

# Mapping child protection systems in the EU (27)

Sweden

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# 1. Legislative and regulatory framework and policies

## 1.1. Overview of normative and regulatory framework

Please provide an overview of the normative legal and regulatory framework of the national and sub-national child protection system. Include information on the scope of the child protection system, the specific needs it addresses, the human and financial resources allocated, and any relevant cultural, social, and historical factors. Please indicate the current priority areas in child protection.

According to the social scholar Esping-Andersen's categorisation of welfare regimes in Europe, Sweden is described as *the* model of social democratic welfare.<sup>1</sup> This model involves a high degree of government action, which is based on a relatively high level of taxation and extensive state funding. The model is characterised by allowances, equal distribution of social resources, a social insurance model based on citizenship and a generous family policy. This can be seen, for example, in the Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]*),<sup>2</sup> which serves as a regulatory framework for different areas of social support. The legal scholar Leviner describes the Swedish child protection system as “family and service-orientated”.<sup>3</sup> Generally, child welfare in Sweden places its main emphasis on social support and services provided on a voluntary basis.

In recent decades, several important changes to strengthen children's rights and counteract the occurrence of violence against children have been made in Sweden. These changes have taken the form of legislation, but also information, education, and changed attitudes and behaviour.<sup>4</sup> Many of the early reforms were implemented in the economic area, but some also in the area of family policy.<sup>5</sup> Since 1970, social child-care (*sociala barnvården*), child-care (*barnomsorgen*) and child health-care (*barnhälsovården*) have all expanded. The mission of the schools has also been changed to better meet children's need for safety, and society's insights into children's everyday lives have increased in order to be able to detect unfavourable circumstances at an early stage.<sup>6</sup> Conditions have been created to support single parents. In 1979, a ban on corporal punishment was introduced.<sup>7</sup> Today, the provision has strong support and is well known among children and adults.<sup>8</sup> In 1990, Sweden ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>9</sup> and during the 1990's work on children's expanded. Among other things, Sweden adopted its first national strategy for the implementation of the CRC and established a government Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*).<sup>10</sup> Over the years, fundamental principles established in the CRC such as the best interests of the child and the child's right to be heard have been incorporated into Swedish law.

According to the National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee, Swedish legislation provides the basis for all children to have effective access to the key social services.<sup>11</sup> Municipalities and government agencies are

<sup>1</sup> Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Leviver, P. (2017) ‘Child Participation in the Swedish Child Protection System – Childfriendly Focus But Limited Child Influence on Outcomes’, Faculty of Law, Stockholm University Research Paper, No. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021, page 10.

<sup>5</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021, page 10.

<sup>6</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021, page 10.

<sup>7</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 July 1983, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>8</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021, page 10.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations (UN), *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), 20 November 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021, page 13.

<sup>11</sup> Sweden, Government (*Regeringen*) (2022) *National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee*, S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

responsible for children having a reasonable standard of living and for them being protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Parents have the main responsibility for the child, but the public authorities also have powers to protect children who are exposed to harm. In various contexts, special support is given to children with disabilities. Children deprived of their liberty or suspected of an offence are subject to several legal safeguards.<sup>12</sup>

The efforts to strengthen children's rights and their access to services have continued in recent years. In 2016, the Child Rights Inquiry (*Barnrättsutredningen*)<sup>13</sup> proposed the incorporation of the CRC into Swedish law. In 2018, the Swedish parliament (*Riksdag*) voted in favour of the government's proposal to incorporate the CRC into Swedish law.<sup>14</sup> In 2020, Articles 1–42 of the CRC was incorporated into Swedish law through the Act on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter*).<sup>15</sup>

The Parental Code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*)<sup>16</sup> determines the legal relationship between children and parents. The Code covers the rights of the child and the obligations of parents, as custodians, towards their children. The custodian is obliged to protect the child from corporal punishment and other degrading treatment. The custodian's responsibility also encompasses the necessary supervision of the child and ensuring that the child's needs are met.<sup>17</sup>

The Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]*)<sup>18</sup> is a "framework law" and does not list the rights of the individual. Instead, it describes the municipalities' obligations regarding children and young people in need of protection or support. The Act contains a list of measures falling under the responsibility of the municipalities' Social Welfare Boards (*socialnämnden*).<sup>19</sup> It follows from this provision that the social services must ensure that children and young persons grow up in safe and good conditions. The municipalities' social services must pay particular attention to children who are at risk of harm. They must ensure that children and young persons at risk of harm are given the protection and support they need. It also falls under the responsibility of the Social Welfare Boards to ensure that children receive care outside the parental home if this is in the best interests of the child. Importantly, the Social Services Act contains an obligation for professionals working with children to report and provide information to the social services if they become aware of or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.<sup>20</sup>

While the Social Services Act is oriented towards the voluntary reception of support, the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU) (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*)<sup>21</sup> supplements the Social Services Act by stipulating the right of the social services to intervene without the child's or parents' consent and remove the child from the parents' care in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect.<sup>22</sup>

The Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*)<sup>23</sup> is a "rights law", creating enforceable rights for the individual. It aims to promote equal living conditions and full participation in social life for persons with certain impairments, including children with certain impairments.

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<sup>12</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes Swedish Law (*Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag*), government official report, 11 mars 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Sweden, Swedish parliament (*Riksdag*) (2018) The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes Swedish Law (*Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag*), press release, 5 June 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Sweden, Act on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter*), 20 June 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 10 June 1949.

<sup>17</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 July 2021, chapter 6, sections 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2018, chapter 5, section 1.

<sup>20</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2016, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>21</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 March 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 March 1990, section 1.

<sup>23</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 27 May 1993.

The government's budgetary allocation in relation to child protection is guided by objectives in several policy areas such as the policy for social services,<sup>24</sup> the disability policy<sup>25</sup> and the child rights policy.<sup>26</sup> The government's overarching policy objectives are incorporated into different legislative and policy instruments. The government's child rights policy is intersectoral. This means that children's rights and interests must permeate all policies and operations affecting children, in all sectors.<sup>27</sup>

The following parts of the budget have relevance for the social welfare and protection of children: "Health, medical and social care"; "Judiciary"; "Migration"; "Financial security in illness and disability"; "Equality and the establishment of newly arrived persons"; "Education and university research"; and "Financial security for families and children". The budget area for "Financial security for families and children" consists of financial support through general benefits, insurance and means-tested benefits.<sup>28</sup> This area covers, among other things, the child allowance (*barnbidrag*), which is a monthly, tax-free sum paid to parents until the child reaches the age of 16.<sup>29</sup> A large family supplement is paid to families with two or more children (*flerbarnstillägg*).<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, families with incomes falling below a certain level may be entitled to a housing allowance (*bostadsbidrag*).<sup>31</sup> Additional benefits are available for parents of children with disabilities. The Swedish parental insurance system enables both men and women to combine parenthood with employment.<sup>32</sup> The parental benefit (*föräldrapenning*) allows parents to stay at home for up to 480 days after the birth of the child, with 80% compensation for loss of income.<sup>33</sup>

To ensure that the rights of all children in Sweden are met, the government has announced several priorities, including the following:

- for a child rights perspective to permeate all work for and with children;
- to combat all forms of violence against children, a government inquiry has submitted a proposal for a new 10-year national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children, which has been referred for consideration to relevant bodies;
- to intensify efforts to prevent children and young people from being recruited into organised crime, for example, by providing parental support;
- to introduce a new health care guarantee granting children access to mental health support within 30 days, strengthened school-based health-care services, and adopting a new national strategy for mental health and suicide prevention;
- to improve the protection of children in alternative care and in institutions.

