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| **European Semester 2018/2019 country fiche on disability** |
| **Sweden** |  |
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| With comparative data provided by the ANED core team |

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](http://disability-europe.net/) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network support the development of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the EU.

This country report and statistical annex have been prepared as input for the European Semester from a disability perspective.

 

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# Summary and recommendations

## Key features of the disability situation and challenges in 2018-19

**Employment** The employment situation for persons with disabilities is quite stable, and no major changes in employment rate can be noted over the last 10 years. The disability gap in employment rate remains the same, at around 20 percentage points between persons with and without disabilities, but the unemployment gap decreased in the last year, from 3.2 points in 2016 to 1.8 points in 2017 (according to national data sources). Nevertheless, the disability employment gap for persons with reduced work capacity remains the same as in 2016, around 22 points, while for persons with disabilities without reduced work capacity the gap decreased, from almost 9 points in 2016 to 4 points in 2017. The EU-SILC data shows an employment gap of 30 points. The differences between persons with disabilities, with or without reduced work capacity, has not been addressed to a large extent, as people with disabilities are treated as a homogeneous group in the labour market statistics and reports. The measures taken are mainly aimed at increasing employment for disabled people through participation in various programs at the Public employment services or sheltered employment via Samhall. However, the effectiveness of measures to reduce unemployment is uncertain as few of the measures are evaluated.

**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. The level of education among people with disabilities has remained at about the same level since 2014, unlike the population in total, where the proportion of post-secondary education has increased from 41% to 44% in the same period. Although the trend is positive, there are still many challenges. Most of the measures taken to meet the national EU2020 goals are focused on low-skilled individuals and newly arrived immigrants. Disability is not mentioned specifically in relation to education in the NRP or CR. 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.

**Poverty and social exclusion:** The number of recipients of activity compensation (disability pension for age 18-29) has increased every year since 2010 and new recipients have doubled over a ten-year period. Most of those who receive activity compensation have not had the opportunity to build up additional insurance cover through employment which means that many young people with disabilities live in poverty. The statistics on sickness compensation have shown a reverse trend with a decrease in recipients but in 2017 this trend came to a halt. The number of newly granted claims is the lowest since the sickness benefit was introduced in 2003. The income gap between persons with disabilities receiving sickness and activity compensation in relation to the rest of the population is high, on average. Overall, statistics and reports on poverty and social exclusion show that people with disabilities are disadvantaged regarding their financial situation. The measure taken to increase the financial equality of people with disabilities, in terms of sickness and activity compensation, is positive but far from adequate.

## Recommendations

Make mainstream **employment measures**, available and accessible for persons with disabilities.

* In order to increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities, there is a need to make mainstream labour market policies both available and accessible to people with disabilities.
* There is a need to provide statistics of persons with disabilities also in all mainstream labour market measures, to establish a full picture of the state of the art concerning their participation in the labour market.
* Policy measures should be evaluated in terms of quality and effects both from a disability and from a gender perspective, as the statistics show differences both disability and gender gaps in interaction.

Equalize the availability and provision of **educational support** for students with disabilities.

* Sufficient support must be given to students with disabilities to avoid segregation or exclusion from the mainstream schools due to a lack of such support.
* Statistics and reports show great differences between municipalities and schools.
* One suggestion is that special support in schools could be managed as a state issue rather than a municipal one, to increase equality in schools.

Increase the monetary levels of social security for persons with disabilities need to guarantee that recipients do not live in poverty.

* The average poverty risks in Sweden are low but this mask the inequality of those persons with disabilities who are reliant on income from disability benefits.
* The financial security of persons with sickness and activity compensation has been strengthened by additional tax reduction for the benefits but this is not enough to secure that the recipients do not live in poverty.

Mainstream disability equality in employment and social policies and 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.

## The EU2020 targets in relation to disability strategy and rights

As part of Member State commitments to the EU2020 strategy, the targets shown in Table 1 were established for the general population. Disability policies are highly relevant, and it is unlikely that the EU targets can be achieved without actions and investments to mainstream disability equality in these three areas. This country report shows where the main disability equality gaps exist, at the national level. It assesses the main policies in place to address these gaps and identifies the opportunities to mainstream disability equality in the semester review process.

Table 1: Europe 2020 and agreed national targets for the general population

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Europe 2020 targets** | **National targets[[1]](#footnote-1)** |
| **Employment** | 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed | > 80% |
| **Education** | Reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10% | < 7 % |
| At least 40% of 30-34–year-olds completing third level education | 45-50% |
| **Fighting poverty and social exclusion** | At least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion | Reduce to well below 14 the%age of women and men (aged 20-64) who are not in the labour force (except full-time students), long-term unemployed or on long-term sick leave |

The statistical annex to this country report provides comparative indicators of the disability equality gaps existing in these target areas (based on ANED’s annual analysis of EU-SILC microdata since 2008).[[2]](#footnote-2)

### Recommendations from the UN CRPD Committee relevant to EU2020

The UN CRPD Concluding Observations were provided in 2014 and the next report is to be expected in 2019. The most relevant key points in the observations, related to the articles addressed in this report, are:[[3]](#footnote-3)

In relation to **employment** (Article 27 CRPD) the Committee expressed concern contradictory trends in the employment of persons with disabilities, with higher unemployment but increased support provided by the public employment service, as well as gender gaps. The Committee recommended that Sweden:

…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.

With regard to **education** (Article 24 CRPD) the Committee was concerned about school exclusion or refusal of admission, and lack of support, for some pupils with disabilities. It recommended that Sweden:

…guarantee the inclusion of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system and ensure that they have the required support.

In relation to adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28 CRPD) the UN Committee raised no specific concern or recommendation in 2014. However, their recommendation on living independently in the community (Article 19 CRPD) is very relevant to the ‘**long-term care**’ concerns of the European Semester reviews. In this respect the Committee expressed concern about limitation and cutbacks to publicly funded personal assistance schemes. It recommended that Sweden:

…ensure that personal assistance programmes provide sufficient and fair financial assistance to ensure that a person can live independently in the community.

### National disability strategies, plans and targets relevant to EU2020

In 2017, a new national disability strategy for Sweden was adopted by the Riksdag.[[4]](#footnote-4) This National Goal and Focus on Disability Policy is to achieve equality in living conditions and full participation in society for people with disabilities, with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Committee’s recommendations as a starting point (as well as the UN Agenda 2030). The goal shall contribute also to increased gender equality. In order to achieve the national goal, implementation of disability policy must focus on the four areas:

* the principle of universal design;
* existing shortcomings in accessibility;
* individual support and solutions for the individual's independence;
* preventing and counteracting discrimination.

