



Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
Division for Social Services and Disability Policy

National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee

Table of Contents

1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 National Coordinator for the Child Guarantee and contacts	6
1.3 Core recommendations (area 4)	6
1.4 Objective and aim of the national action plan	6
1.5 Survey of effective access to key social services by area	7
1.5.1 Summary	7
1.5.2 Early childhood education and care, inclusive education and school-based activities, and a healthy meal each school day, (area 7)	8
1.5.3 With a view to guaranteeing effective and free access to quality healthcare for children in need, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 8)	29
1.5.4 With a view to guaranteeing effective access to sufficient and healthy nutrition for children in need, including through the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 9)	35
1.5.5 With a view to guaranteeing effective access to adequate housing for children in need, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 10)	40
1.6 Lack of access to key social services	48
1.6.1 Children in need according to the EU Recommendation	48
1.6.2 Children in need in the Swedish context	48
1.6.3 Gender equality perspective affects the conditions in which the child grows up	49
1.6.4 Some general factors that may make effective access more difficult	49

1.6.5 Early childhood education and care, inclusive education and school-based activities, a healthy meal each school day – area 7	51
1.6.6 Healthcare – area 8.....	53
1.6.7 Healthy nutrition – area 9	54
1.6.8 Adequate housing – area 10.....	55
1.7 Children in need in Sweden	55
1.7.1 Introduction	55
1.7.2 Children who are financially disadvantaged	55
1.7.3 Children living in inadequate housing, insecure housing conditions or homelessness.....	56
1.7.4 Children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.....	57
1.7.5 Children with disabilities	57
1.7.6 Children placed in care outside their own home	58
1.8 Children’s participation.....	58
1.9 Communication of the National Action Plan	60
1.10 Implementation framework	60
1.11 Quantitative and qualitative targets.....	61
1.12 Measures	62
1.13 EU funding.....	62
Annex 1 Data collection, monitoring and evaluation	63
Annex 2 Enabling framework for targets and monitoring	67

1.1 Introduction

A European and global perspective

Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee (hereinafter referred to as the “Child Guarantee”) aims to prevent and combat social exclusion. This is to be done by supporting Member States in their efforts to guarantee access to key services (hereinafter referred to as “key social services”) of high quality for children in need. According to the Recommendation, children in need are persons under the age of 18 years who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Within the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights, an action plan has been developed which includes the target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million by 2030, of which at least 5 million should be children. Sweden’s preliminary national target for social inclusion is to reduce the number of women and men, girls and boys at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2030 by at least 15,000 in relation to

the 2019 level. Of these, at least one third should be children. The Child Guarantee emphasises that there is a strong link between social exclusion of children and the lack of access to key social services. Reducing the proportion of children at risk of poverty

or social exclusion will also improve access to key social services in Sweden as well as in other Member States. The Recommendation also complements the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, which includes the thematic area socioeconomic inclusion, health and education.

The Child Guarantee can also be seen in a global perspective. In Agenda 2030, the world's governments commit themselves to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment (UN, 2015).

National strategies and targets

National strategies and targets are important tools in the work of the Government. Below some of these with a clear connection to the Child Guarantee are described in brief.

Public health policy, for example, aims to achieve more equitable living conditions and thus opportunities for health equality. The overarching objective of public health policy is to create the conditions for good and equitable health among the entire population, and to end avoidable health inequalities within a generation.

Sweden's public health policy target areas are:

- 1 Conditions in early life
- 2 Knowledge, skills and education
- 3 Work, working conditions and the work environment
- 4 Income and livelihood opportunities
- 5 Accommodation and surroundings
- 6 Living conditions
- 7 Control, influence and participation
- 8 Equitable and health-promoting health and social care

The Government has recently adopted a new strategy for systematic monitoring of disability policy to apply during the period 2021-2031. The aim of the strategy is to follow up disability policy in relation to the national objective. Disability policy is to be followed up by a number of named government agencies and the Swedish Agency for Participation is to provide these government agencies with support in this work. Since 1 January 2020, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been law in Sweden.

On 1 December 2010, the Riksdag approved the national strategy for strengthening the rights of the child in Sweden proposed by the Government in the bill “Strategy for strengthening the rights of the child (Govt Bill 2009/10:232). This strategy states, *inter alia*, that decision-makers and relevant professional groups must be knowledgeable about the rights of the child and put this knowledge into practice in relevant activities and that current knowledge about children’s living conditions

will form the basis of decisions and priorities affecting children.

The Government has also presented a long-term strategy for reducing and addressing the problem of segregation. It sets out the long-term orientation for this work for the period 2018–2028. The overall objective of the strategy is reduced segregation, equal conditions for the child’s upbringing and living conditions, and good chances in life for all. There is also a current strategy for strengthening support for parental support, which was decided in 2018. It aims to promote the health and development of children.

Parental support is defined in the strategy as various contributions, activities and actions aimed at parents that strengthen parenting skills and the relationship between parents and children. This can include giving parents knowledge about the rights of the child, and children’s health and development, as well as strengthening parents’ relationships with each other or their social networks. The Government has been working for the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTQI people since 2014 based on a strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. At the beginning of 2021, the Government also decided on an action plan for the equal rights and

opportunities of LGBTQI people to further strengthen work in this area.

The goal of youth policy is that all young people should have good living conditions, the power to shape their lives, and be able to influence social development. Good living conditions means, *inter alia*, that young people should have access to meaningful recreational activities.

National Action Plan for the implementation of the Child Guarantee

Member States are to draw up a national action plan for the implementation of the Council Recommendation on a Child Guarantee which is to apply for a ten-year period and be submitted to the European Commission by 15 March 2022. Thereafter, Member States are required to report on progress to the Commission every two years. The Government is responsible for regular monitoring of the action plan. The Recommendation states that it should be implemented through national action plans that are adapted to national, regional and local circumstances.

Annex 2 sets out an enabling framework for the targets set in the action plan and their monitoring with a view to following up the targets set in this action plan. The framework contains policy measures and indicators. The framework may come to include milestones during its implementation period, and may be expanded to incorporate clear links to the implementation framework. In addition, Annex 1 sets out a mapping of the existing sources of statistics, which will be the starting point for following up the national action plan. Annex 3 presents current measures in the various areas. The indicators and statistics are set out in Annex 4.

Some definitions from the Child Guarantee

In this action plan, **children in need** means persons under the age of 18 years who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (see point 3 'Definitions' in the Child Guarantee). In Sweden, different age limits apply when it comes to working with children and young people. These are reported when relevant.

In this action plan, the term **parents** covers different types of family constellations.

Economic disadvantage refers to living in a household with a

low absolute income (e.g., low income standard) or low relative income (low economic standard) or deprived of material resources (material deprivation). See also Statistics Sweden's descriptions [Att mäta fattigdom \(scb.se\)](#) (Measuring poverty).

In this action plan, **socioeconomic disadvantage** or socioeconomic challenges are defined as living in an economically vulnerable household in combination with factors related to education, position on the labour market or housing situation.

At risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) means, according to the EU agreed definition, persons living at risk of poverty, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. See further the description by Eurostat [Glossary: At risk of poverty or social exclusion \(AROPE\) - Statistics Explained \(europa.eu\)](#).

According to the definition agreed within the EU, **at risk of poverty** (AROP) refers to the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 per cent of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.

In the action plan, **adequate housing** means a dwelling that meets the relevant national technical standards, is in reasonable condition, provides reasonable thermal comfort and is accessible at an affordable price.

1.2 National Coordinator for the Child Guarantee and contacts

The Swedish coordinator for the Child Guarantee is Håkan Nyman, senior advisor at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (the Analysis function at the Ministry's Coordination Secretariat). The coordinator of the working group for the development of the action plan is Annika Remaeus, Deputy Director and Deputy Coordinator; and Marit Birk, First Secretary, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Division for Social Services and Disability Policy.

1.3 Core recommendations (area 4)

Member States are recommended to:

- (a) guarantee children in need effective and free access to high quality

early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, at least one healthy meal each school day and healthcare; and

(b) guarantee children in need effective access to healthy nutrition and adequate housing.

1.4 Objective and aim of the national action plan

The objective of the Child Guarantee is to prevent and combat social exclusion by supporting EU Member States' in their efforts to guarantee the access of children in need to a set of key social services of high quality.

The aim of this action plan is to implement the Child Guarantee, so that all children in need in Sweden have effective access to the set of key social services covered by the Child Guarantee.

1.5 Identification of effective access to key social services by area

1.5.1 Summary

Swedish legislation provides the basis for all children to have effective access to the key social services referred to in the Child Guarantee. Most of these services are also provided free of charge.

There are, however, groups of children who do not have or risk not having access to social services.

Besides key social services, there is Sweden's economic family policy which strengthens the economy of households with children and reduces the risk of economic disadvantage.

The rights of the child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have been part of Swedish law since 1 January 2020. The right to effective and free access to high quality education and a healthy meal each school day is set out in Sweden's Education Act (2010:800). The right to free access to early childhood education (ages 3-5), and subsidised childcare is set out in Sweden's Education Act. The right to effective health care, which for children is generally free of charge, is set out in the Health and Medical Services Act (2017:30), abbreviated as 'HSL'. The right to effective and free dental care is set out in the Dental Care Act

(1985:125). According to the Social Services Act (2001:453), abbreviated as 'SoL', children and their families have the right to support and assistance up to an adequate standing of living, including, if necessary, financial assistance for housing and food among other things. Some disabled children may also be entitled to contributions under the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (1993:387), abbreviated as 'LSS'.

Besides key social services, there is Sweden's economic family policy (including the child benefit, parental insurance, maintenance support and the housing allowance) which strengthens the economy of households with children and reduces the risk of economic disadvantage. Especially for single women with more than one child. Reducing the risk of economic disadvantage is important in reducing the proportion of children who may be at risk of being restricted in their access to key social services, for example in terms of adequate housing.

1.5.2 Early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, one healthy meal each school day, (area 7)

A Identify and address financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education, and school-based activities

Regulatory framework: In Sweden, all children must be offered early childhood education (preschool) from the age of one year to the extent needed. From the age of 3, all children are entitled to free preschool of at least 525 hours per year. Educational care is offered as an alternative to preschool. Children who are resident in Sweden normally have compulsory school from the autumn term of the year in which the child turns six. School-age educare (the Swedish education system's name for out-of-school centres) must be offered to pupils to the extent needed taking into account the work or studies of their parents or guardians. School-age educare must also be offered to pupils who, for physical, psychological or other reasons, need the activity as a special needs support in their development.

Progress report: Around 4 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 do not attend preschool or educational care. Children living in socially vulnerable areas are registered in school-age educare to a lesser degree than children who do not live in such areas.

Children who are placed in care outside their own home or are staying in residential homes experience at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of education or training.

Regulatory framework and progress report

All children in Sweden aged 3–5 are entitled to at least 525 hours of free preschool per year, termed ‘universal early childhood education’. Educational care is offered as an alternative to preschool. From the age of one year, children are to be offered a place in a preschool to the extent needed taking into account the work or studies of their parents, or if the child otherwise has a need of their own as a result of the family's situation. A need of their own could be for example that the child's parents are on long-term sick leave (Chapter 8, Sections 3–7, 12, 16 and 20 of , Education Act).

In autumn 2020, more than 517 000 children aged 1–5 were admitted to preschool, which corresponds to just over 85 per cent of all children in Sweden in this age group. In the autumn of 2019, approximately 22 000 (approximately 6 per cent) of children aged 3–5 were not participating in early childhood education. Some of these, around 6 200 children were in educational care instead, but some 15,800 children aged between 3 and 5 were not participating in any of these forms of activity. This corresponds to approximately 4 per cent of all children in the age group.

Children resident in Sweden attend compulsory school. This means that children must attend school and participate in the activities provided for them there. The child must have a valid reason for not attending school, such as illness or leave granted by the school. The right to an education means that children who are subject to the obligation to attend compulsory school are entitled to free education. There are children who are not subject to the obligation to attend compulsory school, but who are nevertheless entitled to an education. These include children who are asylum seekers or children living in Sweden *not* pursuant to an official decision or statute. In some cases, a pupil in primary, secondary or special school are entitled to educational activities even after compulsory school has ended for the day. (Chapter 2, Art. 18 of the Instrument of Government of Sweden and Chapter 7, Sections 2–7, 15 and 17, Chapter 29, Section 2, second paragraph, Education Act).

The out-of-school centre is intended to stimulate pupils' development and learning, and to offer pupils meaningful leisure time. Children whose parents or guardians do not work or study are not entitled to a place in an out-of-school centre. The out-of-school centre is a voluntary activity which forms part of the school system, and which complements the education provided by the types of compulsory schools. Children living in areas with socioeconomic challenges are enrolled to a lesser extent in school-age educare than children who do not live in such areas (*Stärkt kvalitet och likvärdighet i fritidshem och pedagogisk omsorg, SOU 2020:34*) [Better quality and equivalence in school-age educare and educational care].

As a general rule, schools and preschools are to be free of charge, but there are exceptions. For example, there may be occasional elements that involve a negligible cost to pupils. In the case of preschools and school-age educare, a reasonable fee may be charged. Children aged 3–5 years are covered by universal early childhood education and a fee may only be charged for the portion exceeding 525 hours per year (Chapter 10, Section 10 and others, and Chapter 8, Sections 16 and 20, Education Act).

Education is the highest priority contribution for minors since its aim is to combat isolation and it is an important protective factor against criminality.

The Swedish Prison and Probation Service may contribute to

young people in detention being provided with an education, but the responsibility for their schooling rests with the child's home municipality.

Measures

Children and young people placed in care often drop out of school. Children and young people who need care outside their own home may be received into foster care, shelters, assisted living, or homes for care or residence (HVB) following a decision by the social welfare committee. The SAMS methodological support, which has been developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, and the National Board of Health and Welfare, aims to provide support for collaboration between the school and Social Services for continuity in the schooling of children and young people placed in care, and better attachment to school. Similar support for collaboration between the school and the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (SiSam). The municipal model for working with these matters *Skolfam* aims to improve school results among children in foster care. The National Board of Health and Welfare has an ongoing long-term remit to strengthen the conditions for children and young people to have access to good healthcare, dental care and continuity in their schooling. In the context of the Government's remit to the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Swedish National Agency for Education on early and coordinated interventions for children and young people (TSI), work is under way, for example, to assure children's schooling.

On 3 March 2022, the Government adopted *Förskola för fler barn* (Preschool for more children) (Govt Bill 2021/22:132) In this Bill, the Government submitted proposals aimed at increasing participation in early childhood education, which has positive effects on the child's development and learning as well as the community.

Around 6 000 children annually accompany a parent or guardian to sheltered housing. In its 2022 budget bill (Govt Bill 2021/22:1 Expenditure area 9), the Government announced the strengthening of the child's rights in sheltered housing, with a view to assuring the child's right to effective education.

B Take measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving, to re-

engage children who are at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of education or training

Regulatory framework: Each municipality has an *aktivitetsansvar* (activity responsibility) which is a responsibility to provide activities for young people in the municipality who are under 20 years of age who have not attended or have dropped out of upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with special needs, or equivalent education.

Progress report: In Sweden there are about 18 000 young people between 15 and 19 not in employment, education or training (NEET category).

Measures: On 24 February 2022, the Government adopted the Bill *Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola* (More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school) (Govt Bill 2021/22:111) Its proposals aim to strengthen the school's compensatory task and to increase the number of pupils eligible for entry to the national upper secondary school programmes. Based on its role as a support function for national actors who are contributing to young people in the NEET category establishing themselves in working life and civic life, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society is to utilise work done at the local and national levels and share good examples.

Regulatory framework and progress report

During the year, each home municipality is required to stay informed about the employment rate of young people in the municipality who are under 20 years old, are not in upper secondary education, do not have an upper secondary qualification, do not have an upper secondary school certificate, and have not completed education equivalent to upper secondary school or upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities with pass grades.