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<sup>24</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 ([Budgetpropositionen 2009](#)), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Individual and family care. The objective is to strengthen protection for children in vulnerable situations.

<sup>25</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) National goal and direction for disability policy ([Nationellt mål och inriktning för funktionshinderspolitiken](#)), government bill, 2016/17:188, 18 May 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 ([Budgetpropositionen 2009](#)), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Child rights policy. The objective is that children and young people should be respected and given the opportunity for development and safety as well as participation and influence.

<sup>27</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Inkorporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter](#)), government bill, 17 Mars 2018.

<sup>28</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 12 - Financial security for families and children ([Utgiftsområde 12 – Ekonomisk trygghet för familjer och barn](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Sweden, Act on general child allowances ([Lag \[1947:529\] om allmänna barnbidrag](#)), 26 June 1947.

<sup>30</sup> Sweden, Act on general child allowances ([Lag \[1947:529\] om allmänna barnbidrag](#)), 26 June 1947.

<sup>31</sup> Sweden, Act on general housing allowances ([Lag \[1993:737\] om bostadsbidrag](#)), 10 June 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Sweden, Act on parental leave ([Föräldraledighetslag \[1995:584\]](#)), 24 May 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Sweden, Social insurance code ([Socialförsäkringsbalk \[2010:110\]](#)), 4 March 2010.

According to the government, another priority is to ensure a child-rights perspective in emergency response and preparedness at the national, regional and local levels. The government also aims to finance a national 24-hour support hotline for children.<sup>34</sup>

## 1.2. Legal provisions in constitutional, civil, criminal, and administrative law related to children in need of protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.2.1. Does the constitution contain any provisions on children's rights and child protection?	X		<p>The rights of the child are explicitly protected in chapter 1, section 2, of the Constitution of Sweden, the Instrument of Government (<i>Kungörelse om beslutad ny Regeringsform</i>).<sup>35</sup> According to chapter 1, section 2, "public institutions shall promote the opportunity for all to attain participation and equality in society and for the rights of the child to be safeguarded." The same provision states that "public institutions shall combat discrimination of persons on grounds of gender, colour, national or ethnic origin, linguistic or religious affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, age or other circumstance affecting the individual." Chapter 2, section 18 of the Instrument of government states that "[a]ll children covered by compulsory schooling shall be entitled to a free basic education in the public education system."</p> <p>The Freedom of the Press Act (<i>Tryckfrihetsförordning</i>) and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (<i>Yttrandefrihetsgrundlag</i>), are both part of the Constitution of Sweden. The Freedom of the Press Act stipulates that its protection is not applicable to pornographic images (<i>pornografiska bilder</i>) of persons whose puberty development has not been completed or who are under the age of eighteen.<sup>36</sup> A corresponding provision is found in the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression.<sup>37</sup> The exceptions are general: none of the provisions and protection of the Freedom of the Press Act or the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression are applicable to pornographic images of children.<sup>38</sup> The Freedom of the Press Act is to some extent adapted to electronic publication, via the internet and digital media, through chapter 1 sections 5 and 6.<sup>39</sup> The provisions in the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (<i>Yttrandefrihetsgrundlag</i>) regulating broadcasting of programs also applies when information from a database is</p>

<sup>34</sup> Sweden, Embassy of Sweden Geneva, '[Statement by Sweden at the consideration of its combined 6th and 7th periodic report at the Ninety-Second Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)', official website, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Sweden, Instrument of government (*Kungörelse om beslutad ny Regeringsform*), 28 February 1974.

<sup>36</sup> Sweden, Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordning*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, section 14.

<sup>37</sup> Sweden, Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression (*Yttrandefrihetsgrundlag*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, section 21.

<sup>38</sup> Axberger, H-G., 'Freedom of the press act', Legal commentary, Nordstedts Juridik, comment 36, and; Axberger, H-G., 'Fundamental law on freedom of expression', Legal commentary, Nordstedts Juridik, comment 45.

<sup>39</sup> Sweden, Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordning*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, sections 5 and 6.

			<p>provided to the public by means of electromagnetic waves.<sup>40</sup></p> <p>Chapter 6, section 2 of the Freedom of the Press Act contains an exception to the right to disseminate printed matter with regard to printed matter disseminated among children and young persons which by reason of its content might have a brutalising effect, or otherwise seriously put young people at risk. A corresponding provision is found in chapter 3, section 12 of the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression.</p>
1.2.2. Is there a single legal instrument devoted to child protection and child rights, e.g. a Children's Act?	X		<p>In 2018, the parliament voted for the government's proposal to incorporate the CRC into Swedish law. In 2020, Articles 1–42 of the CRC was incorporated into Swedish Law through the Act on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (<i>Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta</i></p>

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<sup>40</sup> Sweden, Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression ([Yttrandefrihetsgrundlag](#)), 1 January 2023, chapter 1, section 4.

			<p><i>nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter</i>).<sup>41</sup> These articles concern both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. The rights in the CRC apply to all children within Sweden's jurisdiction. Sweden has also ratified the first two optional protocols to the Convention.</p> <p>Thus, the act is a single legal instrument devoted to child rights. However, it might not be classified as a specific 'Children's Act'.</p>
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1.2.3. Please provide an inventory of key child protection related legislation, including hyperlinks, date of adoption and the areas covered. Please include civil, criminal, and administrative legislation covering different areas of child protection (please add rows, as needed).

