



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Cooperation with US on cancer research to be renewed

Published 22 June 2022

Since 2016, Sweden has had a bilateral cooperation agreement with the US on cancer research. During Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren's visit to Washington DC on 1 June, the parties confirmed the desire to deepen their cooperation by extending the agreement.

Ms Hallengren visited the US in the first week of June and had a number of meetings with American and international decision-makers. These included White House Cancer Moonshot Coordinator Gabrielle Carnival and representatives of the National Cancer Institute and the US Department of State. Cancer has received renewed attention in the US following President Joe Biden's decision to reignite the Cancer Moonshot programme aimed at reducing the death rate from cancer.

“Sweden's cancer care and research are internationally prominent, particularly with regard to fighting breast cancer and prostate cancer. Continued cooperation with the US is an important contribution to the global fight against cancer,” says Ms Hallengren.

The agreement concluded in 2016 describes the general framework to support and conduct high-quality research and the sharing of data to investigate prevention and facilitate early detection and treatment of cancer. Under the agreement, cooperation between a number of research and higher education institutions has been strengthened, and Sweden has gained additional and closer contacts in the US in this field.

The cancer strategies of Sweden and the US have overlapping objectives in

many cases and are thus a good basis for further cooperation. Continued cooperation with the US will be valuable in a number of areas, and builds on Sweden's 2009 National Cancer Strategy for the Future and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. The US is also a prioritised country in the Government's life sciences work, and extensive cooperation takes place between researchers and experts in Sweden and the US.

“Research and care go hand in hand. Sweden's National Cancer Strategy is a cornerstone of the efforts to improve cancer care in Sweden. With numerous actors and several initiatives, both national and international, the work to fight cancer is strengthened,” says Ms Hallengren.

Efforts are now under way to identify additional areas of cooperation on cancer research, prevention and care that can be intensified in the renewed agreement.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden and UK highlight efforts to combat antibiotic resistance at ministerial breakfast

Published 25 May 2022

On 23 May, Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren and UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid hosted a breakfast meeting for the Ministerial Alliance of Champions against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Both countries established the alliance in 2015 and current members include the US, France and China. The meeting was held in connection with the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

“Antibiotic resistance can be described as ‘the silent pandemic’ and causes a million deaths around the world every year. We need to work together at international level to reduce the immense threat to people’s health should antibiotics stop working. That’s why this alliance of the world’s health ministers is important,” says Ms Hallengren.

At the meeting, the ministers discussed the possibility of engaging in the WHO collectively for pandemic preparedness linked to AMR at national, regional and global level. The ministers also followed up on the activities implemented since the last alliance meeting in 2019. This included a high-level meeting on AMR in 2021 and the planned ministerial conference on AMR in Oman in November 2022.

“The international community agrees that regulatory action against pandemics is needed, and it’s important that it includes an AMR perspective.

The capacity and efforts required to prevent, prepare for, detect and manage pandemics must also include AMR, and all health ministers must work together on this,” says Ms Hallengren.

AMR Ambassador Malin Grape and UK Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance Professor Dame Sally Davies also took part in the ministerial meeting.

“The Ministerial Alliance of Champions against Antimicrobial Resistance is just one part of the long-term efforts supported by Sweden. Sweden has long worked on the issue of AMR, both within the EU and internationally. For example, Sweden and the UK co-drafted a resolution on AMR in the WHO in 2014, and it has been a driving force in the development of a global AMR surveillance system,” says Ms Grape.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden supporting Ukraine with medical supplies

Published 03 March 2022

On 2 March, Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren held a press briefing with Director General of the National Board of Health and Welfare Olivia Wigzell and Director General of the Medical Products Agency Björn Eriksson. Ms Hallengren announced that Sweden will donate medical supplies to Ukraine.

At the press briefing, Ms Hallengren announced that Sweden will deliver a large amount of medical supplies to Ukraine during the week in response to the country's request for support within the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. This includes 50 ventilators, 1 million masks, 50 000 face masks and other personal protective equipment, 5 000 venous catheters and 5 000 infusion devices, 100 000 litres of hand and surface disinfection and 10 000 bandages.

The National Board of Health and Welfare is also examining whether regions are able to provide the medical supplies that Ukraine has requested but which are not available in the Board's national reserves.

Individual pharmaceutical actors have stated that they have pharmaceutical products that may be needed in Ukraine and which they are willing to donate, but that there are parts of Swedish regulations which prevent this. This concerns matters such as minimum remaining durability requirements. The Government and relevant public authorities are now urgently reviewing which measures may be necessary to allow any such shipments of pharmaceutical products from Sweden.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 04 February 2022

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

## Restrictions to remain for a further two weeks

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

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

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

The Government has decided to extend the regulation on temporary parental allowance due to the COVID-19 disease to the end of March 2022. This means that one parent can receive temporary parental allowance if the parent needs to be absent from paid work in order to care for a child when,

for example, a preschool or school is closed in certain situations associated with the COVID-19 disease. The extension also includes the scheme for a certain preventive temporary parental allowance for parents of certain children who have recently become seriously ill and who need to be protected from infection by COVID-19.

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

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

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

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

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

## **Extended support for companies, culture and sport**

The Government has proposed further measures to the Riksdag aimed at reducing the spread of infection, safeguarding healthcare resources for testing and vaccination, and mitigating consequences for Swedish jobs and

companies. Among other things, this includes the extension of support for companies, culture and sport, as well as the reintroduction of compensation for qualifying deductions.

## **Stricter infection control measures were introduced on 12 January 2022**

Stricter infection control measures were introduced on 12 January 2022 due to the significant increase in community transmission at the same time as an increase in pressure on the healthcare sector. The overall assessment is that Sweden is in a situation where it is necessary to take certain additional infection control measures in the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures.

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

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

## **Several important vaccination initiatives decided on for 2022**

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

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



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

## Vaccinated in third countries may soon receive COVID vaccination certificates

The Government has decided that the Swedish eHealth Agency will be allowed to sign an agreement with the National Government Service Centre, which means that people with their place of legal or registered residence in Sweden but who have been vaccinated in a third country will have access to a vaccination certificate. The service is expected to be in place no later than 1 February 2022.

## More infection control measures from 23 December 2021

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

### Measures from and including 23 December 2021:

- Indoor general gatherings and public events with more than 20 participants must only have seated audiences, regardless of whether vaccination certificates are used or not. Without vaccination certificates, group size is limited to a maximum of 8 people with a distance of 1 metre between groups. There is an exemption to this for religious gatherings.
- Indoor general gatherings and public events with more than 500 participants require vaccination certificates and group size limited to a maximum of 8 people with a distance of 1 metre between groups. General gatherings and public events with 500 participants or more can therefore not be arranged without a vaccination certificate.
- For restaurants and bars, the requirements are for seated serving and a distance of 1 metre between groups. This also applies to nightclubs.

- For trade fairs and indoor shopping venues, the requirement is for at least 10 square metres per person.
- For indoor culture and recreational activities, such as museums, art galleries and gyms, the requirement is for at least 10 square metres per person, with the exception of activities aimed at children and young people born in 2002 or later, for example training and competition.
- Between 23 December 2021 and 16 January 2022, advice was introduced to culture, sport and recreation associations against organising or participating in camps, cups or other major indoor activities whose participants do not normally meet in other circumstances. Individual activities, matches and one-day competitions in leagues or equivalent can be carried out. The advice does not apply to professional sport.
- General advice to work from home is being reintroduced.
- Infection control measures are recommended for adult education in order to avoid crowding and large gatherings. The general rule is for education to be conducted on an in-person basis, but universities and higher education institutions may use distance learning as a tool to prevent crowding at teaching premises.

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Majority of COVID-19 restrictions to be removed on 9 February 2022

Published 03 February 2022

The phasing out of measures in response to COVID-19 will begin on 9 February 2022. As of that date, measures such as the participant limit for public gatherings and events and the possibility to demand vaccination certificates upon entry will be removed. The same will apply to other restrictions, such as the requirement of social distancing between groups and cap on group sizes.

The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden have made the assessment that the situation is sufficiently stable to begin phasing out infection control measures. The omicron variant does not lead to such severe illness as previous variants, the pressure on intensive care and other hospital services has not increased in line with widespread transmission of the variant, and the vast majority of at-risk people have now received a booster vaccination.

Vaccination is the single most important weapon in the fight against COVID-19. Everyone aged over 12 is still recommended to get vaccinated as soon as possible. This is the best way to protect yourself and others against COVID-19.

The infection control measures will be phased out in two stages: stage 1 will come into force on 9 February, and stage 2 is due to begin on 1 April 2022.

## Restrictions to be lifted as of 9 February 2022

- Public gatherings and public events: removal of participant limits, requirement of social distancing between groups and maximum group sizes and possibility to demand vaccination certificates upon entry.
- Eating and drinking establishments: removal of maximum group sizes, social distancing requirements and obligatory closing times.
- Trade fairs: removal of participant limits, minimum square metres per person and possibility to demand vaccine certificates upon entry.
- Shopping centres and venues for cultural and recreational activities: removal of minimum square metres per person.
- Long-distance public transport: removal of requirement for all passengers to be seated and to wear face masks at busy times or when it is not possible to maintain safe distances.
- Private gatherings in hired premises, etc.: removal of participant limits.
- Tournaments, competitions and other major indoor activities: removal of advice against organising such events.
- Social gatherings: removal of advice to avoid major social gatherings.
- The participant limits will be removed by government decision, and the Public Health Agency of Sweden has decided to rescind its regulations linked to the act on restrictions to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and the temporary act on communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments as of 9 February 2022.

On 1 April, the remaining official recommendations will be removed or adapted to the rate of transmission, burden on health care services and vaccination rates at that time. After that, the vaccination recommendation will remain in place, along with specific recommendations for health service and care environments.

## Public Health Agency of Sweden requests reclassification of COVID-19

The Public Health Agency of Sweden will today submit a request to the Government to examine the issue of COVID-19 remaining a disease that must be reported, but that is not classified as a danger to society or a threat to public health.

The Agency's request will be rapidly examined in the Government Offices. The Government will then submit proposals for the consideration of the Riksdag. Under the Communicable Diseases Act, legislation is required for

this reclassification.

The Government intends submit a government bill proposing that the act on restrictions to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and the temporary act on communicable disease control measures at eating and drinking establishments be repealed. The Government has already initiated consultation on a proposal that these acts be repealed at the end of March this year.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Stricter infection control measures to be introduced on 12 January 2022

Published 13 January 2022

On 12 January 2022, stricter infection control measures will be introduced due to the significant increase in community transmission at the same time as there is increased pressure on health care. The overall assessment is that Sweden is in a situation where it is necessary to take certain infection control measures in stage 3 of the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures.

## Measures introduced as of 12 January 2022

- For indoor public gatherings and events without vaccination certificates, a limit of no more than 50 people will be introduced. The current recommendations on only seated audiences will remain in effect, with a maximum of 8 people per group and a distance of one metre between groups.
- For indoor public gatherings and events with more than 50 participants where vaccination certificates are used, a limit of no more than 8 people per group and a distance of one metre between groups will be introduced. The requirement of seated audiences only will remain in effect.
- For eating and drinking establishments, a limit of no more than 8 people per group will be introduced, and they must close by 23.00. The requirements that guests must be seated and that there is a distance of one metre between groups will remain in effect.

- For trade fairs, vaccination certificates will be required if the number of participants exceeds 50 people. The requirements that crowding is not permitted and that there must be 10 square metres per person will remain in effect.
- The infection control measures for long-distance public transport with only seated passengers will remain in effect. The Public Health Agency of Sweden emphasises the importance of using face masks when many people travel together.
- A general recommendation will be introduced that all adults are encouraged to limit the number of close contacts indoors by refraining from attending larger dinners, parties and similar social contexts. Previous general recommendations on avoiding congestion, social distancing and avoiding travel at rush hour will remain in effect.
- The advice that cultural, sport and recreation associations should not organise or take part in camps, sports cups or other larger indoor activities that involve participants who do not normally meet will be further extended.
- Infection control measures will continue to be recommended for adult education in order to avoid crowding and large gatherings. The general rule is for education to be conducted on an in-person basis, but higher education institutions may use distance learning as a tool to prevent crowding at teaching premises. However, this should not be used as a full-time measure. Educational institutions should make it possible for students to take part in compulsory course components and examinations in smaller groups, and to do so on more occasions.

The new infection control measures will apply until further notice, but the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden will regularly assess the need for these measures. The measures will not remain in effect longer than is absolutely necessary.

For more information about the Public Health Agency of Sweden's recommendations – see [Folkhalsomyndigheten.se](https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se).

## Request concerning participant limit of 500 people and other matters

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has submitted a request to the Government on the introduction of additional infection control measures that should be urgently introduced. The Agency sees the need for a limit of 500 participants at indoor public gatherings, events and trade fairs where

vaccination certificates are used.

Regarding private gatherings held in rented premises such as event facilities or party boats, the Agency has submitted a request to the Government to lower the limit for private gatherings to 20 people (from 50 people).

In its request, the Agency also states that the requirement that a foreign national over the age of 12 must present a negative COVID-19 test no older than 48 hours when entering Sweden should be removed, but that a COVID certificate should be reintroduced as a requirement for entry from the age of 18.

A Government decision is required for all the above amendments to be introduced.

## Everyone who can is to work from home

Our workplaces are a major source of infection. The Government wishes to strongly emphasise that those who can work from home are to do so. This has applied since 23 December and is an important component in reducing infection. The Government has also decided on stricter instructions to government agencies urging that only employees whose physical presence is necessary to conduct business are to be present on their premises. Municipalities and regions should also ensure that all activities are conducted so that they are as infection-safe as possible.





Article from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs,  
Government Offices

# More infection control measures to be introduced on 23 December 2021

Published 22 December 2021

On 23 December, more infection control measures will be introduced in accordance with the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures. This is due to the increased community transmission of COVID-19 and the increased burden on health and medical care services.

## Measures being introduced on 23 December 2021

- Indoor public gatherings and events with more than 20 participants may only have a seated audience regardless of whether or not vaccination certificates are used. Without vaccination certificates, the size of groups is limited to a maximum of 8 people, with a distance of one metre between groups. There is an exemption for religious gatherings.
- Indoor public gatherings and events with more than 500 participants require vaccination certificates and the size of groups is limited to a maximum of 8 people, with a distance of one metre between groups. This means that indoor public gatherings and events with more than 500 participants cannot be organised without vaccination certificates.
- The requirements for eating and drinking establishments are that guests must be seated and that there is a distance of one metre between groups. This also applies for night clubs.
- The requirement for indoor trade fairs and shopping centres is that there must be at least 10 square metres per person.

- The requirement for indoor cultural and recreational activities, such as museums, art galleries and gyms, is that there must be at least 10 square metres per person, except for activities such as training, competitions, etc. intended for children and young people born in 2002 or later.
- Between 23 December 2021 and 16 January 2022, cultural, sport and recreation associations are advised not to organise or take part in camps, sports cups or other larger indoor activities that involve participants who do not normally meet. Individual activities, matches and one-day competitions such as league matches or the equivalent may be conducted. This advice does not apply to professional sport.
- General advice on working from home will be reintroduced.
- Infection control measures are recommended for adult education in order to avoid crowding and large gatherings. The general rule is for education to be conducted on an in-person basis, but higher education institutions may use distance learning as a tool to prevent crowding at teaching premises.