The municipality is required to offer such young people appropriate individual measures (which is termed the municipality's activity responsibility). The main aim of these measures is to motivate these young people to re-engage with education (Chapter 29, Section 9, Education Act).

Both the proportion of pupils leaving grade 9 qualified for entry to upper secondary school and the proportion who graduate with an upper secondary qualification within four years of starting a programme of study vary according to sex, country of birth and the level of education of their parents. A slightly higher proportion of

girls than boys in grade 9 attain entry to upper secondary school and a higher proportion of girls than boys graduate within four years. Among pupils whose parents have tertiary level education, the proportion of those who leave grade 9 qualified for entry to upper secondary level was 93 per cent in 2020. The corresponding figures among those whose parents attained only upper secondary or secondary education were 81 and 51 per cent, respectively. The proportion who graduate from upper secondary school within four years is more than double among pupils whose parents have tertiary level education (81 per cent) compared to those whose parents have only secondary level education (37 per cent). Among pupils born in Sweden, 90 per cent leave grade 9 qualified for entry to upper secondary school and 78 per cent graduate from upper secondary school within four years of starting a programme of study. The corresponding figures for pupils born outside Europe are 58 and 36 per cent, respectively.

In Sweden there are about 18 000 young people between 15 and 19 in the NEET category (Statistics Sweden). The group is heterogeneous, but a significant proportion are in need of cross-sectoral efforts to establish themselves in work or study.

Measures

In order to improve opportunities for young people in the NEET category to establish themselves in working life and civic life, the Government developed a strategy in 2015 that was in force until 2018. During the period 2016–2018, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) was also responsible for distributing government grants to municipalities for activities involving various social actors, such as municipalities, county councils, government agencies, commerce and industry and civil society organisations working together to facilitate the establishment of young people in the NEET category in working life and civic life. In addition, MUCF was commissioned in 2018 to support actors working with young people in the NEET category. In May 2020, MUCF together with several other government agencies were tasked by the Government to develop coordinated support for young people in the NEET category. A new task was added into MUCF's appropriations directions to support those actors, primarily municipalities, who work in activities that contribute to the establishment of young people in working life and civic life who are currently in the NEET

category. MUCF is to continue to coordinate the national support function and, as part of this task, to gather knowledge and experiences from the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Delegation Against Segregation, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, and the Swedish National Agency for Education.

Young people in the NEET category are one of the indicators chosen by the Public Health Agency of Sweden to measure public health and its foundations. MUCF also provides statistics on young people who are neither working nor studying to learn more about this group and provide input to those who are working to support young people in finding work or re-engaging with education. These statistics are unique in that they are based on register data for the entire population aged 16 to 29. The statistics are taken from different registers, such as Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency.

The Government has signed an agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) on part-financing of SALAR's project *Uppdrag fullföljd utbildning* (Mission: completed education). The project aims to increase the proportion of young people completing upper secondary education.

On 24 February 2022, the Government adopted the Bill *Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola* (More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school) (Govt Bill 2021/22:111) The proposals in this Bill aim to strengthen the compensatory task of compulsory school, and to increase the number of pupils eligible for entry to the national upper secondary school programmes.

C Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps

Regulatory framework: Children and pupils in all types of schools and in school-age educare are to be given the guidance and stimulation they need in their learning and personal development so that they can develop to the extent possible, given their capacities, in accordance with the goals of the education provided. Pupils who need them are to get additional adjustments. If these adjustments are not sufficient, the pupil's need for special

support must be investigated. If this investigation shows that the pupil needs special support, the pupil is to be given this support and an action plan must be drawn up. Pupils who have difficulty in attaining the various learning outcomes or learning outcome levels due to a disability are to be given support which has the aim of addressing to the extent possible the consequences of their disability.

Progress report: Some disabled pupils may be at risk of not receiving the support they need from their school in order to have the same opportunities as other pupils.

Measures: On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Elevehälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning* (Pupil health and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities). One of the aims of the proposals is to clarify the role of the School Health Service. On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Resursskolor och tilläggsbelopp för särskilt stöd* (Learning disabilities special schools and additional funds for special support). One of the aims of the proposals is to clarify the regulatory framework for municipal learning disabilities special schools in compulsory school and compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities. On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero* (A safe and supportive study environment in schools). The proposals aim to increase safety and security in schools to create a supportive environment for study and, by extension, to improve learning outcomes. The Government has also adopted a number of additional tasks assigned to the Swedish National Agency for Education in the area.

Regulatory framework and progress report

All children and pupils in all types of schools and in school-age educare are to be given the guidance and stimulation they need in their learning and personal development so that they can develop to the extent possible, given their capacities, in accordance with the learning outcomes of the education provided. Pupils who have difficulty in attaining the various learning outcomes or learning outcome levels due to a disability are to be given support which has the aim of addressing to the extent possible the consequences of

their disability; while pupils who easily achieve the minimum learning outcomes are to be given the guidance and stimulation they need to be able to achieve more (Chapter 3, Section 2, Education Act). All pupils, including recently arrived immigrant pupils, are to have access to additional adjustments and special support if needed. In addition to this, there are provisions that are specifically targeted towards supporting the education of recently arrived pupils.

If the school identifies a risk that a pupil will not attain the minimum learning outcomes, the pupil is to be given support as a matter of urgency in the form of additional adjustments within the context of normal teaching (Chapter 3, Section 5, Education Act).

In early childhood education and educational care, children who need special support in their development due to physical, mental or other reasons are to be given the support or care that their special needs demand. If a child is identified as in need of special support, the director of the preschool is to ensure that the child gets this support (Chapter 8, Section 9 and Chapter 25, Section 2, Education Act).

The education provided is to take into account the different needs of children and pupils. Children and pupils must be given support and stimulation so that they can develop to the extent possible. One ambition is to compensate for differences in the children's and pupils' conditions for benefiting from the education (Chapter 1, Section 4, Education Act).

Pupils with disabilities constitute a very heterogeneous group and their disabilities do not necessarily entail difficulties in school. However, some pupils with disabilities may run a greater risk of failing in school than other pupils. For example, the school might not make adequate adjustments in relation to a pupil's disability, or the school staff may lack adequate knowledge and skills (Swedish Agency for Participation, 2017). It is not possible to assess how well the Swedish school system functions for pupils with disabilities at the national level, as disability data are not collected in school statistics. It is therefore not possible to evaluate whether the efforts made in the school system are having the intended effect for pupils with disabilities. Information on the school situation of pupils with a range of disabilities is mainly available in the form of qualitative reports or studies of smaller groups of pupils with disabilities.

Pupils with disabilities find school a less enjoyable experience and are very much more exposed to bullying, for example, than other pupils. This applies in particular to children with moderate or severe disabilities and children with neurodevelopmental diagnoses (Barnpanelsrapport 2019, National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools). Pupils with disabilities are less likely to take care of their health, more often have mental health problems, and more stress-related symptoms in their daily lives compared to pupils without disabilities (*Skolbarns hälsvanor i Sverige 2017/18* [Schoolchildren's health habits in Sweden 2017/18] Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2018).

Measures

On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted several proposals referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration. One of these entitled *Elevhälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning* (School Health Service and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities) includes proposals that the School Health Service's remit should be clarified. Another entitled *Resursskolor och tilläggsbelopp för särskilt stöd* (Special schools and supplementary funding for special support) proposes changes in the Education Act that clarify the regulatory framework for municipal special schools in compulsory school and compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities. As is already the case for individual school authorities, it was proposed that the Education Act should specify that a municipality may limit education at certain school units to pupils in need of special support. Another of the proposals referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero* (A safe and supportive study environment in schools), included a proposal on efforts to prevent an unsafe or unsupportive study environment.

In 2015, the Government assigned the Swedish National Agency for Education the responsibility for arranging in-service training in special needs education for compulsory school teachers and for equivalent in-service training to be provided at special residential homes for young people and Sami School. Since 2018, the Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (SPSM) have been jointly responsible for the initiative 'Special needs education for learning'. This task has since been extended to include more types of schools in the target

groups. Early childhood education including the preschool and preschool class (preparatory grade), and upper secondary school have been covered by this in-service training initiative since autumn 2021.

In their 2022 appropriations directions, the Swedish National Agency for Education together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools have been tasked with producing support material for investigating a pupil's need for special support. In addition, the Swedish National Agency for Education together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools must arrange skills development courses for staff who work with pupils studying the curriculum of either compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, or upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. The Swedish National Agency for Education, together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools and the Swedish Institute for Educational Research, are also tasked with compiling knowledge summaries in the areas of pupil health and support that can contribute to improving options for school authorities, school principals and teachers to choose effective interventions aimed at assisting pupils in achieving the learning outcomes.

D Adapt facilities and educational materials of early childhood education and care and of educational establishments and provide the most appropriate response to the specific needs of children with special educational needs and of children with disabilities, using inclusive teaching and learning methods; for this purpose ensure that qualified teachers and other professionals are available, such as psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitators, social workers or teaching assistants.

Regulatory framework: Children with disabilities are entitled to appropriate support in early childhood education and in schools. There must be a School Health Service for each preschool class, compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, Sami School, special school, upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. The School Health Service is to include medical, mental health, psychosocial and special needs education interventions.

Progress report: Some pupils with disabilities risk not getting the support from their school that they need to address the consequences of their disability.

Measures: On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Elevhälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning* (Pupil health and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities). Among other things, it aims to ensure that there is access to special needs educators or special needs teachers for the School Health Service's special needs education interventions. On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero* (A safe and supportive study environment in schools). Among other things, its proposals aim to prevent the development of an unsafe or unsupportive study environment in schools.

Regulatory framework and progress report

In early childhood education and educational care, children who need special support in their development due to physical, mental or other reasons are to be given the support or care that their special needs demand (Chapter 8, Section 9, Education Act).

There is to be a School Health Service for pupils in schools. The first priority of the School Health Service is to prevent ill-health and promote health. The pupils' progress towards the learning outcomes of their education must be supported. There must be access to staff with the skills needed to satisfy the pupils' needs for special needs education interventions. In addition to special needs education interventions, the School Health Service is to encompass medical, mental health and psychosocial interventions. For the provision of medical, mental health and psychosocial interventions, schools are to have access to school doctors, school nurses, school psychologists and school welfare officers (Chapter 2, Section 25, Education Act).

Pupils who have difficulty in attaining various learning outcomes or learning outcome levels due to a disability are to be given support which has the aim of addressing to the extent possible the consequences of their disability. This also applies to pupils who do not attain the minimum learning outcomes or achieve pass grades. The legislative history of these provisions in the Education Act emphasise that the school authority cannot be satisfied with the pupil attaining the lowest acceptable learning outcome level. The right to attain the learning outcomes of the education provided to the extent possible applies to all pupils (Chapter 1, Section 4 and Chapter 3, Section 2, Education Act; Govt Bill 2009/10:165 p 662, Govt Bill 2013/14:148 pp 27–29).

Some children with deafness, hearing impairment, or children who are deaf-blind or have profound speech defects can be admitted to a special school. Special school provides a ten-year education to give pupils more time for their learning. For pupils with an intellectual disability and assessed as not being able to attain the learning outcomes in compulsory school, there is compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities available. A decision on admission to special school or compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities must be preceded by an investigation involving an educational, psychological, medical and social assessment. Upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities targets pupils with intellectual disabilities who are not assessed to be in a position to attain the learning outcomes of upper secondary school.

Measures

On 17 February 2022, the Government adopted the proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Elevhälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning* (School Health Service and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities), in which the Government proposes, inter alia, that there should be access to a special needs educator or special needs teacher for the School Health Service's special needs education interventions. Another of the proposals referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero* (A safe and supportive study environment in schools) adopted on 17 February 2022 included a proposal on efforts to prevent an unsafe or unsupportive study environment.

The Swedish National Agency for Education distributes government grants for the appointment of teacher assistants (Ordinance [2019:551] on government grants for the appointment of teacher assistants), with the aim of giving teachers greater opportunities to focus on teaching and tasks associated with teaching.

The Swedish National Agency for Education was commissioned by the Government to produce support material and web-based support for how teacher assistants, social workers, and other occupational groups can relieve teachers in matters related to a safe and secure study environment, for example.

The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools is responsible for producing and adapting teaching and learning materials and providing information about available teaching and learning materials. The Agency also promotes access to available teaching and learning materials through support for producers of teaching and learning materials.

E Put in place measures to support inclusive education and avoid segregated classes in early childhood education and care establishments and in educational establishments; this may also include giving priority to, or, when needed, early access for, children in need.

Regulatory framework: All children and pupils have the right to an inclusive education. Children may in some cases be given priority to early childhood education. Early childhood education and schools must also strive to compensate for disadvantage and thus create the conditions for children and pupils to benefit from the education provided.

Progress report: Segregation has a negative impact on equality and risks diminishing the school system's capacity to compensate for pupils' differing circumstances and conditions that affect their capacity to benefit from the education provided.

Measures: On 3 March 2022, the Government adopted *Förskola för fler barn* (Preschool for more children) (Govt Bill 2021/22:132) The proposals in the Bill aim to increase the proportion of children in early childhood education. On 24 February 2022, the Government adopted the Bill *Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola* (More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school) (Govt Bill 2021/22:111) The proposals in this Bill aim to strengthen the school's compensatory task, and to increase the number of pupils eligible for entry to the national upper secondary school programmes. The Government adopted proposals referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration entitled *En mer likvärdig skola – minskad segregation och förbättrad resurstilldelning* (Greater equality between schools – less segregation and better distribution of resources) on 17 February 2022 and *Ökad likvärdighet för skolhuvudmän* (Greater equivalence for school authorities) on 10 February 2022.

Regulatory framework and progress report

All persons, irrespective of their geographical domicile and social and economic circumstances, are to have equal access to an education in the school system (Chapter 1, Section 8, Education Act). The education provided in the school system must be equivalent within each type of school regardless of where it is provided in the country (Chapter 1, Section 9, Education Act).

The curricula for different types of schools stipulate that the differing conditions and needs of children and pupils are to be taken into account. The education provided should be adapted to all children and pupils. This means that the education cannot be designed in the same way everywhere and that the resources of preschools or schools should therefore not be distributed equally. Early childhood education is a social and cultural venue intended to promote the

child's understanding of the value of diversity. The same applies to the school, which has a responsibility to strengthen the child's capacity to understand the conditions and values of others and put themselves in their place (see for example Ordinance [SKOLFS 2018:50] on the early childhood education curriculum, and Ordinance [SKOLFS 2010:37] on the curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare).

Children who for physical, mental or other reasons need preschool are to be offered a preschool place as a matter of urgency (Chapter 8, Section 14, Education Act).

In the last twenty years, the combinations of pupils in schools have become increasingly divided according to the socioeconomic background of the pupils. In many parts of the country, this means less opportunities for pupils with different backgrounds to encounter each other in school today. Segregation in schools has a negative impact on equality and risks diminishing the school system's capacity to compensate for pupils' differing circumstances and conditions that affect their capacity to benefit from the education provided, which hits pupils living in less favourable circumstances hardest.

School is of great importance to children's and young people's development and should be a safe environment for all pupils to be in. Among other things, it is reported that young LGBTIQ people are subjected to discrimination, violence and harassment, and that school is social institution where young people are most victimised.

Measures

On 3 March 2022, the Government adopted *Förskola för fler barn* (Preschool for more children) (Govt Bill 2021/22:132) in which the Government makes proposals intended to increase participation in early childhood education. On 24 February 2022, the Government adopted the Bill *Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola* (More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school) (Govt Bill 2021/22:111) In this Bill, the Government submitted proposals intended to strengthen the compensatory task of the school, and to increase the number of pupils eligible for entry to the national upper secondary school programmes. The report *En mer likvärdig skola – minskad skolsegregation och förbättrad resurstilldelning*

(SOU 2020:28) (Greater equality between schools – less segregation in schools and better distribution of resources) resulted in two proposals being referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration: Greater equality between schools – less segregation and better distribution of resources adopted on 17 February 2022, and Greater equivalence for school authorities, adopted on 10 February 2022. If this is achieved, the school authority will have to take the measures that are necessary and feasible to maintain a less segregated school population.

