement to the other parent.
- Analyse and propose how to limit possibilities for parental leave with parental benefits so that a parent coming to Sweden with children can only use a limited number of days with parental benefits after the child turns two years old. The purpose of the limitation is to shorten the period before introduction in the labour market.
- Identify problems and examine possibilities for various family constellations to use parental insurance and propose changes as needed.
- Survey conditions and opportunities for entrepreneurs and students to use parental insurance and propose changes as needed.
- Analyse the need to simplify and, based on the various purposes of parental insurance, refine the regulatory framework to make it clear and easy for parents to use and to provide good conditions for effective and legally secure administration with good opportunities for control.
- Consider the proposals' impact on coordination under Council Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and take account of other EU legislative rules.

The remit includes drawing up necessary legislative proposals.

## Committee report

An interim report is to be submitted no later than 31 October 2016 and the final report no later than 1 October 2017.

The Inquiry is to report the part of the remit related to changed age limits in parental benefits for children born abroad but who move to Sweden no later

than 31 October 2016. The Inquiry is to present its overall report no later than 1 October 2017.

## Background

Parental insurance plays a key role in realising objectives in financial family policy, child rights policy, labour market policy and gender equality policy. It promotes labour force participation by both parents, provides children with a possibility to be cared for by their parents and enables good living conditions for families with children. During the four decades since its introduction in 1974, parental insurance has developed to include a number of different insurance situations and in particular, parental benefits have become more generous with regard to the opportunity for longer leave from work.

The overall aim of parental insurance is to provide both parents with equal opportunities for compensation for loss of earned income when they are looking after a child and thereby make combining family and working life easier. Today, parental insurance includes numerous types of closely related yet independent support for families with children, such as parental benefits, temporary parental benefit and pregnancy benefit. In addition, the specified benefits constitute pensionable income, which forms the basis of income-based old-age pensions and for which national old age pension contributions are paid.

Parental insurance largely consists of work-related benefits, i.e. people who work in Sweden, as employees or entrepreneurs, are insured for parental benefits at sickness benefit level and basic level, temporary parental benefit and pregnancy benefit.



Article from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Gender equality in health

Published 21 July 2015 Updated 21 July 2015

Avoidable health inequalities will be eliminated in a generation. The long-term goal is to eliminate the disparities between women's and men's sick leave, while reducing sick leave rates in general to a low and stable level. Men's violence against women must stop.

## Current challenge

### Sick leave

Sick leave in Sweden, as in many other countries, exhibits a considerable bias in its gender distribution. Women are off sick to a far greater extent than men; two out of three people on sick leave are women. This is a historic pattern that has persisted over time.

Psychiatric diagnoses are now the most common cause of sick leave and are increasing among both women and men; however, the increase is greater among women.

### Mental ill health

The risk of a young woman attempting to take her own life is three times as high as the risk of a young man doing so. Self-reported mental and somatic problems are increasing, particularly among girls aged 13 to 15. In addition, the difference between girls' and boys' perceived health increases with age.

### Men's violence against women

Many women are still subjected to abuse. In 2014, a total of 28 200 cases of

abuse of women were reported to the police. This is an increase of 5 per cent compared with 2013. The number of reported rapes increased by 13 per cent between 2013 and 2014, to 6 620 reported offences. Around 17 women are killed each year by a man they have or have had a close relationship with.

## HeForShe goals

Avoidable health inequalities will be eliminated in a generation. The long-term goal is to eliminate the disparities between women's and men's sick leave, while reducing sick leave rates in general to a low and stable level. Men's violence against women must stop.

## HeForShe initiatives

- The Government has appointed a national commission for health equity. Consistent attention will be given to gender health disparities in this work.
- To respond to women's higher sick leave rates, all relevant stakeholders in society need to be mobilised. This includes public authorities, employers, and health and medical care, as well as measures for women's work environment.
- The Government is considering a future long-term initiative to strengthen preventive work in the area of mental health and improve early action for young people suffering from mental health problems.
- The Government is investing in sport and expects the sports movement, at all levels, to redouble its efforts to achieve gender equality in sports to give those who are actively involved the same opportunities to realise their interest in participating, regardless of gender.
- A national strategy will be drawn up for work on men's violence against women. The Government will strengthen its support to women's shelters that support and protect women subjected to violence. The rape legislation will be reviewed so that more sexual offences are cleared up. Sentences for aggravated sexual offences will be made tougher. More will be done to promote increased participation by men in these efforts to promote change. The Government has extended support to a national telephone line which people, primarily men, who risk committing sexual assaults can call for advice and assistance in obtaining treatment. Work will be stepped up on changing gender stereotypes surrounding masculinity, violence and destructive masculine behaviour.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# A more equal parental insurance system

Published 02 June 2015 Updated 01 April 2015

The Government is proposing a third 'reserved' month of parental benefit. The aim of the proposal is to achieve a more gender-equal take-up of parental benefit, which strengthens the right of children to both their parents. The proposal is also aimed at increasing gender equality in the labour market.

At present, two months of parental benefit are reserved for each parent. It is proposed that the new system apply from 1 January 2016 for children born or adopted from that date.

Annika Strandhäll, minister for social security: – The proposal is important because we can see that parents are not sharing parental benefit days equally at present. Women take considerably more days than men, which means spending more time away from the labour market. This can have consequences for women in terms of weaker wage development, fewer career opportunities and even a lower pension as a result of lower lifetime earnings. The proposal would therefore improve gender equality in several ways, in terms of both the situation of women in the labour market and the sharing of unpaid household work. It also strengthens the child's right to both parents.

