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Sweden

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European Disability Expertise (EDE) provides independent scientific support to the Commission's policy Unit responsible for disability issues. It aims to mainstream disability equality in EU policy processes, including implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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¹ For an introduction to the Semester process, see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/how-european-semester-works/>.

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1 Executive summary and recommendations

1.1 Key points and main challenges for the European Semester in 2021

Employment The employment situation for persons with disabilities is slowly improving but national statistics show a disability gap of 10 percentage points in employment rate between persons with disabilities and population in total. The disability gap is larger, 15 percentage points, concerning persons with reduced work capacity. The EU-SILC data indicates an employment gap of 28 points. The measures taken to improve the labour market situation for persons with disabilities are mainly aimed at increasing employment through participation in various programs at the Public employment services or sheltered employment via Samhall. However, the effectiveness of measures varies depending on the program. There are also relatively large gender differences where women with disabilities are at a disadvantage concerning subsidized employment and participation in different programs at the public employment services.

Social policies and healthcare Overall, statistics and reports on poverty and social exclusion show that people with disabilities are disadvantaged regarding their financial situation and especially women with disabilities are over-represented among those in poverty. In support and transfer systems compensations level has remain unchanged for almost two decades in contrast to disposable income for employed, which has increased by 60 % during the same period. Persons with disabilities on activity allowances (disability pension for age 18-29) and sickness allowances (age 30-65) has decreased the last five years. Opportunities for independent living is foremost provided by personal assistance, but the number who are entitled to personal assistance allowances has decreased, while special accommodation for adults with disabilities (residential care) has increased slightly. People with disabilities in general have worse health than the population in general and access to healthcare is not equal. There is a digitisation gap between people with disabilities and the population in general which further complicates access to healthcare.

Education In the last 10 years the level of education of persons with disabilities has increased gradually but the disability gap in education is still large. Although the trend is positive, there are still many challenges. In compulsory schools' support to students in need of support has fallen sharply. However, it is difficult to pinpoint students with disabilities and their needs because schools are not allowed to keep records of disability or health, only of those who are given special support in teaching, regardless of the reason. Proposals from the government within the education area do not address students with disabilities and are foremost focused on immigrants.

1.2 Recommendations for Sweden

These recommendations are based on the evidence and analysis presented in the following chapters of our report.

- **Recommendation:** The increasing use of sheltered employment and active labour market measures, which are not primarily aimed at gainful employment at the open labour market, as instrument to enhance labour market participation must be counteracted if to fulfil the goals in CDPR article 27 and the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 8.² The recommendation is that the Public Employment Services, as well as the municipal employment services, to higher extent make use of evidence-based measures aimed at gainful employment at the open labour market, such as Supported employment, in their services.
Rationale: The Government propose increased compensation to sheltered employment at Samhall, and the Public employment services aim at preparatory efforts and the development the work-oriented rehabilitation efforts, which in terms of results show a low employment rate and may risk extending the time before people with disabilities establish themselves in the labour market.
- **Recommendation:** The support and transfer systems compensations level must be reviewed to avoid the large differences in the risk of poverty between people with disabilities and the rest of the working population. The recommendation is that the authorities perform a review and based on that, adjust the transfer systems compensations level.
Rationale: In support and transfer systems compensations level has remain unchanged for almost two decades in contrast to disposable income for employed, which has increased by 60 % during the same period.
- **Recommendation:** Opportunities for independent living must be noted, if Sweden is to fulfil article 19, in the CRPD;³ on personal assistance and equal living conditions. The recommendation is that the authorities review personal assistance from an independent living-perspective of equality in living conditions and full participation in society, rather from a one-sided perspective on cost.
Rationale: The number who are entitled to personal assistance allowances has decreased, while special accommodation for adults with disabilities (residential care) has increased.
- **Recommendation:** Education needs to be made available to students with disabilities, and support in schools needs to be increased if the disability gap in education is to be evened out. The recommendation is that there should be national funds available for the schools, so that the municipal budget does not decide whether students with disabilities should receive support in school or not.
Rationale: There are still a significant disability gap in education level between people with disabilities and the rest of the population and the schools' support to students in need of support has fallen sharply.

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/employment>.

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx#19>.

2 Opportunities to mainstream disability equality in the Semester documents

2.1 [Country Report](#) for Sweden (Staff Working Document)

In 2020, the Country Report for Sweden included the following direct references to disability issues:

- 'p. 37 People with disabilities are also at a disadvantage. While their employment level of is above the EU average, the employment gap between people with and without disabilities is wider than the EU average. Their unemployment level is also higher than among people without disabilities.
- p. 40 People with disabilities are more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This risk in Sweden is higher than the EU average and the gap between people with and without disabilities is very wide compared with the EU average.'

2.2 [Country Specific Recommendation](#) for Sweden (CSR)

In 2020, the Country Specific Recommendation for Sweden included the following direct references to disability issues:

- 'Labour market integration of groups whose potential was not fully used before the crisis, such as non-EU migrants and people with disabilities, will also be necessary.'

The acknowledgement of disability and disadvantage in the Semester analysis of Sweden is welcome but could be significantly strengthened. There is a need to mainstream disability equality in employment and social policies and to make support for persons with disabilities a targeted priority, while recognising their intersectional needs.

- The most important overall recommendation is to mainstream disability and have the disability aspect as one of the top priorities.
- There is a risk that disability is overshadowed by other main concerns such labour market integration of immigrants, socio-economic segregated schools, mismatch in the labour market etc.
- In the groups referred to as low-skilled and the long-term unemployed people with disabilities are over-represented and among the most vulnerable.
- Aggregating them in this way masks the specific nature of their disadvantage and support needs.
- In terms of intersectional discrimination, the living situation as well as access to employment measures is different for people with disabilities according to gender, socio-economic background and ethnicity.
- The same arguments apply also in relation to education and social inclusion.

3 Disability and the labour market - analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

In 2014, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Sweden:

[Article 27 UN CRPD](#) addresses Work and Employment.

'50. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities to obtain work on the basis of the report presented by the FunkA Inquiry (FunkA-utredning). It further suggests that the State party increase measures of support, including, inter alia, personal assistance in employment, technical assistance in performing in the workplace, reduced social fees, financial support to employers, rehabilitation and vocational training, and that it put in place measures to narrow the employment and pay gender gap. The Committee recommends that the State party assess the impact of the use in the labour market of the term 'people with reduced capacities or limitations' to refer to persons with disabilities, and revise it in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination.'

National disability strategies or action plans may also be relevant to these issues in Sweden (National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy).

On 30 November 2017, the Swedish Riksdag decided on goals and focus on the Swedish disability policy (*Nationellt mål och inriktning för funktionshinderspolitiken* Prop. 2016/17:188). Regarding the labour market, the Government's goal is to increase the employment rate for people with disabilities and to reduce unemployment, in accordance with the guidelines in the UN's Agenda 2030.⁴

In May 2019, the report *Styrkraft Power to steer in the Disability Policy* (SOU 2019: 23)⁵ was submitted to the Government. The inquiry has been tasked with reviewing the governance and follow-up of the government's disability policy. The inquiry proposes that the regulation governing the authorities' responsibility for disability policy be tightened, that the principle of universal design should be guiding, that knowledge about the living conditions of people with disabilities should increase, including through new official statistics, and that a national coordinator be appointed.

3.1 Summary of the labour market situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate an employment rate for persons with disabilities in Sweden of 52.7 % in 2018, compared to 81.0 % for other persons and approximately 1.9 points above the EU27 average - resulting in an estimated disability employment gap of approximately 28 percent points (EU27 average gap 24.2, see Tables 2-4).

⁴ National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy, <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2017/05/prop.-201617188/>.

⁵ https://www.regeringen.se/4ada4f/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/socialdepartementet/funktionshinder/sou-2019_23_webb.pdf.

The same data indicate unemployment rates of 22.7 % and 5.1 %, respectively in 2018 (see Tables 5-7) and the economic activity rate for persons with disabilities in Sweden was 68.1 %, compared to 85.4 % for other persons (see Tables 8-10). These indications are broken down by gender and age in the respective tables in annex.

Employment data is also available from an annual survey on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities in Sweden.⁶ This data indicates an activity rate (employed + unemployed jobseekers)⁷ among persons with disabilities of 75 % and 72 % for people with reduced work capacity in 2019, compared with 85 % of the population, a difference of 10 percent points. The difference between the proportion of people with disabilities and the rest of the population have decreased over time. In 2013, the difference between the population was 15 and 20 percent points, respectively, for people with disabilities and for people with reduced work capacity (see Table A in annex 7.1.3).

According to the national survey data, the proportion employed (employed + certain unemployed enrolled in various programs at the Swedish Public Employment Service)⁸ is less among people with disabilities than in the population in general, 69 % compared to 79 %, a difference of 10 percent points. From 2013, the employment rate has increased in the population, from 77 % to 79 %. During the same period, the employment rate for people with disabilities has increased from 62 % to 69 %. However, there is a smaller proportion of people with disabilities who work full time compared to the population as a whole. In 2020, approximately 153 000 people with disabilities and reduced work capacity were enrolled at the Public employment services and participated in various programs, which constitutes a significant part of the approximately 550,000 with disabilities and reduced work capacity in the population (16-64 years). It can therefore be assumed that active labour market measures, and not only employment, form the basis for Sweden's relatively narrow disability gap in employment rate.

In 2019, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 8 % compared to 6 % in the total population. Among people with disabilities with reduced work capacity, unemployment is 10 %. Since 2013, unemployment has decreased in the population, a trend that is not visible among people with disabilities, except between 2018-2019 when unemployment decreased from 11 % to 7.8 %.

At the workplace

According to the same survey, people with disabilities are less satisfied with their jobs than the rest of the population and among people with disabilities there is, especially among women, a higher proportion who feel that they are mentally exhausted after

⁶ Statistics Sweden
https://www.scb.se/contentassets/14e47b5fde424ca188ad70f4acbd7620/am0503_2019a01_br_a_m78br2002.pdf.

⁷ Activity rate = employed + unemployed.

⁸ In addition to employees and entrepreneurs, those who have worked or participated in certain labor market policy programs during a special reference week are also considered employed.

their work every week.⁹ Every fourth person with a disability has experienced discrimination during the past five years. In addition, the fear of losing their job is higher among people with disabilities.

Of those employed with reduced work capacity, 79 % assess that they need adaptations or support to be able to perform their work, and 64 % need more than one adaptation or support. The most common need for adaptation is adapted work pace, followed by adapted work tasks and adapted working hours. A higher proportion of employed women with reduced working capacity state the need for adapted working hours or adapted working pace. Among those who are not employed, 58 % of people with disabilities and reduced work capacity state that they could perform a job if they received one or more adaptations or support.