F Provide at least one healthy meal each school day

Regulatory framework: In compulsory school and equivalent types of schools, pupils are to be offered nutritious meals free of charge (pursuant to *inter alia* Chapter 10, Section 10, Education Act).

Progress report: Sweden complies with this recommendation in respect of compulsory school and equivalent types of schools. In the case of upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, there is no obligation for the school to provide school meals. Most municipalities and schools, however, also serve or provide free school meals for upper secondary school pupils.

Regulatory framework and progress report

Pupils in compulsory school and equivalent types of schools, are to be offered nutritious meals at school free of charge (Chapter 10, Section 10, Education Act). In upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, there is no obligation today for the school to provide school meals.

In upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, the pupil's home municipality determines whether or not the pupil is to be offered free school meals.

G Ensure provision of educational materials, including digital educational tools, books, uniforms or any required clothing, where applicable

Regulatory framework: All children and pupils in all types of schools and in school-age educare should be given the guidance and stimulation they need in their learning and personal development. Pupils at school should have free access to books and other learning tools needed for a modern education.

Progress report: There is a lack of teaching and learning materials in certain subjects and for certain pupil groups.

Measures: In 2019, the Government appointed an inquiry on strengthening school libraries and teaching and learning materials. The commission of inquiry submitted its report on its remit entitled *Läromedelsutredningen – böckernas betydelse och elevernas tillgång till kunskap* (SOU 2021:70) (Teaching and learning materials inquiry – the importance of books and pupils’ access to knowledge). The report has been circulated for comment and the proposals are being prepared within the Government Offices of Sweden. The inquiry has also submitted an interim report on school libraries (SOU 2021:3) which has been circulated for comment.

Regulatory framework and progress report

All children and pupils in all types of schools and in school-age educare are to be given the guidance and stimulation they need in their learning and personal development so that they can develop to the extent possible, given their capacities, in accordance with the goals of the education provided (Chapter 3, Section 2 of Sweden’s Education Act).

The facilities and equipment needed to fulfil the aims of the education must be available for providing it (Chapter 2, Section 35, Education Act).

Pupils are to have free access to books and other learning tools needed for a modern education (pursuant to *inter alia* Chapter 9, Section 8; Chapter 10, Section 10; and Chapter 15, Section 17, Education Act). Pupils are to have access to school libraries (Chapter 2, Section 36, Education Act). The curriculum makes it clear that it is the school principal who is responsible for the school’s work environment being designed in such a way that all pupils receive active learning support and are given access to good quality teaching and learning materials and other learning tools for a modern education and what they require to be able to use these in order to be able to seek out and develop their knowledge and skills.

These materials and tools include school libraries and digital tools (Curriculum for the compulsory

school, preschool class and school-age educare [Lgr11], and others including Lsam11 [Sami School], Lspec11 [Special Needs Schools], etc.).

There is a lack of teaching and learning materials in certain subjects and for certain pupil groups. These include teaching and learning materials for pupils with disabilities, teaching and learning materials in Sweden's national minority languages Finnish, Yiddish, Meänkieli, Romani Chib and Sami, teaching and learning materials adapted for older pupils with limited reading and writing skills, and teaching and learning materials for many of the vocational subjects, mother tongue classes, and subjects in the practical-artistic field. The lack of teaching and learning materials in the national minority languages has long been one of the obstacles to revitalising these languages and has been confirmed, for example, in a number of inquiries and audits.

Measures

In 2019, the Government appointed an inquiry on strengthening school libraries and teaching and learning materials which has submitted its report on its remit entitled *Läromedelsutredningen – böckernas betydelse och elevernas tillgång till kunskap* (SOU 2021:70) (Teaching and learning materials inquiry – the importance of books and pupils' access to knowledge). The inquiry proposed a number of measures to increase awareness and knowledge of teaching and learning materials and to improve the conditions for teachers to choose teaching and learning materials. For example, the inquiry proposed clarifying the provisions in the Education Act on free access to books and learning tools, so that the pupil's right to teaching and learning materials, including textbooks, is clearly apparent in the legislation. The report has been circulated for comment and the proposals are being prepared within the Government Offices of Sweden. The inquiry also submitted an interim report on school libraries (SOU 2021:3) which has been circulated for comment.

Starting in autumn 2022, the Swedish National Agency for Education will be responsible for the national coordination of teaching in the national minority languages. This task includes planning and responsibility for how remote teaching in national

minority languages can be made available to all school authorities that, according to the Education Act, must offer teaching in these languages. The Swedish National Agency for Education will also prepare a project to support the production and promote the improvement of and access to teaching and learning materials in national minority languages and cooperate in this project with relevant actors.

H provide high speed connectivity, digital services and adequate equipment necessary for distance learning to ensure access to educational content online.

Regulatory framework: Remote teaching and distance education may be used only under certain conditions and with certain limitations. Remote teaching must not be used in early childhood education. Distance education must not be used in early childhood education or preschool class. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a special Ordinance applied which permitted remote teaching and distance education to a greater extent.

Pupils must have free access to learning tools needed for a modern education.

Progress report: The availability of computers per child/pupil is slightly higher in the senior level of compulsory school (*högstadiet*) and in upper secondary school than in preschool and the lower grades of compulsory school.

Measures: The Government has decided on a national digitalisation strategy for schools, in place until 2022. Since 2020, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been the sectorial authority for digitalisation in the school system.

Regulatory framework and progress report

The main rule is that teaching in the compulsory types of schools, upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities must be conducted in the form of face-to-face teaching. In principle, remote teaching may only be used in certain subjects and if there are no qualified teachers for some teaching, or where the pupil base for a particular school unit is so small that face-to-face teaching within the school unit would entail significant organisational or financial hardships for the school authority (Chapter 21, Section 3, Education Act; Chapter 5a,

Section 2, Education Ordinance [2011:185]). Distance education may sometimes be used as special needs support in compulsory school and equivalent types of schools and in upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, but with strict limitations (Chapter 3, Section 11a, and Chapter 22, Sections 5 and 7, Education Act). For some pupils with special challenges, distance education can be used for a complete education in upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities (Chapter 22, Section 8, Education Act). There must always be an individual examination of whether a pupil needs distance education. Remote teaching must not be used in early childhood education (Chapter 21, Section 2, Education Act). Distance education must not be used in preschool or preschool class (Chapter 22, Section 2, Education Act).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a special Ordinance applied which made it possible to provide more remote teaching and distance education (Ordinance [2020:115] on school education and other educational activities during the spread of certain infections).

Pupils are to have free access to the learning tools needed for a modern education (pursuant to *inter alia* provisions in Chapter 10, Section 10; Chapter 15, Section 17, Education Act).

The Government has decided on a national digitalisation strategy for schools in place until 2022. The Swedish National Agency for Education's monitoring of the national digitalisation strategy for the school system (2018) showed that access to computers is greater in the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school than in early childhood education and lower grades in compulsory school. On average, there are currently 1.3 pupils per computer in compulsory school and one computer per pupil in upper secondary school. Almost all preschools and schools have a wireless Internet connection. However, the wireless network in the school does not always have sufficient capacity.

The Swedish National Agency for Education's monitoring also showed that digitalisation poses a number of challenges. Four out of ten teachers feel that technology that fails inhibits their work at least once per week, and only half of the compulsory schools have access

to IT support the same day. Studies carried out by the Swedish Media Council show that general access to digital tools and their use among children and young people differs according to socioeconomic background and other demographic variables. This underlines the importance of providing equal opportunities for all children and pupils to use digital tools and to develop their digital skills (*Nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet* [National digitalisation strategy for the school system]).

Measures

There is a national digitalisation strategy with the following focus areas: 1) digital competence for all in the school system; 2) equal access and use; and 3) research and follow-up on the possibilities of digitalisation. The strategy's targets are to be reached in 2022.

Since 2020, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been responsible for the digitalisation of schools in the school system and certain forms of special education and other educational activities provided in place of education within the school system (Ordinance [2015:1047] with instructions for the Swedish National Agency for Education). This means that the Swedish National Agency for Education is responsible for ensuring that the school system makes the best use of the possibilities of digitalisation by supporting and driving improvements in this area. The Swedish National Agency for Education also offers interventions for digitalisation in schools. These interventions are targeted at school authorities, education establishments and schools that have high needs in terms of digitalisation. Courses and training materials are offered to teachers in compulsory and upper secondary schools, and to school principals.

From the rights of the child perspective, it is clear that digitalisation raises the need for safe and secure digital environments adapted to children and young people. The Government has drawn attention to the need for digital security through enhanced security and privacy within the context of the digitalisation strategy. In practice, this means that when developing and using digital tools and services, compliance with the rules that exist for protecting children and young people need to be followed.

I Provide transport to early childhood education and care and education establishments, where applicable

Progress report: Children are generally entitled to free school-bus services to school if needed.

Progress report

The rules on school buses are based on the principle that pupils are to have free education. It is the home municipality that pays for school bus services. Pupils at a school with a public school authority are entitled to a school bus service, if this service is needed in view of the length of the journey, traffic conditions, the pupil's disability, or any other special circumstance. If pupils choose to attend a school unit other than the one in which the municipality would otherwise have placed them, or who attend another municipality's compulsory school or compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, the municipality is to arrange a school bus service for the pupil where this can be done without entailing significant organisational or financial hardships (Chapter 10, Section 32 and Chapter 11, Section 31, Education Act). Since preschool is a voluntary type of school, municipalities and school authorities are not obliged to offer a school bus service to preschool.

J Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips and sport, leisure and cultural activities.

Regulatory framework: School is to be free of charge, but occasional elements may involve a negligible cost to the pupils.

Progress report: School-based activities such as school trips, study visits etc. are usually free of charge. Outside school time, education in the form of school-age educare is offered to all school children up to the age of 13. The fee for school-age educare has a maximum ceiling and is based on family income.

Measures: The Government has appointed an inquiry chair to review whether the right to participate in educational activities in school-age educare should be expanded (dir. 2021/101). The aim is to give more pupils the opportunity to be stimulated in their development and learning and to contribute to the meaningful use of their leisure time. This task is to be reported on by 3 November 2022 at the latest.

Regulatory framework and progress report

School is to be free of charge. There may be occasional elements that can involve a negligible cost to pupils. In connection with

school trips and similar activities, notwithstanding the other provisions in the Education Act, in some few cases during a school year, fees or charges may be levied which are reimbursed by the pupil's parent or guardian on a voluntary basis. Such activities must be open to all pupils. The reimbursement must not exceed the school authority's actual cost for the pupil's participation in the activity (Chapter 10, Section 11, Education Act). However, many municipalities have their own guidelines on how to handle these charges. School-age educare supplements education in preschool class, compulsory school and equivalent types of schools. The purpose of this activity is to stimulate the development and learning of pupils between 6 and 13 years of age, and to offer them recreation and meaningful use of their leisure time (Chapter 14, Sections 2 and 7, Education Act). Pupils can attend school-age educare before and after school and during school holidays. The fee for participating in the activities of school-age educare must be reasonable (Chapter 15, Section 12, Education Act). The fee is based on the family's income and the number of children in the family who participate in school-age educare activities.

The syllabus for the subject Physical Education and Health for compulsory school and equivalent types of schools requires that teaching should include swimming, swimming and water safety, and how to handle emergencies around water. Pupils also need to pass the elements of the knowledge requirements related to swimming and handling emergencies around water in order to get a pass grade in Physical Education and Health. If a pupil does not attain, or risks not attaining, the minimum knowledge requirements to be achieved in a subject, the pupil must be given support as a matter of urgency in the form of additional adjustments. If extra adjustments are not sufficient to achieve the objectives, the pupil is entitled to special needs support. Statistics show that more than 30 per cent of recently arrived pupils do not attain the learning outcomes in the subject Physical Education and Health. The corresponding proportion for pupils with a Swedish background is 5 per cent.

The school's task to work with the arts, culture and creativity is specified in the Education Act, curricula and syllabuses. This task involves both ensuring that all pupils are made aware of what is offered in the community in terms of cultural activities, but also about using artistic forms of expressions and creative methods as part of the teaching.

Municipal music and arts schools operate outside normal school hours and are found in almost all municipalities in the country. These schools are not free of charge. They give children and young people the opportunity to practise music and arts and to develop their creative abilities.

Within the framework of these schools, they can engage in a variety of arts such as music, dance, drama, film and visual arts. The municipalities generally operate these schools themselves. Data from the Swedish Arts Council and Statistics Sweden suggest that children and young people with parents who have longer education are over-represented in music and arts schools. Furthermore, it has been assessed that a low proportion of children and young people with a foreign background participate in music and arts schools. Among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, knowledge and awareness of music and arts schools is lower.

The aim of the government grant to the municipal music and arts school is improvement through broadening and deepening the music and arts school's offering and teaching, implementing specific initiatives to reach new target groups, and investing in strengthening this activity in areas with socioeconomic challenges or in sparsely populated areas.

Based on all the major surveys of reading among school pupils, it can be concluded that there is a link between how well pupils read and their family's socioeconomic status (Fredriksson and Taube, 2012). The PISA and PIRLS surveys also show this correlation. Being able to read is crucial for an individual's ability to acquire new knowledge, culture and benefit from written information. According to the Swedish Media Council's report *Ungar&Medier 2021* (Kids&Media 2021), daily reading increased among 9- and 10-year-olds between 2018 and 2020. In all other ages, reading declined.

Measures

The Government has appointed an inquiry chair to review whether the right to educational activities in school-age educare should be expanded (dir. 2021/101). The aim is to give more pupils the opportunity to be stimulated in their development and learning as well to contribute to the meaningful use of their leisure time. This task is to be reported on by 3 November 2022 at the latest. In March 2021, the Government submitted a written communication to the Riksdag entitled *Barns och ungas läsning* (Children's and young

people's reading) (Comm. 2020/21:95), with the Government's assessments of how to strengthen reading promotion efforts in and outside the school. Children and young people are a priority target group in cultural policy, as can be seen from the national cultural policy objectives adopted by the Riksdag in December 2009 (Govt Bill 2009/10:3, Report 2009/10:KrU5, Riksdag Comm. 2009/10:145)

In order to achieve the national objective of government interventions in music and arts schools, a number of initiatives are being implemented. Since 2016, a grant has been awarded annually through the Swedish Arts Council. The grant aims to develop the activities of music and arts schools. Kulturskolecentrum (a national resource centre for arts tuition) was established in 2018 at the Swedish Arts Council to support municipal music and arts schools by distributing grants and identifying education and development needs among other things.

Kulturskolecentrum also monitors statistics in this area. In 2018, the Government launched Kulturskoleklivet, an educational initiative intended to supplement existing teacher education and create more trained teachers and educators in Sweden's music and arts schools. Six universities were allocated special funding to arrange courses for those who want to train to work in music and arts schools, but also for continuing education of existing staff.

Since 2015, the Swedish Arts Council has been conducting a national initiative on the language and reading development of small children called Bokstart. There are also targets for the school's reading promotion efforts.

The Swedish Arts Council is also responsible for the distribution of the *Skapande skola* (Creative school) grant. The purpose of the grant is to give pupils greater opportunities for their own creativity through encounters with professional actors in the arts and cultural activities. In the budget bill for 2021, the Government proposed an increase of SEK 25 million in this grant – until 2023. The purpose of this boost in the funding is to increase the impact of the grant in order to reach more children and young people.

Since 2018, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been tasked with strengthening the reading break (*läslov*). As part of this task, the Swedish Arts Council is supporting a number of reading

promotion activities during school holidays.

In May 2017, the Government announced the *Samling för daglig rörelse* (Rallying around daily exercise) intervention, which is a series of initiatives to get more children and young people to exercise every day. This initiative has meant an increase of 100 hours in the guaranteed number of teaching hours in the subject of Physical Education and Health for compulsory school pupils from the autumn term 2019 by redistributing these hours from the pupil's electives. As part of this intervention, in 2018 the Swedish Sports Confederation also started an initiative to encourage more sport, exercise and the development of physical literacy within the framework of the school day. The target group of the initiative is limited to pupils in preschool class to year 6 and the priority is to reach those children who exercise the least.