## Parents not taking parental benefit in a gender-equal way

The current take-up of parental benefit is not gender-equal. Women take a considerably larger proportion of parental benefit than men. This can result

in the division of housework and provision of care being established early on, meaning that women shoulder a greater burden of this work and also remain away from the labour market for longer as a result of long periods of parental leave, part-time work and a higher take-up of temporary parental benefit (to care for a sick child).

## Gender equality in the labour market

Absence from the labour market can have an impact on the labour market situation of women, resulting in both worse wage development and fewer career opportunities compared with men. It can also mean lower pensions. On the other hand, men can also come across obstacles in the labour market stopping them from taking longer periods of parental leave or working part-time.

Parental leave and how it is divided up between men and women - measured as take-up of parental benefit days - therefore has a significant impact on how gender equality in the labour market develops. Against this background, there is a need to take measures that enable the care of a child and housework to be divided in a more gender-equal way between parents.

## Additional 30 days to be reserved for each parent

The proposal involves reserving an additional 30 days for each parent that can be paid as parental benefit at the sickness benefit level. This means that 180 of the total 390 days of parental benefit at sickness benefit level will not be transferable to the other parent. This will create strong incentives for the parent currently not taking as many days - often the father - to take more parental benefit days. The reserved days within the parental benefit system are themselves an incentive for parents to take parental benefit days as they cannot be transferred to the other parent.

## Timetable and implementation

It is proposed that the new regulations enter into force on 1 January 2016. The current regulations will still apply to parental benefit and the gender equality bonus for children born before that date.



Opinion piece from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# “Adapt parental insurance to suit modern working life”

Published 17 February 2016 Updated 17 February 2016

DN Debatt, 4 February 2016. Inquiry terms of reference. The parental insurance system needs to be modernised. It needs to be adapted to better suit entrepreneurs and students and its use facilitated for various kinds of family constellations. Progress towards more gender-equal sharing of parental insurance must be speeded up. The insurance system must also be easy to use.

On 4 February, the Government appointed an inquiry to review the entire parental insurance system. The goal is to present proposals before the end of this electoral period for an updated parental insurance system that is adapted to modern working life and a modern and gender-equal family life. This is the first time in ten years that a major review is being conducted and perhaps the first time ever that it has been done using such a broad approach.

Having children is a major life event. It is overwhelming, profound and involves a completely new piece in the puzzle of everyday life. The parental insurance system was established in 1974, when the politicians of the day did something very courageous. They introduced a whole new insurance system so that society would make it possible for parents – both women and men – to combine working life and family life.

The system has now been in place for over 40 years. Much has happened since that year when electricity was rationed in Sweden due to the oil crisis, Richard Nixon resigned as US president in the wake of Watergate and Abba's song Waterloo won the Eurovision Song Contest. We want parental



insurance to continue being an important form of insurance for both the individual and society, so we must be willing to allow it to be changed.

Naturally changes have taken place along the way. The insurance system has been expanded, compensation levels have been adjusted and months have been reserved for each parent. The fact remains, however, that the society we live in today – and the idea of the kind of society we want to live in tomorrow – has changed more rapidly than the insurance system. It doesn't just cover a few years while children are very young. Most people use it until their child is 12 years old, and some even longer – in other words it affects a large portion of children's lives and parents' professional lives. With this in mind, it is even more important that the system fits with our personal and working lives, today and in the future.

To achieve this we must review the insurance system, many parts of which are good, to see where it needs to be improved. Based on the challenges we see, the inquiry has five focus areas.

In parallel with the work of the inquiry to bring about a modern parental insurance system, attitudes and approaches need to change to ensure a more gender-equal labour market and more gender-equal parenting. Several actors in society must take responsibility for this development. Communication and dialogue will be an essential part of the inquiry's work.

### **Increased gender equality**

Women take three quarters of parental benefit days – as many as four out of every five days during the child's first year of life – and around 60 per cent of temporary parental benefits. One in five fathers of children born in 2009 had not taken out a single day by the child's fourth birthday. Progress is moving too slowly. We also know that the division of parental benefits between parents differs depending on income, education levels, etc. This uneven division has major repercussions on income, labour market position and health. The gender pay gap is around 15 per cent, while the gender gap in pensions is as large as 30 per cent. Women carry out the majority of unpaid work in the home, work part-time more often, have poorer career development and take more sick leave. Two thirds of those on sick leave are women, and ill health accelerates while children are young, particularly after the second child is born. We also know that it is not just the time that parental benefits are taken out that is unbalanced; women also take more unpaid leave than men and are therefore absent from the labour market for a longer period of time.

Consequently, the inquiry has been tasked with proposing measures to achieve an equal division of parental benefits and parental leave, and in particular analysing the conditions for and consequences of more reserved months.

### **Confronting a modern labour market**

Much has also happened in the labour market since the 1970s. More and more people have temporary employment of various kinds until increasingly later in life. More people are self-employed or combiners (people running a business parallel to their job), and on average they take less parental leave than people who are employed. Everyone must have equal opportunities to use parental insurance regardless of whether they have a permanent contract, a fixed-term contract or are self-employed. The inquiry's task is consequently to examine the challenges posed by working life on the possibility of taking parental leave, with particular focus on the conditions for entrepreneurs and students. The inquiry will also investigate the normative impact of the design of the parental insurance system, in society and in the labour market.

### **An insurance system for today's family constellations**

Families can take many different forms, but when the parental insurance system was designed, it was still based on the idea of a nuclear family with two co-habiting parents. Today, we know that more than one in every five children grows up in another kind of family constellation. There are both nuclear families and non-nuclear families. There are permeable families and blended families, families with one parent and families with more than two parents. There can be a difference in having one or several children at the same time. The inquiry has therefore been tasked with investigating the possibility of making it easier for different family constellations to use the parental insurance system.