There were no quantifiable targets in the bill but the disability policy goals that are directly relevant to the EU2020 targets are:

**Employment**: The overarching goal is to increase the employment rate for all people, including persons with disabilities, and to reduce unemployment. By 2030 the goal is to achieve full and productive employment and decent working conditions for all women and men, including persons with disabilities, as well as equal pay for equal work.

**Education**: The goal is that every child and youth, regardless of sex, background and disability, should be given a good educational foundation to stand on, and adults should have good access to education throughout their lives no matter where in the country they live. All children, young people and adults should also be given the opportunity to try and develop their skills and skills to their full potential regardless of age, sex and disability. A goal is to abolish gender differences in education by 2030 and ensure equal access to education and training at all levels for vulnerable persons, including people with disabilities, indigenous people and children living under vulnerable conditions. In addition, a sub-goal is that education environments adapted for children and people with disabilities should be built, taking into account equality aspects, thus providing a safe, peaceful, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all.

**Social security** (poverty): No specific goals were described. The principles of the proposal include a commitment to individual support and solutions (*Individuella stöd och lösningar*), including personal assistance with consistent provision across the country, but no target is included.

# Disability and employment - analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

According to the estimates available from EU-SILC data and national sources, persons with disabilities remain in a far worse situation in the labour market than the rest of the population (see Table 3 in annex). According to the indicators from SILC, the disability employment gap is wider than the EU average. Despite the fact that labour demand is high and the employment rate is generally increasing in the population, the employment rate for persons with disabilities has also not changed in the same positive direction as for the rest of the population (see

Note*: It is important to exercise caution in analysis of the youngest disability age groups, where the number of observations is less than 50 in Sweden (an average of recent years may be more reliable).*

Table 5). There is now a risk that persons with disabilities are left behind in a strengthening labour market. This requires policy attention.

When the numbers for people with disabilities are disaggregated between those who indicate reduced workability and those who do not, trend differences are also evident. While the employment rate of people with disabilities without reduced workability remains considerably higher, the disability gap in their employment rates has widened, while it has narrowed slightly for people with disabilities and reduced work ability (see Table 12). This observation is somewhat counter-intuitive as it is commonly assumed that persons with lower levels of functional impairment, in relation to employment, are more quickly able to find jobs in strengthening labour market conditions. This difference has not been addressed to a large extent, as people with disabilities are treated in labour market policy as a homogeneous group. The employment rate for both groups varies by 8-10%age points over the last 10-year period, and sometimes with fluctuations of about 5%age points over the years, suggesting that labour market policy measures can affect outcomes as equally strong fluctuations cannot be estimated for the total population.

Unemployment, defined as persons without work but seeking work, is higher for people with disabilities, but in their entirety relatively low in Sweden compared with other EU countries (see Table 6). However, a focus on this definition hides the extent of the problem and overlooks the issue of inactivity, since many persons with disabilities without employment are not enrolled in PES and registered as jobseekers (see Table 9). This may be the case, for example, for persons with intellectual impairment and / or autism diagnoses who have been granted the right to ‘daily activities’ are, by definition, not ‘available to the labour market’.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, studies have shown that persons with disabilities in daily activities, when they receive qualitative employment support may achieve employment to a similar rate as other people with disabilities.[[6]](#footnote-6) On the other hand, historic evidence indicates that very few people, in practice, do leave this activity group for work.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The Government’s national goal for disability policy is to increase the employment rate for people with disabilities and to reduce unemployment.[[8]](#footnote-8) The 2017 regulation letter for PES states that the proportion of persons with disability, and reduced work ability, who go into work or study shall increase.[[9]](#footnote-9) At the end of 2017, 169,944 persons with disabilities were enrolled at the PES (2016: 173,881; 2015: 183,794).[[10]](#footnote-10) The figures correspond to 27% of all enrolled, which is unchanged compared to 2016. Of those enrolled with disabilities, 45% were women and 55% men.

Of those enrolled with disability, 54% (38,349 women and 53,253 men), had a job at the end of 2017, of which the majority had a subsidized employment.[[11]](#footnote-11) The share was unchanged compared with 2016, but lower than in the previous year. By 2017, the total proportion of people with a disability and reduced work ability who had found employment was 28.6% (2016: 28.3%; 2015: 26.9%). Among those enrolled with disabilities, the proportion unemployed is slightly higher compared to previous years, and the number has increased slightly. The Public Employment Service mainly sees changes in administrative procedures and programs as possible explanations for changes in the number of those enrolled with disabilities.

**Assessment of policy developments**

In order to achieve its national strategy goals, the government has begun to implement changes in labour market policy.[[12]](#footnote-12) Among other things, a revision of the regulations for the special measures for people with disabilities and reduced workability will be carried out, where the focus will be on actions that are based on the individual's needs and conditions. Another change is the change of names for the wage subsidy, development employment and security employment that came into force from 1 July 2017, which respond to the recommendation of the UNCRPD Committee regarding ‘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’.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The Government has taken advantage of the recommendations of the UNCRPD Committee on designing future Disability Policy and as a basis for developing new goals and a new structure for implementation (see chapter 1.3.2 earlier).[[14]](#footnote-14) Based on Article 27 CRPD, and in order to achieve the national EU2020 target for employment, described in the Swedish convergence program 2018, the government has taken a series of measures.

* Resources have been added to enable more people with disabilities to get a job in **Samhall**, an investment that is estimated to amount to 400 million SEK annually from 2017 (approximately €38m). Samhall is a publicly-owned company with mandated targets to provide a return on investment by employing people with from the target population to at least 30.2 million wage hours annually, from which at least 1,500 employees should transition to another employer. At least 40% of new recruitment should come from groups prioritised in negotiation with the PES (such as persons with intellectual or multiple impairments).[[15]](#footnote-15) The PES commissioned in 2017 that at least 3,100 people in long-term unemployment would be employed by Samhall AB during the year. By the end of 2017, 3,149 people acquired (new) employment at Samhall, one third women and two thirds of men. Of these were 2,105 people, 69%, were under 30 years. By 2017, a total of 1,295 people, 413 women and 882 men (of a total of 25,000 employees)[[16]](#footnote-16) moved on to a job outside Samhall (which is slightly below their agreed target of 1,500).

There has also been an increase in Special Introduction and Monitoring Support (SIUS). The government has initiated a simplification of employment support and an incremental increase in wage subsidies, as well as giving the majority of government authorities the task of receiving persons with disabilities and reduced work ability for internships during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2018.