These infection control measures will be introduced by the Public Health Agency of Sweden on 23 December 2021. For more information about the Public Health Agency of Sweden's recommendations – see [Folkhälsomyndigheten.se](https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se).

## Instructions to government agencies on working from home

Workplaces are a major source of infection. At its meeting on 22 December 2021, the Government will adopt stricter instructions to government agencies. Government agencies must ensure that only employees whose physical presence is necessary to conduct business are present in their premises. These stricter instructions on working from home will apply until 31 January 2022.

## Possible further measures

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has also submitted requests to the Government that a limit of 50 participants should be introduced for indoor premises that can be used or made available for private gatherings, that a requirement on infection control measures should be introduced for long-distance public transport, and that a negative COVID-19 test not older than 48 hours should be required for foreign nationals to enter Sweden. The Government intends to consider these requests speedily.

## Background

Recent weeks have seen a rapid increase in the spread of COVID-19 and also a greater burden on health and medical services. This is occurring at the same time as the circulation of other respiratory infections such as influenza and RS viruses is greater than in many years.

On 7 December, the Government presented an action plan for introducing infection control measures. Through the plan, the Government hopes to create increased transparency and clarity before other possible measures are introduced.



Government Offices of Sweden

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Initiatives to improve security in care of the elderly

Published 14 December 2021

The Government has introduced several reforms to improve quality and security in care of the elderly. Read more about some of the ongoing initiatives below.

## Increased funding to the Care of Older People Initiative

Investing in staff upskilling initiatives improves the quality in care of the elderly so that older people and their relatives have greater confidence and receive good care. This is why the Government wants to increase funding to the Care of Older People Initiative. The initiative comprises SEK 1.7 billion per year in 2022 and 2023. The total sum for 2020–2023 will be approximately SEK 7.2 billion.

The Care of Older People Initiative, which has been under way since 2020, means that new and current staff are given the opportunity to train as nursing assistants or licensed practical nurses in municipal adult education or higher education programmes during paid working hours. From 2021, staff will also be given the opportunity for professional development through upskilling programmes in health and social care for older people, such as specialised licenced practical nurses. In addition, this target group has also been expanded to include first-line managers.

## Dedicated care contact person in home care services

Today, many older people who live at home have complex care needs and

receive services from many different actors. This is why the Government wants to introduce a statutory scheme in which all home care service recipients are offered a dedicated care contact person who is a licensed practical nurse, and who they and their relatives know they can contact and who coordinates the home care services. The Government intends to adopt a government bill on such a scheme during this fiscal year.

## Centre of expertise for care of the elderly

The Government wants to strengthen national action in care of the elderly in order to clarify the importance of good, safe and secure care, and wants to establish a national centre of expertise for care of the elderly under the National Board of Health and Welfare. It is important to follow developments in care of the elderly and ensure that current knowledge is available at national level regarding municipalities and their conditions for providing health and social care for older people. The Government intends to allocate SEK 19 million per year to such a centre.

## Enhancement of government grants to municipalities and regions

The Government proposes permanently increasing general government grants to municipalities and regions by SEK 3 billion from 2022. This increase will strengthen the ability of municipalities and regions to safeguard and develop welfare and lay a foundation for good and equal welfare throughout the country. The increase means that in combination with previous initiatives during this electoral period, the level of general government grants, excluding financial adjustments, will be SEK 27.5 billion higher in 2022 than in 2018. Of this, SEK 22.5 billion represents a permanent increase.

## An additional SEK 2.5 billion to care of the elderly

In the Budget Bill for 2022, the Government proposes several initiatives in care of the elderly, allocating a total of SEK 2 448 million. Together with previously presented initiatives, this additional funding means that the central government is expected to provide an additional SEK 10 billion to municipal care of the elderly in 2022 compared with 2018.

In addition to the initiatives for older people in the 2022 budget, the

initiatives presented in last year's Budget Bill will also continue. You can read more about these initiatives here: Reforms for increased welfare in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' areas of responsibility – the Budget Bill for 2022

## **'Licensed practical nurse' to be a protected professional title**

From 1 July 2023, 'licensed practical nurse' will become a protected professional title. This means that a certificate will be required to be entitled to use the title 'licensed practical nurse' in health and social care. Education and training in upper secondary school, municipal adult education or a programme offering equivalent qualifications is required to receive a certificate awarding the right to use the title 'licensed practical nurse'. The expertise of licensed practical nurses is important for maintaining the quality and security in health and social care. This regulation will ensure clarity regarding the expertise possessed by a person holding the title 'licensed practical nurse'.

## **Inquiry on a care of the elderly act**

To strengthen the long-term prospects for actors providing care for the elderly and to clarify their mandate, the Government appointed an inquiry in December 2020 tasked with proposing a care of the elderly act. The inquiry's task can be divided into two parts: firstly, to propose a care of the elderly act that includes the issue of a national care plan and secondly, to consider and, if necessary, submit proposals that in various ways enhance access to medical expertise in care of the elderly. The inquiry is to submit its report to the Government by 30 June 2022.

## **Opportunities of digital transformation**

During the electoral period, the Government has appointed several inquiries to create legislation that provides better conditions for harnessing the opportunities of the digital transformation. Several legislative proposals are currently being prepared at the Government Offices:

- The Inquiry on welfare technology in the care of the elderly has submitted its report 'Future technologies in care services'.
- The Inquiry on cohesive information in health and social care services has also submitted legislative proposals specifically on cohesive health

and social care documentation and quality monitoring.

- The Inquiry on an effective system for elections and decision-making in municipalities and regions has submitted proposals that will enable automated decision-making in municipalities and regions.





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Inquiry on Sweden's intercountry adoption activities

Published 14 December 2021

On 27 October, the Government appointed an inquiry to survey and analyse how regulatory frameworks, organisational arrangements and processes in Sweden's intercountry adoption activities have operated in the past and up to the present. Professor of Civil Law Anna Singer, a specialist in family law of the Faculty of Law of Uppsala University, has been appointed Inquiry Chair. The lessons learned should provide guidance in the development of Sweden's intercountry adoption activities going forward.

“The best interests of the child and the child's rights are the starting point for an intercountry adoption. The central government must guarantee as far as possible that every adoption takes place in a legal and ethical manner, and that the best interests of the child and legal certainty are ensured at every stage of the adoption process,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

The purpose of the inquiry is to shed light on the occurrence of potential irregularities in Sweden's intercountry adoption activities, and how the Government, relevant government agencies, municipalities, authorised associations, non-profit organisations and other private actors acted and reacted to potential irregularities, based on each actor's responsibilities and role.

The various experiences of adoption can affect adopted children throughout the different stages of their lives. As a result of various life events, an

adopted child may therefore be in need of tailored, adoption-specific support. The inquiry will investigate the need for adoption-specific support and propose which assistance and support activities should be offered.

The inquiry's lessons learned should provide guidance for the development of Sweden's intercountry adoption activities by proposing how current regulatory frameworks, organisational arrangements and processes can be revamped and reinforced with the aim of further strengthening the perspective of the rights of the child and legal certainty. The inquiry will present its report by 7 November 2023.



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

# Government presents action plan for introducing more infection control measures as of 8 December 2021

Published 08 December 2021 Updated 15 December 2021

The Government has introduced further COVID-19 infection control measures due to increased transmission rates and somewhat growing pressure on health care services. The Government also wants to reintroduce further support and compensation to reduce community transmission. Furthermore, the Government is presenting a plan for business support that may be reintroduced if stricter social restrictions need to be reimposed. Vaccinations remain the key to reducing the risk of infection, disease and death, and to avoiding the introduction of further measures.

## New measures to reduce transmission rates

Infection control measures will be introduced in three stages. As of 8 December 2021, when the first stage begins, a number of infection control measures will be added to the recommendations that already apply. The assessment of the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden is that Sweden is experiencing increased transmission rates and somewhat growing pressure on health care services. Additional infection control measures are therefore needed in the first stage of response.

The recommendations aim to reduce contact between people, and they are directed at a range of actors as outlined below.

- Employers should, if possible, avoid holding large indoor gatherings, enable employees to maintain a safe distance from each other and, when appropriate, to work from home to a certain extent. The Government intends to take a decision on tasking government agencies in this regard.
- Higher education institutions, including universities, university colleges, folk high schools, vocational higher education institutions and municipal adult education institutions should continue face-to-face teaching but take infection control measures, including social distancing, at large indoor gatherings.
- Schools should take preventive measures, for example, by ensuring a safe distance between people at concerts and end-of-term events in indoor settings.
- Eating and drinking establishments should prevent crowding and take other appropriate infection protection measures.
- Everyone should maintain a safe distance in public spaces, especially indoor spaces. Everyone should avoid crowded areas. This recommendation is directed at both children and adults.
- Adults should avoid crowding on public transport, if possible, by travelling at off-peak times or choosing other transport modes.
- Adults should use face masks in crowded areas or when it is not possible to maintain a safe distance on public transport, whether travelling short or long distances and regardless of transport mode (bus, train, taxi, ferry).
- Public transport should run as frequently as required to prevent crowding, and service frequency should not be reduced.

Further measures included in the action plan may be introduced in subsequent stages if the situation deteriorates. A substantial increase in transmission rates and increased pressure on health services could lead to a second stage of additional measures. Very high transmission rates and heavily burdened health services could lead to a third stage of additional measures. Read more in the Government's action plan for introducing infection control measures.

## Financial support to reduce transmission

Additional financial measures will be reintroduced to make it easier for people to stay home if they feel unwell.

Most of the measures will apply from 8 December. It is proposed that they all apply until 31 March.

- The requirement of a medical certificate to receive disease carrier's allowance will be removed. (The Government will announce the date of entry in due course.)
- Compensation to at-risk groups and certain relatives of people who are in at-risk groups will be reintroduced, and temporary parental benefit for parents of seriously ill children will be extended.
- The possibility for parents to receive temporary parental benefit if schools or preschools close will be extended.
- Compensation for the standard deduction for sick days for employees and self-employed individuals will be reintroduced to make it easier for people to stay home when they are unwell.
- The State will compensate employers for higher sick pay costs than what is considered normal (retroactively from 1 December).
- The exemption from taxation for benefits of free parking will be extended to reduce crowding in public transport.

The measures will be included in the additional amending budget that the Government intends to present to the Riksdag early next year.

## Preparedness to support businesses

The Government wants preparedness to enable the swift reintroduction of support to Swedish jobs and businesses if new social restrictions become necessary and affect businesses' ability to carry out their activities.

The Government is therefore budgeting with a view to being able to reintroduce both the ordinary reorientation support and the turnover-based support for sole traders and trading partnerships. These forms of support would be designed along the lines of earlier support.

The Government will also announce an extension of event support until 31 March 2022. This is to eliminate uncertainty and enable organisers to continue planning their events.

The Government is also preparing a legislative amendment to remove the waiting period for aid in the event of short-time work so that employers that have received aid during the COVID-19 pandemic can apply, if necessary, for ordinary support for short-time work.





Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Proof of vaccination may be required for access to public gatherings and public functions

Published 18 November 2021

The Government intends to proceed with the proposal to allow the use of vaccination certificates at public gatherings and public functions from 1 December 2021. The aim is to limit the spread of the virus among unvaccinated people in particular by preventing them from gathering in large groups, while public gatherings and public functions can continue to receive visitors.

“The pandemic is not over and in our part of the world the virus is now spreading. The negative trend is worrying, even though we have not yet seen a similar development in Sweden. The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden therefore see a need to be able to use vaccination certificates as a disease control measure to limit the chains of infection,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

The Government has today received a request from the Public Health Authority of Sweden, which sees the need for access to vaccination certificates as a disease control measure. In September, the Government referred a proposal to ease the restrictions that apply to an event if the organiser can guarantee that the participants are vaccinated by requiring them to present a vaccination certificate showing that they are fully vaccinated, i.e., the vaccination component of the EU’s digital COVID certificate.

This means that if the organiser chooses to require a vaccination certificate, they do not have to adhere to the attendance limits that the Public Health

Agency of Sweden deems necessary for public gatherings and functions. According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden, this applies to events held indoors with more than 100 participants.

“It is a priority of the Government to provide opportunities to promote culture, sport and other important events and gatherings. Now that we see that the situation is in danger of getting worse, we intend to proceed directly with the proposal for vaccination certificates that has already been prepared, so as to enable organisers of cultural and sporting events to continue their activities,” says Minister of Culture and Democracy Amanda Lind.

The Government intends to proceed with the proposal, which will take effect on 1 December 2021. Because the current government is a caretaker government, support for the measure will be sought in the Riksdag.

## The proposal in brief

- The proposal is aimed primarily at reducing the risk of transmission by preventing unvaccinated people from participating in public gatherings and public functions.
- Only vaccination certificates will be accepted, i.e., the vaccination component of the EU’s digital COVID certificate, which means that you have to be vaccinated.
- The aim is for the new rules to come into force on 1 December 2021.





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 04 October 2021

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

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

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

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

**The following are being removed as we enter Stage 4:**

- Participant limit for general gatherings and public events.
- Participant limit for private gatherings in, for example, rented premises.
- The Public Health Agency of Sweden's regulations on infection control

measures (including distance between groups at restaurants and bars), announced with the support of the COVID-19 Act and the Act on Temporary Infection Control Measures at Restaurants and Bars, have been repealed.

- The Public Health Agency of Sweden's advice to work from home and the government assignment to government agencies for more people to work from home have been withdrawn.

**The following apply after Stage 4 has been implemented:**

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

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

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

## Temporary measures in social insurance

The Government has taken several temporary measures in social insurance due to COVID-19. Compensation to employers for sick pay costs, compensation for qualifying deductions, and compensation to self-employed for qualifying days, deferred requirements for medical certificates from day 8 to day 15 during a period of illness, and compensation to people who belong to a risk group and relatives to risk groups, are valid up to and including 30 September. These measures are being brought to an end due to the fact that 70 per cent of the population have been vaccinated.

## **Continued readiness to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic**

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

## **Strengthened support in order to increase vaccination coverage**

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

## **Vaccination certificate as infection control measure**

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

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

The Government is proposing a new law on state compensation for personal

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

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

The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked by the Government to conduct a review of the conditions for and capacity of the regional infection control units, and medical officers for communicable disease control, to carry out their assignments. The regional infection control units and medical officers for communicable disease control have a central role in Swedish infection control and have responsibility for the infection control efforts in the areas in which they operate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Government has signed more vaccine agreements

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



Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# More restrictions to be removed from 29 September

Published 08 September 2021

The government has previously presented a plan for how the advice and restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are to be adapted and removed. At a press conference on 7 September, the government announced that restrictions on attendance numbers at public gatherings and events are planned to be removed as of 29 September 2021.

High vaccination levels throughout the population are the single most important prerequisite that will allow all restrictions to be lifted. However, the assessment was also based on the burden on health services, mortality rates and an assessment of the risk of increased transmission.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden's overall assessment is that it is possible to implement stage 4 of the government's plan for removing restrictions on 29 September 2021. This means that many of the restrictions put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 can be removed.