K Develop a framework for cooperation of educational establishments, local communities, social, health and child protection services, families and social economy actors to support inclusive education, to provide after school care and opportunities to participate in sport, leisure and cultural activities, and to build and invest in educational establishments as centres of inclusion and participation

Regulatory framework: The municipalities decide for themselves on frameworks for cooperation.

Regulatory framework

Municipal self-government is established in Sweden's Constitution and means that municipalities and regions in several areas have a free right of control.

Sweden's Constitution also requires that the competence of municipalities and regions shall proceed from acts of law. The competence of municipalities and regions, together with the subsidiarity principle, mean that municipalities and regions themselves may deal with matters of public interest related to the municipality's or region's area.

1.5.3 With a view to guaranteeing effective and free access to quality healthcare for children in need, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 8)

A Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental

problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes. Ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.

Regulatory framework: The child's right to healthcare is found in HSL. The child's right to effective and free dental care is set out in the Dental Care Act.

Progress report: There are queues to psychiatry. Socioeconomically disadvantaged children have poorer health and dental health. The same applies to children in foster care.

Measures: Preparation of the reports *Börja med barnen! Sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga* (SOU: 2021:34) (Start with the kids! Good and local healthcare for all children and young people); *Börja med barnen! Följa upp hälsa och dela information för en god och nära vård* (SOU: 2021:78) (Start with the kids! Monitor health and share information for good and local healthcare); and *Från delar till helhet* (SOU 2021:93) (From parts to the whole). Commission to the National Board of Health and Welfare. Future strategy on mental health and suicide prevention. The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) continue to focus on children's health in 2022 within the framework of the agreements on good and local healthcare, mental health and better access to the healthcare system.

Regulatory framework and progress report

The Child Health Services' national healthcare programme provides the foundations for monitoring the child's health and development, offering vaccinations and providing support to parents. When the child reaches school age, the School Health Service takes over responsibility for monitoring the child's development and health. Public Dental Care monitors the child's dental health and offers regular dental examinations. Child Health Services, the School Health Service and Public Dental Care are free of charge. A key task for Child Health Services is to promote and monitor the health, development and life situation of all children and to identify and respond to problems in the child's health, development and upbringing environment.

Child Health Services provide health guidance, parental support and

health monitoring for all registered children within a locally or regionally defined programme for the area of child health. Vaccination programmes are also included.

Child Health Services is usually organised in the form of child health centres, where one or more qualified nurses and doctors work.

After the child has started preschool class, the School Health Service takes over the responsibility. According to Chapter 2, Section 27 of the Education Act, each pupil in compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, and special school must be offered at least three health visits that include general health checks. For each pupil in upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, at least one health visit must be offered. With a view to increasing the average staff-to-pupil ratio in the School Health Service, there is a permanent government grant for special needs education interventions and continuing professional development.

Other important actors are primary care/health centres, youth services and specialist care.

Both Child Health Services and the School Health Service are free of charge.

Sweden has free dental care for all children and young people up to and including the age of 23. The dental health of children and young people in Sweden is generally good, as in previous years. In 2019, the proportion of children without tooth decay (caries) decreased, while the proportion among children aged 3 and 12 years remained unchanged and increased among those aged 19 compared to the previous year.

Although more children and young people are receiving care and treatment for depression or anxiety disorders, waiting times are long, for first-line care and for psychiatry for children and adolescents. There is a general lack of knowledge among municipalities and regions about the provisions in the Act (2017:209) on health checks of children and young people in foster care, as well as the right to health checks for asylum seekers children and young people in foster care.

Young LGBTIQ people have poorer health and a higher suicide

rate compared to young people in the population as a whole. Transpersons tend to have even poorer mental health. It is twice as common among homosexual and bisexual people to have contemplated taking their own life at some time than among heterosexual people. More than half of respondents between the ages of 15 and 19 who identified themselves as transgender had contemplated taking their own life (Public Health Agency of Sweden, *Utblick folkhälsa* [Public Health Outlook]).

The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has followed and analysed the implementation of the Government's agreements with SALAR on better access to Child Health Services (*Insatser för ökad tillgänglighet i barnhälsovården m.m. Överenskommelse mellan staten och Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2018* [Interventions for better access to Child Health Services, etc. Agreement between the state and SALAR 2018]; *Insatser för ökad tillgänglighet i barnhälsovården m.m. Överenskommelse mellan staten och Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting 2019* [Interventions for better access to Child Health Services, etc. Agreement between the state and SALAR 2019]) The first interim report shows that several regions have used government grants within the agreement to develop collaborations between Child Health Services and Public Dental Care, as well as collaborations with Social Services.

The Government and SALAR continue to focus on children's health in 2022 within the framework of the agreements on good and local healthcare, mental health and better access in the healthcare system. For example, Child Health Services is part of local healthcare, and funding under the agreement on good and local healthcare can therefore be used for interventions which aim to support the improvement of Child Health Services. In addition, funding is allocated for interventions for children and young people, including psychiatry for children and adolescents, under the mental health agreement. Under the agreement on better access to the healthcare system, funding is allocated for efforts to shorten queues to psychiatry for children and adolescents. Interviews with Public Dental Care professionals describe how the incidence of caries differs between different socioeconomic groups and residential areas. The differences in dental health are already visible in children of preschool age, and children with greater needs do not always come to the dental health checks to which they are called. For this reason, Public Dental Care works to a greater extent on expanding its efforts

in areas with socioeconomic challenges. For example, dental hygienists attend activities in *öppna förskolan* (open playgroups) and parent groups, and Public Dental Care participates in joint training days with Child Health Services and Preventive Social Services.

Children living in socioeconomic disadvantage run a higher risk of being hospitalised and dying during childhood than other children. These children have poorer health and dental health even as adults and poorer prospects for learning, work and their own income (*Kommissionen för jämlik hälsa, delbetänkandet Det handlar om jämlik hälsa – Utgångspunkter för Kommissionens vidare arbete* SOU 2016:55 [Equality in Health Commission, interim report “It’s about equality in health – starting points for the Commission’s future work]).

Measures

During its term of office, the Government has made a multi-annual investment in Child Health Services. For example, in 2018 and 2019, the Government concluded annual agreements with SALAR to support the regions in providing better access to Child Health Services for groups with poorer health and dental health and lower vaccination coverage through expanded home visits or other outreach activities, mainly in areas with socioeconomic challenges.

In order to focus on preventive and health-promoting measures for children and young people in Sweden, in 2019 the Government appointed the commission of inquiry with the title ‘Good and local healthcare for all children and young people’ with a view to achieving more comparable healthcare. The investigation resulted in two reports – *Börja med barnen! Sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga* (SOU: 2021:34) (Start with the kids! Good and local healthcare for all children and young people); and *Börja med barnen! Följa upp hälsa och dela information för en god och nära vård* (SOU: 2021:78) (Start with the kids! Monitor health and share information for good and local healthcare).

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with conducting a preliminary study with the aim of reviewing how a national healthcare programme for children and young people should be designed and implemented, based on the proposals from the report ‘Good and local healthcare for all children and young people’ (SOU 2021:34).

In addition, the Government has commissioned the National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare to jointly carry out development projects aimed at improving collaboration between the School Health Service, the healthcare system and Social Services so that children and young people receive early and coordinated interventions (U2017/01236 and U2020/00363). The task includes targeting specific interventions to risk groups among children and young people in areas with socioeconomic challenges, as well as children and young people who are at risk of honour-related violence and oppression.

The Government has appointed a commission of inquiry that is to submit proposals on how the coordinated efforts of healthcare and social care in cases of comorbidity in the form of substance abuse and other psychiatric diagnoses or related conditions can be improved; as well as proposals on how to improve collaboration between the school authorities, and between activities with the same school authority, for individuals with comorbidities. The inquiry's objective – to identify early those children who are growing up in families with substance abuse and mental illness conditions – is therefore of great importance. Its report will be circulated for comment during spring 2022. The report *Från delar till helhet* (SOU 2021:93) (From parts to the whole) is being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has found that children taken into care (includes placement of children and young people in shelters, family-based care, assisted living and homes for care or residence [HVB]) have poorer oral health than others of similar age, and that they visit the Public Dental Care service for regular check-up examinations less frequently. This applies to both boys and girls, and young children as well as teenagers. In addition, children taken into care already have poorer oral health at the time of placement than other children in similar age groups. The National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked during the period 2021 – 2024 with implementing improvement initiatives to strengthen the conditions for children and young people to have access to good healthcare, dental care and continuity in their schooling.

By increasing the age for free dental care up to 23 years, the Government aims to create the conditions for all children and young

people to have access to Public Dental Care.

During 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare published new national guidelines for dental care with recommendations for children. These focus on the prevention of ill-health through dental care and the importance of cooperation with relevant actors, including Social Services in particular, for early detection.

During its term of office, the Government has strengthened its efforts in mental health and suicide prevention. In the budget bill for 2022, the Government estimates that the strengthening of this initiative will also continue in 2023 and 2024. Children and young people are a particularly prioritised target group within the framework of the initiative.

The Government has tasked a number of authorities with submitting input to a future national strategy in the area of mental health and suicide prevention. Under to the new strategy task, particular attention is be paid to those groups at greatest risk of developing mental health problems or committing suicide, such as children and young people, young people in the NEET category, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI people.

More active support and pupil health efforts are proposed in the report 'Better opportunities for pupils to achieve learning outcomes – active support and pupil health efforts and improved education for pupils with intellectual disabilities' (SOU 2021:11).

B Provide targeted rehabilitation and habilitation services for children with disabilities.

Regulatory framework: Children have the right to rehabilitation and habilitation, which is provided in cooperation between the region and the municipality. The region and school authorities have a shared responsibility for assistive technologies.

Measures: In order to provide targeted rehabilitation and habilitation services, a development project is underway which includes the National Board of Health and Welfare producing up-to-date statistics.

Regulatory framework

The region is responsible for rehabilitation and habilitation under

Chapter 8, Section 7 of the Health and Medical Services Act (HSL). The region must offer child and youth habilitation involving a range of occupational groups. The work includes prevention, investigation, diagnostics, treatment, habilitation and rehabilitation. The aim is to maintain or develop the child's motor skills, social skills, language skills or ability to manage their everyday life. The region must also provide interpretation services for everyday interpretation for those with childhood deafness and the deaf-blind.

The region and the municipality must together draw up an individual plan when a child needs assistance from both Social Services and the healthcare system (Chapter 16, Section 4, HSL and Chapter 2, Section 7, SoL). In the case of mental disorders in children, the region and the municipality must enter into an agreement on cooperation and, if possible, take into account the views of organisations representing these persons or their relatives regarding the content of such an agreement (Chapter 16, Section 3, HSL).

The region and the school authorities have a shared responsibility for assistive technologies, which means that each healthcare authority is responsible for personal aids, while school authorities are responsible for educational and teaching aids in schools.

It is important to ensure continuity and coordination in healthcare so that responsibility for coordination is not imposed on the family (see the report *Börja med barnen!*

En sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga SOU:2021:34 [Start with the kids! Good and local healthcare for all children and young people]; and the Swedish National Audit Office audit report 'Coordination of aid for children and young people with functional impairments' [RiR 2011:17]).

Measures

In 2019, the Government commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to survey and share good examples of agreements between healthcare authorities and school authorities regarding assistive technologies for children with disabilities. In parallel with this, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with collecting and publishing data and statistics on the area of assistive technologies on a continuous basis. A first

report on this task was submitted in January 2022.

C Implement accessible health promotion and disease prevention programmes targeting children in need and their families, as well as professionals working with children.

Progress report: There are current public health policy objectives set for work with public health.

Measures: A new public health policy framework has been decided.

Progress report

In 2018, the Riksdag adopted on a new public health policy framework, with a reworded overarching public health policy objective, and a revision of the previous target areas.

Health promotion and prevention are part of the school's activities and therefore need to be part of the school's systematic quality management. Systematic means that the work is structured and long-term. The starting point is to identify areas that are in particular need of urgent improvement in order to meet the targets.

Measures

The Government has assessed that there is a need for the whole of society to pull together to reverse the trend towards overweight and obesity. An inquiry chair has therefore been commissioned (dir. 2020:40) to increase general knowledge of the positive effects of physical activity for the individual through outreach efforts. The inquiry's remit also includes mobilising and engaging relevant actors in the community. Children and young people are to be afforded particular attention in these efforts. This task is to be reported on by 1 March 2023 at the latest.

1.5.4 With a view to guaranteeing effective access to sufficient and healthy nutrition for children in need, including through the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 9)

A Support access to healthy meals also outside of school days, including through in-kind or financial support.

Regulatory framework: The Education Act requires that compulsory school pupils are offered nutritious school meals free of charge. The national guidelines of the Swedish National Food Agency also cover meals provided in school-age educare.

Progress report: Sweden only receives aid for the distribution of milk in schools under the EU School Scheme, but not for fruit and vegetables.

Measures: The Swedish National Food Agency's task to reduce the salt and sugar content of food. The task of the Swedish National Food Agency and the Public Health Agency of Sweden to develop proposals for targets and indicators for sustainable and healthy food consumption.

Regulatory framework and progress report

The municipality must offer school-age educare for pupils who are in the municipality's preschool class, compulsory school or compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities. The pupil's home municipality must also offer school-age educare for pupils who attend independent schools that do not have school-age educare (Chapter 14, Section 3, Education Act). During school holidays and in-service training days, school-age educare is often also responsible for providing lunches, and during term time, it provides snacks.

Most municipalities and schools choose to serve or otherwise provide meals.

The Swedish National Food Agency's national guidelines for meals in preschools and schools, and support for good eating habits within LSS, provide guidance on how those responsible for these meals can plan sustainable breakfasts, snacks and the range of food offered in the school cafeteria – from both the health and environmental perspectives. The guidelines are recommendations and are not mandatory. They target anyone who influences the quality of these meals, from decision-makers to those who work closest to the diner, for example, educators or care staff, even if they are most strongly anchored with the meal managers or equivalent staff with direct responsibility for meals and the task of meal-providing organisations.

The EU School Scheme (aid for the distribution of fruit and vegetables and milk to schools) is applied in Sweden, but only the part of this aid that goes to milk distribution is implemented.

Sweden is the only EU country that does not benefit from this aid for the distribution of fruit and vegetables.

Measures

In its programme area ‘Instruments for sustainable consumption’, the Environmental Objectives Council has submitted two proposals aimed at promoting sustainable food consumption among children and young people. The first proposal concerns broadening the Education Act’s regulation of school meals to include sustainability, in addition to being nutritious, and to cover all types of schools. The second proposal concerns issuing national guidelines and criteria and a national food monitoring plan for food served in tax-funded activities that target children and young people such as sports halls, indoor swimming pools, recreation centres and cultural centres, in order to promote sustainable consumption.

The Swedish National Food Agency has a mission to investigate and create the foundations for an agreement in the food industry to reduce the salt and sugar content of food (interim reports 15 February 2022 and 2023, final report in 2024). Work on the content of the agreement related to sugar-sweetened foods is to focus mainly on children and young people.

The Government has commissioned the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish National Food Agency to prepare proposals for national targets with indicators (interim report 31 January 2023, final report 2024) for sustainable and healthy food consumption. Our eating habits have a direct impact on our health, but also have an indirect impact on other factors that affect sustainability in the food system, primarily with regard to the climate and the environment. Society-wide efforts that provide the best conditions for environmentally sustainable and healthy food consumption need to be given priority in order to reduce health inequalities, and for the climate and environment.

The Swedish National Food Agency’s report entitled *Matutbudet i ungdomars vardag* (Food on offer in young people’s everyday lives) describes the introduction of the EU’s support for fruit and vegetables as an important contribution to promoting the consumption of fruit and vegetables among children.