* **SIUS**, a support form based on Supported Employment and which aim to providing support to both employees and employers, was expanded as planned in 2017 with more SIUS consultants. During 2017, 9 323 people (5 491 people and 3 832 women) were enrolled in the SIUS program. The number of people who reach employment by SIUS has decreased between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, 5 288 people (2 015 women and 3 273 men) got an employment (2016: 5 564; 2015: 5 658). SIUS is a long-term initiative, which means that it will only be possible to see the eventual effects of the increased resources in the next year(s). The expansion of SIUS is in line with the policy objectives for disability policy, where the focus should be on initiatives that are based on the individual's needs and conditions. SIUS also seems to be a relatively effective measure for those who, in the field of labour market policy, are considered to be at the ‘margin of the labour market’ to which persons with disabilities who lack work experience are usually included. Swedish studies of the SIUS program show that 26% of young people with disabilities who, at the start, receive activity compensation from the social insurance agency reach an employment within 15 months.[[17]](#footnote-17) The positive effect, however, was mainly for men.
* On average, 74,235 persons with disabilities (29,658 women and 44,577 men) had **subsidized employment** per month in 2017.[[18]](#footnote-18) In 2016-17 there has been a marginal decline in this average number. It is uncertain what this decline is due to, but one factor that may affect it are displacement effects from other groups that can also receive wage subsidies in labour market policies, such as young people, those who are long-term ill and immigrants.
* Regarding **internships in the state** the evidence is more uncertain, in terms of volume in the effort, which has not been reported in the PES reports for 2017,[[19]](#footnote-19) or in terms of its impact on future employment opportunities. Studies show that the government's previous volume assessments have systematically overestimated the expected participant numbers.[[20]](#footnote-20) The Swedish National Audit Office compared the volume assessments and outcomes for 23 initiatives in the labour market policy, that the government introduced 2006-2015, including, among others, traineeship programs in state administration for people with disabilities. They found that the government systematically overestimated both the future number of participants and the costs. For six out of ten volume assessments, the actual number of participants was no more than 25% of the expected. In addition, almost half of the efforts that started during the period 2006-2015 were discontinued within four years. It is therefore difficult to comment on both the volume of the effort and its effectiveness.

In May 2018, ‘Introductory jobs’ were introduced as a new labour market program at the PES. Introductory jobs refer to employers who hire a person who (a) participate in the job and development guarantee (long-term unemployed), (b) have reached the age of 20, who have participated in the job and development guarantee (long-term unemployed youth) or (c) have reached the age of 20 years and are newly arrived immigrants.[[21]](#footnote-21) The aim is to stimulate the employment of people who find it difficult to get a job without support. Employers may receive 80% of salary costs plus financial support for supervision or other skills enhancement efforts, with SEK 2000 per month during the first six months of the employment. The financial compensation can be granted for twelve months with the possibility of renewal if a person is deemed to need longer periods of support in order to be able to establish himself in the labour market.

In the description of Introductory jobs, there is no specific focus on people with disabilities, which can cause people with disabilities not to be considered as a target group as they are not specifically mentioned as a target group (although they may be among the most vulnerable in target groups for introductory jobs). At the PES there are other programs specifically aimed at people with disabilities, which may mean that officials at the PES choose these programs as first-hand alternatives, instead of mainstream programs. It is difficult to find out how many people with disabilities who receive support in different mainstream programs, since statistics on the programs are presented only for the programs or for those named as main target groups for the programs, and not divided into different subgroups, such as people with disabilities within the overall target group.

As statistics show, are there relatively large gender differences in the active labour market measures for persons with disabilities, initiated by the government. In 2015 the PES made an in-depth analysis of the gender distribution within wage subsidies, which shows that differences between men and women remain even when account has been taken of observable differences between the groups, such as age, type of disability and education level.[[22]](#footnote-22) The same gender differences do not show among persons with disabilities in the working population where 15.4% of women and 14.2 of men report that they have a disability, and of which 11.2% of women and 8.5% of men also report reduced work ability.[[23]](#footnote-23) These figures are not reflected in the measures given where a much higher proportion of men are included in the efforts. The PES has started work with gender mainstreaming where further analyses and activities will be conducted in order to improve gender equality within all forms of support.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Overall, the active labour market measures taken are mainly aimed at increasing employment for disabled people through participation in various programs at the PES or sheltered employment via Samhall, exactly as the Government's guidelines for the PES prescribe. The enrolment at the PES and participation in different programs can, based on the definition of employed persons used in labour market policy,[[25]](#footnote-25) change the employment situation in the shorter or longer term for the individual, depending on its length, which may be a part of the explanation of the fluctuating employment rate figures over the years. However, the effectiveness of measures to reduce unemployment is uncertain as few of the measures are evaluated. The exception applies to SIUS (as described above). The measures initiated by the government for people with disabilities are primarily aimed at increasing employment in the short term and do not meet the challenge identified by CR 2018; the importance of skills in order to meet the demand for high-skilled labour.

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

As the estimates from EU-SILC data indicate, there is a distinct disability equality gap in rate of early leaving and in tertiary educational attainment in Sweden (see Table 13 and

Table 14). Both rates are relatively positive by comparison with averages for other EU Member States, but Sweden performs less well (ranks lower) in relation to disability equality than for its population as a whole on these measures.

The widest disability gap is found in tertiary education, and it has been widening. The level of education among people with disabilities has remained at about the same level since 2014, unlike the population in total where an increase in education levels has been seen since 2014 where the proportion of post-secondary education has increased from 41% to 44%.[[26]](#footnote-26) There is a difference between the general population and the employed part of the population, where those in employment have a higher education level on average, especially for people with disabilities, both with and without reduced work ability (see Table 15).

Concerning the national EU2020-target, the statistics (see Table 13) show the reduction of the rates of early leaving below 7% is still far from being fulfilled for persons with disabilities. Although the trend is a decrease in proportion of disabled students with only compulsory education the proportion is currently 19% and would have to be reduced by nearly 50% in order to align even with the EU average target of 10% (and by more two thirds to align with the achievements for non-disabled young people in Sweden, for whom it is below 5%). The second EU2020 target, at least 45-50% of all those aged 30-34 completing third level education, is also not being met for persons with disabilities (although it is exceeded for those without). The gap is closer than for early leaving although it has seen a slight decrease since last year. About 31% of disabled people, in the target age group, have currently completed third level education. The differences between disabled women and men are considerable; about one quarter more disabled women have completed tertiary education compared to disabled men in this age group.

Education and skills are important for employment and the Swedish labour market is characterized by an increased need for medium and high-skilled workers, which is not fully matched by supply. The 2018 Commission staff working document points to this growing skill mismatch. As stated in the national EU2020 targets, Sweden seeks to increase opportunities for post-secondary education, primarily through the ‘Knowledge Lift’; by creating an additional 100,000 places in higher education by the year 2021. Whether some additional efforts will be directed towards people with disabilities and towards accessibility in education is unclear.