Administrative data indicates that the number of job seekers with disabilities registered at the Public Employment Service (PES) during week 36, 2020 was approximately 153,000 people.¹⁰ Compared with the same week last year, which is a decrease of just over 6,000 people. Over the last ten-year period, the number of job seekers with reduced work capacity has fluctuated, but the trend has shown a declining number.¹¹

The 2020 Country report for Sweden points out rising unemployment as a concern, and especially for young people, as well as labour shortages. There is a mismatch between supply and demand where the demand for people with low levels of qualification is very limited. People with disabilities are also at a disadvantage and the employment gap between people with and without disabilities is wider than the EU average, and they face a higher risk of unemployment than the population in general.

Differences between men and women with disabilities

The Swedish government has issued a goal of economic equality and that women and men should have the same opportunities and conditions in terms of paid work that gives financial independence. On behalf of the Government, the Gender Equality Authority and the Swedish Participation Authority have mapped the challenges in achieving the second gender equality policy sub-goal with regard to the situation of women with disabilities. The report points to a number of challenges when it comes to both finances and participation in society, as follows:¹²

- 'Women with disabilities are over-represented in the group whose disposable income is under 60 % of the median income in Sweden, which is the relative poverty line.

⁹

https://www.scb.se/contentassets/14e47b5fde424ca188ad70f4acbd7620/am0503_2019a01_br_a_m78br2002.pdf.

¹⁰ Statistics from the Public employment Services
http://qvs12ext.ams.se/QvAJAXZfc/opendoc.htm?document=extern_%5Cvstatplus_extern.qvw&host=QVS_%40w001765&anonymous=true_%20&select=StartTrigger.1.

¹¹ <https://mb.cision.com/Public/1326/2522604/85972f08d739107b.pdf>.

¹² Jämställdhetsmyndigheten 2019 Ekonomisk jämställdhet för kvinnor med funktionsnedsättning.
<https://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/ekonomisk-jamstalldhet-for-kvinnor-med-funktionsnedsattning-20195>.

- There are deficiencies within the education system that delay and limit the labour market establishment of young women with disabilities.
- There are crucial differences between women with disabilities and comparative groups in terms of labour force participation, especially in the case of women who are limited in their work capacity. For these women, long-term unemployment is more common, and a lower proportion are moving from unemployment to work.
- There is a large difference between women and men with disabilities when it comes to work prospects. Among employed persons with disabilities, significantly fewer women work fulltime than men. Women with disabilities are part-time unemployed or have hourly work to a greater extent than men with disabilities and other women and men.
- The opportunities to take advantage of support initiatives on the labour market differs between women and men with disabilities who are registered with the Swedish Public Employment Service. For example, the number of women who find work with support is significantly lower than the number of men.
- In many cases, attitudes towards employing people with disabilities is negative. 40 % of the group of women with disabilities and impaired work capacity find themselves exposed to various kinds of discrimination or victimisation in working life due to their disability'.

The survey, on which the report is based, shows that women with disabilities have worse conditions than men with disabilities in terms of both participation in the labour market and working conditions and therefore have lower incomes and less opportunities for financial independence. This leads to many women with disabilities living in financial insecurity and vulnerability. The poor anchoring in the labour market affects the financial levels for a future pension or when using other welfare systems. The survey also shows that the interplay between part-time paid work and support from the transfer systems does not work satisfactorily.¹³

3.2 Analysis of labour market policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Sweden.

In the regulation letter for 2020, the PES received several assignments to strengthen the position of people with disabilities in the labour market.¹⁴ The PES must ensure effective support, in job matching and in ongoing support, to increase the work capacity of persons with disabilities in the long term. The PES shall also report the results of the measures for gender mainstreaming that have been taken so that their activities will contribute to achieving the goals for gender equality policy. The employment service must also take measures to enable women and men to have equal access to support, especially among those born abroad.

¹³ <https://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se/files/2019/04/2019-8-ekonomisk-jamstallldhet-for-kvinnor-med-funktionsnedsattning.pdf>.

¹⁴ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2019/12/uppdrag-till-arbetsformedlingen-2020/>.

The PES' business plan 2020 states (among other things) that:¹⁵

- A higher proportion of people with disabilities shall get work (or start studies)
- The proportion of new decisions on wage subsidies to women will increase
- PES shall ensure the necessary competence to assess the needs, and follow up the results, of preparatory efforts and support in matching to jobseekers with disabilities in order to increase the person's capacity to work.
- PES will develop the work-oriented rehabilitation to strengthen support for those in need of rehabilitation efforts or to clarify work capacity
- The on-going efforts of influencing employers' attitudes and ensuring that the opportunities for adaptation and employment support are used, based on the individual's needs, must continue.
- PES shall cooperate regionally and nationally with Samhall, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the municipalities.
- PES shall assign people with long periods without work to a wage subsidy for development in employment with Samhall.¹⁶ Young adults under the age of 30 must be given priority and a gender equality perspective must be integrated into the assignment.
- PES will increase the use of SIUS¹⁷ for people with disabilities by focusing on cooperation with employers in order to be able to offer suitable and adapted workplaces and jobs.

In the budget bill for 2021, concerning the area of the labour market, it is a specific point regarding disability.¹⁸ The government proposes that the additional cost compensation to Samhall be increased by SEK 400 million from 2021.

The Swedish Public Employment Service offers various programs to jobseekers, where people with disabilities can participate as a participant in a program. The relevant PES initiatives, the number of participants and their employment outcomes are summarized in Table A and Table B (see annex 7.1.3).

Despite the relatively good labour market situation, the number of young people with disabilities who enrol in the PES has more than doubled in ten years.¹⁹ The group of young people with disabilities is overall strongly overrepresented among young people without employment.²⁰ PES has therefore specially examined young jobseekers with disabilities to see how long they remain registered at the PES and for what reason

¹⁵

https://arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.47a458fb16df81b9133ec45/1582203083147/Verksamhetsplan_%202020.pdf.

¹⁶ A state-own company, which exclusively employ people with disabilities, in sheltered employment.

¹⁷ A "Supported employment"-oriented program in PES.

¹⁸ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/400-miljoner-kronor-extra-foreslas-till-samhall/>.

¹⁹ Arbetsförmedlingen 2018 Unga med funktionsnedsättning på Arbetsförmedlingen – utvecklingen över tid. Arbetsförmedlingen analys 2018:11

<https://arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.4fb667a1169bfd2c0a699ec/1556095496934/unga-funktionsnedsattning-arbetsformedlingen.pdf>.

²⁰ SOU 2017:19.

<https://www.regeringen.se/49343c/contentassets/d22e999adfad4c0aaa313fef7af4f22e/uppdrag-samverkan---steg-pa-vagen-mot-fordjupad-lokal-samverkan-for-unga-arbetslosa-sou-201719>.

they have ended their registration.²¹ The statistics show that of the young people who were studied, as many as 94 % had left the PES at some point within four years, and but only half of these had left for work and studies. Young people with a longer enrolment period left to a greater extent for unsubsidized work compared with people with a shorter enrolment period.

There are differences between young women and men, where young men had shorter time until they got a subsidized work, than young women, but longer time to unsubsidized work. A lower proportion of young women received a subsidized job compared to young men while the opposite was true for non-subsidized work, it was also a larger proportion of women who got a non-subsidized job, and they got them faster, compared to men. An upper secondary education had a positive effect on the results of work and studies, regardless of the type of disability. The Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs points out that gaps between different systems and lack of coordination of initiatives contribute to delayed and weaker establishment in the labour market, with the risk for youths of repeated and longer periods of unemployment.²²

Subsidized employment includes employment with support in the form of financial contributions or tax credit to employers for all or part of the wage costs. The number of wage subsidized jobs has increased slightly from 2013 to 2019. Throughout the period, men have more often wage subsidies than women and the pattern is the same in all forms of wage subsidies. Men also get a job with a wage subsidy faster than women.

In November 2018, 14 % of companies in the labour market had at least one ongoing subsidized employment²³ In 2014, the corresponding share was 18 %. Most companies that receive subsidies for employees with disabilities are small companies, with up to four employees (47 %) and 5-9 employees (20 %), respectively. Women have, to a greater extent than men, subsidized employment in a big company and 44 % of the subsidized employment for women are found in the largest companies. The corresponding proportion for men is 30 %.

The PES continuously monitors the proportion who have entered a subsidized employment scheme/program and their employment rate 90 days after the scheme/program ended. The 2019 results show increased employment rate for all forms of employment, except for wage subsidies for development in employment. For this kind of subsidized employment, the results have decreased for both women and men and the majority of the participants have entered an additional employment scheme/program. Compared with other labour market policy measures, subsidized employment has generally shown the greatest effects of all programs in terms of improving people's (with disabilities) opportunities to get a job.

²¹

<https://arbetsformedlingen.se/omoss/statistikochanalyser/analyserochprognoser/analysochutvarde/ring/ungamedfunktionsnedsattningpaarbetsformedlingen.4.3563c7d6172c13113cb10b8.html>.

²² MUCF 2017 Fokus 2017 del 2 – *Unga med funktionsnedsättning etablering i arbets- och samhällslivet*, <https://www.mucf.se/publikationer/fokus-17-del-2-unga-med-funktionsnedsattning>.

²³ <https://arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.76220699169bfc26b3fc46e/arbetsmarknadsrapport-2019.pdf>.

Monthly statistics from the PES²⁴ on the current schemes/programs for people with reduced work capacity show that the proportion of measures given in the schemes/programs has decreased by 8.3 % between July 2020 and July 2019. The largest decrease is in the program 'employment with development', which has decreased by 25.6 %. On the other hand, the program 'employment with development in Samhall' has increased by 31.3 %, which in practice means a transfer from employment programs aiming at the open labour market to the sheltered employment.

Disability care

People with disabilities, who are not in the labour force, may be enrolled in daily activities. The National Board of Health and Welfare has analysed results, in daily activities,²⁵ (according to LSS) related to work or education in order to increase knowledge about transitions to work for the target group. The results show that out of 878 people studied, who had daily activities in 2014, only 72 persons had income from paid work two years after the end of the services.²⁶ Studies of other target groups who receive daily activities give the same picture. The National Board of Health and Welfare's analyses show that few people with mental disabilities who have day activities make the transition to work or studies. Of approximately 630 persons surveyed, only 17 of these persons had income from paid work two years after the end of daily activities.²⁷ The National Board of Health and Welfare's open comparisons²⁸ provide additional knowledge about the conditions for transition from daily activities to work or studies. Few municipalities still have agreements on collaboration between social psychiatry (who are responsible for daily activities under the SoL) and the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the PES, (who are responsible for labour market measures), just under 20 %. Just under half of the municipalities, 41 %, offer work-oriented rehabilitation through qualified measures, (i.e. IPS - supported employment to people with mental disabilities). Only 14 % of the municipalities have routines for annually assess the individual's opportunities for work or internships.

Conclusion

The labour market situation in Sweden is characterized by the requirements for education and skills, which people with disabilities do not get the same opportunities for due to lack of accessibility and adequate support. To combat a lower labour market integration of people with disabilities, employment measures are used where some of the measures offered to people with disabilities give a mediocre result (around 50 % in work after completion of interventions) while others are not even focused on employment, and thus give low results for employment. In labour market policy, there

²⁴

http://qvs12ext.ams.se/QvAJAXZfc/opensoc.htm?document=extern %5Cmstatplus_extern.qvw&h ost=QVS %40w001765&anonymous=true %20&select=StartTrigger.1.