Pupils are taught healthy eating habits in the subject Home

and Consumer Studies in compulsory school, as well as in the subject Physical Education and Health.

The Swedish National Food Agency has an ongoing mission during the period 2020–2025 within the framework of the food strategy to work for the continued improvement of meals in healthcare, schools and social care through its national competence centre for public meals. The aim of this work is to promote sustainable and healthy food consumption in the public sector.

B Ensure that nutrition standards in early childhood education and care and education establishments address specific dietary needs.

Regulatory framework: The Swedish National Food Agency's competence centre for meals in healthcare, schools and social care produces national guidelines and educational materials for meals in preschools and schools, and to provide support for good eating habits within LSS. activities.

Progress report: Monitoring of meals in early childhood education is inadequate.

Regulatory framework and progress report

The Education Act's rules on meals – that meals should be nutritious and free of charge – apply only to compulsory school. Many preschools follow the Swedish National Food Agency's guidelines for meals in preschools. However, monitoring of what is served in preschools and how well it corresponds to children's nutritional needs is inadequate. According to its instructions, the Swedish National Food Agency is to contribute to creating societal foundations for sustainable food consumption, with a particular focus on children and young people.

Measures

The Swedish National Food Agency has an ongoing mission (2020–2025) within the framework of the food strategy to work for the continued improvement of meals in healthcare, schools and social care through its national competence centre for public meals. The aim of this work is to promote sustainable and healthy food consumption in the public sector.

The Government has given the Swedish National Food Agency the task of working with the food industry to create the foundations for an agreement to reduce the salt and sugar content of food. The Agency has also been tasked with producing a knowledge base on how the consumption of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods can be reduced. Concerning sugar-sweetened foods, this work is to focus mainly on children and young people. The task will continue until 2023. The aim is to reduce the consumption of salt, sugar and other energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods in the population in conjunction with the food industry.

C Limit advertisement and restrict the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in early childhood education and care and educational establishments.

Progress report: No problems have been highlighted concerning advertising of unhealthy food in childcare or school. Neither is there any significant access to unhealthy food in childcare and the lower grades of compulsory school. On the other hand, the range of unhealthy food available to pupils in the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school varies, both in the school (primarily the school cafeteria) and in the vicinity of the school area.

Measures: The Swedish National Food Agency is conducting a survey of the food habits of young children.

Progress report

No problems have been highlighted concerning advertising of or access to unhealthy food in preschools or childcare. On the other hand, the Swedish National Food Agency's report *Matutbudet i ungdomars vardag* indicates that the range of unhealthy food available to pupils in the senior level of compulsory school and upper secondary school varies, both in the school (primarily the school cafeteria) and in the vicinity of the school area.

Measures

Sweden lacks an action plan in this area. The need for such a plan has been highlighted, for example, in the report of the Swedish National Food Agency and the Public Health Agency of Sweden entitled *Förslag till åtgärder för ett stärkt, långsiktigt arbete för att främja hälsa relaterad till matvanor och fysisk aktivitet* (Proposals for measures to strengthen long-term efforts to promote health related to eating habits and physical activity). The report was produced as part of a

government commission which consisted of developing input for initiatives to promote health related to eating habits and physical activity 2016–2017. These two government agencies – the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish National Food Agency – have now been tasked with producing proposals for national targets with indicators to provide a clear direction for efforts in relation to sustainable and healthy food consumption in Sweden, but there is still no Swedish action plan.

The Swedish National Food Agency is conducting a survey of the food habits of young children. The survey is being conducted one age group at a time: first four-year-olds, then 1.5-year-olds and finally 9-month-olds.

D Provide adequate information to children and families on healthy nutrition for children.

Progress report: Information for future and new parents in the Maternal Health and Child Health Services. Pupils are taught about healthy eating habits through the school subject Home and Consumer Studies in compulsory school, as well as in the school subject Physical Education and Health.

Measures: Several government agencies are working to develop a national breastfeeding strategy.

Progress report

Maternal Health (MVC) and Child Health Services (BVC) meet almost all future parents and new parents and then the School Health Service takes over.

Information on healthy eating can be provided continuously and guidelines are provided for how best to provide the information.

The EU School Scheme (aid for the distribution of fruit and vegetables and milk to schools) is applied in Sweden, but only the part of this aid that goes to milk distribution. See above under A. Sweden is the only European country that does not receive aid for fruit and vegetables.

Teaching in the subject Home and Consumer Studies in compulsory

school must aim to develop pupils' knowledge about and interest in work, economy and consumption in the home. Through this teaching, pupils are to develop awareness of the consequences for health, well-being and shared resources of the choices made in the household.

Measures

Along with the National Board of Health and Welfare, Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Consumer Agency, the Swedish National Food Agency is developing a national breastfeeding strategy. The aim of the strategy is to establish a better structure for the coordination of breastfeeding matters, in order to improve the conditions for the healthcare system to be able to conduct a project that promotes and supports breastfeeding even more than is the case today, so that all parents are given the support they need and are looking for.

1.5.5 With a view to guaranteeing effective access to adequate housing for children in need, Member States are recommended to take the following measures (area 10)

A ensure that homeless children and their families receive adequate accommodation, prompt transfer from temporary accommodation to permanent housing and provision of relevant social and advisory services

Regulatory framework: Under the Social Services Act (2001:453), each municipality through its social welfare committee is ultimately responsible for families receiving support and help that they need.

Progress report: There is a shortage of housing in much of Sweden, and the possibilities for municipalities to provide families with permanent housing vary, and this includes their access to apartments from public and private sector landlords. The municipalities organise their efforts against homelessness in different ways.

Measures: Preparation of the report *Hållbar socialtjänst (SOU 2020:47)* (Sustainable social services). The development of a national homelessness strategy for 2022–2026.

Regulatory framework and progress report

The National Board of Health and Welfare conduct surveys of the homeless in Sweden. The most recent survey was conducted in week 14, 2017 and before that in 2011 and 2005. The Board contacts municipalities and other organisations that come into contact with

homeless people and in this way collects the information. The National Board of Health and Welfare defines homelessness on the basis of four situations:

- 1 *Acute homelessness.* Living on the street and in staircases, camping grounds, hotels, youth hostels and the like.
- 2 *Institution or assisted living.* Admitted to or registered in, for example, HVB homes, foster care, assisted living or a Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (SiS) institution. Scheduled discharge within three months and no place to go.
- 3 *Long-term living arrangements organised by Social Services.* Living in a long-term housing solution organised by the municipality. People in this situation are often in subleased accommodation and lack security of tenure. This form of housing is often subject to special conditions.
- 4 *Private short-term living arrangement.* Living with friends, family, or relatives without a contract, or other living arrangement with a temporary (maximum of three months) contract or sublease agreement with a private individual.

The National Board of Health and Welfare's survey focuses on adults and the number of children suffering homelessness is estimated from data on the number of parents who are homeless and the extent to which they report living with their children. In the survey, 11 167 out of a total of about 33 000 people who are homeless stated that they had children under the age of 18. The National Board of Health and Welfare estimates that at least 24 150 children had one parent in homelessness during the measurement week 2017. The National Board of Health and Welfare estimates that 10 500–15 000 children were in one of the homelessness situations during the measuring week of 2017, either permanently or alternately. Another 3 600–7 300 children were estimated to have parents who were in homelessness, with different degrees of contact with the child. Just over 5 750 children lived permanently with a single parent in some form of homelessness during the measuring week (homelessness 2017 – extent and character, National Board of Health and Welfare).

According to SoL, everyone is obliged to support themselves and their family within the limits of their capacities in the first instance. This also includes responsibility for arranging housing, which means that a person without their own dwelling must apply for housing

themselves via the local housing authority, housing companies, subleasing agencies or in some other way try to arrange their housing situation. Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children have necessary conditions for living and are responsible for ensuring that the children's needs and rights are met. Under SoL, the social welfare committee has a special responsibility for children being raised in good living conditions. In addition, the social welfare committee must also initiate and ensure that measures are taken to create a good community environment and good conditions for children and young people, the elderly and other groups who are in need of special support from the community. The social welfare committee is required to promote the individual's right to work, housing and education in its activities. Social Services have an important role to play in preventing and combating homelessness.

In addition, the social welfare committee's tasks include participating in community planning and in cooperation with other social institutions, organisations, associations and individuals promoting good environments in the municipality. The social welfare committee's involvement in community planning should be based on its social welfare experience and should aim in particular to influence the design of new and older residential areas in the municipality.

Social Services offer housing interventions with various types of support such as (www.kunskapsguiden.se)

- Emergency housing interventions
- Assisted living
- Long-term housing solutions
- Sheltered housing.
- Help with arranging permanent accommodation
- Debt restructuring
- Bostad först (Housing First)
- Boendekedja (transition accommodation)

The municipalities organise their work against homelessness in various ways and how they apply these interventions differs with regard to the use of the method Housing First (*Förebygga och motverka hemlöshet Analys och förslag för fortsatt arbete inom socialtjänsten* [Prevent and combat homelessness – Analysis and proposals for continued work in Social Services] National Board of Health and Welfare, 2021). There are indications that some municipalities are actively

complicit in encouraging households in need of support to move to other municipalities without the initiative coming from the household, a form of social dumping (*Aktiv medverkan till bosättning i annan kommun, En kartläggning* Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2020:19 [Active participation in settlement in another municipality. A survey]).

Measures

The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed guidelines and knowledge support on how cases should be dealt with based on the best interests of the child and continuously updates its guidelines on preventing evictions. Knowledge support is published on www.kunskapsguiden.se.

In order to strengthen the work of municipalities with acute homelessness, the Government decided on government grants during the period 2018–2021 mainly targeted at municipalities with a large number of people in acute homelessness.

The Government intends to develop a national homelessness strategy for the period 2022–2026. The strategy will include prevention, measures to combat acute homelessness and the pathway to a home of one's own as a means of combating social and structural homelessness. In the report *Förebygga och motverka hemlöshet* (Prevent and Combat Homelessness), the National Board of Health and Welfare proposes that a multi-annual targeted government grant be established for the municipalities to expand or start Housing First activities, and that the Government should appoint an appropriate authority to be given national responsibility for methodological support, training and follow-up of Housing First.

The report *Hållbar socialtjänst* (SOU 2020:47) (Sustainable Social Services) includes proposals concerning the participation of Social Services in community planning, including housing. The report is being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden.

The Government has also tasked the county councils beginning work to counter social dumping.

B Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty and preventing the risk of homelessness. Such assessment and revision should also include social housing or housing assistance policies

Regulatory framework: Each municipality must plan for its housing supply. The housing allowance is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Social Insurance Code.

Progress report: There is a shortage of housing in large parts of the country, which also affects financially disadvantaged families. The current design of the housing allowance, with a preliminary allowance determined on the basis of an estimate of future income which is then reconciled against actual income as determined by the final tax statement, may give rise to both recovery of and indebtedness for allowances not due – which leads to families with children in need of and housing benefits and further improve accessibility for children with disabilities.

Measures: An ongoing commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53). The commission of inquiry on housing allowance and maintenance allowance – better accuracy and reduced indebtedness, submitted its final report in January 2022. The report is being prepared in

Regulatory framework and progress report

The national, more ambitious objective adopted by the Riksdag for the 2030 Agenda for the housing policy area is well-functioning housing markets long term where consumer demand meets an offering of housing that meets the needs of the population.

Under the Act (2000:1383) on municipal housing responsibility, each municipality is responsible for planning housing in the municipality based on guidelines. The purpose of the planning is to create the conditions necessary for everyone in the municipality to live in good housing, and to promote the preparation and implementation of appropriate measures for housing.

There is a shortage of housing in large parts of Sweden. According to the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, in 2021, 74 per cent of the country's municipalities reported that they had a shortage of housing and 90 per cent said that there was a housing shortage in central Sweden. The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning's calculations of the housing shortage suggest that 56 000 households are overcrowded while having a tight housing budget, and thus little opportunity to demand

housing that better matches their needs (*Mått på bostadsbristen* [Housing shortage metrics], the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 2020).

In 2021, a total of 572 children were affected by an executed eviction. (Swedish Enforcement Authority, *Helårsstatistik vräkningar som berört barn, 2020* [Full-year statistics on evictions affecting children]). Under Chapter 12, Section 44, point 1 of the Land Code, notice must be given to the social welfare committee in the municipality when a notice of cancellation of a tenancy is issued to a household. The social welfare committee then has an opportunity to assume responsibility for payment and thereby regain the household's right to rent the dwelling, or in other ways assist the household (see previous section). The National Board of Health and Welfare assesses that many municipalities can strengthen their work to prevent evictions (*Förebygga och motverka hemlöshet, Analys och förslag för fortsatt arbete inom socialtjänsten* [Prevent and combat homelessness – Analysis and proposals for future work in Social Services], National Board of Health and Welfare 2021).

In some cases for example, landlords do not accept the housing allowance or financial assistance as income when assessing a prospective tenant's capacity to pay. Indebted individuals are rarely accepted. Almost all property owners access credit information for prospective tenants (*Hyresvärdars krav på blivande hyresgäster* [What landlords require of prospective tenants], Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 2017:30).

In its report on discrimination in the provision of rental dwellings (Report 2021:3), the Equality Ombudsman (DO) has concluded that rental policies and rental criteria exist in the community that may be discriminatory. For example, demanding a high income in relation to the rent charged, and the fact that certain allowances and other payments are not accepted by the landlord as income, could pose a risk of discrimination. Other potentially discriminatory policies include requiring Swedish citizenship, a permanent residence permit or a Swedish personal identity number.

Municipalities are able to issue rental guarantees to households with sufficiently good economy to pay the rent in the long term, but who for various reasons are not approved as tenants. A government grant is provided for each guarantee, but this tool has not been used to the desired extent.

Municipalities may also provide financial support to individuals to reduce their costs of acquiring or possessing a permanent home under the Act (2009:47) on certain municipal competences. This possibility does not limit the municipality's obligations under the Social Services Act (see previous section).

The housing allowance is a means-tested, and therefore well-targeted, benefit for reaching households with weak economies. The income limits for the housing allowance, for assessing the size of the housing allowance, have been increased in several stages in recent years, including in 2020 and 2021.

Measures

On 20 January 2022, the Government submitted the Bill 'A better basis for measures in the housing market (Govt Bill 2021/22:95) to the Riksdag. This Bill submitted proposals which would mean that the requirements on the analysis used as the basis for the information provided in the guidelines would focus more clearly on the housing shortage in the municipality.

The commission of inquiry on the 'Housing allowance and maintenance allowance – better accuracy and reduced indebtedness' has carried out a review of the rules for the benefits in question. The current design of the housing allowance may give rise to both recovery of and indebtedness for allowances not due. The report (SOU 2021:101) submits proposals which aim to increase the accuracy of the housing allowance distribution and reduce indebtedness for it. The report is being prepared in the Government Offices of Sweden.

The commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53) is tasked with investigating the division of tasks between central government and the municipality that has existed in housing policy since 1940s, and investigating certain housing policy tools, and if necessary making proposals that increase their effectiveness. The purpose of the inquiry is to create the conditions for socially sustainable housing that eases the situation of households having difficulty obtaining housing on market terms. The inquiry is due to submit its report in March 2022.

In its report *Förebygga och motverka hemlöshet* (Prevent and Combat Homelessness) from 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare

outlined a number of key success factors for the municipalities' work to address the problem of evictions. The Government has again tasked the county councils with supporting the municipalities in this work based on the recommendations of the National Board of Health and Welfare. The Government has also tasked the Swedish Enforcement Authority with working to establish cooperation between Social Services and landlords throughout the country. This work is to focus in particular on cooperation to prevent children from being affected by evictions.

C Provide for priority and timely access to social housing or housing assistance for children in need and their families.

Regulatory framework: Individual needs assessment pursuant to Chapter 4 Section 1, SoL. The Act (2000:1383) on municipal housing responsibility.

Progress report: Financially disadvantaged families with children face obstacles in the housing market, including access to subsidised housing. Some municipal tools such as priority and rental guarantees are rarely used.