Legislation	Date passed	Child protection areas covered
Freedom of the Press Act ( <i>Tryckfrihetsförordning</i> ) <sup>42</sup>	1949	As mentioned above, the Freedom of the Press Act is part of the Constitution of Sweden. The act stipulates that its protection is not applicable to pornographic images of persons whose puberty development has not been completed or who are under the age of eighteen. <sup>43</sup> The Freedom of the Press Act is to some extent adapted to electronic publication, via the internet and digital media, through chapter 1 sections 5 and 6. <sup>44</sup>
Act on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ( <i>Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter</i> ) <sup>45</sup>	2018	As mentioned above, articles 1–42 of the CRC were incorporated into Swedish Law in 2020. The articles cover both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.
Parental Code ( <i>Föräldrabalk [1949:381]</i> ) <sup>46</sup>	1949	The Parental Code determines the legal relationship between children and parents. The Code covers the rights of the child and the obligations that parents have towards their children, including the concept of parental responsibility ( <i>föräldraansvar</i> ). The Code regulates, among other things, issues of paternity, adoption, custody, contact and maintenance obligations. There are also rules about guardians and trustees. The best interests of the child are reflected in matters connected to custody, residence and contact, adoption and the execution of judgements or decisions. The Code distinguishes between the concepts of custody ( <i>vårdnad</i> ) in chapter 6 and

<sup>41</sup> Sweden, Act on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter*), 20 June 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Sweden, Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordning*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, section 14.

<sup>43</sup> Sweden, Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordning*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, section 14.

<sup>44</sup> Sweden, Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordning*), 1 January 2019, chapter 1, sections 5 and 6.

<sup>45</sup> Sweden, Act on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Lag [2018:1197] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter*), 20 June 2018.

<sup>46</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 10 June 1949.



		guardianship ( <i>förmyndarskap</i> ) in chapters 9-15. <sup>47</sup> The custodian's responsibility encompasses the necessary supervision of the child and assuring that the child's needs are met. <sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the custodian shall take into account the child's views and wishes with increasing age and development of the child. <sup>49</sup> The custodian is also obliged to protect the child from corporal punishment and other degrading treatment. <sup>50</sup>
Social Services Act ( <i>Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]</i> ) <sup>51</sup>	2001	The Social Services Act applies to all municipal activities involving children and young people who need the protection or support covered by this legislation. The provisions on the best interests of the child constitute one of the Act's opening paragraphs. <sup>52</sup> The Act includes provisions specifically targeting children and young persons, <sup>53</sup> and contains a list of measures falling within the responsibility of the Social Welfare Boards ( <i>socialnämnden</i> ). <sup>54</sup> It follows from this provision that the social services in the municipalities must act in a manner ensuring that children and young people grow up in secure and good conditions. The social services in the municipalities must pay special attention to children who are at risk of developing in ways that are harmful to them. The Social Welfare Board must, in close co-operation with the parental home, ensure that children and young persons at risk of harm are given the protection and support they need. It also falls within the responsibility of the Social Welfare Board to ensure that children receive care outside the parental home if this is in the best interests of the child. The Act also contains an obligation for professionals working with children to report and provide information to the social services if they become aware of or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected. <sup>55</sup>
Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act ( <i>Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga</i> ) <sup>56</sup>	1990	The Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU) supplements the Social Services Act when voluntary interventions are not possible. In some cases, the municipalities' Social Welfare Board can intervene without the child's or parents' consent and remove the child from the parents' care in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect. <sup>57</sup> When making decisions according to the law,

<sup>47</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 10 June 1949.

<sup>48</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 10 June 1949.

<sup>49</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 July 1983, chapter 6, section 11.

<sup>50</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 July 2021, chapter 6, sections 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2013, chapter 1, section 2

<sup>53</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2022, chapter 5, sections 1-3.

<sup>54</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2018, chapter 5, sections 1.

<sup>55</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2016, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>56</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 March 1990.

<sup>57</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 March 1990.

		<p>what is best for the young person must be decisive.<sup>58</sup> The young persons must receive relevant information and be given the opportunity to express their views on issues that concerns them. Their views and attitude must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity.<sup>59</sup> After reaching the age of 15, the young persons have their own legal capacity during processes according to the law. A person who is younger may be heard in court, if he or she cannot be assumed to be harmed by it.<sup>60</sup> A person who is appointed as a public counsel for someone under 15 years of age, without at the same time being a counsel to a guardian, is, without a special appointment, the children's guardian (<i>ställföreträdare</i>) in the case. Only those who, due to their knowledge and experience and also otherwise, are particularly suitable for the assignment may be appointed to public counsel for a young person.<sup>61</sup></p>
Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments ( <i>Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade</i> ) <sup>62</sup>	1993	<p>The aim of the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) is to promote equal living conditions and full participation in social life for persons with certain impairments, including children. The Act is a "rights law" creating enforceable rights for the individual. It stipulates that the best interests of the child must be considered when the support or service concerns children.<sup>63</sup> In addition, children must receive relevant information and be given the opportunity to express their views in measures concerning them. The child's views must be given importance in relation to the child's age and maturity.<sup>64</sup></p>
Act with Special Provisions for Young Offenders ( <i>Lag [1964:167] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare</i> ) <sup>65</sup>	1964	<p>The Act with Special Provisions for Young Offenders contains special procedural provisions for the Police Authority (<i>Polismyndigheten</i>), Prosecution Authority (<i>Åklagarmyndigheten</i>) and the courts in criminal cases where the suspect has not reached the age of 21. The Act contains provisions on detention, remanding in custody and the right to a public legal counsel. Among other things, the Act stipulates that persons under the age of 18 cannot be detained for a continuous period of more than three</p>

<sup>58</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 July 2022, section 1, paragraf 5.

<sup>59</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 Januari 2013, section 36.

<sup>60</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 Januari 2013, section 36.

<sup>61</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 March 2021, section 39.

<sup>62</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments ([Lag \[1993:387\] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)), 27 May 1993.

<sup>63</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments ([Lag \[1993:387\] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)), 1 January 2011, section 6a.

<sup>64</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments ([Lag \[1993:387\] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)), July 2017, section 8.

<sup>65</sup> Sweden, Act with special provisions on young offenders ([Lag \[1964:167\] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare](#)), 20 March 1964.

