

2024

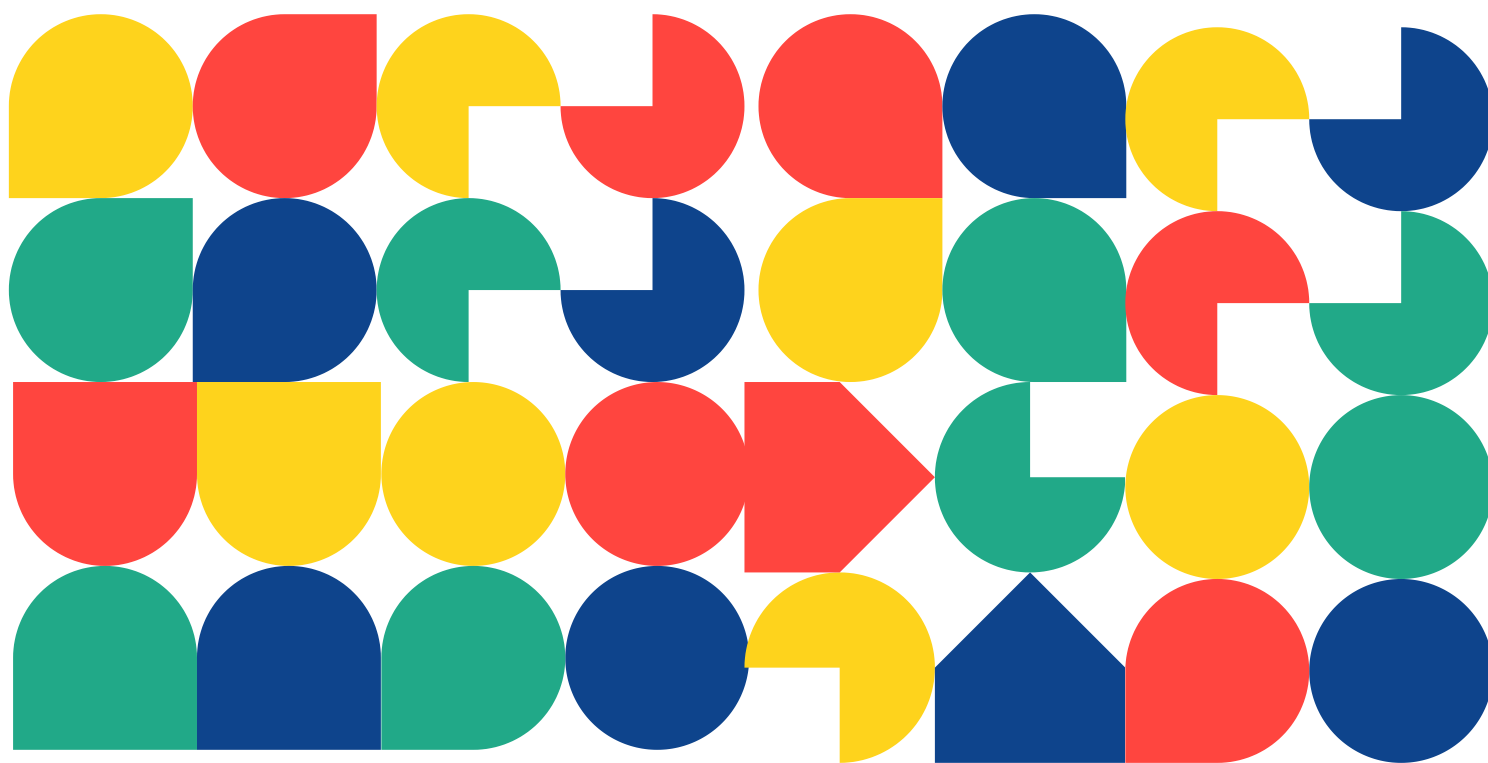


Child Guarantee analysis

SWEDEN

Support to children with disabilities within the
National Action Plan for the implementation of the
EU Child Guarantee

Country Fact Sheets



Date of publication

National Action Plan (2022) [ET](#) / [EN](#)

Biennial report (2024) [ET](#) / [EN](#)

Overall Opinion

The Swedish Child Guarantee National Action Plan (NAP) focuses on ensuring schooling continuity for children placed in care, providing equal and inclusive access to school-based leisure activities and enhancing the quality of public care. However, Sweden needs to implement robust national data collection systems. Monitoring access to essential services for children with disabilities is challenging due to a lack of national statistics on poverty and social exclusion, as acknowledged in the National Action Plan. By gathering comprehensive data, Sweden can establish clear, measurable targets and objectives that are currently lacking in the plan. This will enable the development of more effective actions and interventions, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that progress can be accurately tracked and evaluated. At the time of writing this report, two years have passed since the Action Plan was adopted. Since then, the government has decided on measures whose purpose can be linked to the purpose of the Child Guarantee, but the Action Plan as such has not been updated since its writing. These measures can be included in the Action Plan in the event of a future update.