Measures: The commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53) has the task of investigating certain housing policy tools and, if necessary, submitting proposals to increase their effectiveness.

Regulatory framework and progress report

Following an individual needs assessment pursuant to Chapter 4, Section 1, SoL, a decision is made on the housing intervention that can be offered.

Under the Act (2000:1383) on municipal housing responsibility, each municipality, if necessary to support and promote housing, is to organise a local housing authority. The municipality may charge a fee for the right to remain in the queue if apartments are made available to those in the queue based on their time in the queue. However, a limited number of apartments in the queue may be allocated according to a priority system.

Municipalities that own the land on which apartments are going to be built can, through land allocations, impose requirements on the principles for allocating the apartments built. A land allocation is an agreement between a municipality and a developer that gives the developer the exclusive right to negotiate with the municipality for a

limited period of time and under certain conditions for the sale or grant of a certain area of land owned by the municipality for settlement. Each municipality that uses the tool must adopt guidelines for land allocations. These guidelines are to contain the municipality's starting points and objectives for the sale or grant of land areas for settlement, the processing procedures and basic terms and conditions for land allocations as well as the principles for land pricing (Act [2014:89] on guidelines for municipal land allocations).

There is also a disabled facilities grant (*bostadsanpassningsbidrag*), which is a municipal grant for making home adaptations for disabled persons (Act [2018:222] on the disabled facilities grant).

Measures

The Government has appointed a commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53). See above under B.

D Take into account the best interests of the child as well as the child's overall situation and individual needs when placing children into institutional or foster care. ensure the transition of children from institutional or foster care to quality community-based or family-based care and support their independent living and social integration.

Regulatory framework: The social welfare committee is responsible for ensuring that children who are being cared for outside their own home are safe and secure and otherwise receiving good care.

Progress report: There is a shortage of suitable places in family-based care.

Measures: One of the tasks of the commission of inquiry on children and young people taken into care (dir. 2021:84) is investigating how more places in suitable foster homes can be created. In addition, there are a number of government commissions in progress with the aim of improving the quality of public care.

Regulatory framework and progress report

In 2020, 27 300 children and young people were taken into care outside their own home, which was about 3 800 fewer than in 2019. Family-based care is the most common form of placement. In 2020, 19,400 children and young people were placed in family-based care. A crucial factor for the quality of care is that their placement in a foster home that is suitable for the child or young person. Today,

however, there is a shortage of foster homes, which makes the work of the social welfare committee difficult in matching the child or the young person with a suitable foster home. A commission of inquiry was appointed in 2021 to review and propose measures for improving the quality of care when children and young people are placed in family-based care, shelters, assisted living, and homes for care or residence (HVB). The terms of reference for the inquiry state that the inquiry chair is to analyse how more places in suitable foster homes can be created and how support for foster homes during the placement period can be strengthened.

Measures

During the period 2020–2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare has been tasked with supporting municipalities in improving their efforts to recruit foster homes through awareness campaigns, including making adapted information available. The Board has also conducted campaigns to increase public awareness of what it means to be a foster home, with a view to increasing interest in becoming a foster home.

1.6 Lack of access to key social services

1.6.1 Children in need according to the EU Recommendation

According to the Child Guarantee, children in need are persons under 18 years of age who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Specific disadvantages faced by the following groups should be taken into account: homeless children or children experiencing severe housing deprivation, children with disabilities, children with a migrant background, children with a migrant background or minority ethnic origin, particularly Roma, children in alternative, especially institutional, care, and children in precarious family situations (see point 5 (a)-(f)). Children in precarious family situations means children exposed to various risk factors that could lead to poverty or to social exclusion (point 3 (c)).

1.6.2 Children in need in the Swedish context

With regard to children in precarious family situations (see point 3 (c)), in the Swedish context, special emphasis should be placed on children living with a parent with a disability, mental illness, chronic illness or substance abuse problems. Children who live in families in which violence occurs are also disadvantaged. This is particularly true for children who are victims of honour-related violence and

oppression. The Government has appointed an inquiry chair to submit proposals for a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children, including honour-related violence and oppression. The strategy is to adopt a holistic approach and enable a cohesive direction for efforts to prevent and combat violence against children over the next ten years (dir. 2021:29). Other groups that need to be highlighted are children who belong to the national minorities and LGBTQI children. Attention also needs to be paid to asylum-seeker children, children who have recently immigrated to Sweden from outside Europe, and unaccompanied minors who have residence permits under the Act (2017:353) on residence permits for pupils at upper secondary level. Children without the necessary permits to stay in Sweden are also a disadvantaged group. Children in these situations need to be taken into account in any analysis of children in need and in the measures taken.

Single parents, and mothers in particular, are in a disadvantaged financial situation. This affects the child's ability to access some of the key social services, such as adequate housing.

1.6.3 Gender equality perspective affects the conditions in which children grow up

The Government's goal for gender equality policy is for women and men to have equal power to shape society and their own lives. Based on this goal, there are six interim sub-goals.

- An equal distribution of power and influence.
- Financial equality
- Gender-equal education
- Equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work
- Gender-equal health
- Men's violence against women must cease.

Boys and girls often have differing needs for and access to key social services and use these services differently, and this should always be taken into account. Therefore, statistics and monitoring should be reported separately for girls and boys unless there are specific reasons not to do so and, when measures are taken, their potential to contribute to the gender equality policy goals should be taken into account.

1.6.4 Some general factors that may hamper effective access

There are general factors that may hamper effective access to key social services. These factors may need to be taken into account, for example in the design of measures.

There are points in time that are critical for access to key social services. Examples of these are:

- The transition from child to adult in the healthcare system.
- The transition from interventions for children and young people to interventions for adults in Social Services.
- The time after a child's placement outside their own home ends.
- The transition from upper secondary school to the workplace.
- Summer holidays, Christmas holidays and other school holidays.
- The time between permanent residences, or periods of homelessness.

One risk factor for social exclusion in children is that difficulties are detected too late in the child's life. The Sustainable Social Services (SOU 2020:47) report highlights prevention as a new direction for social work. Early detection is also possible in the healthcare system and dental care. Child Health Services reach virtually all young children in Sweden with health promotion and disease prevention interventions, and interventions to reduce health inequalities – goals that are also shared by Public Dental Care. The National Board of Health and Welfare's new national guidelines on dental care for children and adults include specific recommendations on promoting children's oral health.

Lack of collaboration is highlighted as an impeding factor in the work to satisfy children's needs and guarantee their rights.

Although there are regulations specifying that collaboration should take place, for example around a coordinated individual plan (SIP), this happens too rarely. This is therefore an area in which most actors involved with children can improve.

Another factor that may affect effective access to key social services is the prevalence of discrimination. According to a report by the Equality Ombudsman (DO), caseworkers' perceptions of gender, age, ethnicity and disability may affect access to Social Services' interventions. This may include Social Services making an assessment based not on the individual situation, but based on or influenced by perceptions of certain groups in relation to interventions for children and young people (*Skillnader som kan utgöra risk för diskriminering* 2021 DO [Differences that may constitute a risk

of discrimination]).

Barriers may also include a lack of awareness of the existence of services by individuals and families, or a fear or mistrust of authorities. There may also be barriers that make it difficult for individuals to access services, such as perceived bureaucracy, or digital login requirements.

The availability of services may vary geographically. In some areas, services coverage may be low. Waiting times in the healthcare system also occur and vary geographically. These include waiting times for primary care, child and adolescent psychiatry, treatment for certain chronic illnesses and in emergency departments.

The needs of children as next of kin, and children who take responsibility for a close relative, have received increasing attention in recent years. Children growing up in families with substance abuse, mental illness, violence, serious illness or a recent death are at greater risk of negative consequences for their health, schooling and future working lives. See also [Children as next of kin - Knowledge guide](#).

1.6.5 Early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities, one healthy meal each school day – area 7

Based on the survey of effective access to key social services by area in Section 1.5, it can be concluded that there are certain areas in which children do not have effective access or risk not having effective access at all or in part. This is despite the fact that Sweden offers these services free of charge in most cases. They are summarised by area below.

Children who are not enrolled in early childhood education or educational care

One group of children who may be particularly disadvantaged (at risk of social exclusion) are those who are not enrolled in either early childhood education or educational care. The report entitled *Fler barn i förskolan – för bättre språkutveckling i svenska* [More children in early childhood education – for better language development in Swedish] (SOU 2020:67) states that in 2019 there were approximately 15 800 children aged 3 to 5 who were not enrolled in early childhood education or educational care. Children from low socioeconomic

backgrounds are over-represented in this group. Children with parents or guardians who have a low level of education and children from homes in which no parent or guardian or only one parent or guardian is gainfully employed are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education than children with two gainfully employed parents or guardians. Children with a foreign background, especially those born abroad, are also over-represented among children not enrolled in early childhood education.

Young people not in employment, education or training

In Sweden there are about 18 000 young people between 15 and 19 not in employment, education or training (NEET category). 93 per cent of pupils whose parents have completed post-secondary education left year 9 having qualified for entry to upper secondary education in 2020. The corresponding figures among those whose parents attained only upper secondary or secondary education were 81 and 51 per cent, respectively. 90 per cent of pupils born in Sweden leave grade 9 having qualified for entry to upper secondary education, and 78 per cent take an upper secondary school diploma within four years of starting their programme of study. The corresponding figures for pupils born outside Europe are 58 and 36 per cent, respectively. Early, preventive interventions are important to stop a young person from sliding into exclusion and needing help from the community at a later stage in life (*Stödja aktörer som arbetar med unga som varken arbetar eller studerar* (MUCF), 2021 [Support actors working with young people not in employment, education or training]). Young people with disabilities are also over-represented among those who are not in employment, education or training (*Ett långvarigt utanförskap* MUCF, 2020 [Long-term exclusion]).

Children with disabilities in school and early childhood education

Some pupils with disabilities are at risk of not being adequately supported by their school so that they have the same opportunities as other pupils to succeed in school. This may be because the school does not make sufficient adaptations based on their disability or because the staff lack sufficient knowledge (Swedish Agency for Participation [2017]). It is not possible to assess at national level how the Swedish school system functions for pupils with disabilities, as data on disability is not collected in school statistics. However, the Education Act provides that pupils who have difficulty in attaining the various learning outcomes or learning outcome levels due to a

disability are to be given support which has the aim of addressing the consequences of their disability to the extent possible. Children with disabilities also need to be given the necessary support in early childhood education to ensure that they receive good quality education based on their individual capacities. Education should be accessible and comparable for all, regardless of disability.

Children in care drop out of school

Successful schooling is one of the most important factors in a child's or young person's development and determines their future prospects. At the same time, dropping out of schooling is common for children in care outside their own home or in sheltered housing with a parent or guardian.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged children have poorer reading skills

Based on all major studies of reading among school pupils, it can be concluded that there is a correlation between how well pupils read and the socioeconomic status of their families (Fredriksson & Taube, 2012). The PISA and PIRLS measurements also show this correlation. The lack of equality is a challenge in Swedish schools and affects pupils' reading skills.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged groups of children have lower access to music and arts schools

Data from the Swedish Arts Council and Statistics Sweden indicate that children and young people with parents who have a higher level of education are over-represented in music and arts schools. Furthermore, the proportion of children and young people with a foreign background attending music and arts schools is also considered to be low.

1.6.6 Healthcare – area 8

Socioeconomically disadvantaged children have poorer access to healthcare

Children living in socioeconomic disadvantage are at higher risk of being admitted to hospital than other children. These children have poorer health and dental health even in adulthood and poorer opportunities for learning, working and earning an income (Commission for Equal Health, interim report *Det handlar om jämlik hälsa – Utgångspunkter för Kommissionens vidare arbete* [SOU 2016:55] [It's about health equality – Starting points for the Commission's further work]). This suggests that these children do not always have

access to healthcare and dental care to the extent provided by legislation.

Poorer access to healthcare and dental care for children in care

Research shows that children and young people in care outside their own home have significantly more health problems and greater need of healthcare and dental care than their peers. Special care needs related to psychiatric conditions are common in this target group. Studies also show that interruptions in schooling are common. Similar problems apply to children living in sheltered housing with a parent or guardian. Despite poorer health, children in care are not always offered the health examinations to which they are entitled, and dental examinations are provided less frequently (www.kunskapsguiden.se).

1.6.7 Healthy diet – area 9

Socioeconomically disadvantaged children are less likely to have a healthy diet

The latest Swedish Food Agency dietary habits survey for 2016–2017 was conducted among pupils in years 5 and 8 of compulsory school and year 2 of upper secondary school. The survey confirms that there are socioeconomic differences in dietary habits and health. One in five pupils is overweight or obese and this is more common among children of parents with a low level of education and/or lower income. These children eat less vegetables and fish and drink more soft drinks than children of highly educated parents. One particularly disadvantaged group is young people of upper secondary school age who do not attend upper secondary school.

A survey shows that fewer than 15 per cent of senior level compulsory schools and upper secondary schools offer fruit and vegetables in addition to school lunches.

Nearly half of senior level compulsory schools encourage pupils to bring fruit or vegetables to school. The corresponding figure for upper secondary schools is 24 per cent. It is also less common for schools with pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds to encourage pupils to eat more fruit and vegetables and to take fruit home. The fact that schools with pupils from socioeconomically advantaged backgrounds more often encourage pupils to bring fruit risks widening socioeconomic gaps and may thus neutralise the

school's compensatory efforts. Promoting fruit and vegetables is not specifically stated in the school's mission, but asking parents to send fruit with people from home has been discussed since it may be contrary to the Education Act's requirement that school should be free of charge. Socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, such as children of parents who are unemployed and/or in social exclusion, are less well placed to bring fruit to school and packed lunches for outings (L 2021 No 07 – *Matutbudet i ungdomars vardag* [Food on offer in young people's everyday lives], livsmedelsverket.se).

Socioeconomic differences are also apparent with regard to breastfeeding. There is a higher proportion of exclusively breastfed children in socioeconomically advantaged families. Breastfeeding is increasingly highlighted as a key measure to prevent becoming overweight or obese in later in life.

1.6.8 Adequate housing – area 10

Children in families in various disadvantaged situations may lack access to adequate housing

Children in financially disadvantaged families face difficulties in obtaining adequate housing. One example of a disadvantaged group is women who are experiencing acute homelessness as a result of domestic violence. Many women and children find it difficult to find permanent housing after their stay in sheltered housing. Replacement in sheltered housing or temporary housing solutions such as youth hostels or hotels are not uncommon (*Ett fönster av möjligheter – stärkt barnrättsperspektiv för barn i skyddat boende* [SOU 2017:112] [A window of opportunity – strengthening the rights of the child perspective for children in sheltered housing]). This is confirmed in a report from the National Board of Health and Welfare in 2022 on investigations into certain injuries and deaths. Another example is children with residence permits under the Act (2017:353) on residence permits for pupils at upper secondary level who are at risk of short-term and insecure housing solutions. Children of parents who have been given notice to leave their dwelling are in a disadvantaged situation that risks being exacerbated if it leads to the family being evicted (*Hemma, ett metodstöd för vräkningsförebyggande arbete* [Home – Methodological support for efforts to prevent evictions], Swedish Enforcement Authority/County Administrative Board, 2020, www.kunskapsguiden.se/hemlöshet).

1.7 Children in need in Sweden

1.7.1 Introduction

Based on the identified shortcomings, it can be concluded that there are common and in part overlapping circumstances that are preventing children from having full access to the key social services highlighted in the Child Guarantee. These include children who are financially disadvantaged, children living in inadequate housing or insecure housing or who are homeless, children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, and children who are placed in care outside their own home. Below is a review of these groups and an attempt to estimate how many children may be in each group.

1.7.2 Children living in economic disadvantage

Children living in economically disadvantaged households may be more vulnerable when it comes to accessing key social services. There are different ways of measuring economic disadvantage. According to Statistics Sweden, in 2019 there were approximately 208 000 children living in economic disadvantage, i.e., with a low relative economic standard. This is defined as children living in a family with a disposable income below 60 per cent of the median for the population (SCB ULF/EU-SILC).