		months. <sup>66</sup> However, the time limit may be exceeded if extraordinary reasons apply. <sup>67</sup>
Act on Compulsory Psychiatric Care ( <i>Lag [1991:1128] om psykiatrisk tvångsvård</i> ) <sup>68</sup>	1991	The Act on Compulsory Psychiatric Care is applicable to children under the age of 18 in need of compulsory psychiatric care.
Act on Forensic Psychiatric Care ( <i>Lag [1991:1129] om rättspsykiatrisk vård</i> ) <sup>69</sup>	1991	The Act on Forensic Psychiatric Care is applicable to children under the age of 18 in need of forensic psychiatric care.
Act on the Enforcement of Institutional Care of Young Persons ( <i>Lag [1998:603] om verkställighet av sluten ungdomsvård</i> ) <sup>70</sup>	1998	The Act on the Enforcement of Institutional Care of Young Persons is applicable to young persons aged 15 and 17 years old who commit serious crimes. The Act regulates when children aged 15 and 17 years can be sentenced, by a court, to institutional care instead of imprisonment.
Remand Prisons Act ( <i>Häkteslag [2010:611]</i> ) <sup>71</sup>	2010	The Remand Prisons Act stipulates that suspects below 18 years old held on remand may not be placed together with detainees over the age of 18, unless this can be considered as being in their best interest. <sup>72</sup> The Act also states that suspects below 18 years old held on remand should have the right to spend for at least 4 hours every day in the company of a member of staff or another person in order to reduce isolation. <sup>73</sup>
Prisons Act ( <i>Fängelselag [2010:620]</i> ) <sup>74</sup>	2010	The Prisons Act stipulates that detainees below 18 years old may not be placed together with detainees over the age of 18, unless this can be considered as being in their best interest. <sup>75</sup>
Code of Judicial Procedure ( <i>Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]</i> ) <sup>76</sup>	1942	The Code of Judicial Procedure contains basic provisions for trials in civil and criminal cases in the District Court ( <i>Tingsrätt</i> ), the Court of Appeal ( <i>Hovrätt</i> ) and the Supreme Court ( <i>Högsta domstolen</i> ). As a general rule, individuals under the age of 18 lack procedural capacity of matters they are not in legal control over. <sup>77</sup> The lack of procedural capacity means that children lack the opportunity either to bring an action before a court or to appeal against the decisions of the authorities. In cases where the child lacks procedural capacity, the child has the right to be

<sup>66</sup> Sweden, Act with special provisions on young offenders (*Lag [1964:167] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare*), 1 July 2021, section 23a.

<sup>67</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 1 July 2021, chapter 24, section 4a.

<sup>68</sup> Sweden, Act on compulsory psychiatric care (*Lag [1991:1128] om psykiatrisk tvångsvård*), 20 June 1991.

<sup>69</sup> Sweden, Act on forensic psychiatric care (*Lag [1991:1129] om rättspsykiatrisk vård*), 20 June 1991.

<sup>70</sup> Sweden, Act on the enforcement of institutional care of young persons (*Lag [1998:603] om verkställighet av sluten ungdomsvård*), 11 June 1998.

<sup>71</sup> Sweden, Remand prisons act (*Häkteslag [2010:611]*), 10 June 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Sweden, Remand prisons act (*Häkteslag [2010:611]*), 11 June 2019, chapter 2, section 3.

<sup>73</sup> Sweden, Remand prisons act (*Häkteslag [2010:611]*), 1 July 2021, chapter 2, section 5a.

<sup>74</sup> Sweden, Prisons act (*Fängelselag [2010:620]*), 10 June 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Sweden, Prisons act (*Fängelselag [2010:620]*), 10 June 2010, chapter 2, section 3.

<sup>76</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 18 July 1942.

<sup>77</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 January 2023, chapter 9, section 1, and; Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 18 July 1942, chapter 11, section 1.

		represented by a litigation guardian/children's guardian ( <i>ställföreträdare</i> ). <sup>78</sup> However, children over the age of 15 years are criminally responsible and can act within the remits of the criminal procedure. The Code contains certain provisions on children between the ages of 15 and 18 who possess a certain procedural capacity, such as the questioning of children, <sup>79</sup> fines and summary imposition of a fine, <sup>80</sup> and child witnesses. <sup>81</sup>
Criminal Code ( <i>Brottsbalk [1962:700]</i> ) <sup>82</sup>	1962	Exposing a child to violence is criminalised under the Criminal Code. The Code also includes grounds for more severe penalties if the accused has, for example, exploited another person's defenceless position or difficulty in defending themselves, or if the offence was liable to damage the sense of security and trust of a child in their relationship with a family member. In 2021 a new offence entered into force under the Code. For a child to witness certain criminal acts, such as violent and sexual crimes, constitutes a violation of a child's integrity ( <i>Barnfridsbrott</i> ). <sup>83</sup> According to the Criminal Code, children above 15 years old have reached the age of criminal responsibility ( <i>straffmyndig</i> ), which means that they are authorised to act within the framework of a criminal procedure. <sup>84</sup>
Act on Special Representatives for Children ( <i>Lag [1999:997] om särskild företrädare för barn</i> ) <sup>85</sup>	1999	The Act on Special Representatives for Children stipulates that, in criminal proceedings against a custodian or a close relative based on alleged abuse by the child, it is possible to appoint a separate representative ( <i>särskild företrädare</i> ) to protect the interests of the child instead of having the (other) custodian representing the child. <sup>86</sup> The special representative replaces the custodian in protecting the best interests of the child during the investigation and trial, as well as during measures relating to the enforcement of damages and applications for criminal damages. <sup>87</sup>
Injured Party Counsel Act ( <i>Lag [1988:609] om målsägandebiträde</i> ) <sup>88</sup>	1988	The Injured Party Counsel Act stipulates that, in criminal proceedings, victims of, for example, sexual offences <sup>89</sup> and acts of violence <sup>90</sup> are entitled to an injured party counsel. <sup>91</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 18 July 1942, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>79</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 1 July 2022, chapter 23, sections 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 1 January 2023, chapter 48, section 4.

<sup>81</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 1 January 1992, chapter 36, section 4.

<sup>82</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalk [1962:700]*), 21 December 1962.

<sup>83</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalk [1962:700]*), 1 August 2022, chapter 4, section 3.

<sup>84</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalk [1962:700]*), 1 January 1989, chapter 1, section 6.

<sup>85</sup> Sweden, Act on special representative for children (*Lag [1999:997] om särskild företrädare för barn*), 2 December 1999.

<sup>86</sup> Sweden, Act on special representative for children (*Lag [1999:997] om särskild företrädare för barn*), 1 January 2013, section 1.

<sup>87</sup> Sweden, Act on special representative for children (*Lag [1999:997] om särskild företrädare för barn*), 1 July 2021, section 3.

<sup>88</sup> Sweden, Injured party counsel act (*Lag [1988:609] om målsägandebiträde*), 26 May 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Offences in accordance with chapter 6 of the Criminal code.

<sup>90</sup> For example, offences in accordance with chapters 3 and 4 of the Criminal code.

<sup>91</sup> Sweden, Injured party counsel act (*Lag [1988:609] om målsägandebiträde*), 1 July 2018, section 1.