The following will happen as we move into stage 4 of the government's plan for removing restrictions:

- Restrictions on attendance numbers for public gatherings and events will be removed
- Restrictions on attendance numbers for private gatherings at rented premises, for example, will be removed
- Remaining restrictions on catering establishments, including the size of parties and distance between parties, will be removed
- The Public Health Agency's advice to work from home will be removed

and a gradual return to the workplace can begin. Anyone with symptoms should continue to stay at home and be tested, and employers should then facilitate working from home.

## Vaccination certificates for large public gatherings and events if needed

However, in line with the Government's plan for removal of restrictions, the Public Health Agency has previously argued that certain specific regulations may still be needed for very large public gatherings and events going forward.

In order to be prepared, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs will therefore shortly be submitting a memorandum proposing that vaccination certificates can be used at these major public gatherings and events during stage 4.

The proposal means that any restrictions on attendance numbers that may be necessary for public gatherings and events with 15,000 or more attendees would not apply if the vaccination certificate system is used. This means that the organiser will not be obliged to limit the number of attendees on premises and in defined areas or spaces at the organiser's disposal if there are restrictions in respect of this. Exceptions will be made for children under 16 and people who should not be vaccinated for medical reasons.



Article from Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Modified restrictions as of 15 July

Published 14 July 2021

At a press conference on Monday, it was announced that a number of restrictions will be lifted as of 15 July. This is in line with step 3 of the Government's plan for phasing out restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of the pandemic, the trends are heading in the right direction. The number of COVID-19 cases and the number of people requiring hospital treatment for COVID-19 are falling week by week. Almost 70 per cent of the adult population have now received at least one vaccine dose. Overall, the infection rates, the pressure on the health care system and the vaccination rate of the population are all at levels that allow restrictions to be lifted. For this reason, the Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden have made the assessment that it is appropriate to proceed with step 3 of the Government's plan for phasing out the restrictions.

**As of 15 July, the following applies.**

## Long-distance public transport

As of 15 July 2021, long-distance public transport operators will be able to operate at full capacity.

However, passengers are advised to continue to exercise care and vigilance. Anyone who has any symptoms or feels ill should not travel. They should stay home, isolate and take a COVID-19 test. Keeping a COVID-safe distance is still a crucial factor in minimising the risk of infecting and being infected.



## Municipalities no longer able to ban people from certain public spaces

As of 15 July 2021, municipalities will no longer be able to ban the public from accessing certain spaces where crowding may occur.

The ban has been a tool for municipalities to use to limit crowding in public spaces – such as parks, beaches and parking areas – that could contribute to the further spread of infection when infection rates are high.

## Public Health Agency decisions in line with the plan

In accordance with the Government's plan for phasing out restrictions, the Public Health Agency has also made a number of decisions on modifying and phasing out restrictions under step 3 of the plan. For example, the rule on the number of people per square metre in shopping centres, gyms, museums, amusement parks, etc. will be removed. The advice to amusement parks concerning, for example, how to place groups for rides and attractions, will be removed. The size of groups with designated seats at public gatherings or events, including football matches, will be increased from four people to eight people. This applies to both indoor and outdoor events.

For more information, visit the Public Health Agency of Sweden website.

The next step of the Government's phase-out plan – step 4 – is scheduled for September. The plan for phasing out restrictions can only proceed if infection rates and the pressure on the health care system remain low and the vaccination rate continues to rise.

Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan and State Epidemiologist Anders Tegnell took part in the press conference.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 13 July 2021

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

## Extension of social insurance measures

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

## Vaccination of children from 16 years recommended

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

## Digital vaccination certificates for travel in the EU

## ready from 1 July

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

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

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

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

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

## SEK 20 million for increased information about vaccination

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

## Further SEK 1.5 billion for testing and tracing

The Government is proposing in an Additional Amending Budget that a further SEK 1.5 billion be allocated in 2021 to meet the need for continued

PCR testing, antigen testing and tracing of COVID-19 infection.

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

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

## Unchanged forecast for vaccination against COVID-19

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

## The Government's plan for phasing out restrictions

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

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



Article from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Adjustment of restrictions from 1 July

Published 29 June 2021

The Government previously presented a plan for adapting and phasing out the restrictions put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At a press conference on Monday, June 28 2021, it was announced that a number of restrictions will be lifted as of 1 July 2021, in line with stage 2 of the Government's plan.

In terms of the pandemic, things are steadily moving in the right direction. The spread of infection and the number of people requiring hospitalisation for COVID-19 are decreasing. More than half of the adult population has now received at least one dose of the vaccine. The Government and the Public Health Agency of Sweden have now determined that we can proceed with stage 2 of the Government's plan for phasing out the restrictions.

## The following applies from 1 July

The participant limit for events categorised as public gatherings or public events will be raised further. For indoor events, up to 50 participants may be allowed. If there is assigned seating for participants, up to 300 participants may be allowed. For outdoor events, the maximum number of participants is 600 without assigned seating, or 3,000 participants with assigned seating.

For outdoor demonstrations, up to 1,800 participants are now allowed.

Adjustments are being made to the participant limit for outdoor races and similar sporting events, so that it only applies to the starting line and finish

line area. The provision also applies to sporting events with a course held on roads, on or in water, or in the woods or otherwise off-road. At the same time, the participant limit is being raised to 900 athletes.

## Sectioning

In addition to raising the participant limit, events can also be organised for more participants if the organiser is able to divide up the room, area or space into sections large enough to allow participants to maintain a safe distance. This ensures that participants from different sections cannot come into contact with each other during or immediately after the event. In such cases, the participant limit applies to each section. Each section needs to have separate entrances and exits, and have access to its own service facilities, such as toilets and, where applicable, food and beverage establishments.

## Trade fairs

Trade fairs, which are public events, will be regulated in a way similar to how the Government previously dealt with rules for markets and permanent funfairs. This means that they will not be subject to the participant limit rules that apply to public gatherings and public events. Trade fairs will instead be subject to rules similar to those for markets.

## Private gatherings

The Government has also decided to raise the participant limit allowed for premises, spaces and areas rented out for private gatherings. Such a room or area can be rented out for a group of maximum 50 people.

## Long-distance public transport

The Government intends to take a decision to repeal the rules on passenger restrictions in long-distance public transport from 15 July. This means that long-distance public transport providers can now start planning to accommodate passengers at full capacity.

## Public Health Agency's decisions under the plan

Under the Government's restriction phase-out plan, the Public Health Agency has also taken a number of decisions on adjustments and phase-outs

of restrictions during stage 2 of the plan. These include relaxing restrictions on the opening hours and the size of groups in food and beverage establishments, and removing the recommendation to shop alone and to not spend a lot of time in shops. Recommendations to sports and cultural clubs as well as to individuals in relation to sports shall also be withdrawn. For more information, please visit the Public Health Agency's website.

The amended restrictions decided by the Government, which will be introduced on 1 July 2021, will be supplemented by the Public Health Agency's regulations, which may involve some continued restrictions depending on the conditions of the premises, area or space.

Participants in the press conference included Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs, Amanda Lind, Minister for Culture and Democracy, and Johan Carlson, Director-General of the Public Health Agency of Sweden.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Government Offices

# Government plan for phasing out restrictions

Published 28 May 2021

The spread of COVID-19 and the number of hospital patients being treated for it are now decreasing dramatically. The largest vaccination campaign in Sweden's history is protecting more people every day from serious illness. At a press conference on Thursday, the Government presented its five-stage plan to adapt and phase out the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government's plan has five stages. In Stage 1, which starts on 1 June, the Government will ease a number of restrictions. In the final stage, Stage 5, the Government will essentially lift all restrictions and recommendations imposed in response to COVID-19. The Government is keen to ensure that it lifts the restrictions responsibly and remains prepared to handle any situation in which transmission increases again.

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

To determine whether it is possible to proceed to the next stage and lift further restrictions, the Government will make an overall assessment based on the indicators identified by the Public Health Agency. These will be used to describe the progression of the pandemic and to inform the continued



adaptation of COVID-19 restrictions.

## Adapted restrictions from 1 June

**Stage 1**, as partly communicated earlier, includes new participant limits for activities such as public gatherings and public events. Permanent funfairs and markets are no longer subject to participant limits. Funfairs will be regulated as amusement parks and similar facilities, and markets will be regulated as shopping areas. Opening hours of eating and drinking establishments will be extended to 22.30. The Public Health Agency will no longer advise against small-scale camps and sports cups for children and young people. Outdoor matches and competitions for adults will also be permitted.

**Stage 2**, which is expected to begin around 1 July, will include raised participant limits for public gatherings and events and private gatherings. At that point, the Public Health Agency will completely withdraw its advice against sport and recreation activities to individuals. The opening hours of eating and drinking establishments will be extended further, and the regulation concerning the maximum number of people per group and distance between groups for outdoor establishments will be lifted. The advice to socialise only within a very limited circle will be withdrawn, but socialising outdoors will still be preferable. Advice to clubs and associations to cancel, postpone or hold meetings remotely will be relaxed. Such meetings can then take place, but close contact should still be avoided.

**In Stage 3**, expected to start on 15 July, limitations on long-distance public transportation and regulations limiting the number of people per square in indoor and outdoor environments will be lifted.

**Stage 4** is expected to start in September, at which point all participant limits for public gatherings and events and private gatherings will be lifted. The restrictions in the restaurant sector with respect to group size will also be eased.

All remaining restrictions will be lifted with the start of **Stage 5**. These include regulations concerning crowding in shopping areas and cultural and recreational activities. The requirement on certain central government agencies to ensure that only employees whose physical presence is necessary are present in the workplace will be lifted. The Public Health Agency will withdraw general advice concerning avoiding crowding,

working from home and maintaining especially good hand hygiene. It has not been determined when Stage 5 can start.

## Proof of vaccination

In mid-June, the Government plans to communicate its position on whether it will introduce the possibility of using a vaccination certificate or similar proof of vaccination for certain public gatherings and events for a limited period. The position will clarify how this should be regulated and which public gatherings and events it would concern. Proof of vaccination could be used to enable large-scale events that would not otherwise be possible due to the pandemic to take place.

Although the situation in Sweden is improving, the Government considers that it is still necessary to be well-prepared to take measures if the situation should deteriorate. If this happens, the Government may have to modify its plan for adapting the restrictions.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 26 May 2021

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

## More precise regulations for public gatherings and events

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

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

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

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

Markets will be regulated in the same way as other trading venues rather than as a public event. Similarly, permanent funfairs will only be covered by the regulations for amusement parks and zoos, which means that they will not be subject to the participant limitations set out in the Limitations Ordinance. These activities must limit the number of visitors on the basis of the square metre area available to visitors (20 square metres/person).

Read more on the Public Health Agency of Sweden website.

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

## **Additional SEK 150 million to urgent transports due to the pandemic**

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

## **Unchanged forecast for COVID-19 vaccinations**

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

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

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

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

mutations.

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

Travel with long-distance public transport by bus and train is expected to increase during the summer months, with the risk of increased congestion and hence an increased risk of infection. The restrictions to prevent the spread of infection must therefore remain in place. The disease control measures will be extended from 1 June 2021 until 14 August 2021. An evaluation will be made on 15 June to determine whether the regulation should be repealed as of 1 July, based on the epidemiological situation and the impact on health care.

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

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

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 20 May 2021

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

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

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

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

The remit will be reported on by 15 June 2023.

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

One of the Government's measures during the pandemic is that the assessment of working capacity against regular work in health insurance after day 180 and day 365 of the sickness period can be deferred when care or rehabilitation has been deferred due to the pandemic. The reason for this is to avoid people losing their financial security. Since uncertainty remains about the course of the pandemic and its long-term impact on waiting lists and waiting times, a new bill is now being circulated for comment. The proposal involves extending the temporary exemption if necessary from 1 January 2022 until 31 December 2022.

## Sweden borrows 200 000 vaccine doses from Norway

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

## Guidance ahead of adapting restrictions

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

## Adjusted forecast for vaccination against Covid-19

On 30 April, the Public Health Agency of Sweden announced its updated

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

## Proposal regarding public gatherings and events is circulated for comment

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

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





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 03 May 2021

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

## Extension of measures in social insurance

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

## Continued serious state of infection means that restrictions are extended

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

- The Government is waiting to go ahead with new rules for public gatherings and events. The Public Health Agency of Sweden now makes the preliminary assessment that these rules can enter into force on 17 May.
- The Government has previously decided to enable the municipalities to ban people from being at a specified place if there is a clear risk of crowding at that place. A person who breaches regulations on bans on being at a specified place can be sentenced to a fine. Nor is it appropriate to, for example, have dinners with friends or go to look at Valborg bonfires, since this means that the risk of crowding increases.
- The Public Health Agency of Sweden intends to extend certain temporary disease control measures introduced pursuant to the Temporary Pandemic Act and the Restaurant Act. This applies to the regulations that would have expired on 2 May, including those that eating and drinking establishments may only stay open until 20.30 and those setting a maximum of one person per group at eating and drinking establishments in shopping centres and department stores. These are now extended up to and including 16 May.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Extended compensation period for personal protective equipment for personal assistants**

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

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

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# About the COVID-19 virus, 6 April

Published 26 April 2021

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

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

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

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

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

- Extra funding will be allocated to municipalities and regions for

healthcare measures, including vaccinations, testing and contact tracing, patient transport and compensation for deferred healthcare and healthcare related to COVID-19.

- The National Board of Health and Welfare, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) will also be given greater resources to tackle the pandemic.
- Funding will also be allocated to monitor compliance with the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink.
- During the pandemic, many children and young people have been deprived of activities and social interaction with people their own age. Holiday activities can help to alleviate this situation and improve their lives. The Government therefore proposes a targeted government grant of SEK 200 million to municipalities for this purpose. The grant can support holiday activities that are free of charge and COVID-safe for children and young people aged 6 to 15 in 2021.

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

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

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

### **Benefits to vulnerable groups extended**

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

The measures to be extended are:

- Certain preventive sickness benefits to certain at-risk groups

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

## **No doctor's certificate required until day 15**

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

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

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

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

## **The Government proposes extending grants to employers for sick pay**

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

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

## **The Government proposes extending support to air ambulance services**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Continued work on vaccination certificates

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

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

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

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

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

It is in everyone's interest that not only the rich countries are able to vaccinate their populations but that vaccination is rolled out across the world. This is a question of solidarity and of putting an end to the pandemic and its serious indirect effects as quickly as possible. Sweden has taken an active role in work to ensure global access to vaccines, partly by supporting the global vaccine initiative COVAX.

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

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

## Extended restrictions due to COVID-19

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

The Government has also decided to task the county administrative boards with expanding their reporting on supervision of implementation of the



temporary COVID-19 Act, and also of how the county administrative boards are adapting their supervision efforts to changes in the spread of COVID-19. This is to ensure that the rules are enforced in order to reduce crowding in the establishments concerned and ultimately reduce the risk of increased transmission.