Rädda Barnen, the name of the Swedish Section of Save the Children International, arrives at a similar figure in its 15th report on child poverty in Sweden. According to the report, nearly 200 000 children were living in economic disadvantage in 2019. This is defined on the basis of a composite measure of families with relatively low income and children in families that have been granted income support. The report shows that child poverty according to this definition decreases among children in families with a foreign background and children of single parents. But at the same time, the gaps between these groups and those groups in society with a better standard of living are widening. In recent years, the number of children living in households with a long-term need for financial assistance, i.e., assistance for 10 months or more, has increased. One group with high financial disadvantage is children of single parents, 20 per cent of whom were financially disadvantaged. Half of all children with both a foreign background and a single parent were living in relative financial poverty in 2019. This compares to

1.2 per cent of children with cohabiting parents with a Swedish background (Save the Children Annual Report, 2021).

1.7.3 Children living in inadequate housing or insecure housing or homeless

Since 2018, the number of children affected by an eviction, in the sense that one of their parents has been evicted from their home, has increased, with the exception of 2020. In 2021, 572 children were affected by evictions (Swedish Enforcement Authority).

Many children also live in overcrowded conditions today, which prevents them from bringing friends home and makes homework from school more difficult (Statistics Sweden, *Boendesituation bland gymnasieelever. Större andel trångbodda bland gymnasieelever som ej var behöriga till gymnasieskolan* [Housing situation of upper secondary school pupils. Higher proportion in overcrowded housing among upper secondary school pupils who were not eligible for entry to upper secondary school]).

The National Board of Health and Welfare surveys homelessness in Sweden. The last survey was carried out during a sample week in 2017. Prior to that, surveys were carried out in 2011 and 2005. Out of 33 000 people experiencing homelessness during the 2017 survey week, 11 167 reported being parents. The number of homeless parents has not changed significantly since 2005. Around 1 100 children lived permanently with an acutely homeless parent and at least 890 alternately with an acutely homeless parent. See also the National Board of Health and Welfare's report 'Homelessness 2017 – extent and nature'.

1.7.4 Children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged

Socioeconomic disadvantage has increased in Sweden since the 1990s. Socioeconomic disadvantage here means living in a financially disadvantaged household in combination with factors related to education, position on the labour market, or housing situation. Segregation is most noticeable in suburban areas of large cities, but also occurs in small and medium-sized towns. In areas with socioeconomic challenges, over 50 per cent of the 0–19 age group lived in a household with a low financial standard in 2018. The corresponding figure in other areas was 14 per cent (Statistics Sweden).

Parents of children in areas with socioeconomic challenges are less likely to participate in parenting support, both individually and in groups. This also applies to pregnancy and early childhood.

15 per cent of the population aged 16 and over living in areas with socioeconomic challenges live in households with more than two occupants per bedroom. In other areas, 4 per cent live in overcrowded conditions according to the same definition. People born outside Europe are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions than both those born in Sweden and those born in Europe outside Sweden. In areas with socioeconomic challenges, 30 per cent of people born outside Europe live in overcrowded conditions (Statistics Sweden).

Areas with socioeconomic challenges are described as geographically defined areas characterised by low socioeconomic status, and where criminals have an impact on the local community. These areas together represent only 0.02 per cent of Sweden's geographical area and the population of these areas is around 550 000, which corresponds to approximately 5 per cent of the Swedish population (definition by the Swedish Police Authority).

1.7.5 Children with disabilities

Disability means an impairment of physical, mental or intellectual function. This disability may arise as the result of disease, another condition, a congenital defect or an acquired injury (National Board of Health and Welfare's term bank).

Roughly one in five children (22 per cent) in Sweden have a disability. The most common disability is allergy or asthma. Dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD and autism are also relatively common (Statistics Sweden).

Although not all children with disabilities need support, this group is over-represented in terms of not having full access to key social services.

Children in Sweden are generally in good health. However, trends in children's mental health are worrying. When the statistics are broken down into different background variables, it can be seen that children and young people with disabilities experience psychosomatic symptoms to a greater extent than children and

young people without disabilities. They are also more exposed to bullying and loneliness, as well as online harassment. They also feel more insecure and stressed by schoolwork. (*Skolbarns hälsorvanor* [Schoolchildren's health habits], Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2018). Children with disabilities are at increased risk of all forms of violence and abuse (*Våld mot barn, en nationell kartläggning* [Violence against children, a national survey], 2017, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden).

Children and young people with disabilities also have less active leisure time (*Aktiv fritid* [Active leisure], 2020, Swedish Agency for Participation). Parents of children with disabilities may have great difficulty in coordinating contacts and interventions for their child. Perceived fatigue, difficulty sleeping, anxiety and worry are more common among parents or guardians of children with disabilities than among other parents or guardians.

1.7.6 Children placed in care outside their own home

In 2020, 27 300 children were placed in care outside their own home. The majority of them were placed in family-based care. Children in care are at risk of dropping out of school and not having access to healthcare and dental care to the extent they need. The same applies to children living with a parent in sheltered housing. For example, to ensure that a child's healthcare and dental care needs are met, the social welfare committee needs to work with the healthcare system to ensure that interventions are coordinated. The region in which the child is located must offer healthcare and dental care when needed.

1.8 Children's participation

In the case of a decision or measure that is found to have consequences for a child, special attention and consideration must be paid to the interests of the child. Children should be able to have their say in all decisions that affect them. There are provisions on the best interests of the child in legislation including SoL and LSS. Special attention and consideration must be paid to the interests of the child. It is a right of the child to participate in and be listened to in matters that concern them. Children want to participate in decisions that affect them. Participation requires dialogue between children and adults. Children who have a disability need information about their disability. Adults need to know how the child understands their disability and how the child perceives themselves

and others around them. It is also important to find out about the child's interests, hopes and expectations, as well as any anxieties, fears and anger (www.kunskapsguiden.se).

In accordance with the assessments in *Med unga i fokus* [Focus on young people] bill (Govt Bill 2013/14:191), all central government decisions and measures affecting young people between 13 and 25 years of age are to have a youth perspective based on young people's right to enjoy their human rights as expressed in the fundamental laws and in Sweden's convention obligations in this area. A youth perspective means that young people should be able to exercise their human rights, be seen as a diversity of individuals, be supported to become independent, and have opportunities to participate and exert influence.

The task of the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is to represent the rights and interests of children and young people in light of Sweden's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Within its sphere of activity, the Ombudsman must also gather knowledge and compile statistics on the living conditions of children and young people.

Statistics Sweden conducts surveys of children's living conditions (Barn-ULF), and since 2001 it has regularly interviewed children aged 10–18 (since 2015, 12–18) about their living conditions in the areas of finance, leisure, health, helping at home, relationships, school and safety.

The survey is conducted within the framework of the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). The answers to the questions can also be linked to information provided by the children's parents, such as the parents' occupations and education and the family's living standard. Furthermore, the answers to the questions can be broken down into children with and without disabilities. A number of government commissions have focused on obtaining children's views on, for example, family-based care. The Swedish Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) conducts regular interviews with children who are placed in homes for care or residence (HVB).

The Public Health Agency of Sweden conducts a regular study of the health habits of schoolchildren. The last one was carried out in 2017–2018 and a report on it has since been submitted. The

next study will be carried out in 2021–2022, with an estimated reporting date of spring 2023. The study primarily looks at how children's and young people's living conditions, lifestyle and health have evolved over time, and the differences between girls and boys. The study addresses children aged 11, 13 and 15 and is comparable over time. The survey includes three questions on disability.

The commission of inquiry on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (SOU 2020:63) noted that the provisions in the legislation on the right of children to express their views and have them taken into account in practice, as well as the meaning given to the provisions in different areas of the law, have not been fully implemented. The continued transformation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is therefore central to ensuring that the principles are reflected in their practical application.

In the ongoing initiative to raise awareness of the rights of the child, central government authorities are tasked with developing their work on the practical application of the rights of the child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden is responsible for providing support to the central government agencies, and the county administrative boards are responsible for offering support to municipalities and regions in the same way. In this initiative, support on how to involve children is central.

Through commissions to government agencies, the Government can obtain knowledge about children's views and opinions on their everyday lives and how their rights are being satisfied. In the implementation of this action plan, such targeted government commissions will be considered with a view to involving children in the manner required by the Recommendation.

1.9 Communication of the national action plan

It is important for children and their families to be aware of their rights and the fact that they are entitled to key social services. There is a need to ensure that information about the national action plan reaches the groups primarily addressed by the plan. Actors who need to be involved in the implementation are relevant government agencies, children's rights organisations and representatives of municipalities, regions and counties.

1.10 Implementation framework

The framework consists of existing national strategies and targets with a bearing on the Child Guarantee (see under Section 1.1).

During the implementation period, one or more permanent reference groups will be set up and a continuous dialogue will take place with children's rights organisations. Children will also be involved (see under Section 1.8).

Two reference group meetings were held during the preparation of this action plan, with representatives of government agencies, children's rights organisations and municipalities, regions and counties.

1.11 Quantitative and qualitative targets

The Child Guarantee requires Member States to set qualitative and quantitative targets to be achieved by 2030. Where possible, interim targets to be achieved by 2025 should also be set. The following targets will be monitored over the 10-year period:

1. The proportion of children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families attending early childhood education is to increase.
2. The proportion of children graduating from upper secondary school with pass grades is to increase.
3. Children with disabilities are to receive more of the support needed for equivalent educational opportunities and furthermore comparable living conditions.
4. The proportion of children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families who participate in sports and cultural activities is to increase.
5. The proportion of children in households with long-term financial assistance is to decrease.
6. Children placed in care are to get increased access to education and healthcare, including dental care.
7. The proportion of families in socioeconomic

disadvantage receiving Maternal Health and Child Health Services is to increase.

8. The number of children affected by eviction is to decrease.
9. The proportion of families with children living in inadequate housing (overcrowding combined with a tight housing budget) is to decrease.
10. The number of children experiencing homelessness must decrease.

1.12 Measures

Annex 3 presents ongoing measures in the different sub-areas. During the implementation period, these measures will be monitored. In addition, the focus for new measures should be in areas such as the following over the next 10-year period:

- Early detection through preventive efforts in healthcare, schools and Social Services.
- Greater collaboration at all levels in activities concerning children.
- Interventions in areas with socioeconomic challenges.
- More accuracy and reduced indebtedness concerning the housing allowance.
- More socially sustainable housing.

1.13 EU financing

The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) for the programme period 2021-2027 co-finances projects in areas such as employment and skills development. ESF+ is also designed to help promote the social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including children. The proposed National Operational Programme for the implementation of the European Social Fund includes measures for children (aged 6–18) living in financial disadvantage which aim to improve their schooling, create opportunities for the meaningful use of their leisure time, and include them in a social community. Under the programme proposal, initiatives may also be carried out to increase opportunities for work or study, for example initiatives for young people (aged 13 and over) at risk of dropping out of school or outreach and motivation initiatives for young

people who are not in employment, education or training.

Annex 1 Data collection, monitoring and evaluation

According to the Council Recommendation, the national action plan should include qualitative and quantitative targets to be achieved related to children in need. The action plan should also include a national framework for data collection, monitoring and evaluation of the Recommendation, which is also to be applicable at regional and local levels. This framework also aims to contribute to the EU common monitoring framework. This Annex presents a first review of data sources that may be used as a basis for monitoring as well as identified deficiencies in data availability. In addition to national data, there are also international studies that may be important sources for or supplements to national monitoring. See also 1.6.3 on statistics and monitoring broken down by girls and boys. Annex 4 has additional information about statistical data.

School and education – area 7

The Swedish National Agency for Education is responsible for Sweden's official statistics on the school system and childcare. The Swedish National Agency for Education collects data and reports statistics on children, pupils, staff, costs and educational outcomes. See also [statistics on early childhood education, school and adult education – Swedish National Agency for Education](#). The Swedish National Agency for Education is also responsible for the collection of Sweden's data within the framework of the PISA and PIRLS studies.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) has developed a Strategy for Health which includes target areas and indicators for monitoring related to children's health, education and leisure activities. See also [Strategy for Health, SALAR](#). The indicators in the strategy can be found in the [Kolada](#) database.

MUCF reports statistics on young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET category). The statistics are unique and are based on register data for the entire population aged 16–29.

The health habits of schoolchildren aged 11, 13 and 15 have been

studied since 1985 in Sweden. The study is international and conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). See also Health Behaviour in School-aged children – [Statistics, Public Health Agency of Sweden \(folkhalsomyndigheten.se\)](#).

The Swedish Arts Council, via Kulturskolecentrum, reports statistics on children's and young people's participation in municipal music and arts schools. See also [\(Statistics, kulturradet.se\)](#).

Statistics Sweden and the Delegation Against Segregation have developed statistics to measure and monitor segregation in Sweden. See also [Statistics and monitoring - Delmos](#).

Healthcare – area 8

The National Board of Health and Welfare's annual Status Report for different areas of the healthcare system and Social Services presents statistics on the situation of children in social child and youth care, financial assistance and homelessness and exclusion from the housing market. among others.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have regularly produced Open Comparisons in the area of public health. These are indicator-based reports that show comparisons of public health between regions and between municipalities which reflect both health outcomes and underlying factors that affect health, such as education, employment and safety, as well as lifestyle habits (Open Comparisons of Public Health 2019, Public Health Agency of Sweden).

Healthy diet – area 9

The Swedish Food Agency regularly conducts national surveys of public meals in municipal activities such as municipal early childhood education. See also [Facts – Meals in early childhood education and at school \(livsmedelsverket.se\)](#).

The Health Behaviour in School-aged children survey (see above) asks questions about dietary and meal habits.

Adequate housing – area 10

The National Homelessness Survey by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which is conducted every 6 years, includes children experiencing homelessness.

The Swedish Enforcement Authority publishes annual statistics on evictions involving children. See also [Statistics on evictions, Swedish Enforcement Authority](#).

The Swedish Social Insurance Agency is responsible for and publishes statistics on the housing allowance for families with children. See also [Banner - Who receives housing benefit? \(forsakringskassan.se\)](#).

The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning conducts a housing market survey ([Open data – Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning’s housing market survey – Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning](#)) and a housing shortage survey. Statistics Sweden also publishes statistics on housing, including overcrowding. Statistics Sweden’s SILC survey also asks questions about housing circumstances, some of which are comparable between EU Member States. A number of municipalities, particularly in large cities, conduct their own surveys of the housing situation for families with children among other groups.

Cross-sectoral child statistics

The State and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have developed the Kolada municipal and regional database, which contains detailed statistics and key figures on municipal and regional activities. The key figures are based on data from sources including a large number of government agencies such as Statistics Sweden, the Swedish Election Authority, the Swedish Companies Registration Office, the National Agency for Education and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

Statistics Sweden conducts surveys of children’s living conditions (Barn-ULF), see above, which include the areas of financial situation, leisure, health, helping at home, relationships, housing, school and safety. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society also conducts a survey for municipalities and regions (LUPP) to find out how young people (including children aged 13–16 and 16–

19) are doing, how they feel and what they think about living in their place of residence. The questions cover the areas of leisure, school, family, health, safety, society and democracy, work and the future.

Non-profit organisations also conduct various types of qualitative and quantitative surveys that address children or families with children, either themselves or in collaboration with Statistics Sweden or other organisations. For example, see Rädda Barnen's recurring report Child Poverty in Sweden. See also [Child Poverty in Sweden - Save the Children \(raddabarnen.se\)](https://raddabarnen.se/en/child-poverty-in-sweden).

Gaps identified in the statistics

The gaps in the statistics identified relate in particular to the ability to link children's, and families with children's, access to different types of welfare service to information on socioeconomic factors such as income, education and geography. This includes children's access to healthcare and dental care, the housing situation of families with children and evictions of families with children.

Statistics are also largely missing on children with a disability and on the access of children in care to various types of welfare services.