		The injured party counsel must protect the injured party's interests in the case and provide support and assistance.
Discrimination Act ( <i>Diskrimineringslag</i> [2008:567]) <sup>92</sup>	2008	The Discrimination Act stipulates that its purpose is to combat discrimination based on sex, transgender identity or expression, disabilities, ethnicity, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, or age. <sup>93</sup> Children are protected against discrimination in the education system, health care and the social services. <sup>94</sup> Educational personnel have an obligation to investigate any indications of harassment and sexual harassment within the education system. <sup>95</sup>
Health and Social Services Act ( <i>Hälso- och sjukvårdslag</i> [2017:30]) <sup>96</sup>	2017	All residents have equal rights to health care. According to the Health and Social Services Act, the goal of health care is good health and care on equal terms for the entire population. Care must be given with respect for the equal worth of all people and the dignity of the individual person. Those who have the greatest need for health care must be given a priority. <sup>97</sup>
Education Act ( <i>Skollag</i> [2010:800]) <sup>98</sup>	2010	The Education Act emphasises that education must be designed in accordance with basic democratic values and human rights such as the inviolability of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal worth of all people, and equality and solidarity between people. Everyone working in education must promote human rights and actively oppose all forms of abusive treatment. <sup>99</sup> The Act stipulates children's right to equal access to education and the prohibition of discrimination. <sup>100</sup> Children from the age of 16 also have the right to institute a legal claim under the Education Act. <sup>101</sup>
Aliens Act ( <i>Utlänningslag</i> [2005:716]) <sup>102</sup>	2005	The Aliens Act contains provisions on, among other things, residence permits, detention pending enforcement ( <i>förvar</i> ) and public defence counsels. With regard to detention, the Act contains restrictions when it comes to persons under the age of 18. Among other things, children cannot be detained for more than 72 hours or, if there are exceptional reasons, a further 72 hours. <sup>103</sup> The Act protects the best interests of the child and the child's right to be heard. <sup>104</sup> The Act states that in cases involving

<sup>92</sup> Sweden, Discrimination act (*Diskrimineringslag* [2008:567]), 5 June 2008.

<sup>93</sup> Sweden, Discrimination act (*Diskrimineringslag* [2008:567]), 1 January 2015, chapter 1, section 1.

<sup>94</sup> Sweden, Discrimination act (*Diskrimineringslag* [2008:567]), 1 January 2015, chapter 2, section 5 and; Sweden, Discrimination act (*Diskrimineringslag* [2008:567]), 1 January 2013, chapter 2, section 13.

<sup>95</sup> Sweden, Discrimination act (*Diskrimineringslag* [2008:567]), 5 June 2008, chapter 2, section 7.

<sup>96</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag* [2017:30]), 9 February 2017.

<sup>97</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag* [2017:30]), 9 February 2017, chapter 3, section 1.

<sup>98</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag* [2010:800]), 23 June 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag* [2010:800]), 1 August 2020, chapter 1, section 3.

<sup>100</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag* [2010:800]), 1 January 2015, chapter 1, section 8.

<sup>101</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag* [2010:800]), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>102</sup> Sweden, Aliens act (*Utlänningslag* [2005:716]), 29 September 2005.

<sup>103</sup> Sweden, Aliens act (*Utlänningslag* [2005:716]), 29 September 2005.

<sup>104</sup> Sweden, Act on guardian for unaccompanied children (*Lag* [2005:429] *om god man för ensamkommande barn*), 9 June 2005, sections 10-11.

		children, particular attention should be paid to what their health and development, as well as their best interests, otherwise requires. <sup>105</sup>
Act on Guardians for Unaccompanied Children ( <i>Lag [2005:429] om god man för ensamkommande barn</i> ) <sup>106</sup>	2005	The Act on Guardians for Unaccompanied Children contains provisions on guardians ( <i>god man</i> ) in certain cases for children under the age of 18 who are foreign citizens or stateless. The application for a guardian can be made by the Swedish Migration Agency ( <i>Migrationsverket</i> ) and the Social Welfare Board ( <i>socialnämnd</i> ) in the municipality where the child resides. <sup>107</sup>
Act on Public Counsels ( <i>Lag [1996:1620] om offentligt biträde</i> ) <sup>108</sup>	1996	The Act on Public Counsels is applicable in cases when public counsel is to be appointed according to a special regulation in law. <sup>109</sup> For example, according to the Aliens Act, a public counsel shall be appointed for an unaccompanied child if the child is at risk of expulsion in connection with an application for asylum and in cases of detention pending enforcement. <sup>110</sup>

### 1.3. Policy framework

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.3.1. Is there a specific national or sub-national policy framework and/or a national or sub-national strategy on child rights and/or child protection? If <u>yes</u> , does it require an integrated approach to child protection?	X		<b>Strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden</b> In 2010, the Swedish parliament adopted a strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden proposed by the government in the bill “Strategy to Strengthen Children’s Rights in Sweden” ( <i>Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige</i> ). <sup>111</sup> The strategy is based on the human rights that every child up to the age of 18 is to be ensured under international agreements, especially the commitments arising from the CRC. It contains nine principles expressing prerequisites for promoting and protecting the rights of the child. <sup>112</sup> The rights must be guaranteed to all children regardless of, among other things, gender, age, or disability. <sup>113</sup> The strategy establishes that violence against children must be prevented and combated with all available means. In

<sup>105</sup> Sweden, Aliens act (*Utlänningslag [2005:716]*), 29 September 2005, chapter 1, section 10.

<sup>106</sup> Sweden, Aliens act (*Utlänningslag [2005:716]*), 29 September 2005, chapter 1, section 10.

<sup>107</sup> Sweden, Act on guardians for unaccompanied children (*Lag [2005:429] om god man för ensamkommande barn*), 1 January 2017, section 3.

<sup>108</sup> Sweden, Act on public counsels (*Lag [1996:1620] om offentligt biträde*), 5 December 1996.

<sup>109</sup> Sweden, Act on public counsels (*Lag [1996:1620] om offentligt biträde*), 5 December 1996, section 1.

<sup>110</sup> Sweden, Aliens act (*Utlänningslag [2005:716]*), 20 July 2021, chapter 18, section 1.

<sup>111</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children’s Rights in Sweden (*Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige*), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.

<sup>112</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children’s Rights in Sweden (*Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige*), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children’s Rights in Sweden (*Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige*), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.



		<p>order to combat all forms of violence effectively, the strategy stresses the responsibility of several actors to give children the protection to which they are entitled.<sup>114</sup> The strategy is intended to be a basis for all public actors who must ensure the rights of the child in their operations, i.e. parliament, government, government agencies, regions and municipalities.<sup>115</sup> One of the principles of the government strategy is that public actors in their different activities concerning children should strengthen the rights of the child through cooperation.<sup>116</sup> The government stresses the importance of collaboration to enable a holistic view of the situation of the child. The government also underlines the municipalities' responsibilities to cooperate at the local level and for government agencies to create the conditions for collaboration and coordination.<sup>117</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy to prevent and combat violence against children</b></p> <p>The work to prevent and combat violence against children is currently not guided by any specific strategy or action plan at the national level. However, recently, an inquiry submitted its report titled "An upbringing free from violence" (<i>En uppväxt fri från våld</i>), containing a proposition on a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children.<sup>118</sup> The strategy covers all forms of violence to which children may be exposed, regardless of where or by whom the violence is inflicted. The strategy sets out an overall goal and five long-term objectives to direct the focus for the work over the next ten years. The inquiry proposes an organisation for its implementation, the development of knowledge in this area, and follow-up.<sup>119</sup> Within the strategy's five long-term objectives, a number of horizontal priority areas have been identified. Linked to these priority areas, 23 assessments and 59 proposals for measures are identified for implementation.<sup>120</sup> According to the report, the strategy and its associated action plan entail a powerful</p>
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<sup>114</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children's Rights in Sweden ([Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige](#)), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.