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

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

## **Mandate regarding potential surplus PPE**

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

## **The Government seeks to increase the borrowing limit for vaccines**

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

## **Mandate to keep a list of regulations issued under**

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

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

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

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

## Compensation for personal injury caused by the COVID-19 vaccine

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

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

## Review of long-term effects of COVID-19

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

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

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

## Extending the reimbursement period for PPE for personal assistants

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

## Pregnancy allowance for pregnant women with risks in their working environment

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# About the COVID-19 virus, 4 March

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

## New measures to reduce the spread of infection

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Extension of temporary measures in health insurance

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

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

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

## New recommendations for vaccinated individuals at care homes for older people

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

delivered in quarters 3 and 4.

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

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

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

## Continued national restrictions

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

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

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

## Proposal for new restriction measures pursuant to

## the temporary Pandemic Act

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

The Government is also preparing proposals for a new system for public gatherings and events that will make more accurate rules possible when the state of the infection permits this. It was proposed that these proposals enter into force on 11 March 2021.

## Compensation period for additional costs extended

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

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

## Restrictions introduced for long-distance public transport

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

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

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

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

On 11 February the Government commissioned Kammarkollegiet (Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency) to pay the regions SEK 4 billion in 2021. The regions will use this funding to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care. In the Budget Bill for 2021 the Government announced spending of SEK 4 billion to the regions to deal with the costs of deferred care and COVID-19-related care resulting from the pandemic.

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





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# About the COVID-19 virus: Extensions of national restrictions

Published 15 February 2021

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

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

## Extended ban on the sale of alcohol after 20.00

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

## Continued home working

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

## Adjusted recommendation to upper secondary schools

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

until and including 1 April 2021.

## Extended recommendation on face masks in public transport

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has recommended face masks in public transport, as of 7 January 2021, at times when there is often crowding. This will apply throughout the spring.

## Continued closure of non-essential services

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

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

## Temporary Pandemic Act provides more powers for communicable disease control measures

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

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

## Negative COVID-19 test required to enter Sweden

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

## **SEK 175 million to the county administrative boards to increase supervision**

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

## **SEK 100 million for swift transport due to COVID-19**

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

## **SEK 1.4 billion for quick tests**

Testing and tracing is under way on a large scale in Sweden, and it is important that society has access to a range of tools and methods to break infection chains and press down transmission of the infection. At the same time, it is important to maintain a correct picture of the state of the infection

in the country. The advantage of quick tests is that they give a test result straightaway, sometimes after as little as 15 minutes. As part of continued action to meet the need for large-scale testing for COVID-19, the Government is proposing allocating SEK 1.4 billion in 2021 to the use of quick tests. The Government has previously allocated SEK 7.5 billion to large-scale PCR testing and tracing in 2021.

## The Government wants to break older people's isolation

Many older people are alone and isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here pensioner organisations fill an important function in supporting their members and in contributing to activities and breaking isolation. To strengthen their work, the Government is proposing increasing the government grant to these organisations by SEK 15 million in 2021.

## Swedish Medical Products Agency receives an additional SEK 24.6 million

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

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

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

## Extended compensation period for protective

## equipment for personal assistants

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

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

Sweden needs to be able to continue to maintain large-scale testing and tracing of COVID-19 as important tools for combating the spread of infection in the country. On 12 January the Government therefore proposed allocating an additional SEK 5.5 billion to large-scale PCR testing and tracing for COVID-19 in 2021. This means that the Government has now allocated a total of SEK 7.5 billion this year, since SEK 2 billion had already been allocated. The proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

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

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

## Corona-related measures in health insurance

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# COVID-19 Act allows stronger communicable disease control measures

Published 18 January 2021

The Government has adopted a Government Bill for a temporary Act to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The legislation is intended to give the Government the authority to adopt more binding communicable disease control measures than was previously possible. The Act entered into force on 10 January 2021 and is in effect until 30 September 2021.

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The new Act is intended to allow accurate measures, adapted to the conditions of different activities, and to not unnecessarily hinder activities that can be conducted in an infection-safe manner. If necessary to prevent infection, it will be possible to introduce special limitations regarding the following activities and places:

- public gatherings and events
- places for recreational or cultural activities that are open to the general public
- commercial centres that are open to the general public
- public transport and domestic flights
- places for private gatherings.

Certain orders, such as closures and bans on gathering in public places, must be approved by the Riksdag

The Government has instructed the Public Health Agency of Sweden to analyse which communicable disease control measures should be taken in the event of different levels of infection so as to be able to decide on the right measures at the right time.

New regulations for gyms and sports centres, swimming pools, shops and places for private gatherings

Under the new Act, on 8 January the Government issued a new ordinance – the ‘limitations ordinance for COVID-19’ – that entails the introduction of legally binding regulations on gyms and sports centres, swimming pools, shops and malls, and places for private gatherings as of 10 January.

## Maximum number of visitors on premises

For shops, indoor gyms and sports centres, and swimming pools, the new regulations mean that it will now be obligatory to calculate the maximum number of simultaneous visitors or customers allowed on the premises. The maximum number must be documented and may not be exceeded. A sign must be posted next to all entrances informing visitors of the maximum number. The calculation will be based on each visitor having 10 square metres at their disposal. It must be possible to either wash your hands or else there must be a hand sanitiser available.

Under the limitations ordinance for COVID-19, the Public Health Agency of Sweden has prepared more detailed orders and will draft instructions on how to avoid congestion. These may include alternative solutions to physical queues or referring visitors to specially designated entrances or exits. Private gatherings such as those at event facilities, club premises and other places that can be rented will now be subject to a maximum of 8 participants.

The Government has initially chosen to regulate activities where the need – based on the disease control situation – is currently deemed greatest. The Government will present other measures that may be implemented pursuant to the new temporary COVID-19 Act at a later date.

## The COVID-19 Act



- The COVID-19 Act is a framework law through which the Riksdag temporarily gives the Government the authority to issue ordinances containing more binding communicable disease control measures than is currently possible.
- This is primarily a matter of measures that prevent the spread of the disease without setting unnecessary limits on activities that can be conducted in an infection-safe manner. In concrete terms, this may involve limits on the number of visitors, regulating opening hours or other measures necessary to prevent congestion.
- In very serious situations, it must be possible to close activities and limit gatherings in places to which the general public has access. At the same time, it is important to safeguard the Riksdag's influence, and that any such decisions are subject to examination by the Riksdag – within a reasonable period of time.
- It will also be possible for the Government or government agencies to adopt communicable disease control regulations for more locations and facilities that are currently not covered by binding regulations. These include gyms, sports centres, libraries, campsites, museums, zoos, shopping centres, shops and service centres such as hairdressing salons, event facilities and public transport.
- The Government will also have greater opportunity to limit people's use of public places and limit the size of groups allowed to gather in public places. The Government – or a municipality, following a Government decision – may introduce a ban on being present at a specified location. This may include bathing sites, city parks or similar locations.
- The Government will also have the option of introducing limitations regarding premises and spaces rented for private gatherings, such as event facilities rented on a commercial basis, shared premises in rented and tenant-owned housing, club premises and premises that belong to universities, colleges and student unions.
- Supervisory responsibility rests with the county administrative boards. If the regulations are not followed, the county administrative boards may impose an injunction, such as closing. Fines can be imposed when necessary. The Public Health Agency of Sweden will provide guidance on how to conduct supervision.
- Matters concerning financial compensation as a result of ordinances issued under the act will be handled in connection with the preparation of such ordinances. The Government will present proposals to the Riksdag at a later date concerning compensation within the framework of the procedures applicable to the budget process.
- Regarding the ordinances that, under the temporary COVID-19 Act are

to be subject to examination by the Riksdag, the Government will provide an assessment of the financial consequences to companies, workers or other actors in the Government Bill on submission.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 05 January 2021

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

## Vaccination against COVID-19 started on 27 December

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

## The 180-day examination in sickness insurance to be stopped

The Government is proposing a temporary stop in the assessments in relation

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

## Further national restrictions to stop the spread of the infection

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

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

## Consultation started on draft of a temporary Pandemic Act

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Central Government and SALAR agree on rapid tests

Antigen tests, called 'rapid tests', can be used to supplement PCR testing when there is a need for greater test capacity. They can, for instance, be used in sensitive settings such as special housing for older people or to maintain regular activities in out-patient care at an emergency clinic for patients who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking care for some other reason. Central government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have reached an agreement that means that central government will co-finance the use of antigen tests and the regions undertake to carry out the testing.

## Extension of temporary measures in sickness insurance

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

- compensation at a standard amount of SEK 810 for the sick pay standard deduction;
- compensation to sole traders for their first 14 waiting days at a standard amount of SEK 810 per day;

- compensation to employers for the part of excess sick pay costs above the normal level;
- requirement of a doctor's certificate deferred from the 8th to the 15th day of a sickness case.

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

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

## Government decision to extend temporary parental benefit

On 17 December the Government decided to extend the temporary measures on account of COVID-19 that apply to temporary parental benefit. The measures are intended to reduce the spread of infection, reduce the burden on health care and enhance financial security. The measures are being extended up to and including 30 April 2021.

The measures covered by today's Government decision are:

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

## Reinforced research in health and welfare equips Sweden for the future

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of medical research and innovation. Thanks to rapid action by researchers all over the world, several vaccines have already been developed. In its bill on research and innovation

the Government presents investments in health, welfare and life sciences of around SEK 0.5 billion per year – investments that will contribute to Sweden being better equipped to face any new pandemics and other health challenges.

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

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

## **The Government proposes extending exemptions in the rehabilitation chain**

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

## **Updated scenarios for the development of COVID-19**

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

At the same time, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is to



produce descriptions of potential impacts on society.

## **Personal assistants receive compensation for personal protective equipment**

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

## **Continued programme of large-scale testing**

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

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

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

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

2020 and applies until 28 February 2021.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Government welcomes COVID-19 Commission's interim report

Published 17 December 2020

On Tuesday 15 December, the COVID-19 Commission submitted its first interim report to the Government. The report focuses on the spread of the virus in the health and social care of older people. Its conclusions highlight, among other things, the need for a better regulatory framework, a clearer division of responsibilities and increased medical expertise in the care of older people.

At the end of June, the Government decided to appoint a Committee of Inquiry in the form of a Commission. The Commission's task was to evaluate the measures taken by the Government, the administrative agencies concerned, the regions and the municipalities to limit the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

During the spring, it became clear that Sweden had not succeeded in protecting older people to a sufficient degree. The Government therefore instructed the Commission to submit a special interim report this year focusing on the care of older people. According to the Commission's conclusions, almost 90 per cent of the more than 7 500 people who died in Sweden were 70 years of age or older and almost half of them lived in service accommodation. Community transmission of the COVID-19 virus is singled out as the most important cause of its spread in older care settings. The conclusions show that there are structural shortcomings in older care and that providers were unprepared and ill-equipped to deal with a pandemic, due to an inadequate regulatory framework, fragmented organisation, a lack of medical expertise, and other shortcomings.

## New act on older care and greater medical expertise

According to the COVID-19 Commission, responsibility for this lies with several actors, but primarily with the Government and previous governments, which have been aware of the structural shortcomings but have not remedied them. The Government welcomes the COVID-19 Commission's interim report, which will be an important starting point for future reforms. Intensive work is already under way for more robust care of older people and more robust legislation in the area. The Government will shortly present an inquiry tasked with:

- Proposing a new act on older care that complements the Social Services Act and regulates the health and social care of older people aimed at giving providers clearer statutory responsibilities and functions.
- Presenting measures to strengthen the regulated access to medical expertise in the care of older people, including access to doctors around the clock for older people in service accommodation.

The COVID-19 Commission will submit a second interim report by 31 October 2021. The final report will be submitted by 28 February 2022.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 27 November 2020

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

## Maximum of eight participants should be normative for all of society

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

## Alcohol sales banned after 22.00

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

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

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

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

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

## **Extended benefit period for certain risk groups**

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

## **Reinforced communication to the public about COVID-19**

The spread of the infection has increased in Sweden in the autumn. The Government is therefore commissioning the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the county administrative boards and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) to jointly coordinate, strengthen and develop communication measures directed at the public. This applies especially to the introduction of local general advice in the regions. This communication

should be aimed especially at the groups and situations where the spread of the infection is increasing or risks increasing, and where compliance with advice and recommendations is judged to be deficient. These authorities will also produce a communication strategy to ensure that communication at national, regional and local level is coordinated and that there is clarity that there may be regional adaptations and focuses.

## Follow-up of vaccinations against COVID-19

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

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

## Commission to secure access to medical products and devices

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

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

## SEK 3 billion for more testing for COVID-19

At present large-scale testing is being conducted throughout the country.

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

## **Compensation for personal protective equipment for personal assistants**

COVID-19 has resulted in additional costs for personal protective equipment for personal assistants. The municipalities were already able to apply for compensation for that additional cost. Now the Government is proposing a new government grant ordinance so that private providers operating personal assistance services can also apply for compensation. SEK 50 million will be allocated to this initiative. The Government's proposal is based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

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

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

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

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

## **Commission to analyse the possibilities of infection-**



## proofing more events

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



Article from Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden's national life sciences strategy and COVID-19

Published 12 November 2020

Sweden's national life sciences strategy was launched in late December 2019 to strengthen the long-term competitiveness of Sweden as a life sciences nation.

Life sciences contribute to improving health and quality of life of the population, ensuring economic prosperity, advancing the country as a leading knowledge nation and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Data-driven innovative solutions and scientific advances will have a fundamental impact on developments in prevention, diagnostics, treatment, monitoring, habilitation and rehabilitation, paving the way for personalised care – or precision medicine.

Sweden's research and innovation is of the highest international standard, and the life sciences industry is one of the nation's basic industries. However, international competition is intensifying. To harness the potential in the sector, a national life sciences strategy – setting out clear objectives and outlining a strategic and integrated approach – was seen as essential. Cross-sectoral collaboration between national, regional and local levels was regarded as a particularly important factor for regional responsibility for health care planning and delivery, and for coordinating and facilitating regional development.

Based on input from sector stakeholders, the Government outlined objectives in eight priority areas in which change was considered particularly important:

1. Structures for collaboration
2. Unlocking the potential of health data for use in research and innovation

3. Responsible, secure and ethical policy development
4. Integration of research and innovation into care delivery
5. Assistive technologies for increased independence, participation and health
6. Research and infrastructure
7. Skills supply, talent attraction and lifelong learning
8. International attractiveness and competitiveness

The COVID-19 pandemic, which struck shortly after the launch of Sweden's national life sciences strategy, has demonstrated the importance of life sciences and cross-sectoral collaboration in crisis management and societal resilience. The COVID-19 experience has also provided additional support for the relevance and timeliness of the strategy's eight priority areas.

The Government is firmly committed to ensuring that Sweden is an attractive investment destination in a global, digital and knowledge-based world by offering an environment that includes world-leading universities, an innovative and high-quality health care system and government agencies mandated to contribute to policy development and systemic innovation. The Life Sciences Office at the Government Offices connects the Government and sector stakeholders; these include the cross-sectoral health and life sciences innovation partnership programme and the health and life sciences partnership group, which advises the Life Sciences Office and the innovation partnership programme.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 19 October 2020

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

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

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

## Visiting ban at homes for older people ends on 1 October

In Sweden the ban on visits to special housing for older people ended on 1 October. This decision was based on a lower spread of the virus in the

community, the measures already taken in elderly care services, and new government agency regulations and recommendations.