### **A clear insurance system that is simple to use**

Parental insurance includes a number of different forms of insurance. The flexibility of the system offers an array of opportunities, and there have been various reasons for the changes made to it over the past 40 years. But for those wanting to use the system, it is not always easy to understand how it works or can best be used. The inquiry has therefore been tasked with analysing the need to simplify the system. The goal is that it should be easier to plan one's life and leave using parental benefits, and to identify the

situations in a child's life when parental insurance can make it easier to combine gender-equal parenting with work.

### **The common theme – the child's perspective**

A common theme throughout is the child's perspective. The child's right to secure conditions to grow up in is central in designing family policy as a whole and the parental insurance system in particular. The principle of the best interests of the child must serve as a guide for the entire inquiry.

The politicians of 1974 were courageous, and we must be as well. We look at our society today and we want to make changes. We want to see a more gender-equal labour market and a more gender-equal private life, where there is also a more equal division of unpaid work. We want to see that children have equal rights to their parents, regardless of their position in the labour market or their family constellation.

If we see this – while also seeing that this is not the case today – then it is our responsibility to do what we can to make change happen. This is why the appointment of this inquiry is an important step. I am full of expectation ahead of the important task this inquiry will carry out and the proposals it will present.

/Minister for Social Security, Annika Strandhäll



Government Offices of Sweden

Opinion piece from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# Strengthen the right of LGBTQ people to be themselves

Published 12 February 2016 Updated 12 February 2016

Opinion article, Newspaper Expressen, 8 february 2016  
Legislation must keep pace with developments in society. The Government therefore plans to implement changes that aim to offer the same conditions for everyone, regardless of their choice of partner and type of family, write five government ministers.

People have the right to be themselves in all areas of life. This includes the right to live with the person you love and to have your family formation treated with respect. Efforts to break old norms that limit people from fully living their lives must continue. This applies particularly to policies for the rights of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ people).

Proactive organisations in civil society and courageous politicians before us have helped to move the situation of LGBTQ issues in the right direction. Society is constantly evolving, and perceptions of parenthood, family, gender and the rights of the child in the family evolve with it. Today, there are numerous family constellations other than the traditional nuclear families: single, friends with children, step-families or families with several mothers or fathers. Our social systems must also meet the needs of these families.

Legislation and its application must keep pace with developments in society. It must accommodate various ways of forming a family and ensure the right of all people to good health. The Government is therefore planning to implement changes that aim to offer the same conditions for everyone, regardless of the choice of partner and type of family that each of us chooses

to live with:

- Parental support and family law issues in social services need to be more modern, equitable and gender equal. Family constellations vary and have different needs. In light of this, the Government has concentrated responsibility for these issues at the Family Law and Parental Support Authority. An important task for the Authority is producing knowledge support for relevant actors so that these, in turn, can provide better support and guidance to parents and children.
- Families can take many different forms, but when the parental insurance system was designed, it was still based on the idea of a nuclear family with two co-habiting parents. The living conditions of families with children have changed over time.

More than one in five children grows up in a family constellation other than one including both their biological parents. The inquiry on parental insurance that is now to be conducted has therefore been tasked with identifying problems and investigating possibilities for facilitating the use of parental insurance by different family constellations.

- There are currently large health disparities between different groups in society. To close the avoidable health gaps within a generation, the Government has appointed a commission for equitable health. We know that LGBTQ people in general have poorer health and young LGBTQ people are particularly vulnerable with regard to mental health. In its work, the commission will therefore take into account health disparities between LGBTQ people and the rest of the population.
- The treatment of LGBTQ people in health and medical care is unequal across the country. Unfortunately, in their contacts with different authorities, individuals are sometimes doubted and treated ignorantly. This leads to LGBTQ people in some cases refraining from seeking care.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with analysing care and treatment of intersex people (persons whose gender cannot be determined due to biological reasons) and implementing measures in the various areas of activity of social services. The objective is to raise awareness of LGBTQ people's living conditions and the various forms discrimination can take. The National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden will also review how issues concerning the health of young transgender people could be highlighted within the

framework of other mental health initiatives.

- There have been several high-profile cases where information was registered in the population registration regarding a person who had changed gender in such a way that the link between individuals, such as a child and a parent, was lost. The Swedish Tax Agency has now been tasked with describing what has been done or will be done to prevent problems that may arise.
- Current regulations regarding paternity and parenthood are based on heterosexual marriage. There is reason to review whether the regulations should be updated and for this reason, the Government intends to appoint an inquiry in the spring to conduct a review of the legislation.

These are some of the initiatives the Government is now implementing. We know there is a lot left to do. Discrimination, inequitable treatment and violence are still part of daily life for many LGBTQ people all around the country. This is never acceptable. The Government will continue its efforts to strengthen the possibility for LGBTQ people to fully be themselves in all areas of life.

Gabriel Wikström  
Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport

Åsa Regnér  
Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Morgan Johansson  
Minister for Justice and Migration

Alice Bah Kuhnke  
Minister for Culture and Democracy (Green Party)

Annika Strandhäll  
Minister for Social Security (Social Democratic Party)



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Annika Strandhäll to visit New York for high-level political forum on the 2030 Agenda

Published 09 July 2019

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development begins today. Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll will head the Swedish delegation and be at the HLPF in New York on 15–19 July, when the ministerial meeting takes place.

“Sweden is at the forefront globally in many respects, not least on gender equality and climate action, but much remains to be done. We can and will take the lead in the transformation towards sustainable societies,” says Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll.