* The **accessibility** of the school system has in a number of reports[[27]](#footnote-27) been criticized and seen as a significant barrier to equal education. The Authority for Participation’s (MFD) report ‘So available is the state’ [*Så tillgänglig är staten*] (2016)[[28]](#footnote-28) shows that overall accessibility at universities has improved in recent years. At the same time, however, some accessibility barriers remain. For example, there is a slight downward trend in the proportion of higher education institutions that have adapted their premises, written information and communication from an accessibility perspective during the period 2011-2016.
* Other reports points out that obstacles in studies for students with disabilities may be due to **inadequate organization** rather than the studies themselves.[[29]](#footnote-29) Shortcomings in the organization may be due to the fact that contacts with support persons are created late, that premises are inaccessible and that syllabus are issued late so that students who need the course literature in a particular format receive the literature later than other students.

A concern that Sweden shares with a number of other countries is the so-called NEET population and the proportion of young people who interrupt their schooling early, even though Sweden has comparatively a low proportion of NEETs. In 2015 the OECD did a report about the NEETS situation in Sweden[[30]](#footnote-30) which shows that nearly 10% of 15-29 years old in Sweden were not in employment, education or training. This is below the OECD average of 15%. However, the report also shows that youths with low education are more at risk of being NEET in Sweden than in other OECD countries and this group accounts for one third of all NEETS. Youths without completed upper secondary school education are five times more likely to be NEET compared to youths with tertiary education. Although is not possible to rate the proportion of persons with disabilities among the NEETs the report summarises that ‘NEETs are substantially more likely to report poor health and physical limitations than other youth and are more likely to suffer from long-term illness and mental health problems.’

Statistics from the Delegation of youth to work[[31]](#footnote-31) shows that 35% of youths below 20 years of age drop out of (or not fulfil) upper secondary school. The statistics do not show the proportion of youths with disabilities but earlier studies[[32]](#footnote-32) of reasons behind school dropout show that for a third of women and half of men who dropped out of secondary school study fatigue was the main reason why they did not complete their studies. Every sixth woman and every tenth man stated that the main reason was that they had been physically or mentally ill for a long time which delayed their studies. Of those who started a preparatory programme about 20 % interrupted their studies because they have been physically or mentally ill, which was twice the proportion among other programs. Women dropped out in greater extent than men because they needed but did not receive support in school.

There are a number of measures in the national 2020 goals that will affect the completion of schooling in a positive direction. However, the only individual target group highlighted in the documents is new arrived immigrants even though there is reason to believe that people with disabilities are largely found among those who interrupt their schooling or fail to get full grades. However, as the schools are not allowed, according to the laws, to keep register of health-related issues (such as disability) there is hard to get statistics about the situation in schools for pupils or students with disabilities. The statistics mainly show how many of the pupils or students that have some kind of support in school or support needs, numbers that could not be equalized with the number of pupils or students with disabilities. Earlier evaluations of the school have shown that it is far from all pupils with disabilities who have access to special support at school, despite the need for such support.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The evidence suggests that the unequal level of education is due to the large gaps in the support of students with disabilities need to reach as far as possible in their education.[[34]](#footnote-34) National Agency of education statistics[[35]](#footnote-35) show a decrease in the % age of pupils with support programmes, from 14% in 2012/2013 to 5% in 2016/2017. The decrease is probably due to the change in the law which came into force in 2014, which meant that many students no longer considered to be in need of support programmes and specific support because the support measures should be set out in the form of additional adjustments in the context of the regular curriculum. Statistics show an overrepresentation of boys in all support measures. This trend is constant over the years. For example, 6, 2% of boys received a support programme 2016/2017 compared with 3, 4% of girls.

Statistics from the School inspectorate[[36]](#footnote-36) show that it is twice as common that a notification of misconduct concerns a boy’s right to special support in school, then a girl’s right. Statistics also shows a connection between having a diagnosis and special support, and that boys tend to be more often diagnosed than girls. The school inspectorate criticizes 40% of the schools for shortcomings in special support, during the regular supervision of priority school units, in 2016. In almost one third of all schools the shortcomings were about urgently investigating the student’s need for special support. Other concerned that the adjustments had not been sufficient.

There has been a large reduction in the number of students in all special schooling forms. In special upper secondary schools, the numbers decreased by 25 %, from 8763 students in 2007[[37]](#footnote-37) to 6 072 students 2017.[[38]](#footnote-38) There has been a similar decrease in special elementary school. There are several reasons for the decline. The requirements for the reception of students in special primary and upper secondary schools have been tightened, the target audience for the type of school has been reduced and there has been an overall reduction in the number of young people in secondary school age.

For adults, education is offered at Folkhögskola, a school form that the government in the National Disability Strategy points out as suitable for people with disabilities. Pedagogy is individualized, which means that the courses are shaped according to the participant's needs and conditions. By 2017, 21% of participants at long courses had some or all types of disability and 8% of participants at short courses.[[39]](#footnote-39) Compared to 2015 and 2014, the number of disabled people has increased by 4% and 5% respectively. In addition to the general mission of public education to offer people education to disabled people, additional efforts are made to support disabled people. The National Education Council annually allocates a reinforcement contribution to disabled students at Folkhögskola.[[40]](#footnote-40) There is also a special education support that the Special Education School Authority benefits to Folkhögskolor in order to provide support to disabled persons in the form of support persons and certain technical equipment.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The Government’s national disability strategy[[42]](#footnote-42) is based, concerning education, on Article 24 and the right to education for persons with disabilities shall be granted without discrimination and on equal terms. The objectives have been designed in accordance with Objective 4 of Agenda 2030, which means that by 2030 equal access to education and training at all levels for vulnerable persons, including people with disabilities, is to be ensured and that educational environments adapted for children and people with disabilities should be built. In order to achieve the goals, the government has initiated a range of measures, such as a focus on more places on the special education and special education programs and on strengthening and developing student health. The Government has also initiated changes to the School Act's provisions on contributions to individual principals for preschools and schools in the form of additional amounts for special support for children and students. They have also commissioned the Authority for Available Media to review, in cooperation with the Special Education School Authority, access to teaching materials adapted for people with disabilities from preschool to college. There are no follow-ups to the results of these efforts.

Overall, statistics and reports show that Sweden is quite far from meeting both the national 2020 goals and the goals of an equal and accessible school expressed in the National Disability Strategy. There is no particular focus on people with disabilities, either in CR or in the Convergence Program 2018, but they refer to ‘groups on the margin of the labour market, such as low-skilled unemployed’. The only group that occupies a particular interest in these reports, regarding education, is immigrants. The goals that have been formulated in the government's national disability strategy and the measures initiated so far have the potential to improve the school situation for disabled people, but more needs to be done to achieve a level of equal education. The education system is based on the principles of mainstream schooling and that the pupil is to be supported in the school situation in order to achieve equal conditions, but since the school is governed by the municipality, the availability of support may differ to students depending on the municipality to which they belong.[[43]](#footnote-43) The difference in access can be both a resource question and a knowledge question. There have been discussions that special support in schools would be a state issue rather than a municipal, something that could be an accessible way to increase equality in schools.