## Billions set aside to continue fighting COVID-19 in 2021

In 2020, the Government has set aside almost SEK 7 billion to support large-scale testing throughout Sweden and promote active contact tracing. In recent weeks, more than 100 000 tests for active COVID-19 infection have been carried out each week. Testing and contact tracing are important tools in fighting the pandemic and they need to continue in 2021 too. In the Budget Bill for 2021 the Government therefore proposes SEK 2 billion for continued testing and contact tracing in the regions. The Government also proposes increasing funding to the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare in 2021. This will help ensure continued access to personal protective equipment and other measures. The proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

## Sweden to host EU reserves of protective and medical equipment

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

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

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) have started the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX) to guarantee that future COVID-19

vaccines are shared fairly among every country in the world. Sweden will take part in COVAX, together with the European Commission and other EU Member States.

## **Extension of COVID-19-related social insurance measures**

Since the pandemic struck, the Swedish Government has taken many measures in the area of social insurance to lessen the impact of the pandemic. These measures aim to prevent the spread of infection, ease the pressure on health care, strengthen financial security and lessen the consequences for employers. Other measures allow parents to stay home with their children if schools are closed. The Government has proposed extending these COVID-19-related sickness insurance measures and temporary parental benefits. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

## **SEK 4 billion to manage delayed care**

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

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

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

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

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

## Evaluation of care for long-term COVID-19 symptoms

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

This is why the Government has instructed the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services to carry out a systematic review of patients with long-term COVID-19 symptoms. This includes compiling the scientific data available on care, treatment and rehabilitation. International data and experience in this area will also be studied.

## Scenarios for new COVID-19 outbreaks

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

## COVID-19-related measures in social services

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

## Review of homes for older people presented

In June, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate reviewed all 1 700 homes for older people in Sweden. This review found that 40 municipalities were

particularly vulnerable, with almost 70 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths occurring in homes for older people.





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 25 September 2020

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

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

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

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

An adjustment to the national dental care subsidy will compensate patients who have not been able to go to the dentist during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A new compensation period will start for these patients on 1 September 2020, extending for the same number of days that were lost.

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

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

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

## **Additional funding for continued COVID-19 response**

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

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

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

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

the pandemic next year.

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

## **The Government wants to reduce pharmaceuticals emissions**

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

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

## **Special mental health function**

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

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

## **SEK 1.5 billion to maternity care and women's health**

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

## Higher pensions and lower taxes to strengthen pensioners' financial situation

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

## Stimulate and accelerate developments in the area of disabilities

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

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

## Increased security at National Board of Institutional Care homes

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

## SEK 100 million per year to strengthen cancer care

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

Party.

## The Government reinforces ambulance care

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

## Investments to increase social justice

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes investments to increase social justice in society. These include a recovery bonus for staff in health and social care, an investment in social measures in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, higher maintenance support for single parents and increased funding for housing allowance. The Government's proposals are based on an agreement between the government parties, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party.

## Record-high rise in standard compensation provided for personal assistance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Subsidies for foster home placements**

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

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

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

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

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

## **SEK 4 billion to manage postponed care**

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

## **Historic budget initiative to reinforce care of the elderly**

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

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

security for families and children’.

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





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 06 July 2020

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

## Ban on visits to care homes for older people extended

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

## Preventive sickness benefit for risk groups

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

## Relaxation of restrictions in the summer

In recent weeks the number of people needing care in hospital has decreased, and several regions have been able to increase their tracing and testing. In view of this and of the phase Sweden is now in, the Government is able to give new information about conditions for travel in Sweden this summer. As of 13 June people without symptoms can travel in Sweden.

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

## Consequences of COVID-19 for social services to be analysed

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

## SEK 30 million to counter the consequences of isolation

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

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

The Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and

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

## Government providing SEK 5.9 billion for expanded testing and tracing

The Government wants to see a strong increase in testing and tracing. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is therefore being commissioned to speedily ensure, in consultation with the regions and country administrative boards, that conditions are in place for large-scale testing for COVID-19 throughout the country.

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

## Municipalities to be given full responsibility for the supervision process

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

## Payments for digital care in national schedule

The Government has decided to make it possible temporarily for care

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

## Impact on cancer patients to be analysed

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

## Government's vaccine strategy

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

## Information material for children and young people particularly susceptible to infection

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

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





Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren on the Swedish COVID-19 strategy

Published 17 June 2020

At a press briefing on June 11, Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs, summarised three months of transmission of COVID-19 in Sweden.

“We have managed to flatten the curve. The health care system has coped well,” Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren said.

Lena Hallengren further stated that as testing now rapidly increases, more infections are consequently detected. At the same time, the number of patients in intensive care units constantly decreases.

“A mix of recommendations, legal requirements and regular adjustments of measures will continue to be corner stones of the Swedish strategy to deal with COVID-19,” the Minister for Health and Social Affairs said.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 11 May 2020

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

## More clinical studies about COVID-19

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

## Shorter waiting lists not required to be eligible for the 'waiting list billion'

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

## Expanded digital contact channels to safeguard mental health

The Government considers that the COVID-19 pandemic can affect people's mental wellbeing. It is therefore important that contacting mental health services is easy. The Government wants to support effective communication among care services, patients and relatives in cases where physical visits are not possible as a result of the spread of COVID-19.

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

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

## Analyse risks in health and social care

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

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

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

## Expanded opportunities for temporary parental benefit

The opportunities to receive temporary parental benefit have been expanded in a new ordinance. If it should be necessary to close e.g. preschools and schools to limit the spread of the virus, parents who have to stay home from



work to care for children will be eligible for temporary parental benefit. In such situations, parents will receive approximately 90 per cent of the daily allowance they would normally receive in temporary parental benefit.

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

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

## Identifying particularly vulnerable risk groups

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

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

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

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

## Government removes reporting requirements for municipalities and regions

To make it easier for municipalities and regions, considering the difficult situation they find themselves in, the Government has decided to remove the

requirements on reporting in 2020 concerning five agreements between central government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALAR).

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

## Government appoints national coordinator for clinical studies on COVID-19

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

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

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



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Decisions and guidelines in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus

Published 09 April 2020

The Government continues to maintain a close dialogue with relevant expert government agencies on effective measures to counter the spread of the coronavirus, which can cause COVID-19. Read more below about the most recent recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance.

## The Government must be able to take quick decisions on temporary measures

On 7 April, the Government decided on a bill proposing that new powers be introduced into the Communicable Diseases Act. The legislative proposal would enable the Government to act quickly and take decisions on temporary measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Measures that may be considered include temporarily limiting gatherings, temporarily closing shopping centres and other trading centres, temporarily suspending transport and temporarily enabling the redistribution of medicines and medical equipment.

This is a temporary amendment that will be apply for three months, from 18 April until 30 June 2020.

## General guidelines: Keep your distance and take personal responsibility

The Public Health Agency has produced new regulations and general guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Sweden. Private individuals must take the situation seriously and follow the guidelines and recommendations. This includes maintaining social distancing by keeping a distance from each other and refraining from non-essential travel within the country.

## Restrictions on dispensing medications

As of 1 April, pharmacies are not allowed to dispense more medications than patients need for a three-month period. The restrictions on dispensing medications apply to medications for both people and animals.

The demand for medications has increased significantly recently. This is due in part to increasing numbers of COVID-19 patients in care needing treatment, but also to people collecting increased quantities of a number of different medications at retail pharmacies.

Currently, medications are only subsidised in the benefits scheme (i.e. medications covered by the high-cost protection scheme) if patients collect a three-month supply at most. If patients pay the full price for their medication, it is possible to collect a full year's supply of prescription medications. Many patients have recently used this opportunity.

Following proposals from the Medical Products Agency, the Government is now restricting the dispensing of medications to the quantities patients need for three months, regardless of whether the medication is included in the high-cost protection scheme and regardless of whether the patient pays for their own medications. Exemptions can only be made for special reasons.

## Visiting ban at care homes for older people

A ban on visiting all of the nation's care homes for older people has been in place since 1 April to prevent the spread of COVID-19. People living in the nation's care homes for older people are those who need to be protected most from the spread of the virus.

The Government previously issued a formal recommendation against visiting

care homes for older people. Many municipalities have already introduced various forms of visiting bans, but the Government is now introducing uniform and clear rules for the entire country.

This is a general decision. The operator responsible for a given home may grant exemptions from the ban in individual cases.

## Expanded national testing for COVID-19

Sweden is already carrying out extensive COVID-19 testing per capita. Up to 29 March, more than 36 000 people had been tested. But there is much to be gained from expanding this testing further. This is partly to continue ensuring the testing of priority groups in health and medical care, both among patients and staff, and partly to mitigate the impact on society and the economy of a large decline of staff in other particularly critical activities. Expanded national testing for COVID-19 will mean that a large proportion of critical workers will not need to stay home when in fact they are able to work.

To expand testing, the Government has therefore instructed the Public Health Agency to rapidly start to expand national COVID-19 testing and to lead the necessary actors.

The initial phase is testing to enable the identification of people who are infected with COVID-19. The second phase involves also introducing immunity testing for relevant groups. These groups may include staff in health and medical care, and social care, as well as staff in other activities that are considered particularly critical.

## Ban on gatherings of more than 50 people

Since 29 March, it has been prohibited to hold public gatherings and public events for more than 50 people, as compared to the previous number of 500 people. This is not a general recommendation, but a formal Government decision. A breach of the ban is subject to a penalty. Anyone who organises such a gathering or event risks fines or imprisonment for up to six months. The police can also disperse a gathering that breaches the ban.

## Table service only at restaurants

On 24 March, the Public Health Agency decided on additional measures to limit the spread of infection at restaurants, bars, cafés, school dining halls

and other venues serving food and beverages. All venues must all ensure that tables are spaced appropriately to avoid crowding, thus reducing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, people must always be seated when consuming any food or beverages.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

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

Published 20 March 2020

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

## Responsible authorities instructed to limit the spread of infection

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

virus.

## **Delivery of face masks to medical care services**

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

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

## **More intensive care beds in hospitals**

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

## **National procurment centre for protective equipment and medical equipment**

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

## **Sick pay standard deduction discontinued and medical certificate requirement suspended**

The Government has proposed to temporarily discontinue the sickness benefit standard deduction. This means that sick pay is paid from the first



day at home. The purpose of this change is to encourage people to stay at home even when they have mild symptoms.

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

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

## Information to social services personnel

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



Government Offices of Sweden

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

# Discussions, meetings and collaboration for developing Sweden

Published 06 November 2019

Interesting discussions and new perspectives characterised the National Innovation Council meeting and thematic day at Linnaeus University in Kalmar on 23 October. The aim of the Council's regional meetings is to learn from local and regional experiences and to develop the national policy. Alongside the meeting, various workshops were also organised as part of the Innovation Council's thematic day.

The National Innovation Council meeting, which was led by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, focused on how society can address complex social challenges through innovation and cooperation. The Council meets 6 times per year, of which two meetings are regional. The meeting and thematic workshops in Kalmar were jointly planned by the county administrative board and Region Kalmar and, in addition to the core issues of cooperation and innovation, focused on two themes: eHealth and sustainable water use, which are important issues for the region. Meeting participants discussed the problems associated with water scarcity and the challenges arising from a steadily aging population that put a strain on the health and welfare sector, particularly eHealth. A great deal of attention was given to the solutions and opportunities that innovation and technology can present.

Lena Miranda, CEO of Science Park Mjärdevi and member of the National Innovation Council, participated in the meeting in Kalmar.

## **Why is it important for the Innovation Council to have meetings in different regions of Sweden?**

“The Government has expressed the desire to see more innovation – not just in the business sector but in all areas – throughout the country, and not limited to metropolitan areas. I think this is the right way to go. Innovation happens everywhere, and our job is to create the best possible conditions to contribute to this. We have to make sure that people feel they are involved and create an impact – inclusion is very important to also ensure the survival of democracy,” says Ms Miranda, and continues:

“Around our country, there are many good examples at local and regional level that are important for us to see and understand at national level when decisions on new initiatives are to be taken. From this perspective, the Innovation Council’s visits around the country are important.”

The Prime Minister, other government ministers and Council members, together with regional actors from academia, the business sector and society, took part in the meeting. One of the participants was Cecilia Schelin Seidegård, Deputy County Governor of Kalmar County.

## **What do you consider to be important lessons from today’s meeting and which are also relevant to the national policy?**

“Innovation takes place throughout the country. We need to find forms to spread good ideas between different regions in order to benefit from what already exists. Kalmar County will gladly be part of various testbeds, both when it comes to water issues and eHealth. There is a strong commitment to work together to make a difference. We can take the initiative and conduct tests on a small scale, which can then be implemented on a large scale,” says Ms Schelin Seidegård.

## **High level of activity at Innovation Council workshops**

Running alongside the meeting was the Innovation Council’s thematic day, with activities in workshops under the guidance of Vinnova and Hack for Sweden. Participants had the chance to test cooperation methods and find common goals and ways to solve social challenges. The theme here as well was sustainable water use and eHealth.

The day’s programme concluded with a meeting of participants from both the Innovation Council meeting and the workshops to jointly report on

experiences from the day. Many people spoke about the benefit of different actors meeting to discuss and provide different perspectives and solutions to complex social challenges. In conclusion, Mr Löfven highlighted the importance of regional cooperation for innovation, and also open dialogue between local, regional and national activities. The ambition now is to continue working on the ideas, comments and proposals that emerged during the activities of both groups.



Government Offices of Sweden

Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Lena Hallengren on investments in care for older people

Published 23 August 2018

In this film, Minister for the Elderly Lena Hallengren talks about investments in care for older people for 2015–2018. For example, the Government has invested SEK 7 billion to increase staffing levels in care for older people, it will be easier to receive home-help services, a dementia strategy has been adopted and investment support for housing for older people is now available.



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







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

# Dementia strategy focusing on care

Published 06 July 2018

On 24 May, the Government adopted a national strategy for dementia care. Sweden's population is living longer. Life expectancy has risen almost continuously for the past 250 years, and is currently more than 84 years for women and close to 81 years for men. The risk of developing dementia rises with increasing age. This national strategy will enable the Government in the coming years to adopt a more comprehensive approach to dementia care. The Government wants to secure improved quality of care and increased safety and security for people with dementia and their families.

The strategy identifies seven key strategic areas in which the Government wants to secure improvements:

- Collaboration between health and social care
- Staffing
- Knowledge and skills
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Family and friends
- Society
- Digital and assistive technologies

"More and more people are living longer and being diagnosed with dementia, and we must tackle this trend with knowledge and skills, and a more systematic approach. Now we finally have a dementia strategy," says

Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren.

## Collaboration between health and social care

Effective collaboration is essential. Otherwise, there is a risk that major problems can arise for individuals with dementia and their families. Ineffective collaboration between a municipality and a county council, for example, entails a risk that a woman or man who has just been diagnosed with dementia is not offered the support they need.

To facilitate better collaboration, the Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with promoting and spreading a standardised care pathway model for people diagnosed with dementia. The aim is to make it easier for municipalities and county councils to organise the health and social care of people with dementia. The model will help ensure that people with dementia are offered the right support and the right interventions at the right time throughout the course of their illness.