²⁵ Daily activities according to LSS are aimed at people with intellectual disabilities, people with autism diagnoses or people with traumatic brain injury.

²⁶ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2019-3-7.pdf>.

²⁷ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

²⁸ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2019-3-7.pdf>.

is a tendency to see disability as an individual problem that must be combated with individual efforts, and a focus on equipping / strengthening the individual and finding an adapted situation in the labour market where the person can get a job and provide financial stimulus in the form of wage subsidy. There is a focus on individual efforts (and individual ability) while the structural perspective (e.g. accessibility and universal design) is absent, and thus not reflected in the efforts made. From a disability perspective accessibility in mainstream systems, and that an accessible society (e.g. labour market and education) should be evaluated in terms of quality and effects also from a disability perspective on accessibility, is perhaps more effective than a one-sided focus on disability as individual problem.

When the government describes what efforts are to be made to strengthen the position of people with disabilities in the labour market, it becomes clear that they have not rested their proposals against research or other evaluations of labour market policy, based on the fact that the vast majority of the proposed initiatives are individual level (to strengthen the individual or to assess individual capacity), or about sheltered work (Samhall). The latter increases the employment rate but only to a small extent, when compared to the share of the population with reduced work capacity who are not gainfully employed. It is very uncertain in what way these efforts can to any great extent reduce the employment gap that is expressed as a concern in the 2020 Country report. The measures presented by the FunkA Inquiry are not addressed in the proposed initiatives, apart from the gender gap.

4 Disability, social policies and healthcare – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

In 2014, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Sweden:

[Article 28 UN CRPD](#) addresses Adequate standard of living and social protection.

‘50. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities to obtain work on the basis of the report presented by the FunkA Inquiry (FunkA-utredning). It further suggests that the State party increase measures of support, including, inter alia, personal assistance in employment, technical assistance in performing in the workplace, reduced social fees, financial support to employers, rehabilitation and vocational training, and that it put in place measures to narrow the employment and pay gender gap. The Committee recommends that the State party assess the impact of the use in the labour market of the term ‘people with reduced capacities or limitations’ to refer to persons with disabilities, and revise it in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination.’

[Article 19 UN CRPD](#) addresses Living independently in the community.

‘44. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that personal assistance programmes provide sufficient and fair financial assistance to ensure that a person can live independently in the community.’

[Article 25 UN CRPD](#) addresses Health.

[no recommendations were made on health]

Social policy is not a priority area in the National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy.

4.1 Summary of the social situation of persons with disabilities

Data from EU-SILC indicate the poverty risk rate for working age persons with disabilities in Sweden was 26.7 % in 2018, compared to 14.8 % for other persons of similar age - an estimated disability poverty gap of approximately 12 percent points (see Table 14). For people aged over 65, the disability poverty gap was 11.5 points (23.6 % for older persons with disabilities and 12.1 % for other persons of similar age). The tables in annex also indicate the respective rates of AROPE and break these down by gender as well age.

For people with disabilities between the ages of 30 and 64, the proportion living on an economic standard with a risk of poverty is approximately 19 %.²⁹ For the rest of the population, the proportion is close to 10 %. In several support and transfer systems,

²⁹ SCB Undersökningarna av levnadsförhållandena ULF/SILC 2018 *Statistik om personer med funktionsnedsättning, tabeller 2016–2017*, <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/levnadsforhallanden/levnadsforhallanden/undersokningarna-av-levnadsforhallanden-ulf-silc/pong/tabell-och-diagram/statistik-om-personer-med-funktionsnedsattning/tabeller-2016-2017/>.

compensation levels have remained largely unchanged over the past 20 year.³⁰ At the same time, disposable income for gainfully employed has increased by about 60 % during the same period. This means that real wages for everyone who works, even the lowest paid, have risen sharply during the period. This also means that many who, due to disability and reduced work capacity, are not part of the labour force have a significantly lower financial standard compared with those who work. The gaps between those who work and those who do not work have widened and 60 % of beneficiaries with activity or sickness allowances live in households with a low financial standard.

Financial assistance has become more common among people who receive personal assistance services according to The Act concerning Support and Service to Persons with Certain Functional Disabilities (LSS), compared to ten years ago.³¹ The level is now at the same level as for the rest of the population, 5 %. Long-term financial assistance has in turn become somewhat more common among people with services according to the LSS-legislation, about 2 % compared with 1 % in the rest of the population. The incidence of financial assistance for people with services according to Social Services Act (SoL) is as high as 10 years ago. In 2018, 10 % had long-term financial assistance. It is four times as common with financial assistance among people with services according to SoL compared to the rest of the population, and 10 times as common with long-term financial assistance. Within this group, people with mental disabilities are overrepresented, and the National Board of Health and Welfare has previously raised the financial vulnerability of this group.

Statistics from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency³² show that the number of young people with activity allowances has decreased over the past five years, and in 2019 just over 29,000 people received activity allowances. The number of recipients of sickness allowances has also decreased and in 2019 was just over 246,000 people. Receiving activity or sickness allowances risks creating long-term financial challenges as many recipients have not had the opportunity to build up additional insurance cover through employment and being on long-term allowances the poor financial conditions thus risk following through life.

As described in chapter 3, young people with disabilities have difficulty establishing themselves in the labour market has consequences for continued working life, but also for the standard of living. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society Affairs (MUCF)³³ notes that young people with disabilities have worse living conditions than other young people. They have a weaker position in working life, partly because part-time and fixed-term employment are more common. They also have greater experience of unemployment and are unemployed longer compared to other young people. The situation has worsened over time.

³⁰ Myndigheten för delaktighet 2018 Uppföljning av funktionshinderspolitiken 2017, <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/levnadsforhallanden/levnadsforhallanden/undersokningarna-av-levnadsforhallanden-ulf-silc/pong/tabell-och-diagram/statistik-om-personer-med-funktionsnedsattning/tabeller-2016-2017/>.

³¹ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

³² <https://www.forsakringskassan.se/statistik/sjuk/sjuk-och-aktivitetsersattning>.

³³ <https://www.mucf.se/publikationer/fokus-17-del-2-unga-med-funktionsnedsattning>.

The demand for support from, for example, social services is increasing. As in previous years, the main reasons why clients seek the support from the social services are that they experience difficulties with finances and that they need support in contact with various authorities.³⁴ The latter is mainly about difficulties linked to the digitization of authorities, as many in this group do not have e-identification or a bank ID.

Health

People with disabilities have poorer health than the rest of the population and the somatic care is not always equal.³⁵ For example, women with interventions according to the LSS have almost a doubled risk of dying from breast cancer compared with other breast cancer patients and with interventions according to the LSS who develop cancer have a doubled risk of dying from cancer compared with other cancer patients. Among school children with disabilities, sedentary leisure, obesity, daily smoking and low consumption of fruit and vegetables are more common among children with disabilities.³⁶

A growing share of the health and care sector uses various digital solutions (e-health), and surveys show a large digital exclusion for people with disabilities³⁷ The digital the gap is established at an early age and lasts a lifetime. The law on web accessibility does not cover all accessibility problems. It has become more common to have to identify oneself digitally, but surveys show that about a third of people with disabilities have no way to identify themselves digitally. Therefore, it is not possible for them to take part in socially important functions such as digitalized care and government functions.

4.2 Analysis of social policies relevant to the Semester

For reference, see also the 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Sweden

Recent developments

In the Budget Bill for 2021, the Government proposes that the amount for the hourly standard for assistance compensation be increased by 3.5 per hour.³⁸ The government also proposes an initiative to strengthen mental health, psychiatry and suicide prevention for 2021.³⁹

³⁴ <https://www.hsan.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

³⁵ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2019-3-7.pdf>.

³⁶ Folkhälsomyndigheten 2019 *Skolbarns hälsovanor i Sverige 2017/2019 – grundrapport*. <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publicerat-material/publikationsarkiv/s/skolbarns-halsovanor-i-sverige-201718---grundrapport/>.

³⁷ http://www.begripsam.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SMFOI_rapport_200616.pdf.

³⁸ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/rekordstor-hojning-av-schablonersattningen-for-personlig-assistans/>.

³⁹ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/nara-12-miljarder-kronor-for-att-bekampa-psykisk-ohalsa-och-starka-psykiatrin/>.

The Government draws attention to the fact that the current pandemic has far-reaching effects on the labour market. In order for the Swedish folkbildning⁴⁰ to be able to conduct more initiatives aimed at foreign-born women and, if necessary, other target groups who are far from work and studies, the state subsidy for Swedish folkbildning is strengthened by SEK 50 million per year for two years. <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/satsningar-for-etablering-av-nyanlanda-och-utrikes-fodda-och-samhallsintroduktion-for-asylsokande/>.

In the budget for 2021, the Government also proposes an extension of the job incentive special calculation rule for income support.⁴¹ Only 50 % of earned income shall affect the assessment of the right to financial assistance. The purpose of the change is to make it more profitable for recipients to take temporary jobs and increase their working hours by reducing the marginal effects at work.

The Government also instructs the Swedish Participation Agency (MFD) to produce support material for municipalities and other actors in order to promote active leisure time for people with disabilities.⁴²

Support to live independently

There are several kinds of support that persons with disabilities can receive from society as different means of assistance for independent living. The most comprehensive supports are personal assistance or special accommodation, which is provided under the Law on Disability Support – LSS. For persons with disabilities who are not the target group of the LSS, living support could be provided under the Social Services Act (SoL).

Special accommodation

Special accommodation is provided as residential care for persons with certain disabilities, provided under the Law on LSS or SoL as accommodation with special services or other specially adapted housing for persons with certain kinds of disabilities. In 2018, approximately 28,000 adults and 900 children were living in special accommodation according to LSS and 4450 adults in special accommodation according to SoL.⁴³ Special accommodation for adults has increased over time, and from 2013 by about 10 %

The National Board of Health and Welfare states that the opportunity to live like others increases for people who live in special accommodation but is still limited.⁴⁴ For

⁴⁰ Swedish folkbildning is the collective name for the activities conducted by the country's folk high schools and study associations in the form of courses, study circles and cultural activities. Folkbildning is a part of the liberal non-formal educational system. Every year, over a million Swedes participate in folkbildning activities (<https://www.folkbildningsradet.se/om-folkbildningsradet/Oversattningar/English-translations/>).

⁴¹ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/jobbstimulans-inom-ekonomiskt-bistand-och-satsning-mot-felaktiga-utbetalningar-och-fusk-inom-a-kassan/>.

⁴² <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/06/framjande-av-aktiv-fritid-for-personer-med-funktionsnedsattning/>.

⁴³ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2019-3-7.pdf>.

⁴⁴ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

example, it may not be possible with leisure activities or staff-supported activities after 9 pm, and the possibility for users to have an internet connection in their own apartment is not available in all accommodation. In just over 95 % of the homes, it is possible to become a cohabitant, but only on the condition that both have an LSS decision.