# Disability, poverty and social exclusion – analysis of the situation and the effectiveness of policies

According to the EU-SILC indicators, the relative poverty of persons with disabilities in Sweden is a matter for concern. While the risk of material deprivation is very low the risk of relative financial poverty now rises above the EU average for this group (see Table 16). Some caution is needed when interpreting this data, due to an under-reporting of activity limitation in the Swedish survey (which might lead to anomalies in the estimation). Nevertheless, the disability income equality gap applies to both women and men and to persons declaring more moderate levels of limitation (Table 17). The average risk of poverty or social exclusion has been rising steadily for persons with disabilities of working age since 2011, and much faster than for other persons (Table 19). In fact, the risk of financial poverty for working age persons with disabilities is among the highest in the EU, before social transfers, and no better than moderate after social transfers. This underlines a high vulnerability to social benefit policies among younger disabled adults in particular. The unequal disability poverty risk, and the role of social protection measures, needs to be actively monitored in the context of the Semester.

Statistics show that persons with disabilities in a much greater extent lacking cash margins than the general population, 28% compared to 14%.[[44]](#footnote-44) Among people with disabilities, as for the general population, men have better personal finances. During the period 2010-2015, it is primarily people with severe anxiety who had the worst cash margin (48%), followed by people with asthma / allergies (37%) and long-term illness (36%).

Individuals with low education and low income are over-represented among those with excessive debt. People with disabilities are at risk because the group as a whole has a lower level of education and is in work to a lesser extent than the general population. The same statistics show that between 2010 and 2015, 22% of all people with disabilities experienced economic hardship compared to 11% among the general population. Among people with disabilities, people with severe anxiety experienced this more often than others, at 38%.

Concerning Sweden's social security network, the CR 2018 points to that jobless households, to which people with disabilities to a greater extent than the rest of the population belong, remain at a considerable risk of poverty. The share of risk of poverty or social exclusion has grown, especially for older women. The CR also points out that educational and social background has an impact on the risk of poverty. As the educational level is lower among people with disabilities, this can further help increase the risk of poverty for them and their children.

**Disability and sickness benefits**

The social insurance expenditure for benefits managed by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (SIA) in 2017 totalled SEK 228 billion, just under 5% GDP.[[45]](#footnote-45) A little more than half of these expenses went to sick people and people with disabilities, one third went to children and families, and the remaining part to other remuneration in the labour market and administration. The benefits that specifically provide financial security to people with disabilities are activity compensation and sickness compensation.

Data from the Social Insurance Agency show that in 2017 there were 45,707 persons 19-29 receiving **activity compensation**, of which almost all are granted the compensation on a full-time basis.[[46]](#footnote-46) The number of recipients has increased every year since 2010 and during 2017 there were around 6,500 new recipients, which is a doubling over a ten-year period. Mental illnesses predominate in activity compensation and the proportion has increased over the years. By 2017, mental illnesses accounted for 86% and 87% of all newly granted activity compensation for women and men, respectively. Most of those who receive activity compensation have not had the opportunity to build up additional insurance cover through employment, and therefore only receive guarantee compensation. The maximum guarantee for activity compensation was SEK 8,960 per month before tax in 2017. In 2017, 87% of women and 93% of men with activity compensation received only guaranteed compensation. This means that many young people with disabilities live in poverty.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Statistics Sweden’s survey of living conditions[[48]](#footnote-48) shows that 12% of youths aged 16-29 who have a disability state that they have financial problems. This can be compared with 4.5% among other young people. It is more common for young men with disabilities to indicate that they have financial problems compared to young women with disabilities.

The statistics on **sickness compensation** have shown a reverse trend with a decrease in recipients but in 2017 this trend came to a halt.[[49]](#footnote-49) In 2017 there were 300,785 persons in age 30-64 who received sickness compensation. Of these, 5,700 were newly granted sickness compensation, which is the lowest number of new grants since the sickness benefit was introduced in 2003. Of the recipients of sickness compensation, 59% were women and 41% men. Among the youngest with sickness compensation, it is more common with full compensation, while among the older it is more common with partial compensation. Most of the older people who receive sickness compensation have had the opportunity to build up additional insurance cover through previous employment and therefore receive higher income-related compensation. In December 2017, 83% of women and 73% of men received income-related compensation. Those remaining receive a guarantee compensation of SEK 9,147 per month before tax in 2017. Although income-related compensation is usually higher than the guarantee fee, the maximum amount of compensation amounts to 18,116 SEK/ month[[50]](#footnote-50) means that it is still relatively low income, which for many may pose a risk of poverty.

The Agency for Participation’s monitoring of Disability Policy confirms that the income gap between persons with disabilities receiving sickness and activity compensation in relation to the rest of the population on average is high.[[51]](#footnote-51) The difference in the financial standard between persons receiving compensation and the rest of the population began to rise in the early 2000s with a more dramatic increase since 2006. The Authority for Participation points to two main explanations for this development:

* The first is that the level of transfers paid is often linked to price developments or determined in nominal amounts. These have not kept pace with wage developments in society. Since people with a sickness and activity compensation receive their main supply through transfers, to a significantly greater extent than the rest of the population, their income has grown slower or almost not at all.
* The second explanation concerns economic reforms in the 21st century, which has resulted in higher income from earnings than revenue from transfers. This development has meant that the proportion of people living in relative poverty has increased significantly among those claiming sickness and activity compensation.

The Swedish National Audit Office has investigated how a refusal of sickness and activity compensation affects the income and health of the individual, compared to a granted compensation.[[52]](#footnote-52) The review shows that the denial of sickness and activity compensation had a negative impact on income where refusal of compensation had approximately 125,000 kronor less per year over the next three years compared to those granted. The absence of compensation is not compensated for by income from work or other transfer systems. The decision also had negative consequences for health. Individuals who were refused compensation were treated more extensively in closed care due to severe mental illness, compared with those who were granted compensation.

In Sweden’s ‘New measures of wellbeing’ framework, the ‘low economic standard’ measure refers to the proportion of the population with a disposable income that is less than 60 per cent of the median income (i.e. in EU terms, relative financial poverty).[[53]](#footnote-53) This was 36% in 2014, which can be compared with 16% for people without sickness and activity compensation. For persons with sickness and activity compensation with only a guarantee coverage (i.e. no income-based compensation) the share was approximately 63% in 2014. This group has almost doubled between 2003 and 2014 and consists mainly of young people with a weak connection to the labour market.