The HLPF is a global platform for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This year’s theme is ‘Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’.

This year, the goals to be reviewed in depth are: inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Goal 4), sustainable economic growth and decent work (Goal 8), reduced inequality (Goal 10), action to combat climate change (Goal 13), and peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16).

In addition to delivering Sweden’s national address at the HLPF, Annika Strandhäll will take part in several side events and hold bilateral talks with other ministers and UN representatives.

Ms Strandhäll will be available for media interviews during the HLPF. For

more information and interview requests, please contact Ms Strandhäll's Press Secretary, Hanna Alexandersson.





Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden and Japan sign social security agreement

Published 11 April 2019 Updated 11 April 2019

Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll and Japan's Ambassador Shigeyuki Hiroki today signed a social security agreement between the two countries. The agreement coordinates the Swedish and Japanese public old-age, survivors' and disability pensions systems.

“The world is getting smaller, and labour market mobility is increasing year on year. Japan is one of our largest trade partners outside the EU, and around 3 000 Swedes work in Japan. This agreement not only increases security for the individual, it is also beneficial for businesses in both countries,” says Ms Strandhäll.

Last year, Japan and Sweden celebrated 150 years of diplomatic relations. During the Swedish State Visit to Tokyo in April 2018, which involved the King and Queen and Swedish government representatives, the two countries agreed to sign a social insurance agreement following several years of negotiations. The agreement aims to ensure that individuals do not lose social security rights that they have accrued – particularly pension rights – when they move between the countries, and that businesses do not have to pay double social security contributions.

The agreement will make it easier for Swedes working in Japan to receive Japanese pension payments in the future if they return to Sweden. It will also enable businesses to post workers to the other country for up to five years. For the duration of the posting, the worker, as well as their accompanying family members, will continue to be covered by their home country's legislation on the benefits in question.

Next, the countries' parliaments will need to approve the agreement before it can enter into force.

Japan is the world's third largest economy, and Sweden's second-largest export market in Asia. Around 1 500 Swedish businesses currently trade with Japan, and 160 Swedish companies are established in the Japanese market. A free trade agreement between the EU and Japan came into force in February 2019, giving Swedish businesses better access to the Japanese market and its 127 million consumers. The social insurance agreement will help increase security for workers and their family members moving between Sweden and Japan, and also make it easier for Swedish companies to do business with Japan.

Sweden has previously concluded social security agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Cap Verde, Chile, India, Israel, Morocco, the Philippines, Serbia, South Korea, Turkey and the United States. The social security systems within the EU are also coordinated.



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Social protection following Brexit

Published 25 February 2019

The Government wishes to mitigate the consequences for Swedish citizens in the United Kingdom in the event that the country leaves the EU without reaching any agreement whatsoever on how this withdrawal is to take place. Among other things, the government bill submitted to the Riksdag proposes that, in the event of a hard Brexit, it should still be possible to pay Swedish social security benefits to individuals in the United Kingdom over a transitional period. It is also proposed that it should still be possible to receive compensation for healthcare expenses over the same period.

– The EU was created to secure peace, freedom, democracy and the freedom of movement. People who have moved between Sweden and the United Kingdom must also be able to feel secure in times of uncertainty. The Government has therefore submitted a legislative proposal to the Riksdag to create security for people during this adjustment, says Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll.

The bill proposes that, over a transitional period, individuals can continue to receive Swedish social security benefits, with the exception of unemployment benefit, paid to them in the United Kingdom in the same way as at present. The proposal also means that individuals will be able to receive compensation for healthcare costs in certain cases. The provisions for the payment of benefits and compensation for healthcare costs will cease to apply at the end of 2019.

– We want to see an orderly British withdrawal from the EU – everybody would benefit from this. But the date for the withdrawal is coming ever

closer and there is still no agreement. This makes it important that we also prepare for a hard Brexit so that nobody gets into difficulties, says Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

It is also proposed that provisions be introduced to protect, in the future, the right to aggregate periods of acquired insurance and the right to equate benefits and so on for people working or residing in the UK during the period in which the country was a member of the EU. This may become relevant for future claims of social security benefits, such as pensions.

It is proposed that the legislative amendments enter into force on 29 March 2019.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release

# The ministers' press contacts

Published 22 January 2019

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Eight Swedish cabinet ministers to the Social Summit in Gothenburg

Published 15 November 2017

The Prime Minister, together with the EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has invited to a social summit focusing on the promotion of Fair Jobs and growth, in Gothenburg on Friday 17 November. Heads of State and heads of Governments together with other EU-member ministers will be in place.

Apart from the Prime minister the Swedish Government participates are:

- **Minister for Employment and Integration Ylva Johansson**
- **Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll**
- **Minister for Education Gustav Fridolin**
- **Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde**
- **Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Mikael Damberg**
- **Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér**
- **Minister for Upper Secondary School and Adult Education and Training Anna Ekström**

All government ministers will be available for media during the summit, contact respective press secretaries. In addition to the Swedish government, representatives from the EU Commission and EU countries, more than 30 different organizations and actors will attend the Summit on Fair Conditions and Growth in Göteborg, November 17, 2017.

The summit will bring together EU leaders, the social partners and other key stakeholders to discuss how to promote fair jobs and growth.





Press release from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# The Swedish Government strongly criticizes the Commission's EMA assessment in a letter today

Published 13 October 2017

The Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll and the Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ann Linde criticize the assessment in a letter today to the Commission with clarifying comments on the Swedish bid. The ministers conclude that this has not been a serious part of the process.