## Staffing

For women and men with dementia, it is important that there is sufficient staff with knowledge about their particular needs. In 2015–2018, the Government invested SEK 7 billion to increase staffing levels in care for older people with the aim of improving care quality, safety and security for individuals. The National Board of Health and Welfare's follow-up indicates that in the first year alone, 2015, this staffing investment funded approximately 5 000 full-year equivalent employees across different professional groups for municipal and private providers of care for older people.

## Knowledge and skills

For municipalities and county councils to be able to offer health and social care of high quality, ensuring staff have the right skills is essential. In its supporting documents for the national dementia care strategy, the National Board of Health and Welfare points out that knowledge about dementia is lacking in all professional groups working in social services and health care. In 2016, the Government invested SEK 178 million in skills development for support staff caring for older people and people with disabilities, an investment primarily in assistant nurses and care assistants. Municipalities have carried out 1 200 training initiatives on values, ethics and dementia.

## Monitoring and evaluation

It is important to be able to monitor, both locally and nationally, the progression of the disease for people with dementia. Two quality databases are available for this – the Swedish Dementia Registry (SveDem) and the BPSD registry (register of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia). The Government has provided financial support for these databases for several years, which will continue in 2018.

## Family and friends

The Government believes that in health and social care, the views of the families of the people with dementia are important. Families must be confident that their voice is heard and that their loved ones receive the health and social care they need. Dementia affects not only the person who has it, but also their family and friends. The work of the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre includes gathering and disseminating knowledge about how to develop the social services provided to families. It is essential that staff understand the importance of communication, information and training for families. Municipalities are required to provide support to families under the Social Services Act.

## Society

Achieving a dementia-friendly society requires collaboration and cooperation between the central government, county councils, municipalities, non-governmental organisations and the rest of civil society. It is essential that people with dementia are met with understanding and empathy – people must feel safe and secure living in Sweden, even if they have dementia.

## Digital and assistive technologies

The Government believes that assistive technology solutions may greatly benefit people with dementia. They may enable women and men who have a disability, or who run the risk of developing a disability, to maintain or increase their confidence, independence and level of activity and participation. Assistive technologies may also improve the working environment for women and men working in social services. To better harness the opportunities offered by the increased use of assistive technologies, the pace of investment in these technologies needs to increase.

In the spring amending budget for 2018, the Government therefore proposed a targeted government grant of SEK 350 million to municipalities, which should go to investments in assistive technologies in social care.

## Monitoring the national strategy for dementia care

In its appropriation directions for 2018, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been instructed to monitor and manage strategic issues within the framework of this strategy. The Board must present a plan for this work on 1 October 2018 and deliver its final report on 1 June 2022.

## Investments in dementia care during this electoral period:

- In the 2015–2018 electoral period, the Government invested SEK 7 billion to increase staffing in care for older people, an investment that funded around 5 000 full-year equivalent employees and improved care quality, safety and security for individual older people.
- In 2016, the Swedish Dementia Centre was allocated SEK 1.8 million to increase the use of training material on countering the use of coercive measures in care.
- In 2017, the Government granted the Swedish Dementia Centre SEK 1.8 million to continue disseminating training material and SEK 910 000 to revise the Dementia ABC and Dementia ABC Plus training programmes.
- In 2018, the Swedish Dementia Centre received SEK 350 000 to follow up the Vision Zero training initiative and SEK 450 000 to support the training programmes Dementia ABC, Dementia ABC Plus, Working safely with drugs and Vision Zero.
- In 2016, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with conducting an inquiry and producing comprehensive supporting documents for both a broad national dementia care strategy and a plan for prioritised measures in the area until 2022.
- In 2016–2018, the Swedish Dementia Registry was allocated SEK 1.5 million per year to develop the registry.
- In 2016–2018, the BPSD register (register of behavioural and psychological

symptoms of dementia) was allocated SEK 1.5 million per year.





Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# International conference in Stockholm on men and gender equality

Published 01 June 2018

On 15–16 May, Sweden and Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren hosted the 4th International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (ICMEO) in Stockholm. Among the 300 participants were several European gender equality ministers, researchers and representatives of government agencies and civil society. The role and responsibility of men and boys in gender equality efforts was in focus, as well as how we change social norms that have negative effects.

The conference in Stockholm was arranged in cooperation with the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and has previously been held in Germany (2012), Austria (2014) and Luxembourg (2016).

"In light of the 'Me Too' movement, it is important to continue discussing and raising examples of how boys and men can be active in changing attitudes and fighting sexism. To achieve real change and a gender-equal society, men need to participate, be engaged and show solidarity," said Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren, who opened the conference at Norra Latin in Stockholm.

Shanga Aziz, founder of Locker Room Talk, was one of the opening speakers and spoke about the work to fight sexism and macho culture in the

changing room.

"It is about starting conversations with more men on these topics. We men must reflect on our own behaviour, ask questions, but also confront others. If your friends are talking about women in a degrading way, you have to question this behaviour in order to make a change," said Mr Aziz.

Virginja Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), participated in a panel on norm criticism and how boys and young men can be active in the process of change.

"We have to establish gender equality standards for the European Union in order to be better able to compare the Member States. Now things are going backwards in relation to unpaid work. Two out of three men in the EU do not even devote one hour to the children or housework, which means the whole job is done by women," said Ms Langbakk.

## Challenging social norms

The theme of this year's conference was 'Masculinity and norm critical approaches: Gender equality work with boys and young men'. Perspectives on men and gender equality were examined in areas such as education, health and prevention of violence. The first day had a broader international perspective and parts of the second day had a Nordic profile, since Sweden holds the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2018. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Män organisation were each responsible for a workshop.

On 16 May, in parallel with the ICMEO, Nordic gender equality ministers held a meeting under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, during which men and gender equality was also on the agenda. In connection with the meeting, a Nordic-Baltic ministerial meeting on current gender equality issues in the countries was also held.

## Parallel workshops

1. Norm critical work in schools
2. Promoting equality through education
3. Masculinity and caregiving
4. Young men and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

5. Icelandic concept for dealing with masculinity norms and trafficking of human beings for sexual purposes

6. Nordic work on violence prevention among young men including honour-related violence



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Convention on the Rights of the Child will be Swedish law

Published 29 March 2018 Updated 14 June 2018

On 13 June, the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) adopted a bill on making the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Swedish law. In order for the convention to have a greater impact, the Government is also proposing a guidance document, an education initiative and continued systematic transformation work.

On 15 March, the Government adopted a bill on making the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Swedish law.

"The decision means that we are clarifying the role of the child as a legal entity with their own specific rights. This means that children will be in greater focus in situations that apply to them," says Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality Lena Hallengren.

## Courts and legal practitioners to consider the rights of the

The new act clarifies that courts and legal practitioners must consider the rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The rights of the child must be considered in deliberations and assessments made in decision-making processes in cases and matters that concern children. Incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child also helps to give visibility to the rights of the child. It is a way to create the foundation for a more child-oriented approach in all public sector activities. It is proposed that the act enter into force on 1 January 2020.

## A regulatory framework and an educational tool

By being incorporated into Swedish law, the Convention as a whole will become more visible. It will be clear that the rights contained in the Convention are interlinked and should be interpreted in relation to each other, and that they are brought together in one and the same act. In this way, the Convention will become an educational tool and a cohesive regulatory framework to relate to.

Incorporation of the Convention also makes clear that other legislation concerning children, such as the provisions of the Children and Parents Code, the Aliens Act, the Education Act, the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments and the Social Services Act, must be interpreted on the basis of the Convention in its entirety and not only on the basis of the provisions transformed into each act.

Incorporation will make the provisions of the Convention applicable as law. With the reservation that all the provisions are not directly applicable in every individual case, they can form the basis for decisions by public authorities in legal and administrative cases. This also applies when the provisions of the Convention are not explicitly clear from other legislation.



Article from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# ICMEO - focus and background

Published 22 December 2017

After being hosted by Germany, Austria and Luxemburg, Sweden is now to run with the ball. The 4th ICMEO conference in Stockholm focuses on change of social norms and stereotypes as ways to strengthen focus on men and boys and their role in gender equality politics and efforts.

ICMEO is organized in cooperation with the newly established Swedish Agency for Gender Equality, which is also responsible for one of the six seminars. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish National Agency for Education, The Public Health Agency of Sweden and MÄN are also organizing one seminar each.

This year's ICMEO theme is "Masculinity and norm critical approaches: Gender equality work with boys and young men". Challenging norms for masculinity promotes gender equality and better opportunities for all, and is especially important in work with youth. How do social norms change, and what are the best ways to engage men and boys for gender equality, and a lifestyle with opportunities which reach beyond stereotypical norms?

Day one, May 15, will have an international perspective, and parts of day two more of a Nordic profile, as Sweden holds the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers during 2018.

## Parallell workshops

1. Norm critical work in schools
2. Promote equality through education
3. Masculinity and caregiving
4. Young men and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

5. Barbershop dealing with masculinity and trafficking of human beings for sexual purposes
6. Nordic work with violence prevention among young men including honour-related violence

## Background

ICMEO was held for the first time in Berlin in 2012, in Vienna in 2014 followed by Luxembourg in 2016. The overall theme for the conference series is the role and responsibility of men in gender equality efforts, and the Luxembourg conference was entitled "Who cares? Who shares?"

Over 300 representatives from 23 European countries participated in Luxembourg. The conference there clearly demonstrated that men do provide care in many ways, but they provide much less unpaid work than women. The participants in 2016 saw these inequalities as resulting from a complex interplay between cultural norms, individual inclinations, power structures, social practices, business requirements, and the political environment.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden supporting Ukraine with medication

Published 14 March 2022

The Government has decided on several mandates that will support Ukraine with medication. The Medical Products Agency and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency have been tasked with coordinating the transport of medication to Ukraine. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been tasked with assessing the possibility of donating medication to Ukraine from its reserves.

“Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the country is in great need of medication. The purpose of these important mandates is to allow Swedish aid to reach those in need in Ukraine, using the special management methods that medication requires,” said Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

## The Medical Products Agency and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency will coordinate transport of medication to Ukraine

The Medical Products Agency has been tasked with assisting the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency to coordinate the request for support within the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism relating to medication, due to the crisis in Ukraine.

The Medical Products Agency will analyse the offers of medication that it receives and investigate how they correspond to requests submitted through



the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The Agency will also assess whether the offered medication meets regulatory requirements.

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency – with expertise provided by the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Medical Products Agency – will arrange transport of medication to Ukraine.

## **Mandate to assess the possibility of donating medication**

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been tasked with conducting an overview of its medical reserves for contingency purposes and assessing the possibility of donating medication to Ukraine in accordance with the requests submitted via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Within the framework of the mandate, the Public Health Agency of Sweden may, after ensuring that national needs have been secured, donate medication to Ukraine. This may include various kinds of antibiotics.

Information regarding which medication has been identified as possible to donate is to be submitted to the Medical Products Agency, based on its role to coordinate requests for medication and with offers to donate medication. Donations are to go through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and the medication is to be submitted to the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency for further transport.



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Sweden appoints an ambassador to work against antimicrobial resistance

Published 18 February 2022

Sweden is establishing a new position – an AMR Ambassador – to further strengthen the important global work against antimicrobial resistance. The position will go to Malin Grape.

When Sweden's Statement of Foreign Policy was presented this week, it included a new Swedish initiative of appointing an AMR Ambassador. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major threat to global health security and claims the lives of more than one million people each year, according to a study recently published in *The Lancet*.

“Antimicrobial resistance has long been an important issue for the Government. It is a serious and growing public health problem in Sweden and around the world. Sweden has a great deal of knowledge and experience in this area, and we are now raising the bar even higher by appointing an ambassador to strengthen Sweden's work internationally,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

AMR – particularly work on antibiotic resistance – is a complex issue that requires cross-sectoral cooperation in areas such as human health, animal health and the environment, and that necessitates both national and international cooperation and long-term commitment. The work involves both preventing infections that may require antibiotics and preventing the spread of resistant bacterial strains.

The new AMR Ambassador Malin Grape is currently head of the Public Health Agency of Sweden's Unit for Antibiotics and Infection Control and

has long worked on these issues, both nationally and internationally. For example, she was responsible for the Public Health Agency's work to build and develop the WHO's Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS). She also worked on the European Joint Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections (JAMRAI) project.

"I am tremendously honoured by this appointment. It feels very important to work on what the WHO considers to be one of the greatest global threats to human health. It's an issue that concerns us all and that we must work with at international level to have an impact," says Ms Grape.

## Background

- Sweden has long worked on AMR both in the EU and internationally. In 2014, Sweden and the UK co-drafted a resolution on AMR in the WHO.
- Sweden and the UK co-founded the Ministerial Alliance of Champions against Antimicrobial Resistance. Other members include the United States, France, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China and South Africa.
- Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren is co-chair of the UN Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, whose aim is to promote the global efforts to reduce antimicrobial resistance.
- Malin Grape holds a MSc in Pharmacy and her background is in research. Her doctoral thesis focused on antibiotic resistance. She has worked on antimicrobial resistance both nationally and internationally.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office

# Change of government, 30 November 2021

Published 30 November 2021

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

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

## Prime Minister's Office

Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister

Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU Affairs

## Ministry of Employment

Eva Nordmark, Minister for Employment and Gender Equality

Johan Danielsson, Minister for Housing and Deputy Minister for Employment

## Ministry of Finance

Mikael Damberg, Minister for Finance

Max Elger, Minister for Financial Markets

Ida Karkiainen, Minister for Public Administration

## Ministry of Defence

Peter Hultqvist, Minister for Defence

## Ministry of Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth, Minister for Infrastructure

Khashayar Farmanbar, Minister for Energy and Digital Development

## Ministry of Justice

Morgan Johansson, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Anders Ygeman, Minister for Integration and Migration

## Ministry of Culture

Jeanette Gustafsdotter, Minister for Culture

## Ministry of the Environment

Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment

## Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

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

Anna-Caren Säterberg, Minister for Rural Affairs

## Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren, Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Social Security

## Ministry of Education and Research

Anna Ekström, Minister for Education

Lina Axelsson Kihlblom, Minister for Schools

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Anna Hallberg, Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Matilda Ernkrans, Minister for International Development Cooperation

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Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Defence

# Sweden's new Government

Published 09 July 2021

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

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

## Prime Minister's Office

### Prime Minister

Stefan Löfven

### Minister for EU Affairs

Hans Dahlgren

## Ministry of Employment

### Minister for Employment

Eva Nordmark

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

Märta Stenevi

## Ministry of Finance

Minister for Finance

Magdalena Andersson

Minister for Public Administration

Lena Micko

Minister for Financial Markets and Deputy Minister for Finance

Åsa Lindhagen

## Ministry of Defence

Minister for Defence

Peter Hultqvist

## Ministry of Infrastructure

Minister for Infrastructure

Tomas Eneroth

Minister for Energy and Digital Development

Anders Ygeman

## Ministry of Justice

Minister for Justice and Migration

Morgan Johansson

Minister for Home Affairs

Mikael Damberg

Ministry of Culture

Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport

Amanda Lind

Ministry of the Environment

Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

Per Bolund

Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation

Ibrahim Baylan

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Minister for Health and Social Affairs

Lena Hallengren

Minister for Social Security

Ardalan Shekarabi

Ministry of Education and Research

Minister for Education

Anna Ekström

Minister for Higher Education and Research

Matilda Ernkrans

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ann Linde

Minister for International Development Cooperation

Per Olsson Fridh

Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs

Anna Hallberg



Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Plan for the event of new outbreaks of COVID-19

Published 08 July 2020

The number of people falling seriously ill with COVID-19 has decreased recently, but according to the Public Health Agency of Sweden there is a risk that new local and regional outbreaks could occur in Sweden. The Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Medical Products Agency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the county administrative boards have therefore been instructed by the Government to produce a plan for the event of new outbreaks of COVID-19.