The convergence program 2018 describes that welfare is to be strengthened and, as part of this, the financial security of persons with sickness and activity compensation has been strengthened by introducing a tax reduction for the benefits. The tax cuts can be seen as relatively marginal, for persons with the highest possible sickness benefit and the average municipal tax rate is estimated to receive a tax reduction of approximately SEK 2,483 per year, that is, approximately SEK 200 per month.[[54]](#footnote-54)

**Conclusion**

Overall, statistics and reports on poverty and social exclusion show that people with disabilities are at a marked disadvantage regarding their financial situation (and notably among younger working age adults lacking contributions from past employment). The measure taken to increase the financial equality of people with disabilities, in terms of sickness and activity compensation, is positive but far from adequate. Proactive measures are needed that reduce the risk of getting into a disadvantage situation, such as measures for equality of schooling, because there is a link between low educational levels and the lifetime risk of poverty. Opportunities to be able to support oneself through work must also increase. Today, almost 75,000 people with disabilities are employed in some form of subsidized employment (see chapter 2). Wage subsidy levels are relatively low compared to the median wage in Sweden, although the cap of wage subsidies will be a step-wise increase, from 18,300 SEK / month to 20 000 SEK / month in 2020. The increase in wage subsidies was requested in the Funka Investigation and has consequences for the wage levels of persons employed in wage subsidized employments.[[55]](#footnote-55)

# Opportunities to mainstream disability equality in the European Semester review documents

As in earlier years, there is no explicit mention of persons with disability in the 2018 CR for Sweden, other than in relation to expenditure on social protection benefits, and no disability-specific recommendations. The 2017 Commission Staff Working Document does not acknowledge the disability gap in employment or education and does not address the evident income gaps or risk of poverty for persons with disabilities in its analysis. There is a need to mainstream these indicators, with analysis from a disability perspective.

The Commission Staff Working Document addresses the challenge of some groups having difficulties finding a job, such as low-skilled people and non-EU immigrants. It is likely that in these groups there may be a relatively high proportion of people with disabilities. Intersectionality (the overlap of social identities between different groups) is not highlighted, although this may affect the interventions. Labour market policies can be taken as examples, where non-EU immigrants with disabilities may need further support and adaptations in the measures given to achieve equal conditions with other non-EU immigrants. The intersectionality perspective therefore needs to be included when discussing problems and solutions for different groups in the population, especially regarding accessibility, which is usually central to reducing barriers for people with disabilities.

There are several areas highlighted in both 2018 CR and the NRP that will affect people with disabilities to a relatively high degree.

**Economic situation**

In the CR, the Commission concludes that Sweden has macroeconomic imbalances, primarily in the form of overvalued housing prices combined with increased household debt. They also point out that the debt levels are unevenly distributed, with low-income households and younger households having particularly high debts in relation to their income. As people with disabilities have a high risk of belonging to low-income households, macroeconomic imbalances affect them strongly. Lack of housing, and especially affordable housing, impact on options to live independently in the community for disabled persons. As new jobs are created mainly within the metropolitan areas, where housing shortage is greatest, this can influence the opportunities to find a job and notably for people with more limited mobility or access to transport. Housing in the metropolitan areas is more expensive than in the countryside, which make it hard for persons with low income to find affordable housing in metropolitan areas. There could also be problems with access to healthcare and rehabilitation measures in rural areas, which can affect disabled persons living situations.

**Labour market**

The CR points to strong improvements in the labour market, with an employment rate of 81% (which is above the national target) and decreasing youth unemployment and NEET rates. However, the employment rates of low-skilled people are declining. The CR points to skills mismatch and unemployment rates of non-EU immigrants as contributing reasons for this. The integration of low-skilled persons into the labour market concerns persons with disabilities as they have disproportionately lower education than the population average (see chapter 3). However, in the recommendations there is only a focus on non-EU immigrants and not on persons with disabilities, who form a much larger group. This creates a risk that measures will only be targeted to the group that is noted. Disability equality needs to be made more visible. The government has made training of low-skilled people a priority and adult education is expected to provide about 70,000 adults with a higher level of skills. However, it is unclear to what extent these adult education sites will attract people with disabilities. This may depend on how much customization will be offered and to what extent the programs can be made accessible. As shown earlier (in chapter 3), accessibility in the school system has been criticized in a number of reports and significant efforts are needed to create a more inclusive education system.[[56]](#footnote-56)

By 2018, the government plans a number of measures to make the labour market more inclusive, to which the government have earmarked SEK 7.3 billion (€758 million) in the budget. The measures should be targeted groups at the margin of the labour market, such as unemployed low-skilled people, especially non-EU immigrants. The government has also brought together five different employment subsidy programs into one introduction job scheme aimed at long-term unemployed and newly arrived persons. Introduction jobs could be targeted at people with disabilities but there is a risk that they will primarily target new arrivals because this target group is clearly mentioned in the documents. The same could be said about the ‘Introductory jobs’ programme which target long-term unemployed and newly arrived immigrants.

There are other measures aimed primarily at people with disabilities such as subsidized employment schemes which may be seen as adequate measures for the group. The PES accounts of how appropriations are used, however, indicate that the service does not fully utilize the appropriations for wage subsidies and Samhall.[[57]](#footnote-57) This may indicate that people with disabilities are not prioritized or that adequate resources are not provided in the labour market policy, to support people with disabilities into work. The proportion of persons with disabilities who receive measures aimed at, for example, long-term unemployed, is not reported. The reporting of people with disabilities refers only to participants in programs specifically aimed at people with disabilities. It would therefore be necessary to report also the proportion of people with disabilities in other interventions aimed at, for example, young or long-term unemployed persons, to get an overall picture of disability mainstreaming in labour market measures.

**Skills and education**

The 2018 CR points to growing inequalities in learning outcomes and highlights that the distribution of school resources does not guarantee equal learning opportunities. In order to counteract this, the government plans to invest SEK 10.5 billion (€1.1 billion) to reduce inequalities in learnings outcomes between pupils from different socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the integration of newly arrived pupils remains a priority for the government and it is unclear how much of this will be directed to people with disabilities. It is far from certain that students with disabilities are seen as belonging within the category of disadvantage socioeconomic background, although studies show that parents of disabled children more often experience financial difficulties, mainly because disability brings additional living costs.[[58]](#footnote-58) On the other hand, it is clear that students with disabilities encounter inequalities in learning outcomes and the distribution of school resources. Earlier evaluations have shown that far from all pupils with disabilities have access to special support at school, despite the need.[[59]](#footnote-59) The evidence suggests that the unequal level of education is due to the large gaps in support for students with disabilities.[[60]](#footnote-60) Therefore, attention must be paid to all groups of pupils who experience unequal learning outcomes, if the objective of equal learning opportunities for ‘all’ is to be met. This includes taking a disability perspective on the challenge.