<sup>115</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children's Rights in Sweden ([Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige](#)), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.

<sup>116</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children's Rights in Sweden ([Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige](#)), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010, page 15.

<sup>117</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children's Rights in Sweden ([Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige](#)), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010, page 15.

<sup>118</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 49.

<sup>120</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 49.

			strengthening of work to prevent and combat violence against children. The starting points for all the proposals are the views received from children in the development of the report and the CRC. The inquiry proposes a structure and organisation for the implementation of the strategy focusing on evidence-based, active, and long-term efforts from a wide range of societal actors. This work needs to be structured, coordinated, and cooperative. <sup>121</sup>
1.3.2. Are there national or sub-national plans for action or policies targeting specific groups of children or particular areas, e.g. children with disabilities, children in care?	X		<p>There are several national action plans and policies, some targeting specific groups of children and some targeting particular areas. These are presented below.</p> <p><b>National Action Plan to implement the EU Child Guarantee</b></p> <p>In 2022, the government adopted a National Action Plan to implement the EU Child Guarantee. According to the government, there are groups of children who do not receive, or risk not having access to, community services. This includes children in families in economically vulnerable situations, children living in unsafe conditions, children with disabilities and children who are placed outside their own homes. The action plan contains a mapping of actual access to basic community services in Sweden, together with applicable regulations and measures to achieve the goals of the child guarantee. Such measures include re-engaging children who are at risk of dropping out or have already dropped out of their education. The government emphasises that in most of the areas mentioned in the child guarantee, work is already underway to fulfil the recommendations.<sup>122</sup></p> <p><b>National Homeless Strategy</b></p> <p>In July 2022, the government decided on a National Homelessness Strategy for the period 2022–2026. The aim of the strategy is to reduce the number of homeless adults and children. The strategy also presents efforts to prevent people from becoming homeless. The strategy has four goals: 1) preventing homelessness; 2) no one should live on the street; 3) the social perspective in community planning must be strengthened; and 4) the so-called Housing First (<i>Bostad först</i>) method should be introduced nationally. According to the government, ‘Housing First’ is a proven method of counteracting homelessness for people facing social problems. According to the method, persons in acute homelessness are offered a home on the same terms as other tenants. This is then combined with voluntary and individually adapted assistance efforts. The introduction of this strategy does not require any</p>

<sup>121</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 57.

<sup>122</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) ‘[National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#)’, 24 May 2022.



		<p>legislative changes or amendments.<sup>123</sup> The National Homeless Strategy does not mention the EU Care Strategy adopted in September 2022.<sup>124</sup> However, the National Homeless Strategy recognises that homeless people often are, in addition to housing, in need of various health-care and social-care support efforts.<sup>125</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy from 2021 to 2031</b></p> <p>In 2021, the government presented a national strategy for systematically following up the national objective of the disability policy from 2021 to 2031.<sup>126</sup> The national objective covers four areas:<sup>127</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the principle of universal design;</li> <li>- existing shortcomings in accessibility;</li> <li>- individual support and solutions regarding the individual's independence;</li> <li>- preventing and counteracting discrimination.</li> </ul> <p>The strategy clarifies the rights of the child in all measures concerning children with disabilities. The aim of the strategy is linked to the government's desire to clarify the importance of each sector in society taking responsibility for its own part of the disability policy, with a specific emphasis on following up the national objective.<sup>128</sup> More specifically, the strategy outlines a number of government agencies, including the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen</i>), that will be asked to conduct a systematic follow-up of the disability policy within their respective areas of responsibility.<sup>129</sup> The Swedish Agency for Participation (<i>Myndigheten för delaktighet</i>) supports the different agencies in implementing the national strategy.</p> <p><b>National strategy to combat men's violence against women</b></p> <p>In 2017, the government adopted a national strategy to combat men's violence against women between 2017 and 2026. The strategy includes children. The strategy covers all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence</p>
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<sup>123</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) The government's strategy to combat homelessness 2022–2026 ([Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet 2022–2026](#)), 7 July 2022.

<sup>124</sup> The national homeless strategy was adopted in July 2022.

<sup>125</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) The government's strategy to combat homelessness 2022–2026 ([Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet 2022–2026](#)), 7 July 2022, see under goal 3.

<sup>126</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 ([Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspolitiken under 2021–2031](#)), government assignment, 23 September 2021.

<sup>127</sup> The national objective for disability policy 2021 – 2031 is based on the CRPD; see Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 ([Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspolitiken under 2021–2031](#)), government assignment, 23 September 2021, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), National objective and orientation for disability policy, 2016, 2016/17:188 ([Nationellt mål och inriktning för funktionshinderspolitiken 2016, 2016/17:188](#)), government bill, 11 May 2017.

<sup>129</sup> 28 authorities will have a clear follow-up responsibility. For a complete list of the different government agencies see; Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 ([Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspolitiken under 2021–2031](#)), government assignment, 23 September 2021.

			<p>and threats of violence directed at women and girls, including honour-related violence and oppression, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The strategy also includes work against prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, as well as work against the commercialisation and exploitation of the female body in advertising, media and pornography in order to reproduce notions of women's subordination. The strategy has four objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expanded and effective preventive work against violence, including working with men and boys to prevent the use of violence to a greater extent.</li> <li>2. Improved detection of violence, and stronger protection and support for women and children exposed to violence.</li> <li>3. More effective law enforcement.</li> <li>4. Improved knowledge and method development.<sup>130</sup></li> </ol> <p><b>National violence prevention program</b></p> <p>In 2022, the government adopted a National Violence Prevention Program in the area of men's violence against women. The program also includes children. The government stresses that children experiencing violence in intimate relationships need special attention to ensure their rights, and to counter vulnerability and future violence. In situations where the child or a relative of the child is exposed to violence, the child may need to receive information, advice and support from social services and health-care services. Through the program, efforts and measures aimed to prevent the use of violence, and early interventions on violence prevention are strengthened. The government's ambition with the National Violence Prevention Program is to create the conditions for a proactive approach to violence in line with the national strategy for preventing and combating men's violence against women.<sup>131</sup></p> <p><b>Strategy for the national work on human rights</b></p> <p>In 2016, the government adopted a strategy for its national work on human rights. The strategy is based on ensuring full respect for Sweden's international commitments to human rights. The strategy is part of developments towards developing a coherent structure to promote and protect human rights on all levels. According to the strategy, such a structure should consist of strong legal and institutional protection of human rights, coordinated and systematic work with human rights in</p>
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<sup>130</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Power, objectives and authority - feminist politics for an equal future (*Makt, mål och myndighet - feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid*), official letter, Skr. 2016/17:10, 21 November 2016.