“The number of people falling seriously ill with COVID-19 continues to decrease, which is good news. At the same time, we must be prepared for the spread of the virus to pick up pace again. It is important that our crisis preparedness is as good as possible to minimise the impact,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

“Our stamina is another critical factor. For this reason, additional coordinated information measures will be necessary in the autumn, and the Government wants to see the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency prepare for this,” says Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been tasked with drawing up various scenarios, both national and regional, of how the spread of the virus could develop in Sweden over the coming year, with a focus on autumn 2020. The different scenarios must contain key assumptions, numbers of infections and death rates. No later than 20 July 2020, the Public Health

Agency of Sweden will inform the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Medical Products Agency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the county administrative boards about the scenarios it has drawn up.

“To deal with any new outbreaks of COVID-19, it is important to take into account the regional perspectives of the county administrative boards. They are the Government’s extended arm in crises around the country and also have knowledge about the specific challenges and conditions prevailing in each county,” says Minister for Public Administration Lena Micko.

On the basis of the scenarios drawn up by the Public Health Agency of Sweden:

- the Public Health Agency of Sweden will assess what measures should be taken within its area of responsibility to quickly detect new outbreaks, curb the spread of the virus and minimise the number of infections and deaths;
- the Medical Products Agency will produce a plan for measures that may be necessary at various stages of an outbreak;
- the National Board of Health and Welfare will assess what measures, both national and regional, may be necessary within its area of responsibility to strengthen health care services and the ability of social services to effectively manage new outbreaks;
- the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency will assess what measures may be necessary within its area of responsibility and produce a plan for how these measures can be implemented (for the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency this is mainly a matter of managing and pursuing coordination between actors involved in critical services, taking responsibility for coordination of crisis communication through targeted information measures and providing support in terms of transport and logistics for protective equipment); and
- the county administrative boards will produce a plan for measures that may be necessary (for example guidance, supervision and restrictions on public gatherings and events), and produce a plan for how these are to be implemented. Halland County Administrative Board is coordinating the assignment.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Medical Products Agency, the Swedish Civil Contingencies

Agency and the county administrative boards must submit their final report by 1 September 2020.





Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Mats Melin to chair COVID-19 inquiry in Sweden

Published 01 July 2020

The Government has today, 30 June 2020, appointed a committee of inquiry to evaluate the measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19. The committee chair will be Mats Melin.

The Government has decided to appoint a committee of inquiry with instructions to evaluate the measures taken by the Government, administrative authorities and municipalities to limit the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 and the effects of its spread. The inquiry will also conduct an international comparison with relevant countries of the various measures that have been taken.

The inquiry will:

- evaluate how the crisis management organisations of the Government Offices, relevant administrative authorities, regions and municipalities have functioned during the pandemic;
- evaluate how the responsibility principle and geographical area responsibility have functioned during the crisis; and
- present proposals of measures that the inquiry's observations give rise to .

The Government has appointed Mats Melin as inquiry chair. He was a Justice and President of the Supreme Administrative Court between 2011 and 2018. Prior to that he was Chief Parliamentary Ombudsman between 2004 and 2011. Mr Melin has participated in several central government inquiries and has also served at the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The inquiry is to submit its final report by 28 February 2022. Two interim reports are to be presented, one on 30 November 2020 and the other on 31 October 2021. The first interim report is to concern the spread of the virus in the health and social care of older people.



Government Offices of Sweden

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

# Government contributing SEK 40 million to WHO's emergency fund

Published 09 March 2020

In light of the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, which is caused by SARS-CoV-2, the Government has decided to contribute SEK 40 million to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Contingency Fund for Emergencies. The aim of the fund is to strengthen the WHO's ability to act rapidly, without negatively affecting its other activities, when, for example, there is an outbreak of communicable diseases.

“Health-related emergencies, such as the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, must be handled jointly. By contributing to the WHO's emergency fund, Sweden is contributing to the global efforts to counter health threats and strengthen public health. This increases security not only internationally, but also here in Sweden,” says Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

“The WHO must now ensure preparedness across the world to reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Our contribution facilitates these efforts and thereby helps to reduce the risk of a pandemic,” says Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government's decision to classify COVID-19 as a threat to public health and a danger to society provides a legal basis for certain disease control efforts that may be necessary if there is extensive spread of disease in Sweden. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is monitoring developments with regard to the outbreak and considers that the risk of the disease

spreading in Sweden is very low. The Agency also considers that health checks at airports are not currently a necessary measure.

The WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies was set up in response to the Ebola outbreak in 2015, when it was observed that many countries had inadequate capacity and preparedness to handle transnational health threats.



**Government Offices of Sweden**

Press release from Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Government Offices

# New state secretaries at the Government Offices

Published 22 January 2019

The Government today appointed 31 state secretaries at the Government Offices. Former state secretaries have been dismissed from their positions. Most of the state secretaries have previously held corresponding positions at the Government Offices.

## Prime Minister's Office

The Government has appointed Nils Vikmång as the Prime Minister's State Secretary. The Government has also appointed Madeleine Harby Samuelsson and Karin Wallensteen as state secretaries to Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The Government has appointed Paula Carvalho Olovsson as State Secretary to Minister for EU Affairs Hans Dahlgren.

The Government has appointed Mats Andersson and Maria Ferm as state secretaries in the coordinating committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

## Ministry of Employment

The Government has appointed Annika Dahl as State Secretary to Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson.

The Government has appointed Karin Strandås as State Secretary to Minister

for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen.

## Ministry of Finance

The Government has appointed Max Elger and Leif Jacobsson as state secretaries to Minister for Finance Magdalena Andersson.

The Government has appointed Ulf Holm and Elin Olsson as state secretaries to Minister for Financial Markets and Housing, Deputy Minister for Finance, Per Bolund.

The Government has appointed Alejandro Firpo as State Secretary to Minister for Public Administration Ardan Shekarabi.

## Ministry of Defence

The Government has appointed Jan-Olof Lind as State Secretary to Minister for Defence Peter Hultqvist.

## Ministry of Infrastructure

The Government has appointed Mattias Landgren as State Secretary to Minister for Infrastructure Tomas Eneroth.

The Government has appointed Sebastian De Toro as State Secretary to Minister for Energy and Digital Development Anders Ygeman.

## Ministry of Justice

The Government has appointed Catharina Espmark and Lars Westbratt as state secretaries to Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson.

The Government has appointed Elisabeth Backteman as State Secretary to Minister for Home Affairs Mikael Damberg.

## Ministry of Culture

The Government has appointed Helene Öberg as State Secretary to Minister for Culture and Democracy, with responsibility for sport, Amanda Lind.

## Ministry of the Environment

The Government has appointed Eva Svedling and Gunvor Ericson as state secretaries to Minister for Environment and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister, Isabella Lövin.

## Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

The Government has appointed Stina Billinger and Emil Högberg as state secretaries to Minister for Enterprise and Innovation Ibrahim Baylan.

The Government has appointed Per Callenberg as State Secretary to Minister for Rural Affairs Jennie Nilsson.

## Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

The Government has appointed Maja Fjaestad as State Secretary to Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren.

## Ministry of Education and Research

The Government has appointed Erik Nilsson as State Secretary to Minister for Education Anna Ekström.

The Government has appointed Malin Cederfeldt Östberg as State Secretary to Minister for Higher Education and Research Matilda Ernkrans.

## Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The Government has appointed Annika Söder as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström.

The Government has appointed Per Olsson Fridh as State Secretary to Minister for International Development Cooperation Peter Eriksson.

The Government has appointed Niklas Johansson as State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, with responsibility for Nordic affairs, Ann Linde.



Government Offices of Sweden

Press release from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Press invitation: International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities

Published 08 May 2018

Media representatives are invited to the International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (ICMEO) in Stockholm, Sweden, on 15–16 May.

Swedish Minister for Gender Equality Lena Hallengren will speak at the Conference. International speakers and delegates will include EU ministers, heads of international bodies, researchers and government agency representatives.

"If we want to achieve real change towards a gender equal society, men have to be engaged, and participate in the process. The conference will explore perspectives on men and equal opportunities in fields such as education, health and violence prevention," says Lena Hallengren, Minister for Gender Equality, Sweden.

ICMEO aims to strengthen the focus on men and boys and their role in gender equality policy and action. How do social norms change and how can we best engage men and boys in gender equality and promote a lifestyle beyond stereotypical norms?

Day two of the conference includes six parallel workshops on boys and young men in relation to education, health and violence prevention. These workshops will be run jointly with partner organisations.

The conference gathers European decision-makers, politicians, experts, academics and practitioners from all sectors of society.



ICMEO was held for the first time in Berlin in 2012. It was held in Vienna in 2014 and in Luxembourg in 2016. The overall theme for the conference series is the role and responsibility of men in gender equality.

Read more about ICMEO: <http://www.government.se/ICMEO2018>

Please note: Media representatives need to register by email no later than 14 May 2018 at: [maud.nordell@regeringskansliet.se](mailto:maud.nordell@regeringskansliet.se)

Accreditation is required. Please bring your press credentials to the conference venue.

### **ICMEO**

15–16 May, Stockholm.

**Conference Venue:** Norra Latin, Stockholm City Conference Centre

**Address:** Drottninggatan 71 B, Stockholm

Please contact Press Officer Karl-Johan Bondesson at Swedish Gender Equality Agency, for questions about the programme.

+46 70 7847497



Government Offices of Sweden

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

# Lena Hallengren new Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality

Published 08 March 2018

Lena Hallengren was today appointed as new Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality.

Ms Hallengren was Deputy Minister for Education, with responsibility for preschools, youth issues and adult learning, in 2002–2006.

She has since held several leading posts in the Riksdag. During the previous electoral period, she was Deputy Chair of the Committee on Health and Welfare and the Swedish Social Democratic Party spokesperson on social policy issues, with responsibilities including medical care, care of the elderly and disability policy.

She has been a member of the Riksdag since 2006 and chair of several committees, most recently the Committee on Education.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Lena Hallengren at the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly

Published 26 May 2021

Speech by the Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren at the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly on 24 May - 1 June 2021. Check against delivery.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear Dr. Tedros.

I would like to thank the DG for his report and to align our statement with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

It has been an overwhelming year for all of us. The pandemic has hit hard all over the world. So many lives have been lost, our health workforce has been stretched to the limit and health systems have been challenged like never before. Economies worldwide have been severely affected, and poverty and lack of access to education has become an even bigger problem than it was before.

Adding to that, there have been rapid increases in risk of violence and reduced access to care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights. This means that we are falling short of our goal to secure universal health coverage and ensuring health and well-being for all. In fact, the world is now at risk of seeing entire generations falling behind – this is something that we must avoid at all costs.

We must act now to end this pandemic and we must commit to taking decisive steps to prevent another global health crisis. It is paramount that we act on the recommendations from the Independent Panel, the IHR Review

Committee and the oversight body of the Health Emergencies Programme. Now, more than ever, we need a strong World Health Organization to coordinate the global health response and to create a fit-for-purpose preparedness system. No one is safe until we are all safe.

Sweden stands prepared to do our part. We commit to un-earmarked financing of WHO, ensuring a strong preparedness system and providing robust data for surveillance. We hold ourselves accountable to the International Health Regulations. We commit to global vaccine solidarity and support to the Covax Facility, of which we are proud to be the world's largest donor in per capita terms. We commit to supporting the Health Emergencies Programme, and we commit to ensure that the WHO is equipped to perform its important work – wherever it is needed.

We must all do what we can to create stronger national and global systems for surveillance, preparedness and response. We need to invest in our own health systems to equip them better for the future. Viruses see no borders. In this pandemic, and in the next one, we must all act to ensure that lives are protected .

The term “health in all policies” is key, and the role of public health and health systems preparedness cannot be overestimated. I look forward to taking great strides forward with all of you in the years to come. Together, we can create a better future for everyone.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Lena Hallengren at the UN High-level Interactive Dialogue on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

Published 07 May 2021

Speech by the Minister for Health and Social Affairs  
Lena Hallengren at the UN High-level Interactive Dialogue on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) on April 29. Check against delivery.

Dear Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very happy to be a part of this important meeting today and to see so many prominent participants taking an interest in the subject. Taking the time to discuss this issue, despite the ongoing pandemic, another threat to public health, shows the commitment that is needed.

Political leadership, from the very top and from different sectors, is crucial in the fight against AMR. The Swedish government has put the effort to combat the silent pandemic of AMR at the core of our agenda.

The importance of using a One Health perspective must be underlined. To defeat AMR, we must involve multiple areas, such as human and animal health, the environment, research, education, trade and international development cooperation. All sectors of the society must be involved, active and held accountable for the spread of AMR.

We are committed to reduce AMR via close cooperation and dialogue with the prescribers. This is thanks to the interdisciplinary organization Strama, which is a Swedish acronym for cooperation against antibiotic resistance,

that has promoted responsible use of antibiotics since it was formed in 1995.

Swedish animal production is characterized by strong animal welfare and good animal health. We were pioneers in phasing out growth-promoting antibiotics in the 1980:s without compromising animal health or yield – This makes us an important role model in the world and we are sharing our experiences in different foras! Tackling AMR in the livestock sector is hard, but possible!

Sweden is proud to be assisting the WHO in their Global AMR Surveillance System GLASS, with the aim to develop it and to assist countries joining the system. Simultaneously as this meeting today, Sweden and the Republic of Korea co-sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) is organising a conference for the surveillance system with the aim to move forward with the further development and implementation of it. The meeting, welcomes representatives from 88 countries from all WHO regions. All participating member states have agreed to work together with WHO to move forward with further development and implementation in all countries of the Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System - GLASS.

In order to secure access to important antibiotics, Sweden is performing a pilot that has been of international interest on testing an alternative payment model for new antibiotics. The idea is that the company is paid a guaranteed pre agreed payment, regardless of sale level, if they guarantee fast access of the antibiotic to the healthcare.

I am proud that our engagement is continued within the One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, where I am very honoured to be a member. The group provides an excellent platform for collaborative action and continued action in our fight against AMR.

Collaboration is not all we need - financial contributions by more countries is also needed to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund in order to support low and middle-income countries to develop and implement action plans on AMR.

The covid 19 pandemic has taught us that by pooling our resources and by making decisive political decisions, it is possible to take great strides in a short period of time. It is possible to produce new medical products and to achieve coordinated research and development to solve the pressing health needs of today.

The same kind of decisive actions are needed to combat AMR. We need to

start today.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren at WHO briefing 23 april

Published 29 April 2020

Dear Director-General, excellencies, my name is Lena Hallengren and I am Minister for Health and Social Affairs in Sweden.

Today, I am here with Johan Carlson, Director-General of the Public Health Agency of Sweden and Olivia Wigzell, Director-General of the National Board of Health and Welfare. Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on Sweden's approach to combating COVID-19.