**Income inequality**

Compared to other EU countries, Sweden has one of the lowest levels of income inequality, but despite this, it has increased in the past decades. The 2018 CR points out that the changes are driven by increased capital income and a decreasing effect of tax and benefit systems to reduce market inequality. These two driving forces affect people with disabilities disproportionately, as many people rely on social transfers from benefit systems (as explained and evidenced earlier, in chapter 4). The Agency for Participation’s monitoring of Disability Policy shows that the income gap between persons with disabilities receiving sickness and activity compensation is high in relation to the rest of the population on average.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Persons with disabilities are more likely to have low incomes, especially the approximately 75,000 people who work in subsidized employment where the wage subsidy levels are relatively low compared to the median wage in Sweden. Although people with disabilities largely live in income inequality, compared with the general population, this is not mentioned in either 2018 CR or NRP, which poses a risk that the increased risk of inequality for people with disabilities remains invisible and no action will be taken to increase opportunities for living under equal economic conditions.

# Implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in relation to disability

Through 13 national and regional programmes, Sweden has been allocated **€3.65 billion** from ESI Funds over the period 2014-2020.[[62]](#footnote-62) Within ESIF, the European Social Fund (ESF) projects are more often aimed at people with disabilities and accessibility must be integrated into all activities in the programming period.[[63]](#footnote-63) This requirement applies both in the Swedish ESF Council and in the projects. Accessibility should be achieved through a systematic approach and accessibility competence: basic knowledge about disability and accessibility as well as when, where and how disabilities can occur.

The Social Fund Program is divided into three program areas, in which one or more specific objectives are included. Projects specifically addressed to people with disabilities are often found in Objective 2.3. The measures in Objective 2.3 focus on people far away from the labour market due to a complex unemployment problem in combination with, for example, lack of relevant work experience and networking, ill health or disability that causes reduced workability, social reasons or language barriers.[[64]](#footnote-64) However, the projects do not reach people with disabilities to a significant extent, and the proportion of disabled people with reduced working capacity accounts for 16% of participants (15% of women and 17% of men) in Goal 2.3. Based on the fact that Goal 2: 3 focuses on people far away from the labour market, people with disabilities, which constitute a significant part of this target group, can be seen as underrepresented. The share is the same in both Objective 2.1 (16%) and 2.2 (15%). Earlier reporting shows that the group of people with disability overall is poorly represented in the social fund projects.

There are a number of projects aimed at people with disabilities in program area 2.3. Most of the ESF projects targeted at people with disabilities are about education and / or work. Relatively many projects aim to ‘equip the individual’ in different ways through increased education (mainly in the form of shorter courses / internships), increased work experience (mainly in the form of internship) or other activities that are believed to give better self-esteem etc. Relatively few of the projects seem to focus on changing structures in the labour market, or the education system. This is something that the projects funded by the ESF share with projects aimed at people with disabilities but financed by other funders.[[65]](#footnote-65)

None of the ESF projects can be said to be about institutionalization regarding housing situation. This is probably due to the fact that the degree of institutionalization of people with disabilities is not particularly high in Sweden, most of them live in their own housing or in group housing. However, the Commissioner of Human Rights in Europe has now warned of a worrying trend of re-institutionalization due to a reduction of state-funded personal assistance.[[66]](#footnote-66) This means that the issue of de-institutionalization may have to be considered and updated more assertively in the future. However, some of the projects can be said about deinstitutionalization (de-segregation) regarding transition from disability care/sheltered workshops to work in the open labour market,

Active Mobility is an ESF project in the Youth in Mobility announcement aimed at continuing to develop methods for mobility for young women and men with suspected or identified disability or at risk of exclusion.[[67]](#footnote-67) The project lasts from 1/9 2015 to 31/8 2018. The goal is that a total of 50 people between 18 and 29 years will be given the opportunity to do an internship in another EU country for two months, and that at least 60% of women and 60% of the male participants must have acquired work experience resulting in employment or education. As part of spreading knowledge about mobility for the target group and, in practice, demonstrating the good effects of international practice on participants, such as personal development and self-confidence, representatives from the project's partners have the opportunity to visit each group in place. This is also believed to be able to increase the interaction between the actors involved in the participants. The project has received ESF contribution of € 653,267.42 and has a total project budget of 979,348.19 EUR.[[68]](#footnote-68) The project will end in August 2018, which means that final reports and evaluations will be available only in autumn 2018.

A project aimed at employers, rather than people with disabilities, is the ESF project ‘More ways in-wide recruitment’. Since January 2018, this project is run by the Swedish local authorities and regions (SALAR) together with eight municipalities, the PES and the Agency for Participation.[[69]](#footnote-69) The project is about the provision of skills in municipal welfare from an employer and competence supply perspective. The purpose of the project is to explore and evaluate the possibilities of solving parts of the welfare needs of the welfare community by better utilizing the skills of people with disabilities who are currently outside the labour market. The work is done in close cooperation with the unions and collective parties. Projects are focused on developing complementary services that relieve current employees, matching these services with people outside the labour market, as well as testing and evaluating ways to workplace-based support for individuals, managers and employees. The reason for the project is twofold.[[70]](#footnote-70) First, municipalities and county councils face recruitment challenges, and half a million new employees need to be recruited within the next ten years to keep up with current organization and working methods.[[71]](#footnote-71) Second, there are many people with disabilities outside the labour market, despite the fact that many can and want to work. The planned number of project participants is 240, and ESF project funding amounts to 32,940,130 SEK.[[72]](#footnote-72) The total budget is 49,385,023 SEK. As the project is relatively new, no evaluations have yet been made of its working methods or effects.

# Statistical annex: disability data relevant to EU2020

Unless specified, the summary statistics presented in this report are drawn from the most recent EU-SILC micro data available to ANED researchers from Eurostat. Where available, estimates based on national data sources should be compared. The EU-SILC sample includes people living in private households and does not include people living in institutions (congregative households). The sampling methods and responses vary in each country - in Sweden, the sample aged 16-64 reporting severe activity limitations in 2016 contained fewer than 50 men).

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]](#footnote-73)

Table 2: Self-reported ‘activity limitations’ as a proxy for impairment/disability

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018

Note: the Swedish prevalence estimates of self-reported are well below the EU average for all groups, and notably older persons, which may affect the estimation of outcome indicators based upon them.