– We strongly disagree to the non-objective criteria within the EMA-bid process. This process has to have one objective and nothing else; patient safety for more than 500 million people living in the EU. That has to be the standards for the EU assessment and the vote of the member states and nothing else, says minister Strandhäll.

In short, the technical assessment states that the Swedish bid "does not meet EMA requirements", but Sweden more than meets all the specified criteria.

The bid states that Sweden offers the EMA a choice of secure premises in Stockholm, giving the EMA the opportunity to influence the design of the building such that it suits the requirements and needs of the Agency and that detailed plans for the whole relocation process will be drawn up in close cooperation with the EMA.

– This is the first common decision for EU 27 after the British referendum on the exit from the EU. It is therefore important that both the process and decisions are fair and objective, says Ann Linde, Minister for EU Affairs and

Trade.

It is the Swedish Government's sincere hope and expectation that the Commission will continue to work for a transparent process based on objective criteria, and to this end acknowledge the correct and verifiable facts provided in the Swedish bid.

**Facts:**

On 30 September, the Commission published its assessment, including a technical assessment performed by the agency itself, of the bids submitted for the relocation of the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The Commission's general assessment summary of Sweden's bid is correct; however, the technical assessment conducted by the EMA omits and misinterprets some of the information Sweden have provided.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Exporting Swedish Care and Health

Published 12 October 2017

The Swedish government wants to increase exports of health and medical care, social services, pharmaceuticals, biomedicine and medical technology. These areas are already an important component of Swedish exports, but their share can be increased. Swedish social services and health and medical care produce world-class medical results. To make use of the available opportunities and potential, a new, active working group will be established under the Team Sweden concept, called 'Team Sweden Care and Health'.

"The social services, health and medical care sectors are already an important part of Swedish exports, but we see greater potential in our welfare sector. We know that Swedish welfare and welfare technologies are in the forefront and that's a message we want to spread to the world," says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll.

Team Sweden Care and Health will create better opportunities to increase Swedish exports and investment opportunities in the health and medical care sector. Representatives of the business sector, academia, government agencies and other ministries were invited to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to begin dialogue and collaboration, and to bring promotion efforts and the work each party does together.

Team Sweden Care and Health is a high-level group that will meet regularly under the leadership of the Health and Social Affairs Ministry's state secretaries.

An important part of its work will be to package health and medical care solutions. There is often international need for expertise on entire systems, such as 'a hospital', 'a health centre' or 'a home for the elderly'.

"Through Team Sweden Care and Health, the Government are in the firm belief that we will strengthen the Swedish capacity to deliver package solutions on health and medical care", says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll.



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden ready to host the EMA

Published 01 August 2017 Updated 01 August 2017

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is currently looking for a new location in connection with the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Sweden has now submitted its official offer to host the EMA.

The offer guarantees the smooth relocation of the EMA and its staff to Stockholm, which provides a unique and world-leading life sciences environment and successful cooperation between health care, academia and industry.

"The EMA is strategically important for the EU's global competitiveness. We are convinced that Sweden's offer is best able to benefit the EMA and the EU as a whole," says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

"The EMA is an extremely important agency for health and medical care and patient safety in the European Union. Sweden and Stockholm can provide the seamless transition required," says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Annika Strandhäll.

Strandhäll argues that Sweden more than meets the criteria established by the European Commission and, in addition, has several unique advantages:

- The Swedish Medical Products Agency is already one of the EMA's most active partners and thereby a valuable asset. The Agency will also increase its staffing to assist the EMA in the event of a move.
- Karolinska Institutet – the EMA is offered a research environment that includes one of the world's foremost medical universities and the Nobel Assembly as its closest neighbours.
- Synergy effects with the ECDC – Sweden already hosts the European



Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). This will help strengthen public health protection while improving EU resource efficiency.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice

# Government reshuffle, 27 July 2017

Published 27 July 2017

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven today announced a government reshuffle. Three ministers have chosen to leave their posts, two new ministers have been appointed, and two ministers have been entrusted with revised areas of responsibility.

Ministers Anna Johansson, Anders Ygeman and Gabriel Wikström are leaving their posts.

## Newly appointed ministers

Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Migration, and Deputy Minister for Justice: Heléne Fritzon

## Changes by ministry

Ministry of Justice Minister for Justice and Home Affairs: Morgan Johansson

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs Minister for Health and Social Affairs: Annika Strandhäll



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden is ready to host the EMA

Published 15 June 2017

Sweden is determined to host the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in Stockholm and is ready for seamless relocation. The Swedish Prime Minister has written to the President of the European Council, Mr Tusk, expressing Sweden's wholehearted ambition to host the EMA.

"We are certain that we are the best country to host the EMA. I am sure that we can convince the other European governments of this," says Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll.

"We can provide a seamless transition for the EMA and its staff to a world-class scientific environment with life sciences collaborations between the health care sector, academia and industry."

Ms Strandhäll will focus on this issue when she meets European colleagues in Luxemburg on 15–16 June and at other European bilateral meetings. Since December 2016, the Swedish Government, together with regional stakeholders, has been working intensively to set up an extraordinary package for the European Medicines Agency. Ministers across government have put the EMA issue on the agenda of meetings with European colleagues.

The Swedish Government believes that Sweden is best suited to host the EMA for the reasons outlined below.

## 1. Identified location in Stockholm

Sweden has options for EMA headquarters in Hagastaden, Stockholm; these are well embedded in the life sciences centre near Karolinska Institutet, one

of the most renowned medical universities in the world, and the Science for Life Laboratory (SciLifeLab), an elite research centre for molecular biosciences.