LSS is a national rights legislation, but there are major differences between the municipalities. For example, there is a lack of special accommodation in many municipalities. According to the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 162 of the country's municipalities have deficits in accommodation with special services for people with disabilities.⁴⁵ There is still a long waiting time for accommodation for adults, in 2019 the median time was 126 days.⁴⁶ Slightly fewer municipalities than in previous years report deficits in special accommodation for people with disabilities, but many still consider that the needs are greater than the supply.

During the last 10-year period, the number of special accommodation decisions for children has halved.⁴⁷ The reduction applies primarily to the age group 13-22 years but the reasons for the decrease in decision has not been analysed. The reasons behind decisions about special accommodation for children are often complex needs, which could not be met in their ordinary home, and often the decisions are about schooling in another town for students at, for example, special upper secondary schools. The majority of the municipalities that currently have decisions about accommodation for children state that they can meet the need but estimate that the need will increase. Their concerns are that interventions such as personal assistance will not be enough or will not be granted to a sufficient extent which will increase the need for special accommodation for children with disabilities who have complex needs. However, a smaller proportion of decisions on special accommodation are about children and young people who have previously had personal assistance and this group has decreased somewhat in number since the previous measurement year.

In 2018, the Swedish Health and Care Inspectorate handled and decided on approximately 140 reports of misconduct involving people living in accommodation with special services for adults.⁴⁸ About 40 % of the cases involve a resident being subjected to violence or abuse. Where it is stated in the reports who was responsible for the violence or abuse, it is just as common for it to be a co-resident as a staff member. The supervisory authority also points out that it still happens that children and adults are subjected to coercive and restrictive measures in special accommodation. It can be about physically limiting children or young adults, by putting locks or alarms on doors. There have also been more serious incidents where people, for example, have been detained by personnel.

⁴⁵ Boverket 2018 Bostadsmarknadsenkäten <https://www.boverket.se/sv/om-boverket/publicerat-av-boverket/oppna-data/bostadsmarknadsenkaten/>.

⁴⁶ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

Personal assistance

In 2019 personal assistance was provided to approximately 20,000 people, of which approximately 16,000 have had personal assistance allowance (LASS) from the Social Insurance Agency and the rest from the municipalities.

There has been an increase in the number of assistance hours granted, and in 2018, 13 % of assistance users had more than 100 hours per week.⁴⁹ This is a doubling since 2009. Many assistance users state that they are satisfied with their personal assistance, but nevertheless estimate low in terms of influence, and less than half state that they have been involved in deciding who should be their personal assistants.⁵⁰

The number of people who are entitled to assistance compensation has decreased by almost 2,000 people since 2014.⁵¹ The reduction is primarily due to fewer and fewer assistance allowances being granted. One of the possible explanations for this is that new guidelines on how to interpret the law have meant that fewer assistance hours are granted for basic needs. Two case law judgments from the Supreme Administrative Court serve the basis for the new guidelines, which means that fewer people are eligible for personal assistance requiring in-depth knowledge of the user. Thus, fewer assistance users are expected to need more than 20 hours per week for basic needs, which is required to receive an assistance allowance.

The number of new grants of assistance allowance has also decreased, from about 900 in 2014 to about 200 in 2019.⁵² On the other hand, the average number of granted hours has increased, from 124 in 2014 to 129 in 2019. Over time, the number of decisions on state-granted assistance allowance has decreased at the same time as the municipally granted assistance has increased and the number who receive municipally granted personal assistance has doubled since 2009. The majority of those who had their state-granted assistance allowance withdrawn in 2017 instead received municipally granted personal assistance. Others were granted special accommodation according to SoL or LSS.

Conclusion

Proposed measures do not address in a straight-forward manner the financial, independent living or health-related challenges that the statistics and reports presented highlight for people with disabilities.

⁴⁹ The fact that persons with municipally decided personal assistance have more than 20 hours of assistance per week is explained by the fact that personal assistance can also be granted for other personal needs than the basic ones. Examples of such areas of life where such needs may be relevant are work, studies, and social interaction.

⁵⁰ <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

⁵¹ <https://www.forsakringskassan.se/statistik/funktioner/C2/ADnedsattning/assistansersattning>.

⁵² <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/globalassets/sharepoint-dokument/artikelkatalog/ovrigt/2020-3-6686.pdf>.

Financially, the levels of the transfer systems would need to be reviewed, in order to reduce the risks of relative poverty, and especially for those who are partly employed and partly receiving compensation.

Socio-economic status affects health, both on the basis that low incomes provide poorer opportunities for participation in society, but also because it affects opportunities for good diet and exercise / sports. Despite this, the financial situation of people with disabilities is seldom highlighted in different reports on opportunities for independent living, and health for people with disabilities.

5 Disability, education and skills – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

In 2014, the UN CRPD Committee made the following recommendations to Sweden:

[Article 24 UN CRPD](#) addresses Education.

‘48. The Committee urges the State party to guarantee the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system and ensure that they have the required support.’

The Government's education policy aims to give every child and young person, regardless of gender, background and disability, a good foundation to stand on and adults must have good access to education throughout life, regardless of where in the country they live. Disability policy is based on Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which describes the right to education for persons with disabilities without discrimination and on equal terms, and Agenda 2030, which states that states must ensure inclusive and equal education of good quality and promote lifelong learning for all.

5.1 Summary of the educational situation of persons with disabilities

The EU-SILC estimates concerning educational attainment should be treated with some caution due to variable confidence levels, but they consistently indicate disability quality gaps. Table 16 indicates early school leaving rates disaggregated by disability status. Youth with disabilities (aged 18-24) tend to leave school significantly more than non-disabled peers of the same age groups (and this is reinforced by widening the sample size to age 18-29). Table 17 shows completion rate of tertiary education disaggregated by disability and age group. Persons with disabilities (age 30-34) are less likely to complete tertiary education than their peers (and this is reinforced in the wider sample for age 30-39).

Compulsory education

Children with disabilities have the right to preschool and the Education Act states that support should be given to children in need of special support in preschool.⁵³ A School Inspectorate.⁵⁴ report show that approximately one in five children in preschool is in need of special support. The report also indicates that approximately 4 % of the children in pre-school have a disability. Children who are unable to attend the mainstream schools can be admitted to specialized schools. There are nine specialized schools run by the Special education school authority which also run pre-school classes.

⁵³ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800.

⁵⁴ The school inspectorate. Children in need of special support in preschool. Available at: <https://www.skolinspektionen.se/globalassets/publikationssok/granskningsrapporter/kvalitetsgranskningar/2017/forskolans-arbete-med-barn-i-behov-av-sarskilt-stod/forskolans-arbete-med-barn-i-behov-av-sarskilt-stod-2017.pdf>.

There are no statistics available of the proportion of students with disabilities in the educational system, as the schools are not allowed to collect statistics on health status or disability, only on students in need of special support.

The Public Health Agency's review of school children's health habits shows that stress among Swedish schoolchildren has increased.⁵⁵ The increase is visible among students both with and without a disability. Among students with disabilities, however, the share reporting stress is even higher. 48 % of those students feel quite or very stressed about schoolwork, compared with 38 % of students without disabilities.

Reports from Statistics Sweden show that the level of education of people with disabilities is shorter than in the population as a whole.⁵⁶ In the population aged 16–64, 14 % have compulsory school as the highest completed education, compared with 16 % among people with disabilities. Among people with disabilities, 47 % have upper secondary education as their highest completed education, compared with 39 % among the population as a whole.

According to the disability labour force survey reporting, about 46 % of the population has tertiary education, compared with 35 % among people with disabilities.⁵⁷ People with reduced work capacity show a similar distribution as people with disabilities in general. A larger proportion of women than men with disabilities have tertiary education, 40 % compared with 29 %. This also applies to those with reduced work capacity. Of those, the proportion of women with tertiary education is 38 %, compared with 29 % of men. 31 % of women with disabilities have a profession that requires a university degree, which is a larger proportion compared with men with disabilities, for whom the proportion is 18 %.

5.2 Analysis of education policies relevant to the Semester

The 2020 [National Reform Programme](#) for Sweden (p.38) describes that the Government focuses on raising the level of knowledge, improved the quality of teaching and increased equality in schools. The Swedish *Riksdag* has decided on a strengthening of the state funding of the preschool class and compulsory school, which will be distributed to the principals based on the students' socio-economic background.

In line with this, the budget bill, describes targeted investment to be made in schools in vulnerable areas.⁵⁸ The investment will go to an improved work environment for teachers in these areas. The *Riksdag* also aim to strengthen children's language

⁵⁵ Folkhälsomyndigheten 2019 *Skolbarns hälsovanor i Sverige 2017/2019 – grundrapport*.
<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/publicerat-material/publikationsarkiv/s/skolbarns-halsovanor-i-sverige-201718---grundrapport/>.

⁵⁶ https://www.scb.se/contentassets/14e47b5fde424ca188ad70f4acbd7620/am0503_2019a01_br_a_m78br2002.pdf.

⁵⁷ https://www.scb.se/contentassets/14e47b5fde424ca188ad70f4acbd7620/am0503_2019a01_br_a_m78br2002.pdf.

⁵⁸ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/riktade-skolsatsningar-for-okad-likvardighet-och-kvalitet-i-utsatta-omraden/>.

development in Swedish in preschool, to which a new government grant was introduced in 2019. It is now proposed that the investment be further strengthened.⁵⁹ The initiative gives preschool children who are in need of language promotion initiatives, especially children who have a different (than Swedish) daily language of communication at home, better opportunities to develop their Swedish and also contributes to giving children more equal conditions before starting school. In the budget bill for 2021, the government also proposes that SEK 25 million be set aside annually until 2023 to promote all students' reading ability.⁶⁰

The Education Act⁶¹ states that support should be given to students with difficulties in learning, based on individual needs, and no diagnosis or disability recognition is required to receive support in preschool or school. The support should be given promptly and to the extent that the student needs, but reports show that many schools do not live up to this commitment. During the academic year 2012/2013, 13.9 % of the students participated in an 'action program for special support'.⁶² During the academic year 2019/2020, that proportion had fallen to 5.5 %. The proportion has risen slightly in the last three academic years. Action programs are more common among boys than among girls, 7.1 % and 3.9 %, respectively.⁶³ Both action programs and other types of support are more common among boys than girls. The largest difference between girls and boys is in terms of action programs. Among other support measures, the difference is greatest for special teaching group. In total, 1.2 % of the pupils in compulsory school receive support in a special teaching group, which corresponds to just under 13,400 pupils.⁶⁴ It is at the same level as the last academic year. A survey aimed at guardians with children with neuropsychiatric disabilities shows that the school does not meet the students' needs.⁶⁵ Of the respondents, just over 90 % believe that their children need special support to achieve the educational goals, but that it is often not given in the right way or is not present at all.

Students with intellectual disabilities can read a special curriculum in a specialized unit within the mainstream schools, designed for students with intellectual disabilities. During the academic year 2018/19, 10,529 students attended such a unit, which corresponds to approximately 1 % of all students in mainstream compulsory education. In upper secondary education, 5,469 students attended such a unit, corresponds to 1,7 % of all students in mainstream upper secondary education. Children or adolescents who, due to their disability or for other special reasons, are unable to attend the mainstream school system can be admitted to special needs schools. In 2019 approximately 650 students attended a special needs school.