In subsequent tables, these data are used to estimate ‘disability’ equality gaps and trends for the three target areas in EU2020 – employment, education and poverty reduction – comparing the outcomes for persons who report and do not report ‘limitations’.[[74]](#footnote-74) National estimates are compared with EU28 mean averages.[[75]](#footnote-75)

## Disability and employment data from EU-SILC

Table 3: Employment rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

Table 4: Employment rates, by age group

*Note: It is important to exercise caution in analysis of the youngest disability age groups, where the number of observations is less than 50 in Sweden (an average of recent years may be more reliable).*

Table 5: Trends in employment by disability status (aged 20-64)

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: a reduction in the disability sample might impact negatively on recent outcome trends.

### Unemployment

Table 6: Unemployment rates by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

Table 7: Unemployment rates, by age group

*Note: It is important to exercise caution in analysis of the youngest disability age groups, where the number of observations is less than 50 in Sweden (an average of recent years may be more reliable).*

Table 8: Trends in unemployment rate, by disability status (aged 20-64)

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: a reduction in the disability sample might impact negatively on recent outcome trends.

### Economic activity

Table 9: Economic activity rates, by disability and gender (aged 20-64)

Table 10: Activity rates, by age group

*Note: It is important to exercise caution in analysis of the youngest disability age groups, where the number of observations is less than 50 in Sweden (an average of recent years may be more reliable).*

Table 11: Trends in activity rates, by disability status (aged 20-64)

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: a reduction in the disability sample might impact negatively on recent outcome trends.

### Alternative sources of national disability employment data

Table 12: Disability and workforce statistics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Labour force[[76]](#footnote-76)** | **Employment[[77]](#footnote-77)** | **Unemployment[[78]](#footnote-78)** |
| **Disability** | 68.2% (2017)69.6 % (2016)68.7% (2006) | 62.3% (2017)62.4 % (2016)62.9% (2006) | 8.7 % (2017)10.4 % (2016)8.5 % (2006) |
| **Disability without reduced workability** | 79.7% (2017)78.4 % (2016)85.2% (2006) | 74.2% (2017)70.6 % (2016)80.1% (2006) | 6.8% (2017)10.0 % (2016)5.9% (2006) |
| **Disability with reduced workability** | 62.4% (2017)65.4 % (2016)58 % (2006) | 56.2% (2017)58.4 % (2016)51.7% (2006) | 9.9 % (2017)10.7 % (2016)10.9% (2006) |
| **Total population 16-64 year** | 83.4% (2017)84.8 % 82016)79.9% (2006) | 78.2% (2017)78.6 % (2016)74.7% (2006) | 6.9 % (2017)7.2 % (2016)6.5 % (2006) |

*Source: adapted from Statistics Sweden (Table B18)[[79]](#footnote-79)*

## Disability and educational attainment data from EU-SILC

National comparisons are more limited in the EU2020 target age groups (a wider range improves reliability, but gender breakdowns are not reliable). The EU level indicator is reliable but there is low reliability at the national level in individual years. For example, this was the case in Sweden in 2016. The following tables show an average of the three most recent years (2014-2016).

Table 13: Three-year average early leaving rates, by disability status (aged 18-24 and 18-29)[[80]](#footnote-80)

Table 14: Three-year average tertiary or equivalent education rate (age 30-34 and 30-39)

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018 (and preceding UDBs)

Note: Confidence intervals for the disability group are large and reliability low. An average of several years may be needed to establish trends. National administrative data may provide alternative indications, where available.

### Alternative sources of national disability education data

Table 15: Persons with disabilities workability and educational level, 2017, percent

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Elementary school** | **Upper secondary** | **University/college** |
| **Disability** | 19 (12.1) | 49 (48.3) | 31.6 (39.6) |
| **Disability without reduced workability** | 24.3 (12.4) | 40.4 (45.2) | 34.7 (42.4) |
| **Disability and reduced workability** | 16.3 (11.9) | 53.3 (50.5) | 30.1 (37.7) |
| **Total population** | 14 (8.9) | 40.8 (42.2) | 44.1 (48.7) |

*Source: Statistics Sweden[[81]](#footnote-81)*

*Note: Highest education level, age 16-64, figures in brackets () in employment.*

## Disability and poverty or social exclusion data from EU-SILC

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

Table 17: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and gender (aged 16+)

Table 18: Overall risk of household poverty or exclusion by disability and age (aged 16+)

Source: EUSILC UDB 2015 – version of October 2017 (and previous UDB)

Table 19: Trends in household risk of poverty or social exclusion, by disability and age group

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2016 – version of March 2018 (and previous UDB)

Note: a reduction in the disability sample might impact negatively on recent outcome trends.

Note: The risks for older people do not include work intensity (Eurostat refers to the age group 0-59 for this measure) and the survey does not distinguish ‘activity limitation’ (the proxy for impairment/disability) for children under the age of 16.

### Alternative sources of national disability poverty data

In general, the EU-SILC data provides the most comprehensive and reliable source concerning poverty or social exclusion rates in the Member States. However, national disability surveys or studies may offer additional information.

1. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4411192/4411431/Europe_2020_Targets.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Further explanation and analysis of the comparative data and methodology is included in ANED’s annual statistical reports relevant to the EU2020 goals, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/SWE/CO/1&Lang=En>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Nationellt mål och inriktning för funktionshinderspolitiken* [National goal and focus on disability policy] <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2017/05/prop.-201617188/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. According to the Act Concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.forsakringskassan.se/wps/wcm/connect/d37af317-9573-4e13-8621-8e0cd025b629/socialforsakringsrapport-2017-05.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Social Insurance Office, Diagnosmönster i förändring – nybeviljade förtidspensioner, sjukersättningar och aktivitetsersättningar 1971-2005, 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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31. <https://www.dua.se/fakta-och-statistik/fullfoljd-gymnasieutbildning>. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
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73. The SILC survey questions are contained in the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM) [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\_explained/index.php/Glossary:Minimum\_European\_Health\_Module\_(MEHM)](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary%3AMinimum_European_Health_Module_%28MEHM%29). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. The methodology is further explained in the annual statistical reports of ANED, available at <http://www.disability-europe.net/theme/statistical-indicators>. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. A discontinuity in the German disability data due to a definitional change in 2015 (reducing prevalence estimates) and affected the estimation of EU average indicators and trends. A break in the Italian prevalence data in 2016 was also large enough to affect the EU average. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The labour force consists of people who are either employed or unemployed [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Employees are: People who did some kind of work, Persons who did not work but who had employment, and were temporarily absent, Persons participating in certain labour market programs. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. People who were unemployed but who sought work. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
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80. There was a change from ISCED 1997 to ISCED 2011 qualification definitions in 2014 although some Member States continued to use the older definition in 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. <https://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/download/18.c48fd951624371cfe267dcd/1522248591278/atterapport-situationen-arbetsmarknaden-personer-funktionsneds%C3%A4ttning-2017.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)