<sup>131</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) National violence prevention program (*Nationellt våldsförebyggande program*), information material, 3 June 2022.

			<p>public activities, and strong support for work with human rights in civil society and in the business sector.<sup>132</sup></p> <p><b>National plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes, and five specific action plans against different forms of racism</b></p> <p>In 2016, the government adopted a national plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes. In 2022, as part of this national action plan, the government adopted five specific action plans against different forms of racism. The action plans are to combat Afrophobia,<sup>133</sup> Antisemitism,<sup>134</sup> Antigypsyism,<sup>135</sup> Islamophobia,<sup>136</sup> and Anti-Sami Racism.<sup>137</sup> All these action plans have the following areas of action: more knowledge, education and research; strengthened online prevention; a more active judiciary and civil society; and increased support and dialogue. The action plans cover different measures aimed at children and young persons' vulnerability to racism and discrimination, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increased knowledge among children about racism and rights;</li> <li>- support and information material on how to talk to children about racism;</li> <li>- increased knowledge of where pupils and guardians can turn when someone has been exposed to discrimination or abusive treatment;</li> <li>- democracy-strengthening efforts to counter racism in school.<sup>138</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy and action plan for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression</b></p> <p>In 2014, the government adopted a strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. One of the designated focus areas for the strategy deals with reducing violence, discrimination and harassment. The strategy covers both adults and children, and young LGBTIQ people are highlighted as a special focus area in the strategy.<sup>139</sup> In 2021, the government adopted an action plan for the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTIQ people to strengthen work further in this area. The action plan complements the existing strategy with</p>
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<sup>132</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (Kulturdepartementet) (2016) The government's strategy for the national work on human rights (*Regeringens strategi för det nationella arbetet med mänskliga rättigheter*), Skr. 2016/17:29, 18 October 2016.

<sup>133</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Afrophobia](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>134</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Antisemitism](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>135</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Antigypsyism](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>136</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Islamophobia](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>137</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Anti-Sami Racism](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>138</sup> See for example; Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Afrophobia](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>139</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2014) A strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (*En strategi för lika rättigheter och möjligheter oavsett sexuell läggning, könsidentitet eller könsuttryck*), information material, 23 January 2014.

		<p>concrete measures for the period 2020–2023. Several of the measures are specifically aimed at the target group of children and young people. The government emphasises the importance of highlighting children's rights and the youth perspective in all measures where children and young people are affected.<sup>140</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy for stronger parental support and action plan for crime-prevention parenting support</b></p> <p>In 2018, the government decided on a new national strategy for stronger parental support to promote children's health and development.<sup>141</sup> This support shall be based on the child's rights and shall be equal, including gender-equal. The child rights perspective, gender-equal parenting and equality in health characterise the national strategy. The overall objective of the strategy is that all parents should be offered parenting support throughout the child's upbringing. Parental support is defined in the strategy as various contributions, activities and actions aimed at parents that strengthen parenting skills and the relationship between parents and children. This can include giving parents knowledge about the rights of the child and children's health and development, as well as strengthening parents' relationships with each other or their social networks. The strategy has links to several other national objectives and strategies. Parental support is mentioned as related to achieving the goals in, for example, the areas of children's rights, public health, gender equality, alcohol, drugs, doping, tobacco (ANDT) prevention work, disability and crime prevention work. In 2022, the strategy was evaluated by the Family Law and Parental Support Authority (<i>Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd</i>).<sup>142</sup> On behalf of the government, the Family Law and Parental Support Authority developed an action plan for crime-prevention parental support, presented in 2022. The authority will implement the action plan during 2022–2023.<sup>143</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy for reducing and addressing segregation, 2018–2028</b></p> <p>The government has adopted a long-term strategy for reducing and addressing segregation. It sets out the orientation for this work for the period 2018–2028. The overall objective of the strategy is reduced segregation,</p>
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<sup>140</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) '[Action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people](#)', information material, 25 November 2021.

<sup>141</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) National strategy for stronger parental support ([En nationell strategi för ett stärkt föräldraskapsstöd](#)), 2018.

<sup>142</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2022) Final report: Implementation and follow-up of the national strategy for stronger parental support ([Slutrapport: Genomförande och uppföljning av den nationella strategin för ett stärkt föräldraskapsstöd](#)), 12 April 2022.

<sup>143</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2022) Action plan for crime prevention parental support ([Handlingsplan för brottsförebyggande föräldraskapsstöd](#)), 2 February 2022.

		<p>equal conditions for the child's upbringing and living conditions, and good chances in life for all.<sup>144</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights</b></p> <p>The Public Health Agency of Sweden (<i>Folkhälsomyndigheten</i>), on behalf of the government, has developed a national strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights. The overall objective of the strategy is to achieve good, fair, and equal sexual and reproductive health throughout the entire population. The strategy contains four long-term sub-targets and seven areas of action. Combined, these will contribute to attaining the overall objective. The overall objective and the sub-targets will be followed regularly through a number of indicators. Young people and young adults are specifically targeted as a group whose health and rights need to be strengthened.</p> <p>The Swedish public-health policy framework stresses that all children must have a good start in life and grow up in a positive environment that stimulates their early development, learning, and health.<sup>145</sup> The foundations of good sexual and reproductive health are created as a child grows up, not least by securing the right to knowledge early on.<sup>146</sup> All children, young people, and adults must have the chance to develop their knowledge, skills, and competence around sexual and reproductive health at all stages of their lives. The strategy stresses that "[a]ll children must have the chance to talk about bodies, identities, integrity, and relationships in different contexts. Values and norms take root early on, and questions and reflections need to be addressed to promote a child's development."<sup>147</sup></p> <p><b>Program to prevent crime and organised crime</b></p> <p>In 2017, the government presented a national crime prevention program, "Together against crime" (<i>Tillsammans mot brott</i>).<sup>148</sup> The aim of the program is to create conditions for structured and long-term crime prevention work throughout society. Children and young people are highlighted as an important group, and the child's right to grow up without violence is emphasised. The program is both about early preventive measures for children and young people who are at risk of ending up in crime and about measures aimed at reducing recidivism,</p>
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<sup>144</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2018) Long-term strategy for reducing and addressing segregation (*Långsiktig strategi för att minska och motverka segregation*), Ku2018/01462, 2018.