⁵⁹ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/riktade-skolsatsningar-for-okad-likvardighet-och-kvalitet-i-utsatta-omraden/>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/fortsatt-satsning-for-att-starka-alla-elevs-lasformaga/>.

⁶¹ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800.

⁶² <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/beskrivande-statistik/2020/pm---sarskilt-stod-i-grundskolan-lasaret-2019-20>.

⁶³ <https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=6604>.

⁶⁴ <https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=6604>.

⁶⁵ https://attention.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/pdf-undersokning-rapport-attentions_skolenkat_2014-02-06-1.pdf.

Statistics Sweden show that disabilities risk becoming an obstacle to completing an upper secondary school program: about one in ten without a final grade from upper secondary school has stated that a disability prevented them from either starting or finishing upper secondary education.⁶⁶ Lack of adaptation of the learning environment and differences in the allocation of funds to schools for students with special needs are some of the challenges that *Funktionsrätt* Sweden (disability organisation) points out, when it comes to children and young people with disabilities.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The proposed measures do not specifically address the needs of students with disabilities, in need of support in school. Individually adapted support in the school, and that students with disabilities are given adequate support that finished school, with approved grades, is a prerequisite for facilitating entry into the labour market and for adequate standards of living. Despite this, the possibility of receiving support in school has decreased over time, which risks having major consequences for the labour market participation and the standard of living of people with disabilities. The focus in different measures in the education area is mostly on socio-economic background (i.e. Immigrants) and the NEETS. The implication for disabled people is that there is a risk that they will not be in focus since there are other issues which seem to be more acute, hence the focus on meeting the target for disabled persons will be jeopardized.

⁶⁶ SCB 2017 *Unga utanför? Så har det gått på arbetsmarknaden för 90-talister utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning?*
https://www.scb.se/contentassets/8470acff99c54f21bd4aba8ca058cb5b/uf0549_2015a01_br_a40_br1704.pdf.

⁶⁷ Funktionsrätt 2019 Respekt för rättigheter: Rapport om hur Sverige lever upp till konventionen om rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning 2019, <https://funktionsratt.se/funktionsratt-ratten-att-fungera-i-samhallet-pa-lika-villkor/manskliga-rattigheter/funktionsrattskonventionen/civilsamhallets-granskning/>.

6 Investment priorities in relation to disability

6.1 Updates on use of existing EU funds (to 2020)

Table A: participation in ESF projects

European Social fund projects 2020 ⁶⁸	Target 1.1	Target 2.1	Target 2.2	Target 2.3	Target 3.1	Total	% Men/women
Number of participants with disabilities and reduced workability	113	3662	2648	3161	0	9484	53/47
Total number of participants	148742	24762	23849	20031	35518	249902	39/61

The Swedish ESF projects in target 2 are aimed at people who are far from the labour market; i.e. are long-term unemployed or on sick leave, new arrivals' establishment in the labour market with a special focus on newly arrived immigrant women and / or people with disabilities. Several of the projects are explicitly aimed at men and / or women with a non-Nordic background. This group includes most certainly people with disabilities, but they are not an explicit target group for the project. In most cases, the projects include several target groups; long-term unemployed, new arrivals and individuals with disabilities that lead to reduced working capacity. Many projects focus in particular on immigrants, especially newly arrived and women. In total, almost 9,500 people with disabilities and reduced work capacity received support in the ESF project 2014-2020. This can be compared with other target groups such as immigrants, a target group where just over 42,000 people have received support in ESF projects between 2014-2020.

In 2019, the PES was the project owner of 14 social fund projects and co-financed 123 projects.⁶⁹ Two of these programs, which are aimed at people with disabilities, are:

Samstart (Co-start).

The project runs between December 2019 and January 2022. The aim is to improve transitions from school to working life through better coordination between public actors. The target group is primarily young people, aged 16–29, with a disability, which is part of the PES' collaboration assignment with the school. Based on the target group's needs, support will be offered in multi-competent teams. The functions that are part of the team are determined by the needs of the target group and by which local actors are included in the project. The business has started up in two locations during the autumn of 2019 and plans to start up in additional locations in southern Sweden during the project period.

Trygg rekrytering (Safe recruitment)

The project started in July 2019 and will run until June 2022. The project aims to work with method development that creates services and makes skills available to individuals with reduced work capacity. The project will, together with new employers,

⁶⁸

<https://www.esf.se/Documents/V %c3 %a5ra %20fonder/Programinformation/Socialfonden %2020/Socialfondsrapport %202020-07-27.pdf>.

⁶⁹

<https://arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.47a458fb16df81b9133efd1/1582529066363/nationella-socialfondsprogr-investeringar-sysselsattning.pdf>.

further develop a structured approach that the PES has previously tested with IKEA and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The project will further develop methods with a focus on employment, analyse factors that limit the labour market for people with disabilities and clarify the cooperation between the authority and employers. A team with specialist competence will train employers and provide support in workplaces where the participants work. Employers who are linked to the project are expected to contribute knowledge for the design of efficient working methods.

6.2 Priorities for future investment (after 2020)

Just Transition Fund investments in Sweden lift the priority investment area of upskilling and reskilling of workers. This could address the mismatch between the labour market's demand for skilled labour and the relatively low level of education of people with disabilities in general, if there is a targeted investment in the target group. As can be seen, in the reporting on the project period 2014-2020, few people with disabilities have been included in the financed ESF projects during this period. This can be seen as remarkable because the ESF projects in program area 2 focus on vulnerable groups, which people with disabilities belong to when it comes to education level, labour market affiliation, standards of living and health.

In the case of program area 1, skills development for employees, focus could be on digitisation, based on reports showing a digitalisation gap between people with and without disabilities, which is partly due to accessibility, despite the Law on web accessibility. This is in line with the Smarter Europe objective (objective 1) in Regional Development and Cohesion Policy.⁷⁰

CSR1 refers to the adequacy of the health system, where the unmet needs of disabled people should be acknowledged. CRS2 includes reference to investment in sustainable transport, which should stress the need to build in accessibility for disabled persons in accordance with CRPD Article 9 and EU structural fund and public procurement rules.

⁷⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/2021_2027/.

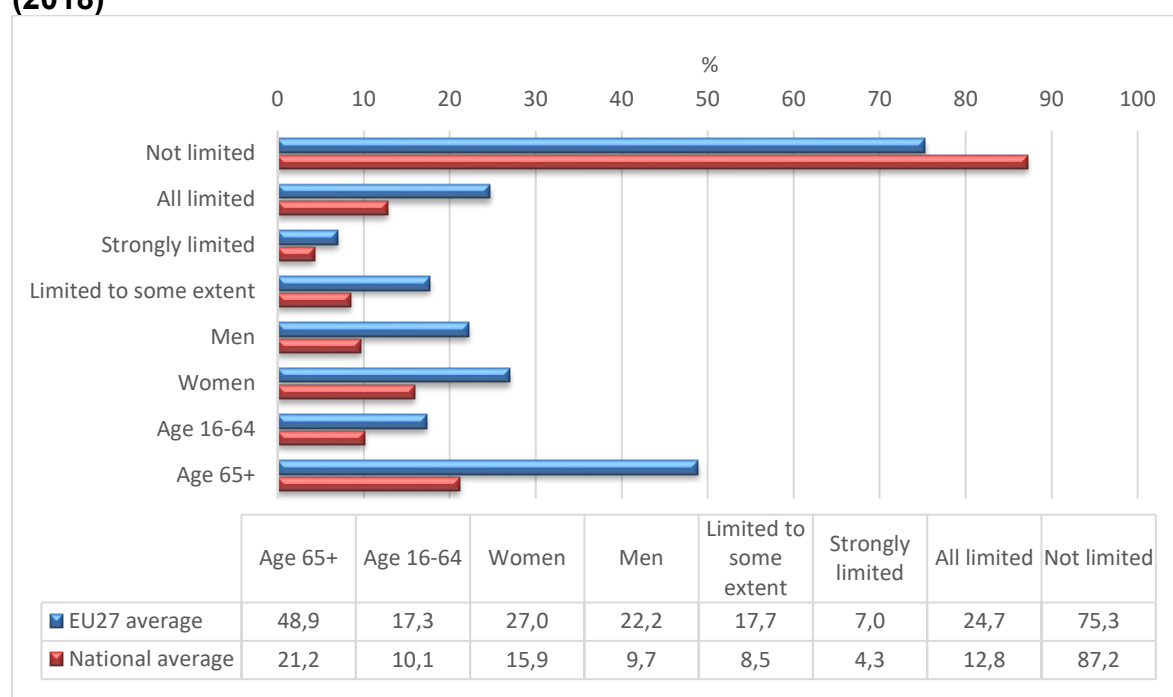
7 Annex: disability data relevant to the Semester

See also disability data published in the Eurostat database⁷¹ and statistical reports.⁷²

Unless specified, the summary statistics are drawn from the most recent EU-SILC data available to researchers from Eurostat. The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions (congregative households). The sampling methods vary somewhat in each country.

The proxy used to identify people with disabilities (impairments) is whether ‘for at least the past 6 months’ the respondent reports that they have been ‘limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do’.⁷³

Table 1: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability (2018)



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1

In subsequent tables, these data are used to indicate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends relevant to the analytical chapters – for the labour market, social policies and healthcare, and education – by comparing outcomes for persons who report and do

⁷¹ Eurostat health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁷² Eurostat (2019) *Disability Statistics* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics.