There has been some interest internationally in our approach to combat the virus. Despite this, I would say that there is no unique Swedish way of dealing with Coronavirus. We do what we think is best based on the development of the pandemic in Sweden, and our national circumstances.

We are very practical and open to implementing any measures that we think would be effective. But in order to understand our approach, it helps to be aware of some fundamental characteristics of Swedish society.

Our welfare state is universal, including the health care system. It is publicly funded and accessible to all. In addressing this situation, we try to build on and utilize established national institutions.

There is a tradition of mutual trust between public authorities and citizens. People trust and follow the recommendations of the authorities to a large extent.

The Swedish Government has from the start of the outbreak applied a 'whole-of-Government' approach. We have presented a range of different measures, both voluntary and legally binding, to limit the spread of COVID-19.



Our measures aim to save lives and slow down the outbreak. We've carried out a number of reforms to strengthen our health care system so that our doctors and nurses can cope with the extraordinary challenge that COVID-19 poses.

In my presentation I would like to highlight five aspects of our approach to Coronavirus.

First, the Government has overall responsibility, but Sweden's public health response is largely based on advice from our expert agencies.

Early in this process, the Government decided to let decision-making be guided by available knowledge and evidence on effectiveness. The responsible national agencies, as well as international organisations and authorities such as the WHO, therefore have an important role in our response.

Second, protecting the elderly and people in other risk groups is a top priority.

The Government has banned visits to care homes for the elderly, where the most vulnerable live. We have also issued strict recommendations for people over the age 70 to avoid physical contact with others. The whole population is recommended to refrain from visiting elderly people.

Sweden faces the same challenge as other countries in keeping the elderly safe and protected, especially in vulnerable settings such as care homes. High numbers of infected people in homes for elderly care is one of our major concerns.

Third, social distancing and incentives to stay at home are key tools in our strategy.

The Government has banned public gatherings of more than 50 people. We have also implemented distance and online education for upper secondary schools and higher education.

Our generous welfare systems make it easy for people to stay at home when sick. However, we have carried out some additional changes to strengthen the incentives for people to stay at home from work when they show even the slightest symptoms. Employees and self-employed people will get paid sick leave from day one, and we have waived the need for a doctor's certificate.

New legislation now authorises the Government to rapidly impose even stricter prohibitions on different kinds of public gatherings, if deemed necessary. It can also force actors to re-distribute medicines according to needs.

Fourth, we aim for strategies that last over time and have public trust. Sweden's efforts consist of a combination of legislative action, strong recommendations and guidelines, awareness raising and voluntary measures.

Measures need to last over time and be acceptable to the public. Also, we are trying to implement the right measures at the right time.

Distance education and working from home have significantly reduced movement in society. So far, it has not been necessary to implement a total lockdown of the whole of Swedish society or implement confinement measures.

Our assessment at this point is that people mostly follow recommendations issued by the Government and the responsible authorities. This makes us convinced that strong legal measures are not the only way of achieving behavioural change.

That being said: we are monitoring the situation closely and are prepared to implement stricter measures whenever necessary. This brings me to the fifth aspect of our work.

(Fifth), flexible adaptation to developments on the ground.

We are continuously assessing the effectiveness of our interventions and let epidemiological developments guide how we combat COVID-19.

One example is the new legislation I previously mentioned. Another is the decision to increase testing capacity. We recently adopted a national strategy to ensure that the number of tests increase.

Since the beginning of the outbreak we have also more than doubled our intensive care capacity and re-allocated resources to expand the number of beds available. At present, we have an excess intensive care capacity of around 20 per cent at national level, even if it is under high pressure.

It is far too early to draw any firm conclusions on the effectiveness of the measures taken in Sweden, but so far, the care needs in Sweden are being met.

We are monitoring ICU capacity on a daily basis in order to have a good overview and be able to regionally coordinate ICU beds according to needs.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the geographical spread of COVID-19 has been mostly in the Stockholm area, where most cases of illness have been confirmed so far.

Right now, it is important that everyone keeps adhering to all the recommendations in order to keep numbers down.

I want to emphasise the need for international cooperation and solidarity between countries.

I would like to express Sweden's strong support and appreciation for the WHO and the important job this organisation is doing.

As one of the largest donors of un-earmarked core funding, I am happy to see that our funding has allowed organisations to act flexibly and quickly when needed.

There is no denying that this pandemic is a tragedy, affecting all countries and all levels of society.

But we can see some other side effects too. Temporarily laid-off employees from different sectors are being rapidly trained in basic healthcare to join the health workforce. Companies have changed their production and started to manufacture personal protective equipment. And since the outbreak started, there has been a major increase in the number of applications to medical courses and programmes in Sweden. I am very glad for this positive development.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the main message for this briefing,

There is no unique Swedish way of dealing with COVID-19. We share the same goals as other countries, we face the same challenges as other countries and we use similar tools as other countries. We do what we think works best for Sweden in our national circumstances. And we are always prepared to implement stricter measures if necessary.

Lastly, I would like to thank the WHO for the opportunity to present Sweden's response to COVID-19.

Thank you.



Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren at the 72nd session of the World Health Assembly

Published 22 May 2019 Updated 22 May 2019

Thank you, Madam/Mr President, for the opportunity to address the Assembly on the important agenda for achieving universal health coverage.

Sweden is a committed proponent of universal health coverage. We are very pleased that this issue has been accorded high priority by the Director-General and at this year's World Health Assembly.

The Swedish health system aims to ensure good health care on equal terms for the entire population, regardless of ability to pay. I am proud to say that we have come a long way towards universal health coverage in Sweden.

The UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September will be an important occasion to advance this work - further action is essential to achieving worldwide universal health coverage.

The 2030 Agenda contains our jointly agreed sustainable development goals and targets. Target 3.8 is about achieving universal health coverage. But this target is not only key to improving the health of populations - it is also crucial to the implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda. Strong health systems, with universal coverage, are fundamental to achieving sustainable societies.

Substantial health gaps still exist today, both between and within countries. This is unacceptable. We must work together to ensure that these gaps are closed. One crucial step is meeting people's health care needs.

Primary health care is a cornerstone of all health systems. Effective primary care increases access to services, reduces avoidable hospital admissions and can also contribute to equitable population health. In Sweden, we are in the process of restructuring our health care system. One of the most important aims of this work is a strengthened primary care structure that provides integrated, people-centered health services, including preventive measures.

One of the most serious and pressing global health threats is antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Achieving universal health coverage is not possible without effective antibiotics. I look forward to the upcoming UN Secretary-General's report on AMR. But we have no time to lose; it is imperative that the IACG recommendations spur concrete action within countries and that the Tripartite agencies and UNEP step up their work on AMR, especially to support countries to implement their national action plans.

Essential to achieving universal health coverage is the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and rights interventions that safeguard women's and girls' rights to their own bodies and lives. The provision of a comprehensive SRHR package of services benefits women, men, adolescents and children alike - and societies at large.

Sweden believes in a strong and effective multilateral system; the global challenges we face today require global solutions and multilateral cooperation. WHO has a very important role to play in this global system and we need to continue to support WHO's reform agenda to create a stronger and more effective organisation, and improve the conditions for providing support to countries.

I would also like to stress the need for effective financing of WHO. Sweden provides unearmarked core funding to the organisation as part of our overall strategy for more effective financing of the UN system. As a dedicated partner of WHO, we look forward to continuing the dialogue to enhance the predictability and flexibility of funding to the organisation.

Finally, let me end by saying that Sweden looks forward to working together to achieving universal health care for all. No one should be left behind.

Thank you.



Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Minister for Health and Social Affairs at WHO Partners Forum 10 April 2019

Published 10 April 2019

Dear Guests,

I would like to welcome you to this second day of the WHO Partner Forum. I would especially like to welcome Dr Tedros and the WHO team and also the leaders for the Global Fund, Gavi, the International Red Cross Federations and IPPF.

As Minister of Health, representing the Swedish government, I am honored to have this first meeting in Stockholm. This is a historic moment for honest discussions on tackling modern global health threats. We need to ensure that WHO is equipped and supported to be able to lead the global response to future health challenges.

In the creation of the Swedish welfare state, gender equality has been a major factor. Universal and affordable access to sexual and reproductive health and rights has contributed to both high fertility rates and high employment rates, and women's participation in the labour market has, in turn, contributed to Sweden's stability and economic growth.

Broad, cross-regional support for gender equality, respect for human rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights is fundamental to sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 can only be fulfilled with full enjoyment of SRHR for all and if women and girls are an active part of development, having full autonomy of their own bodies.

SRHR interventions that safeguards women's and girls' rights to their own bodies and lives, which includes access to safe and legal abortions. This benefits women, adolescents, children and societies at large.

The participation of women and girls is necessary for the functioning of democracy. To achieve this men and boys must be engaged, too.

Around the world, democracy, multilateralism and already agreed commitments on human rights, including SRHR, are under threat and being increasingly questioned. Sweden has a feminist Government and will continue to pursue a feminist foreign policy. We will continue our extensive support to sexual and reproductive health and rights, for all, including LGBTQI persons, at the normative level as well as financially. We are hopeful that we jointly can foster a more constructive dialogue, for the benefit of all our communities and societies and the integrity of a UN system we all are part and proud of.

In 1945 the Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to Sir Alexander Fleming, and colleagues for the discovery of penicillin.

Over time, we have come to rely heavily on antibiotics and we take for granted that we can treat infectious diseases and perform advanced medical procedures with the help of antibiotics.

But indeed, today increasing antimicrobial resistance threatens the foundations of modern medicine and is a true challenge to global health and development.

Since many years, the Swedish Government has been strongly committed to the fight against AMR.

The overall use of antibiotics in Sweden over the past 20 years has decreased substantially, without measurable negative consequences, and levels of antibiotic resistance are low compared with other countries.

Achievements in the AMR area can be attributed to committed work among many different professions and areas in the society according to a One Health approach.

Sweden also support the Global AMR Surveillance System (GLASS) through the WHO Collaborating Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Containment.

I am proud of our hard and persistent work. But there is no room for contentment. AMR is an evolving threat that calls for an evolving response.

AMR is a worldwide challenge. We must work together to be successful. No country can tackle health threats of this kind on its own.

Finally, UN-reform is one of Sweden's top priorities. The creation of an independent and empowered Resident Coordinator and a new generation of UN Country Teams is key for UN's capacity to collectively support countries to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. Sweden welcomes WHO's transformation agenda, it reflects the goals of a reformed United Nations system. Simplifying procedures and increasing transparency, efficiency and accountability is a shared goal for the UN system.

Sweden believes in a strong and efficient multilateral system. This is not only because we are a relatively small country but the global challenges we have in front of us today require global solution and multilateral cooperation.

WHO has a very important role to play in this global system. But WHO needs to reform - as all organization need to do over time.

This meeting is already about the effective financing of the work of WHO. I am proud that Sweden is the leading partner providing un-earmarked flexible support to WHO.

This is part of our overall strategy for more effective financing of the UN systems. And we prefer providing un-ear marked finances but we expect high quality reporting and accountability on the totality of what you do.

Once again very much welcome to Sweden and to I hope and I am sure of – a very productive WHO Partners Forum.





Government Offices of Sweden

Speech from Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

# Speech by Lena Hallengren at ICMEO– International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities in Stockholm

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Dear participants,

Welcome to Stockholm and welcome to the 4th International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities. Last time this conference was held in Luxemburg. Now I am very happy to see you all here in Stockholm. Sweden has a feminist government. In practice, this means a commitment to building a society in which women and men, girls and boys can live their lives equal and to their full potential. We are not there yet. Not in Sweden or in Europe. Women and men, girls and boys, still do not have access to resources and power on equal terms.

The Metoo movement has showed that discrimination against women and girls continues. Governments need to demand zero tolerance, and work hard to ensure that sexual harassment, and abuse, will not happen. I know this conference will give great examples of how boys and men can be active in the change we need to see.

We are moving forward. In Sweden the progress made towards gender equality has contributed to high levels of female employment and growth. It has also contributed to a more equal sharing of parental leave and caring fathers.

It has not happened by itself; it is largely the result of political struggle and decisions, together with hard work from a strong civil society. Therefore, I am so glad to see so many fellow ministers, experts and civil society

representatives here today.

This conference is important. We need to meet and exchange experiences, best practice and ideas. We need to develop this field and keep international focus on this important issue.

As Ministers for Gender Equality in Europe, we play a central role in leading the charge for gender equality and to involve men in the process. We have a joint responsibility to push for better opportunities and a gender equal society.

Men and gender equality is a field prioritized by the Swedish government.

I am convinced that to achieve gender equality we will need the commitment of all men. Men need to be engaged, show solidarity and participate in the struggle and process of change. Gender power relations and traditional gender stereotypes hinder the empowerment of women and girls. Men need to become more involved in sharing unpaid domestic work, in breaking the gender segregation of the labor market, and in preventing violence against women.

I am also convinced that gender equality contributes to a better life for men. Therefore, it is essential to raise matters that concern men and boys, when we make our policies on gender equality.

The theme for the conference is "Challenging norms, Changing ways – Gender equality work with boys and young men".

With this theme, we want to focus on how to change norms and how to work with youth. I believe that is crucial. Starting with boys and young men is key to shaping a better and more equal future. Boys and young men face unique challenges, that we need to consider when we talk about gender equality.

The workshops tomorrow will focus on boys and young men in areas such as education, health and violence prevention.

I am personally committed to all these areas.

When we look at education we know that boys are underachieving in school. Many boys think that being a real guy means being tuff and that you should not seem to be interested in school. This needs to change.

We also know that we will need more men in female dominated professions such as childcare and health care. For this we need to challenge traditional norms that hinder boys and men from that path.

We also need to reach more boys and men when it comes to sexual and reproductive rights and education in that field.

Preventing violence is also very important.

Men need to speak out against gender based violence and it is crucial to

involve men and boys in violence prevention measures.

The Swedish government has decided on a national strategy to combat and prevent men's violence against women. A strong part in our strategy focuses on violence prevention. One example is violence prevention programs in schools, such as "Mentors in violence-prevention". These programs are currently being tested in Sweden and show positive results. Combatting and preventing honor related violence and oppression is also part of this work. The strategy also includes work against trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes.

All these areas, and more, will be discussed during this conference.

I am proud and pleased that several Swedish national agencies and organizations have worked together with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to organize this conference.

First, The Swedish Gender Equality Agency that was established in January this year, has been in charge of finalizing and arranging the whole conference. Furthermore: the Swedish civil society organization MÄN; the National Agency for Education; the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions; and the Public Health Agency, all host different workshops.

We have also cooperated with the Nordic Council of ministers and we have specific Nordic activities in the program.

In all workshops and in all panels, we have experts from European countries. Thank you all for your contributions!

Finally, I would like to say - that this is a conference that focus on gender equality work with boys and young men – and I look forward to also hear the contributions from boys and young men during the conference.

I am glad to soon share the scene with Shanga Aziz, co-founder of Locker Room Talk, an organization that works with boys and sports to change attitudes and fight sexism. I think that shows a great example of the work we want to highlight here today.

I am looking forward to these two days as I am sure you are too. So, once again welcome to you all.