## 2. Leading research environment

Some of Europe's best researchers call Stockholm-Uppsala home and the region's five universities their second address. These bright talents conduct research in biomedicine, pharmacology, human health sciences and regulatory science. This cluster also includes three university hospitals, providing high-quality healthcare and research.

## 3. Smooth transition for the staff and their families

- A housing provision service: construction of new housing in Stockholm-Uppsala is growing rapidly.
- A one-stop shop, including a specially developed mobile phone application, will be available to guide EMA employees and their families through the steps to take as they settle into life in Sweden.

## 4. The Swedish Medical Products Agency: an asset for EU27

Since its start in 1995, the Swedish Medical Products Agency (MPA) has been one of the EMA's most active partners, with broad in-house expertise in all therapeutic areas. It is a valuable asset that will allow for the continuity of the EMA's work.

## 5. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is already well established in Stockholm. Close geographical proximity of the ECDC and the EMA would contribute to synergy effects and facilitate the agencies' collaboration, for example in vaccines and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Relocating EMA to Sweden may therefore help strengthen Europe's defences against international health threats. In Sweden, there is substantial experience of work to tackle AMR, which stems from active and successful efforts over several decades to combat antibiotic resistance.

## 6. Stockholm is easy to access

The location proposed as the new EMA headquarters is within easy reach of two international airports. Arlanda Airport and Bromma Airport can both be reached from Hagastaden in less than 30 minutes.

For more information: [www.ematosweden.eu](http://www.ematosweden.eu)



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Employment,  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and President Jean-Claude Juncker to host Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth

Published 23 January 2017 Updated 23 January 2017

Together with President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will host a Social Summit in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017, focusing on promoting fair jobs and growth.

The Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth will gather heads of state and government, the social partners and other key players to work together to promote fair jobs and growth. Well-functioning and fair European labour markets, effective and sustainable social protection systems and the promotion of social dialogue at all levels will be at the heart of these discussions.

In spite of recent improvements in economic conditions, the legacy of the worst economic and social crisis in recent times has been far-reaching. The world of work and our societies are changing fast, with new opportunities and new challenges arising from globalisation, the digital revolution, changing work patterns and demographic developments. We share a responsibility and an interest in working for a more prosperous and 'future-proof' Europe, where economic and social developments go hand-in-hand.

The Summit will be an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss the policy priorities and initiatives set at European level and to see how the European

Union, the Member States and social partners at all levels can deliver on their shared economic and social priorities.

President Jean-Claude Juncker said: “Since the start of my mandate, I have made clear that I wanted a more social Europe. We have taken important first steps to achieve that. This year will be crucial. Following the broad public consultation, it is time to establish the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Social Summit in Sweden will help us to deliver the momentum and put social priorities where they belong: at the top of Europe's agenda.”

Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said: “In these challenging times, we need to show that we can deliver results in peoples’ everyday lives. A more social Europe, with fair working conditions, effective labour markets and a strong social dialogue, should be a priority for all of us. I trust we can take important steps towards this goal at the Social Summit in November.”



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Budget reforms for increased welfare and security

Published 26 September 2016 Updated 26 September 2016

The Budget Bill for 2017 was presented on the 20th of September. Improvements in sickness and activity compensation, the establishment of a gender equality agency and better dental health for older people are some of the reforms in the areas for which the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs is responsible. The Budget Bill for 2017 is based on an agreement between the government parties and the Left Party.

Sweden must have quality welfare services we can rely on. This is why the Government has made major investments in health, education and social services. As Sweden's population grows, strengthening welfare becomes particularly important. The Government continues to prioritise welfare services in this budget and proposes that SEK 10 billion a year be made available to municipalities and county councils in general government grants.

"We are continuing the important work to close the health gaps and develop the Swedish model. This is being achieved not least through the welfare billions, investments in better dental health for older people and additional resources to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate for supervisory activities. We are also increasing access to care for traumatised asylum seekers and new arrivals," says Minister for Health Care, Public Health and Sport Gabriel Wikström.

Several of these budget investments also affect the more vulnerable groups in society and target in particular single women, families with children on low incomes and people receiving sickness and activity compensation.



"People feeling safe is an important part of building our society. Our common insurance schemes were very badly looked after during eight years of a government led by the Moderate Party. This is why I am very pleased to support investments that strengthen the Swedish model and build up our social insurance system again," says Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll.

The Government also intends to establish a gender equality agency that will become active at the beginning of 2018 to ensure that political priorities gain traction in government agencies and activities.

"Our feminist policy must have a clear impact and make a difference to people's lives. To ensure the effective implementation of gender equality policy, a special gender equality agency is needed. The Government will also prioritise preventive action to combat men's violence against women in a new national strategy with an action plan for the period 2017–2020," says Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Åsa Regnér.

**Below is some brief information about all reforms at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs under each Minister's areas:**

## Reforms in Gabriel Wikström's areas

### **Doubling of the general dental care subsidy for people aged 65–74**

The general dental care subsidy will be raised for people aged 65–74 from currently SEK 150 to SEK 300 per year. The increase will take effect on 1 July 2017.

### **Additional funding to the National Board of Health and Welfare for validation**

The National Board of Health and Welfare will be allocated additional funding amounting to SEK 5 million for 2017. This is in addition to an earlier investment of SEK 42 million per year for validation of foreign health and medical care training.

### **Reinforcing the Health and Social Care Inspectorate**

The Health and Social Care Inspectorate will be allocated temporary additional resources for the processing and supervision of homes for care or residence due to the large number of unaccompanied refugee children. The

Health and Social Care Inspectorate will receive SEK 40 million in 2017 for this initiative. The Inspectorate will also receive permanent additional resources of SEK 70 million per year for staffing costs and to strengthen its supervision and licensing for personal assistance providers.