⁷³ The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_\(MEHM\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Special:WhatLinksHere/Glossary:Minimum_European_Health_Module_(MEHM)).

not report 'activity limitations'.⁷⁴ National estimates for Sweden are compared with EU27 mean averages for the most recent year.⁷⁵

7.1 EU data relevant to disability and the labour market (2018)

Table 2: Employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

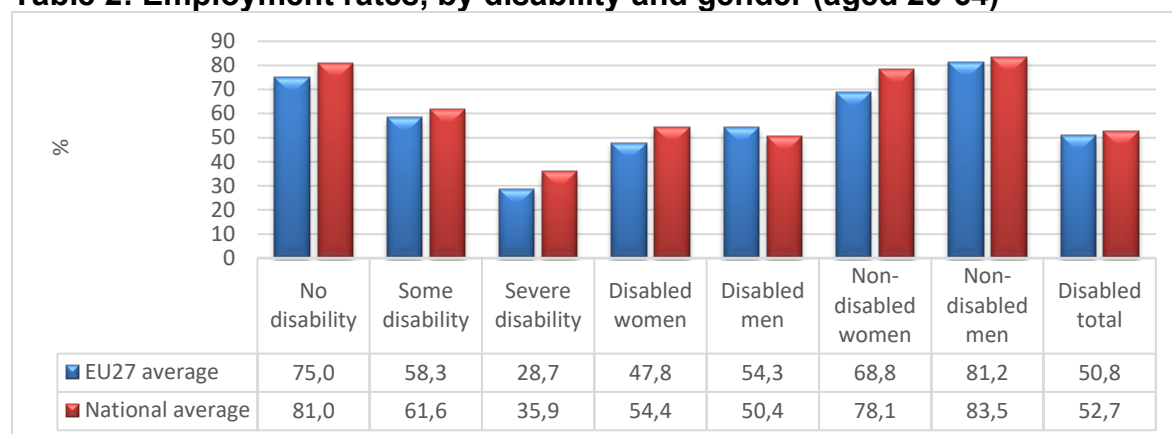
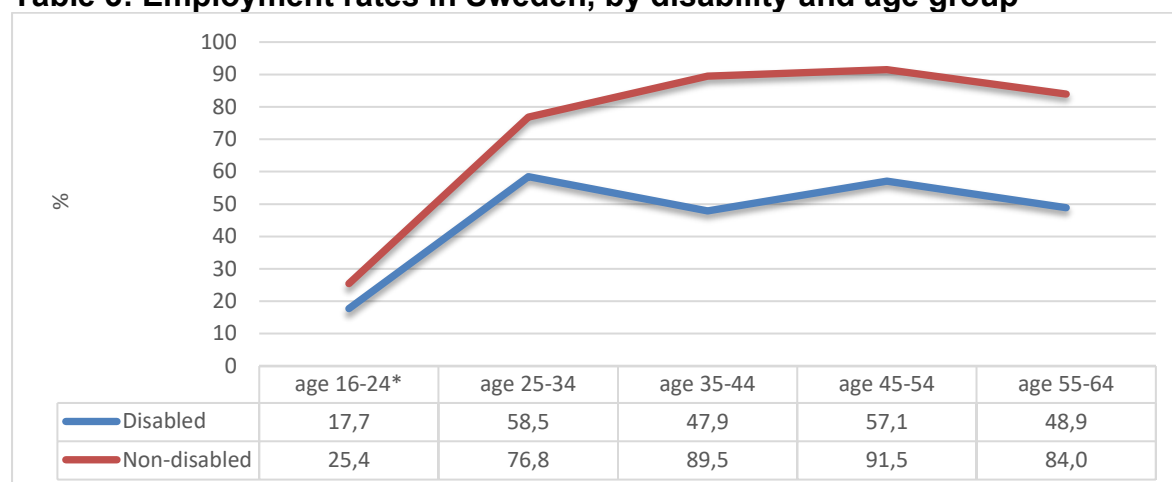


Table 3: Employment rates in Sweden, by disability and age group



⁷⁴ This methodology was developed in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>.

⁷⁵ The exit of the United Kingdom from the EU changes the EU average. Averages were also affected in 2015 by a discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change.

Table 4: National trends in employment rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.1 Unemployment

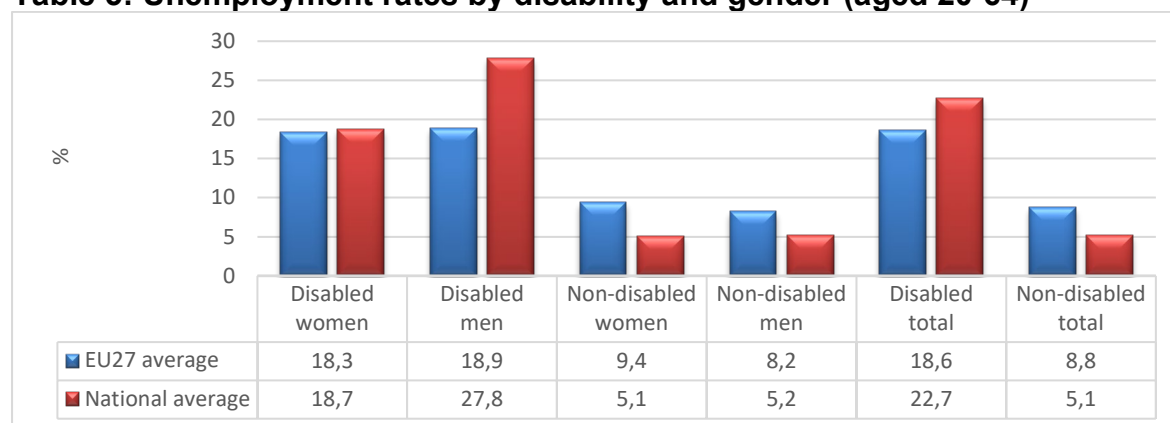
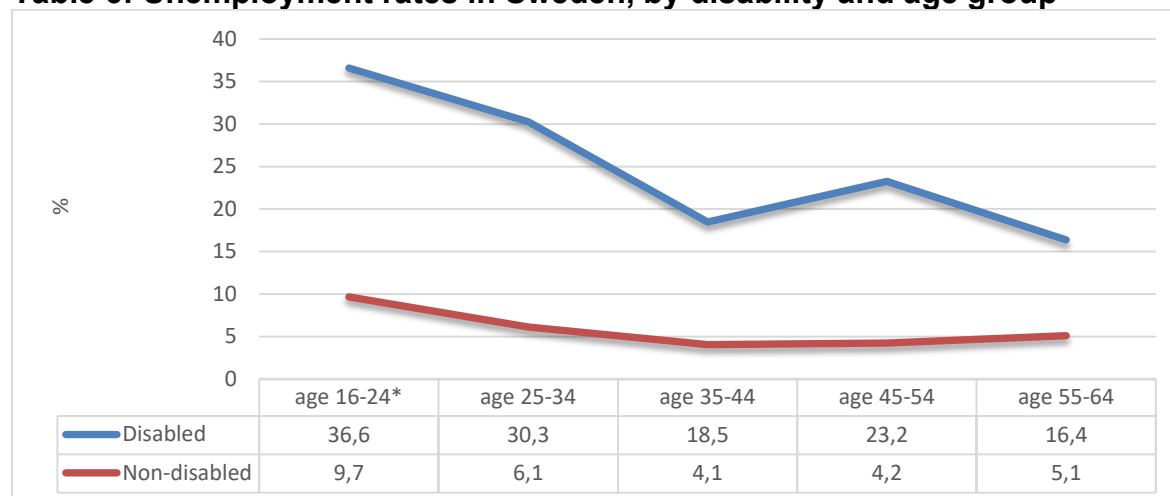
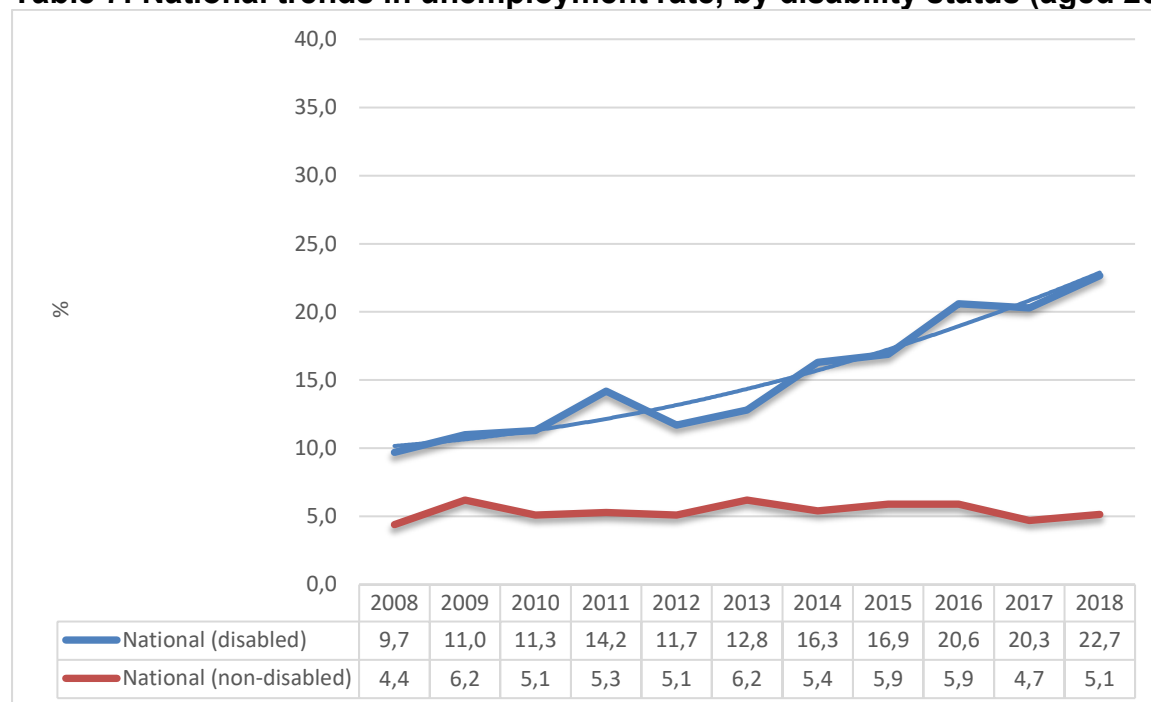
Table 5: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64)**Table 6: Unemployment rates in Sweden, by disability and age group**

Table 7: National trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.2 Economic activity