Finally, it is noted that it is not possible to report statistics for groups of children belonging to a national minority or identifying as LGBTQI+.

Annex 2 Enabling framework for targets and monitoring

The table below presents a draft template for a framework for targets and monitoring of the action plan, including a number of preliminary target wordings and examples of indicators. The framework should also include information such as relevant actors, the periodicity of monitoring, detailed definitions of the main indicators and any sub-target indicators and whether these can be reported at the regional and local levels, supplementary and/or contextual indicators, statistics sources, gaps identified in the statistics, and data collection measures.

Table: Enabling framework for targets and monitoring

Target wording (Policy measure)	Target 2030	Quantitative indicators	Relevant actors
7. Early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities			
The proportion of children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families attending early childhood education is to increase (7a)		The proportion of children (aged 1-5) enrolled in early childhood education, by level of education of parents (Swedish National Agency for Education)	Municipality and State
The proportion of children graduating from upper secondary school with pass grades is to increase (7b, c)		Educational outcomes of graduates by programme and specialisation, by level of education of parents (National Agency for Education)	Municipality and State
Children with disabilities are to receive more of the support needed for equivalent educational opportunities and furthermore equal living conditions (7d)		Sources: Barn-ULF, Swedish Agency for Participation, Public Health Agency of Sweden, National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools	Municipality, region and State
The proportion of children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families who participate in sports and cultural activities is to increase (7k)		Indicators from Barn-ULF (Statistics Sweden)	Municipality, State, civil society

The proportion of children in households with long-term social assistance is to decrease (7)		The proportion of children in households receiving social assistance for at least 10 months in a year (National Board of Health and Welfare)	Municipality and State
8. Healthcare			
Children placed in care are to get increased access to education and healthcare, including dental care (8a)		N/A	Region, municipality and State
The proportion of families in socioeconomic disadvantage situation accessing Maternal Health and Child Health Services is to increase (8a)		N/A	Region
10. Adequate housing			
The number of children affected by eviction is to decrease (10a, b, c)		Children affected by enforced eviction (Swedish Enforcement Authority)	Municipality
The proportion of families with children living in inadequate housing (overcrowding combined with a tight housing budget) is to decrease (10a, b, c)		The proportion of families with children living in inadequate housing according to the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning's metric for housing shortage	Municipality (State)
The number of children who are homelessness is to decrease (10a, b, c)		The number of children in any of the four homelessness situations, estimated by means of national or local surveys	Municipality, State

Area 7 - With a view to guaranteeing effective and free access to early childhood education and care, education and school-based activities and a healthy meal each school day for children in need, Member States are called on to take the following measures:

Recommendations	Types of measure	Measure s	Time
7a Survey and address economic and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, and education and school-based activities.	Government commission	Early and coordinated initiatives (U2017/01236 and U2020/00363)	1 June 2023
7a Identify and address financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education, and school-based activities.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 27 January 2022 on early childhood education for more children	
7a Identify and address financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education, and school-based activities.	Commission of inquiry	A window of opportunity – strengthening the children’s rights perspective for children in sheltered housing (SOU 2017:112) and Ds 2020:16. Under consideration.	
7a Identify and address financial and non-financial barriers to participation in early childhood education and care, education, and school-based activities.	Commission of inquiry	Commission of inquiry (dir. 2021:101) on expanding the right to education in school-age educare	3 November 2023
7b Take measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving, to re-engage children who are at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of education or training.	Government commission	Support actors working in activities that help young people not in employment, education or training to enter employment, education or training (Appropriation directions 2022 to the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society).	1 April 2023
7b Take measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving, to re-engage children who are at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of education or training.	Agreement with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)	The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have now signed an agreement on co-financing the project <i>Uppdrag fullföljd utbildning</i> (Mission: completed education), which aims to increase the proportion of young people who have completed upper	The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) must submit an interim report on the work by 15 February 2022 and a final report by 15 February 2023.

		secondary education. For this agreement, the Government has allocated SEK 8 million annually in 2021 and 2022.	
7b Take measures to prevent and reduce early school leaving, to re-engage children who are at risk of dropping out or have dropped out of education or training.	Legislation	Govt Bill adopted 24 February 2022 on More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school.	
7c Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 17 February 2022 on Pupil health and better education for pupils with learning disabilities.	
7c Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps.	Government commission	Special education for learning The Swedish National Agency for Education, together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, is to produce support material for investigating a pupil's need for special needs support (Appropriation directions 2022).	1 February 2023
7c Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps.	Government commission	The Swedish National Agency for Education, together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, is to arrange skills development courses for staff who work with pupils studying the curriculum of either compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, or compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities (Appropriation directions 2022).	29 February 2024
7c Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps.	Government commission	The Swedish National Agency for Education, together with the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools and the Swedish Institute for Educational	1 February 2024

		Research, is to produce knowledge summaries in the areas of pupil health and support (Appropriation directions 2022).	
7c Provide learning support to children with learning difficulties to compensate for their linguistic, cognitive and educational gaps.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 17 February 2022 on learning disabilities special schools and additional funds for special support.	
7d Adapt facilities and educational materials of early childhood education and care and of educational establishments to the specific needs of children with disabilities, using inclusive teaching and learning methods; for this purpose ensure that qualified teachers and other educational professionals are available, such as psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitators or teaching assistants.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 17 February 2022 on Pupil health and improved education for pupils with learning disabilities.	
7d Adapt facilities and educational materials of early childhood education and care and of educational establishments to the specific needs of children with disabilities, using inclusive teaching and learning methods; for this purpose ensure that qualified teachers and other educational professionals are available, such as psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitators or teaching assistants.	Initiative	Government grant for the employment of teaching assistants under the Ordinance (2019:551) on government grants for the employment of teaching assistants.	

7d Adapt facilities and educational materials of early childhood education and care and of educational establishments to the specific needs of children with disabilities, using inclusive teaching and learning methods; for this purpose ensure that qualified teachers and other educational professionals are available, such as psychologists, speech therapists, rehabilitators or teaching assistants.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 17 February 2022 on a safe and supportive study environment in schools.	
7e Put in place measures to support inclusive education and avoid segregated classes in early childhood education and care establishments and in educational establishments; this may also include giving priority to children in need.	Legislation	Govt Bill adopted on 3 March 2022 on early childhood education for more children.	
7e Put in place measures to support inclusive education and avoid segregated classes in early childhood education and care establishments and in educational establishments; this may also include giving priority to children in need.	Legislation	Govt Bill adopted 24 February 2022 on More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school.	
7e Put in place measures to support inclusive education and avoid segregated classes in early childhood education and care establishments and in educational establishments; this may also include giving priority to children in need.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 17 February 2022 on greater equality in school choice.	
7e Put in place measures to support inclusive education and avoid segregated classes in early childhood education and care establishments and in educational establishments; this may also include giving priority to children in need.	Legislation	Proposal referred to the Council on Legislation for consideration adopted on 10 February 2022 on greater equivalence for school authorities.	
7f Provide at least one healthy meal each school day.			
7g Ensure provision of educational materials, including books and uniforms, where applicable.	Commission of inquiry	The commission of inquiry on teaching and learning materials – the importance of books and pupils' access to knowledge (SOU 2021:70).	Under consideration.
7g Ensure provision of educational materials, including books and uniforms, where applicable.	Government commission	Starting in autumn 2022, the National Agency for Education will be responsible for national coordination of teaching in the national	28 February 2023

		minority languages.	
7h Provide high speed connectivity, digital services and adequate equipment necessary for distance learning to ensure access to educational content online.	Strategy	The Government has decided on a national digitalisation strategy for schools in place until 2022. Since 2020, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been the sectorial authority for digitalisation in the school system.	
7i Provide transport to early childhood education and care and education establishments, where applicable.			
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Commission of inquiry	The Government has appointed an inquiry chair to review whether the right to participate in educational activities in school-age educare should be expanded (dir. 2021:101).	The final report of the commission must be delivered by 3 November 2022.
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Initiative	Implementation of the Reading Delegation's proposals. The intervention is permanent.	Permanent
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Initiative	The government grant to municipal music and arts schools is SEK 200 million in 2022 and SEK 100 million in 2023 according to BP 21 (p. 34).	
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Initiative	The Government is augmenting the Creative Schools grant up to the end of 2023.	
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Government commission	Since 2018, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been tasked with strengthening the reading break (<i>läslov</i>) (Appropriation directions 2021). This is a school holiday period dedicated to reading.	16 December 2023
7j Ensure equal and inclusive access to school-based activities, including participation in school trips.	Initiative	Swedish Sports Confederation: Focus on the target group of pupils in	

		preschool class to year 6, with special priority given to reaching the children who exercise the least.	
7k Develop a framework for cooperation of educational establishments, local communities and social economy and social services actors to support inclusive education, to provide after school care and opportunities to participate in sport, leisure and cultural activities, and to build and invest in educational establishments as centres of inclusion and participation.			

Area 8 - With a view to guaranteeing effective and free access to quality healthcare for children in need, Member States are called on to take the following measures:

Recommendations	Type of measure	Measures	Time
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.	Commission of inquiry	Start with the children! Good and local healthcare for all children and young people (SOU: 2021:34) and Start with the children! Monitor health and share information for good and local healthcare (SOU: 2021:78).	Under consideration.
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.	Government commission	Commission to the National Board of Health and Welfare to conduct a pilot study on a national healthcare programme for children and young people (S2021/06171)	31 October 22
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.		Commission to the Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare to jointly implement a development project aimed at improving collaboration between the School Health Service, the healthcare system and Social Services so that children and	16 June 2023
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.	Commission of inquiry	From parts to the whole – A reform for coordinated, needs-based and person-centred interventions for persons with comorbidities (SOU 2021:93).	Under consideration in the Government Offices of Sweden.
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.	Government commission	Commission to the National Board of Health and Welfare to implement development initiatives to strengthen the conditions for children and young people aged 0-20 in care to have access to good healthcare, dental care and uninterrupted schooling (S2020/07505 in part)	30 April 2024
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening programmes; ensure timely curative and rehabilitative follow-up, including access to medicines, treatments and supports, and access to vaccination programmes.	Government commission	The Government has commissioned a number of its agencies to submit input for a future national strategy in the area of mental health and suicide prevention.	1 September 23
8a Facilitate early detection and treatment of diseases and developmental problems, including those related to mental health, ensure access to periodic medical, including dental and ophthalmology, examinations and screening		Better opportunities for pupils to achieve learning outcomes (SOU 2021:11)	

8b. Provide targeted rehabilitation and habilitation services for children with disabilities.	Commission concerning statistics on assistive technologies (S2019/01378).	An initial report was delivered in January 2022.
8c. Implement accessible health promotion and disease prevention programmes targeting children in need and their families, as well as professionals working with children.	Kommitté för främjande av fysisk aktivitet (Committee for the promotion of physical activity) Främjafys (framjafys.se). See also under a.	The work will continue until 2023.

Area 9 - With a view to guaranteeing effective access to sufficient and healthy nutrition for children in need, including through the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme, Member States are called on to:

Recommendations	Type of measure	Measures	Time
9a. Support access to healthy meals also outside of school days, including through in-kind or financial support.	Government commission	Commission to the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Food Agency to develop proposals for national targets with indicators for sustainable, healthy food consumption (S2021/03523)	Interim report 31 January 2023, final report 2024.
9a. Support access to healthy meals also outside of school days, including through in-kind or financial support.	Government commission	Commission to investigate and create the conditions for an agreement in the food industry to reduce the salt and sugar content of food (N2020/02692 N2019/02144, N2019/01425)	Interim reports 15 February 2022 and 2023, final report 2024
9b. Ensure that nutrition standards in early childhood education and care and education establishments address specific dietary needs.	Government commission	See under a. And that the Swedish Food Agency's national competence centre for public meals should work, among other things, to develop national guidelines and educational material for meals in early childhood education and at schools and provide support for good dietary habits in support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (LSS).	Commission ongoing, 2020-2025
9b. Ensure that nutrition standards in early childhood education and care and education establishments address specific dietary needs.		Implement measures in 2020-2025 within the framework of the food strategy (N2019/03245)	28 February 2023
9c. Limit advertisement and restrict the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in early childhood education and care and educational establishments.	Government commission	Commission to the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Food Agency to develop national targets for sustainable, healthy food consumption (S2021/03523).	31 January 2024
9c. Limit advertisement and restrict the availability of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in early childhood education and care and educational establishments.	Survey	The Swedish Food Agency will conduct a dietary habits survey among young children, one age group at a time, first four-year-olds, then 1.5-year-olds and finally 9-month-olds.	
9d. Provide adequate information to children and families on healthy nutrition for children.	Strategy	National breastfeeding strategy prepared by the Swedish Food Agency with the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Consumer Agency.	

Area 10 - With a view to guaranteeing effective access to adequate housing for children in need, Member States are called on to take the following measures:

Recommendations	Type of measure	Measures	Time
10a. Ensure that homeless children and their families receive adequate accommodation, prompt transfer from temporary accommodation to permanent housing and provision of relevant social and advisory services.	Commission of inquiry	Commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53).	31 March 22
10a. Ensure that homeless children and their families receive adequate accommodation, prompt transfer from temporary accommodation to permanent housing and provision of relevant social and advisory services.	Commission of inquiry	Sustainable social services – A new Social Services Act (SOU 2020:47) with proposals on the involvement of Social Services in community planning. The report is in preparation.	
10a. Ensure that homeless children and their families receive adequate accommodation, prompt transfer from temporary accommodation to permanent housing and provision of relevant social and advisory services.	Strategy	The Government intends to develop a new national homelessness strategy for the period 2022-2026.	

10a. Ensure that homeless children and their families receive adequate accommodation, prompt transfer from temporary accommodation to permanent housing and provision of relevant social and advisory services.	Government commission	Commission to the Swedish Enforcement Authority to increase cooperation to prevent evictions (Fi2020/00714).	The commission will be presented on an interim basis in the Authority's annual reports for 2022 and 2023 and the final report will be submitted in 2024.
10b. Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty; such assessment and revision should also include social housing and housing benefits.	Legislation	On 20 January 2022, the Government adopted the Bill 'A better basis for measures in the housing market'.	
10b. Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty; such assessment and revision should also include social housing and housing benefits.	Commission of inquiry	On target – Introduction of monthly data in housing allowance and maintenance support (SOU 2021:101).	Under consideration.
10b. Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty; such assessment and revision should also include social housing and housing benefits.	Commission of inquiry	Commission of inquiry on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53).	March 2022
10b. Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty; such assessment and revision should also include social housing and housing benefits.	Government commission	In its report 'Preventing and Combating Homelessness' in 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare outlined several success factors for the municipalities' work to address the problem of evictions. The Government has again tasked the County Administrative Boards with supporting the municipalities in this work based on the recommendations of the National Board of Health and Welfare (Appropriation directions 2022, Fi2020/02647 et al.).	5 July
10b. Assess and revise, if necessary, national, regional and local housing policies and take action to ensure that the interests of families with children in need are duly taken into account, including addressing energy poverty; such assessment and revision should also include social housing and housing benefits.	Government commission	Commission to the Swedish Enforcement Authority to increase cooperation to prevent evictions (Fi2020/00714).	The commission's work will be reported on regularly in the Authority's annual reports for 2022 and 2023 and the final report will be submitted in 2024.
10c. Provide for priority and timely access to social housing for children in need and their families.	Commission of inquiry	on socially sustainable housing (dir. 2020:53). See under b.	March 2022
10d. Prevent children from being placed in institutions while taking into account the best interests of children. Ensure the transition of children from institutional to quality community-based or family-based care and support their independent living and social integration.	Commission of inquiry	Commission of inquiry on children and young people in care (terms of reference 2021:84)	10 April 2023
10d. Prevent children from being placed in institutions while taking into account the best interests of children. Ensure the transition of children from institutional to quality community-based or family-based care and support their independent living and social integration.	Government commission	Commission to increase knowledge about national adoptions, etc. in family-based care (S2020/05272)	31 March 23