### **Investment to combat mental ill health among traumatised asylum seekers and new arrivals**

SEK 40 million per year will be allocated to the care and treatment of asylum seekers and new arrivals who have had traumatic experiences, such as war, famine and torture, so as to combat mental ill health among this group.

### **Teams for long-term unemployed people to strengthen sports, outdoor activities and public health**

The Swedish Sports Confederation will receive funds to create work teams of long-term unemployed people in five district sports associations. These work teams are to strengthen sports, outdoor activities and public health by organising activities, preparing walks, renovating facilities, etc.

### **Sports associations to receive stimulation for sports and youth leaders in socially vulnerable areas**

SEK 14 million per year will be provided up to 2019 to enable more sports activities, leadership development, etc. in socially vulnerable areas. SEK 18 million per year will be provided during the period 2020–2025. These investments are expected to contribute to democratic values and physical activity.

### **Additional resources for sports activities for asylum seekers and new arrivals**

The autumn amending budget contains an additional SEK 20 million for 2016 for asylum seekers' sports activities.

## **Reforms in Annika Strandhäll's areas:**

### **Increased appropriation to Försäkringskassan**

The appropriation to Försäkringskassan (the Swedish social insurance agency) will increase by SEK 130 million in 2017. These resources are to be used for the increased volumes in several social insurance benefits resulting

from the increased number of new arrivals. Moreover, the resources are to be used for reforms to sickness and activity compensation and financial support to families. The resources are also for improving the quality of investigations and strengthening efforts to combat benefit fraud in the area of assistance allowance.

### **A trial period for studies while maintaining activity compensation**

The Government proposes that a person who has received activity compensation due to reduced working capacity for at least twelve months should be able to try studying while still receiving activity compensation payments for a period of at most six months. It is proposed that this amendment enter into force on 1 February 2017.

### **Greater security to people entitled to hold sickness compensation dormant while working**

A monthly amount equivalent to 25 per cent of the sickness compensation that has been declared dormant can be paid each month for a period of 24 months when sickness compensation is held dormant while a person is in gainful employment. It is proposed that this amendment enter into force on 1 February 2017.

### **Full sickness compensation from 19 years**

The age limit for when full sickness compensation can be granted will be brought down to 19. This only applies to full compensation and to people who will probably never be able to work at all. People with serious disabilities will receive secure compensation whereas young people receiving activity compensation can expect measures to help them develop their work capacity. It is proposed that this amendment enter into force on 1 February 2017.

### **Increased guarantee compensation in sickness and activity compensation**

The guarantee level for full sickness compensation and activity compensation will be raised by 0.05 price base amounts, which for people receiving full guarantee compensation means an increase of SEK 187 per month before tax per year, using the 2017 price base amount. It is proposed that this amendment enter into force on 1 July 2017.

### **Increased housing supplement for people receiving sickness and activity**

## **compensation**

The compensation rate in the housing supplement will be increased from 93 to 95 per cent. This increase will provide at most an additional SEK 100 in housing supplement per month.

In total, the increase in guarantee compensation and the increase in the housing supplement mean that approximately 200 000 people will receive on average just over SEK 2 000 per year from 2018.

It is proposed that this amendment enter into force on 1 January 2017.

## **Raised income thresholds in housing allowance**

It is proposed that the income thresholds in housing allowance provided to families with children be raised from SEK 117 000 to SEK 127 000 for single people and from SEK 58 500 to SEK 63 500 for couples. It is proposed that this increase enter into force on 1 January 2017.

## **Increased maintenance support for older children**

The Government intends to submit legislative proposals for differentiation in the amount of maintenance support received by increasing it for children who are 15 and older.

Combined with the increase in maintenance support for older children, the Government will also look into increasing the basic income tax allowance for parents required to pay maintenance.

These increases are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2018.

## **Increased large-family supplement**

The Government proposes an increase in the large-family supplement for the third child of SEK 126 per month. It is proposed that this increase enter into force on 1 January 2017.

## **Increased level for adoption allowance**

The Government intends to raise the adoption allowance to SEK 75 000. This will mean that the allowance will cover 33 per cent of parents' average costs. It is proposed that the amendment enter into force on 1 January 2017.

## **Modernised support for parents living apart**

The Government intends to introduce a new special allowance in the housing allowance for children who live alternately with both parents. This means that a certain form of housing is not favoured and that the child's registered residence does not determine his or her right to support.

## **Reforms in Åsa Regnér's areas**

### **Plans to establish a gender equality agency in 2018**

The Government intends to establish a gender equality agency, to be operational from the beginning of 2018. For the Government to ensure that gender equality policy priorities are reflected in the management of government agencies and activities, a permanent structure at national level is needed.

### **National strategy to combat men's violence against women**

Before the end of the year, the Government will present a new national strategy to combat men's violence against women in the Government Communication on gender equality policy. The range of measures to prevent and combat men's violence against women comprise over SEK 900 million for the period 2017–2020.

### **Reinforced appropriation to the National Board of Institutional Care**

The National Board of Institutional Care needs to expand the number of places available in its activities due to increased demand. The Government proposes increasing the appropriation by SEK 40 million in 2017 and estimates that the appropriation should increase by an additional SEK 10 million from 2018, which means a total of SEK 50 million per year.

### **National knowledge centre for unaccompanied minors**

The Government intends to set up a national knowledge centre at the National Board of Health and Welfare for issues concerning unaccompanied minors. The aim is to disseminate knowledge, successful methods and effective processes to the municipalities, county councils and responsible agencies that implement measures for unaccompanied minors. The National Board of Health and Welfare will receive SEK 10 million per year in 2017 and 2018 for this initiative. It will then receive SEK 5 million per year in

2019 and 2020.