Key data and figures

- **Children with disabilities:** About 22% of children have a disability.

While children with disabilities are identified as “children in need” within Sweden’s National Action Plan, **statistics are largely missing**. There is an absence of data on children with disabilities and their access to essential welfare and care services, including schools. Information on the school situation of pupils with diverse disabilities is mainly available in the form of qualitative reports or studies of smaller groups of pupils. This notably prevents measuring the level of inclusion of these disabilities into the Swedish school system.

Key challenges

- **Lack of access to essential services** for children with disabilities.
- **Health and well-being:** Children with disabilities face more psychosomatic symptoms, bullying, loneliness, online harassment and stress from schoolwork than their peers. This is notably the case for children with moderate or severe disabilities and children with neurodevelopmental diagnoses.
- **Greater mental health issues:** Children and young people with disabilities experience psychosomatic symptoms to a greater extent than children and young people without disabilities. 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.
- **Risk of violence and abuse:** Children with disabilities are at increased risk of all forms of violence and abuse.
- **Lack of educational resources:** Lack of teaching and learning materials for pupils with disabilities.
- **Lack of access to leisure activities** for children with disabilities.
- **Parental challenges:** Parents of children with disabilities often struggle with coordinating care and experience higher levels of fatigue, sleep difficulties, anxiety and worry.



National legal framework

The framework consists of existing national strategies and targets:

- National strategy for strengthening the rights of the child.
- New strategy for systematic monitoring of disability policy to apply during the period 2021-2031: It aims to follow up disability policy in relation to the national objective. Disability policy is to be followed up by several named government agencies, and the Swedish Agency for Participation is to provide these government agencies with support in this work.
- 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 is to reduce segregation and ensure equal conditions for children's upbringing.
- A 2018 strategy also focuses on enhancing parental support to promote children's health and development.

Key targets and objectives

- Children with disabilities should receive more support for equal educational opportunities and comparable living conditions. A new indicator measures the percentage of children attending concerts or cinema in the last six months, having their own room and affording items their friends have. It reveals that fewer girls with disabilities have their own room compared to those without disabilities. It also shows that girls with disabilities struggle to afford items compared to boys and children without disabilities. However, there are no significant differences in cinema and concert attendance between children with and without disabilities.

Key measures

ECEC and education

- **Legislative clarifications:** Proposals have been made to clarify the remit of the School Health Service and the regulatory framework for municipal special schools to ensure that education cannot be limited for pupils with special support.
- **Learning support:** The Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools have been tasked with providing professional development in special needs education, including neurodevelopmental problems. Additional funding has been allocated to improve mandatory screening materials and assessment support in preschool and primary education.



- **Facilities and material adaptations:** The Education Act has been amended to ensure that the School Health Service focuses on individual needs and collaborates with educational staff. Special needs educators are required for special needs educational initiatives and early support interventions have been introduced.
- **Monitoring and knowledge improvement:** An inquiry was appointed to propose how knowledge about children with disabilities in the school system can be improved. The final report, submitted in December 2023, aims to create a sustainable system for monitoring their progress.
- **Transport:** Free transport to school is generally provided, including for children with a disability. No additional measures were included in the NAP.

Leisure activities

- **Leisure-time card ('Fritidskort'):** It aims to give children and young people from 8 to 16 years greater access to sport, culture, outdoor activities and participation in other club activities.
- **'Skapande skola' ('Creative School'):** The Swedish Arts Council ensures equal and inclusive access to school-based activities - including participation in school trips - through grants. During the 2022-23 school year, approximately 625,912 pupils participated in Creative School projects, representing about 50% of pupils in preschool class, compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with severe intellectual disabilities, compulsory special needs school, special needs schools and Sami school.

Healthcare

- **National Health Programme for Children and Young People:** It aims to promote health and development, prevent ill-health and propose long-term follow-up. The final report is due by 31 October 2026.
- **New Mental health strategy:** Covering 2025-2034, the **'It's about life'** strategy was adopted in 2025, after the publication of the Biennial report - that mentioned it. It is accompanied by a National Action Plan (2025-2026).
- **Rehabilitation and rehabilitation services:** In 2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare was tasked with assessing national guidelines for rehabilitation, habilitation and assistive devices. It concluded that national support should be strengthened, and guidelines implemented regionally. From 2024, primary healthcare must offer rehabilitation based on individual needs.



Foster care

- **Prevent institutionalisation:** Measures are taken by the Inquiry *Barn och unga i samhällets vård* ('Children and young people placed in care') to prevent children from being placed in institutions by improving the quality and availability of family-based care and other supportive environments. It involves creating more suitable care placements, ensuring individual needs are met and supporting municipalities in providing high-quality care. It seeks to place children in care settings that best meet their needs while ensuring their safety and security.

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