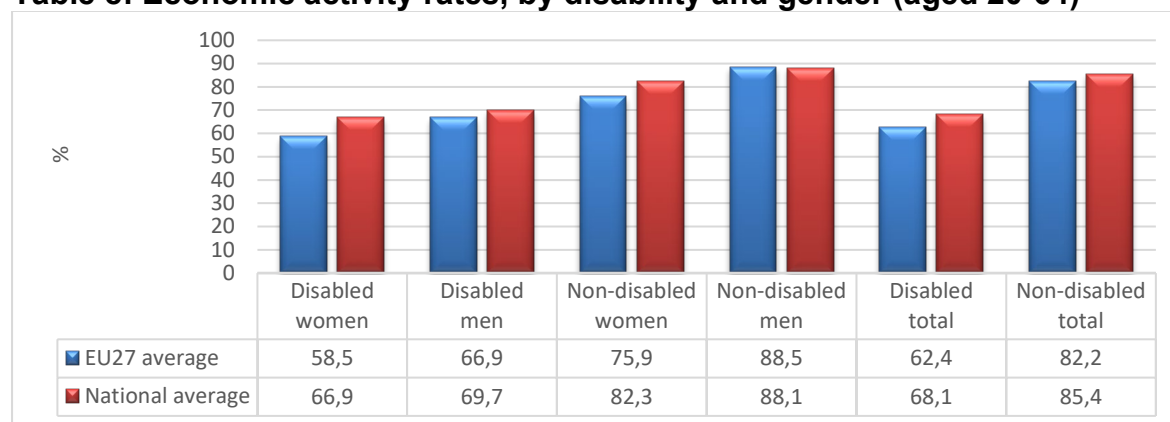
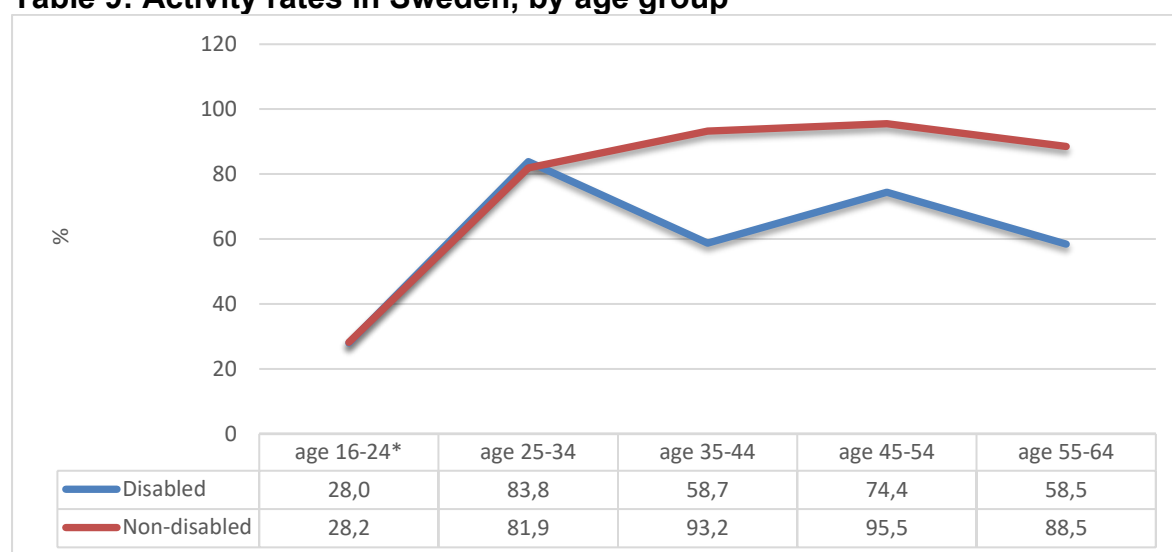
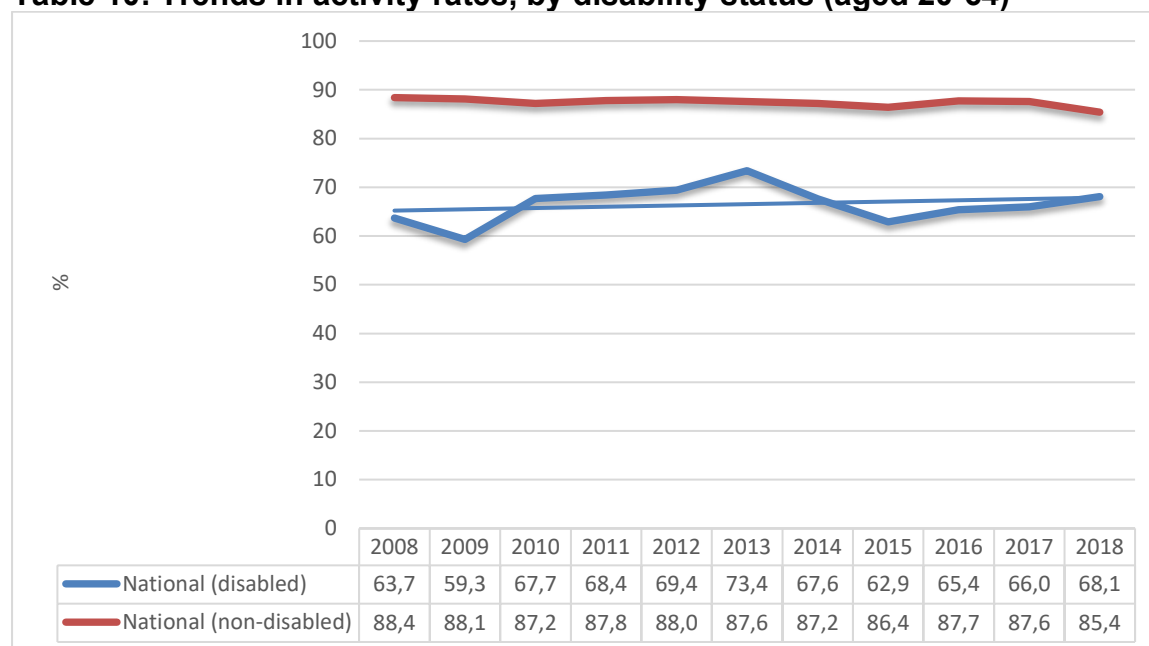
Table 8: Economic activity rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

Table 9: Activity rates in Sweden, by age group**Table 10: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)**

Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

7.1.3 Alternative sources of labour market data in Sweden

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey but labour market indicators for Sweden were disaggregated from ad modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁷⁶

There is a Labour Force Sample Survey in Sweden since the 1960s. Disabled people are not identified in the ordinary survey but specific sample surveys on disabled people have been carried out as a supplement to the Swedish Labour Force Surveys in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2012/13. During 2011 data have been collected in accordance with the EU Directive EC No 577/98 ('The 2011 ad hoc module on employment of disabled

⁷⁶ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

people') and delivered to Eurostat. Sweden participated in the European LFS module in 2002.

From 2014 the government assigned the responsibility on the Public Employment Services to report by 31 March each year the results of an annual survey on the labour market situation of persons with disabilities.⁷⁷

Table B: disability and labour force data from national statistics

	With disabilities (%) 2019	% men/women with disabilities	With reduced work capacity (%)	% of men/women with reduced work capacity	Rest of population (% of men/women)
Total population (16-64 years)	806000 (12.8) (In 2013 987000 (16.4))	In the total population 12.3/13.5	549000 (68 % of citizens with disabilities 16-64 years)	45.2/54.8	87.7/86.5
Employed (+ unemployed job seekers in Active labour market programmes) 16-64 years	554000 (68.9) (In 2013, 612000 (62.0))	72.2/65.6	354560 (64 % of citizens with disabilities 16-64 years)	67.2/62.6	80.9 % of pop, approx. 5 million) (82/79.7)
- Age 16-29 %	22.6		21.8		28.6
- Age 30-49 %	42.4		40.7		42.7
- Age 50-64 %	35		37.5		28.7
- Upper secondary education (highest education)	46.4		48.8		37.8
- Tertiary education	34.9		34.1		47.2
- Swedish born	84.2		82.9		74.9
- Migrant background	15.8		17.1		25.1

⁷⁷ Statistics Sweden: The labour market situation for people with disabilities 2018
https://www.scb.se/contentassets/14e6562ea76147f3a18e06419fd0466f/am0503_2018a01_br_a m78br1902.pdf.

Table C: Swedish Public Employment Service programs for jobseekers

<i>Programs for unemployed, with or without disabilities</i>	Number of participants with disabilities 2019	Men/Women (%)	Employment rate, 90 days after program/measure ended (%) (for all participants)
Labour market education (courses etc)	5170	74/26	39.7
Internship	15969	57/43	37.8
Preparing measures (mapping, guidance, and rehabilitation)	36580	40/60	26.4
Preparing or orienting educational courses	4698	63/37	9.4
Establishment program (for immigrants)	1666	55/45	17.1
Programmes for long-term unemployed (JOB)	71351	50/50	48.3
Programmes for long-term unemployed (JOB for youth 16-25 years)	7674	61/39	41.6
<i>Programs for unemployed, with disabilities</i>			
Special introduction and follow-up support	18184	57/43	Not reported
Benefits to start up a business	962	44/56	Not reported

Table D: PES offers special programs to people with disabilities⁷⁸

	Total number 2019⁷⁹	Men/Women (%)	Employment rate, 90 days after program/measure ended (%)
Work aids and support			
Benefits for work-aids, in employment	7600	44/56	No reported
Benefits (to employers) for work-related personal assistance at work	14308	59/41	Not reported
Wage subsidies			
Wage subsidies for development in employment (assessed yearly, up to 2 years)	25533 decisions/ 11473 persons	57/43	55.4
Wage subsidies (assessed yearly, up to 8 years)	48724 decisions/ 33229 persons	59/41	50.8
Wage subsidies for security in employment (assessed every 4th year, no time-limit)	54620 decisions/ 38531 persons	59/41	45.9
Total wage subsidies	128877 decisions/ 83233 persons		
Sheltered employment			
Sheltered employment in public sector	4217 persons	70/30	43.5
Sheltered employment at Samhall ⁸⁰	25637 persons		6 ⁸¹
Total Sheltered employment	29854 persons		

⁷⁸ <https://arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.76220699169bfc26b3fc46e/arbetsmarknadsrapport-2019.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Data from <https://arbetsformedlingen.se/om-oss/statistik-och-analyser/analyser-och-prognoser/analys-och-utvardering/arbetsmarknadspolitiska-program-2019>.

⁸⁰ https://samhall.se/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/AHR_Samhall2019.pdf.

⁸¹ Employment rate 2019, transition from Samhall to another employer.

7.2 EU data relevant to disability, social policies and healthcare (2018)

Table 11: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and risk (aged 16-59)