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Social security agreement signed between Sweden and the Philippines

Published 20 October 2015 Updated 20 October 2015

Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll and Philippine representative Emilio S. de Quiros signed a social security agreement between the two countries on Thursday 15 October. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs plans to present a bill on approval of the agreement to the Riksdag in early 2016.

The agreement coordinates the general Swedish and Philippine systems for old-age, survivors' and disability pensions (for Sweden, sickness and activity compensation), and work injury compensation.

It determines whether a person is to be insured for pension and work injury benefits in Sweden or the Philippines, thus protecting people from losing their pension entitlement or work injury compensation, and avoiding social security contributions being paid in both countries.

The rules on export of benefits and totalisation of creditable periods are particularly important to Sweden. Without these rules, Philippine pensions will not be paid out to individuals living in Sweden. In other words, the agreement makes it possible for individuals covered by the Philippine pension system to have their pension paid out in Sweden.

“It is important to coordinate social insurance benefits for people moving to and working in different countries, and also to ensure the security of the labour force from countries outside the EU. This agreement will benefit both individuals and companies”, says minister of social security, Annika

Strandhäll.





Press release from Prime Minister's Office

# Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to receive President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil in Stockholm

Published 16 October 2015 Updated 16 October 2015

On Monday 19 October, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven will receive the President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, in Stockholm. They are meeting to discuss economic exchanges between Sweden and Brazil, climate and sustainability, and defence.

During her visit to Sweden, President Rousseff will also participate with Mr Löfven in a business forum and a meeting with representatives of the City of Stockholm. She will also go to see Norra Djurgårdsstaden and visit companies in Kista and Linköping.

## Programme points, 19 October

### **09.30 Business Forum**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rousseff address a business forum at Grand Hôtel.

### **10.00 Reception by the Prime Minister at Rosenbad**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rousseff arrive at Rosenbad.

Photo opportunity at the entrance.

Discussions.

Photo pool – meeting room.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström, Minister for Higher Education and Research Helene Hellmark Knutsson, Minister for Social Security Annika Strandhäll and Minister for Housing, Urban Development

and Information Technology Mehmet Kaplan will also take part in the discussions.

### **11.15 Press conference at Rosenbad**

Mr Löfven and Ms Rouseff hold a joint press conference in Bella Venezia.

The press conference will be webcast live on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se).

### **Lunch at City Hall**

The City of Stockholm hosts a lunch for Mr Löfven and Ms Rouseff at City Hall.

Photo pool.

### **15.50 Visit to Saab in Linköping**

Ms Rouseff and Mr Löfven visit Saab in Linköping.

## **Advance registration**

Advance registration and/or application for a place in the photo pool is required. Please register/apply via the International Press Centre at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs no later than 16.00 on 16 October. More detailed information about times and venues of meetings will be sent to media representatives concerned.

Advance registration/application for place in photo pool



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Press briefing with the Romanian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly

Published 22 January 2015 Updated 17 May 2015

A meeting will take place on Friday between the Swedish minister for Social Security, Ms. Annika Strandhäll, minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality, Ms. Åsa Regnér and the Romanian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Ms. Rovana Plumb. Thereafter a press conference will be held.

Friday 23 January 11:30 am  
Rosenbad 4

The press conference will be held in English.



Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Swedish national statement for High-level Political Forum 2019, delivered by Minister for Social Security, Annika Strandhäll

Published 18 July 2019

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues, friends,

I believe that the overarching goal of politics in general – and the 2030 Agenda in particular – is to build a better world for each generation. To advance our children's opportunities to live free from all kinds of violence in safe, sustainable and prosperous societies.

Sweden is well placed to implement the 2030 Agenda. But the fact remains: we still have a lot of work to do in Sweden if we are to achieve the SDGs.

For example, we must work harder to address existing inequalities.

This entails dramatically reducing income disparities and providing equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities, LGBT persons, minorities and newly arrived immigrants.

We must work harder to achieve equity in health care and provide equal opportunities for lifelong learning throughout our country. We also need to strengthen inclusive and sustainable economic growth that benefits all sections of society.

There is a growing awareness of the urgent need to act – to act now.

Greta Thunberg, an impressive young Swedish climate activist, reminds me of this every Friday as I pass her school strike for climate action outside our Parliament.

The message from our youth is very clear and we need to listen, and we need to act.

To combat climate change we need an unprecedented transformation of the whole society. Sweden's ambition is clear – we want to be the first fossil-free welfare state in the world.

Climate change has devastating effects that are particularly severe in fragile contexts. Climate-related security risks are a major threat to us all, but the poorest are hit the hardest and women are particularly affected. I believe that the Climate Summit in September will be vital for raising our climate ambitions and putting us on a 1.5-degree pathway.

I would also like to take a moment to address two issues close to my heart: universal social protection and gender equality.

Sweden has a long history of a strong welfare system that has been key in building an open and inclusive society. Social protection is a human right and an indispensable tool in the fight against poverty, inequality and social exclusion. Universal social protection, including floors, is key to upholding the principle of leaving no one behind.

In far too many places around the world, we see that women and girls' rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, are being pushed back.

The advances we have made, thanks to the efforts of brave women and men, cannot be taken for granted. Gender equality requires will, courage and perseverance.

Dear friends,

It is time to move from plan to action.

In the next implementation cycle, we must do more. We need accelerated action and delivery on the SDGs, in particularly at national and local level. We need to build stronger synergies between the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The world needs a decade of accelerated action and delivery on the SDGs.

Thank you.