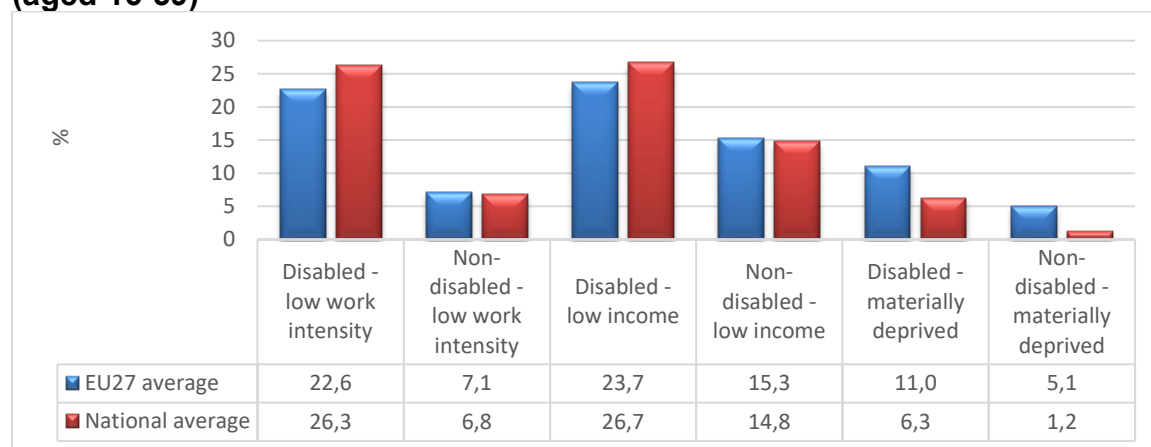


Table 12: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

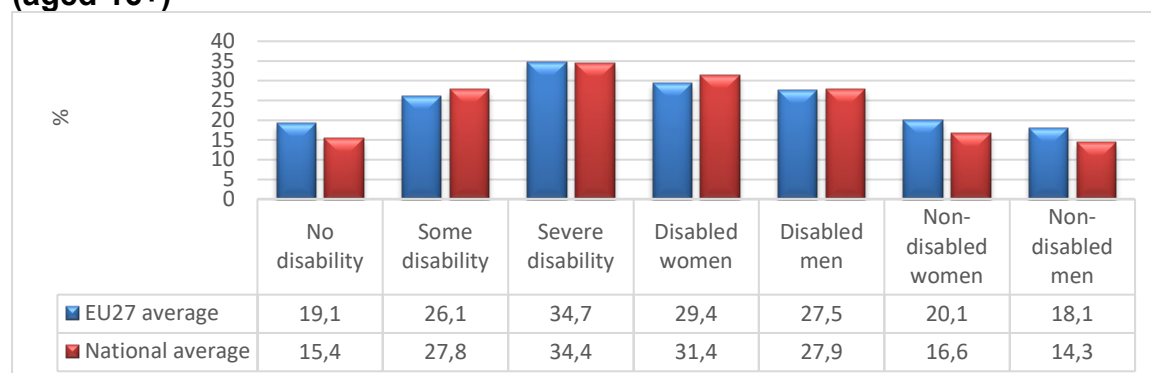
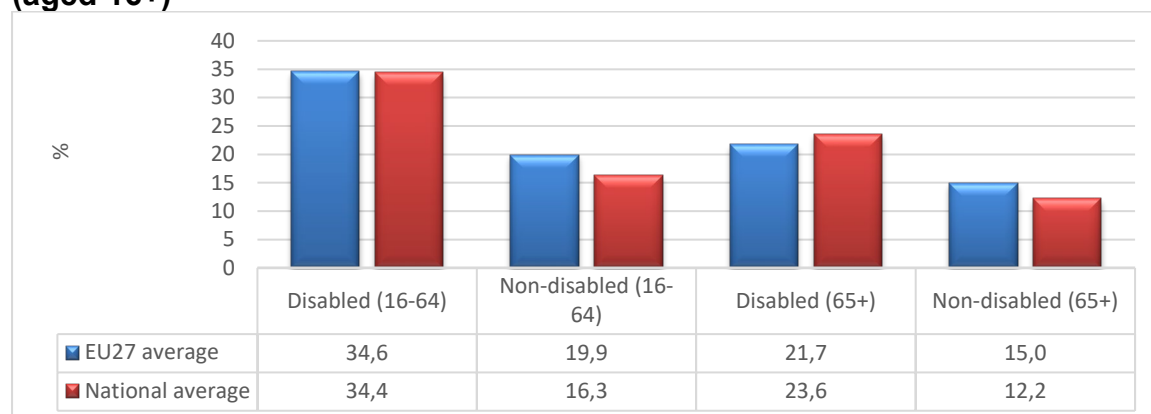
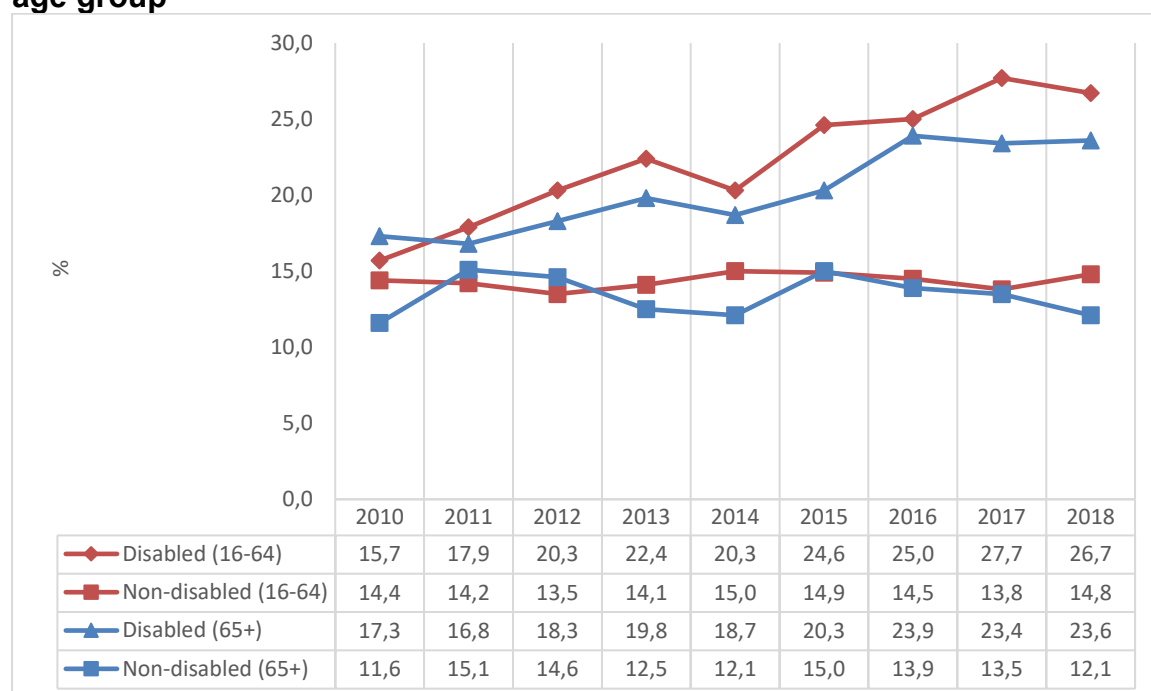


Table 13: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

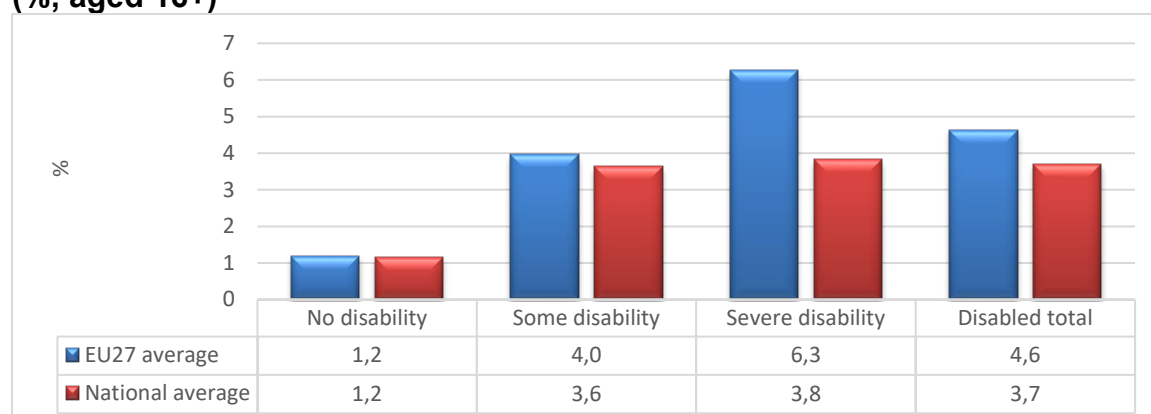


Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and previous UDB)

Table 14: Trends in the risk of poverty after social transfers, by disability and age group

Source: Eurostat Health Database [\[hlth_dpe020\]](#) - People at risk of poverty

Note: this table shows national trends in financial poverty risk, rather than the general AROPE indicator (which is not as comparable between age groups due to the effect of paid employment); the survey does not distinguish 'activity limitation' for children under 16.

Table 15: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination, 3-year average (% , aged 16+)

Source: Eurostat Health Database [\[hlth_dh030\]](#) – 'Too expensive or too far to travel or waiting list'

Note: due to large variations an average of three years is indicated. EU mean averages are also skewed by high values in a minority of countries within disability groups but median averages for the total disability and no disability groups in 2018 are consistent with the 3-year mean values.

7.2.1 Alternative sources of poverty or health care data in Sweden

The EU-SILC data provides a comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates. In addition to the summary tables presented so far, the Eurostat disability database also contains breakdowns concerning disability and poverty before and after social transfers, as well as in-work-poverty.⁸²

7.3 EU data relevant to disability and education

Table 16: Early school leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)⁸³

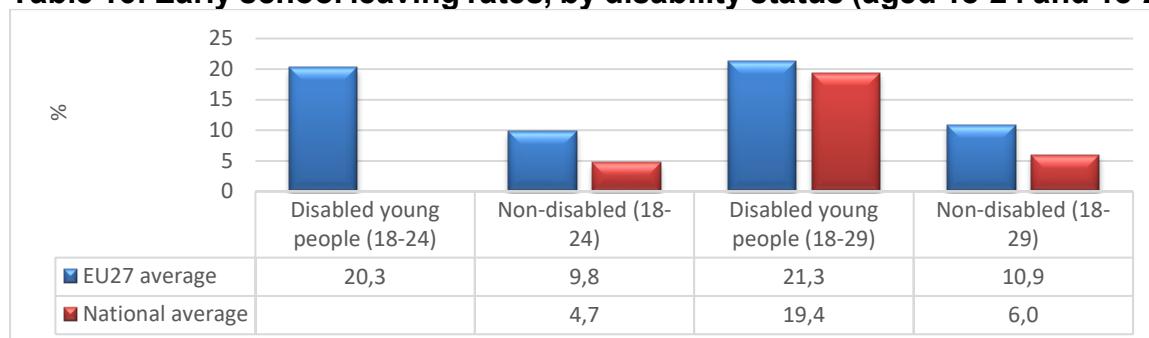
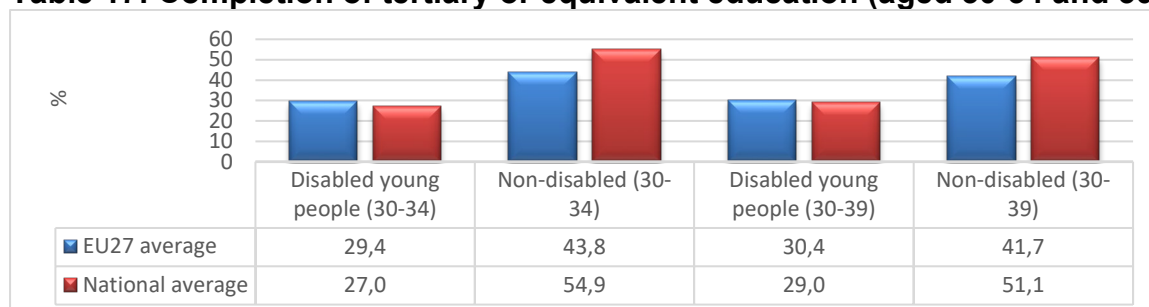


Table 17: Completion of tertiary or equivalent education (aged 30-34 and 30-39)



Source: EU-SILC 2018 Release 2020 version 1 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low (due to the small sample size in the target age group). An average of several years may be needed to establish trends or to compare breakdowns by gender. Not all estimations can be reported but they are broadly consistent.

7.3.1 Alternative sources of education data in Sweden

Disability data is not included in the core European Labour Force Survey, but education and training indicators were disaggregated from ad hoc modules conducted in 2001 and 2011. These can be found in the Eurostat disability database.⁸⁴ Similar caution is needed with this data.

Some administrative data is also provided in the European Agency's Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE), concerning the population of enrolled students identified with special educational needs in Sweden.⁸⁵

⁸² Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁸³ There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition after this time.

⁸⁴ Eurostat Health Database, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/health/data/database>.

⁸⁵ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, *Statistics on Inclusive Education*, <https://www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information>.

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