<sup>145</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2018) Long-term strategy for reducing and addressing segregation (*Långsiktig strategi för att minska och motverka segregation*), Ku2018/01462, 2018, target area 1.

<sup>146</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2018) Long-term strategy for reducing and addressing segregation (*Långsiktig strategi för att minska och motverka segregation*), Ku2018/01462, 2018, target area 2.

<sup>147</sup> Sweden, Public Health Agency of Sweden (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*) (2022) '[National Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) – Good, fair, and equal sexual and reproductive health throughout the population](#)', 14 November 2022.

<sup>148</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2016) Together against crime – a national crime prevention program ([Tillsammans mot brott – ett nationellt brottsförebyggande program](#)), official letter, 21 March 2017.

		<p>for example, preventive methods for the treatment of perpetrators of violence.<sup>149</sup> In 2019, the former government presented the so-called “34-point program against organised crime”, which includes, among other things, measures in schools and social services in “socially disadvantaged areas”, coordinated efforts for children and young people at risk, and measures for a national dropout program.<sup>150</sup></p> <p><b>National plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools</b></p> <p>In 2021, the government presented a national plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools. The national plan proposes both changes to the Education Act and development work at the school and principal levels. The purpose of the proposals is to indicate directions for long-term and systematic work to increase safety in education and provide a supportive study environment in schools.<sup>151</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy for coordination on children and young people at risk</b></p> <p>The national strategy for coordination on children and young people at risk of child abuse and neglect was drawn up by the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>), the National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) and the National Police Board (<i>Rikspolisstyrelsen</i>) in 2007.<sup>152</sup> The strategy emphasises that activities must be coordinated not only in relation to the situation of individual children and young people, but also on a general basis.<sup>153</sup> The strategy is based on a general statutory duty for public authorities to co-operate. This is a long-term strategy. In 2013, the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) developed supplementing guidelines, ‘Cooperation for the best interests of the child – a guide to children’s need of interventions from several actors’.<sup>154</sup> The guidelines have not been revised since 2013. However, since 2013 and onwards, the National Board of Health and Welfare</p>
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<sup>149</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2016) Together against crime – a national crime prevention program ([Tillsammans mot brott – ett nationellt brottsförebyggande program](#)), official letter, 21 March 2017.

<sup>150</sup> Sweden, Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokraterna*) ‘[Program för att stoppa gängkriminaliteten](#)’, official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>151</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2021) National plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools ([Nationell plan för trygghet och studiero](#)), Ds 2021:13, 18 May 2021.

<sup>152</sup> Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2007) National Strategy for Coordination on Children and Young People at Risk for Child Abuse and Neglect ([Strategi för samverkan - kring barn och unga som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa](#)), 2007.

<sup>153</sup> Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2007) National Strategy for Coordination on Children and Young People at Risk for Child Abuse and Neglect ([Strategi för samverkan - kring barn och unga som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa](#)), 2007.

<sup>154</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2013) Cooperation for the best interest of the child – a guide about children’s need of interventions from several actors ([Samverka för barns bästa – en vägledning om barns behov av insatser från flera aktörer](#)), August 2013.

		<p>has developed several other support materials for collaboration.<sup>155</sup></p> <p><i>Ongoing strategy developments</i></p> <p><b>Alcohol, narcotic drugs, doping and tobacco policy</b>  During 2011–2015 and 2016–2020 there have been national strategies under the alcohol, narcotic drugs, doping and tobacco policy (the ANDTS strategy). The Public Health Agency (<i>Folkhälsomyndigheten</i>) has had a special role in following up and coordinating the strategies. In 2021, the government presented a bill with proposals for a renewed strategy for 2021–2025. However, the parliament did not approve the presented proposal. Among other things, the parliament requested greater clarity regarding the government's priorities. No new strategy has yet been adopted.<sup>156</sup> However, the Public Health Agency has continued to be tasked with supporting implementation of the policy in the alcohol, narcotic drugs, doping and tobacco (ANDTS) areas.<sup>157</sup></p> <p><b>Mental health and suicide prevention</b>  The government has tasked a number of its agencies with submitting input for a future national strategy in the areas of mental health and suicide prevention.<sup>158</sup> Under the new strategy, particular attention is to be paid to those groups that are at greatest risk of developing mental health problems or committing suicide, such as children and young people, young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), people with disabilities, and LGBTQI people.</p> <p><b>Sexual exploitation of children</b>  In 2007, the government decided on an updated National action plan against the sexual exploitation of children.<sup>159</sup> The action plan is aimed primarily at state and municipal agencies that come into contact with children, the authorities responsible for tourism and the travel industry, and NGOs working on the issue. In 2008, the government presented an action plan for combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.<sup>160</sup> In 2014, the government adopted an action plan for the</p>
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<sup>155</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Board of Health and Welfare, 21 February 2023.

<sup>156</sup> Sweden, Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottet*) (2020) A renewed strategy for alcohol, narcotic drugs, doping and tobacco policy 2021–2025 (*En förnyad strategi för politiken avseende alkohol, narkotika, dopning, tobak och nikotin*), committee report, 2020/21:SoU25, 15 June 2021.

<sup>157</sup> Sweden, Public Health Agency (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*) Support structure for government public health work (*Stödstrukturen för det statliga folkhälsoarbetet*), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>158</sup> See for example; Sweden, Public Health Agency (*Folkhälsomyndigheten*) National strategy in the area of mental health and suicide prevention (*Nationell strategi för psykisk hälsa och suicidprevention*), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>159</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2007) National action plan against child sexual exploitation (*Handlingsplan mot sexuell exploatering av barn*), 2007.

<sup>160</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Integration and gender Equality (*Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet*) (2008) Action plan for combating prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes (*Handlingsplan mot prostitution och människohandel för sexuella ändamål*), official letter, 2007/08:167, 10 June 2008.



			<p>protection of children against human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>161</sup> In 2016, the government adopted another action plan (2016–2018) for the protection of children against human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse.<sup>162</sup> In 2018, the government adopted an action plan to combat the prostitution and trafficking of human beings. The action plan aims to prevent and combat prostitution and trafficking of human beings for all purposes, and to contribute to better protection and support for people who are subjected to trafficking. One objective is that no child should be exposed to the trafficking of human beings, exploitation or sexual abuse.<sup>163</sup></p> <p>These policies have guided the government's work against sexual exploitation of children.</p>
1.3.3. Are there national or sub-national child protection policies regarding children in the digital space and when using online media?	X		<p>Since 2017 Sweden has a national digitalisation strategy outlining the government's digital policy.<sup>164</sup> One of the strategy's goals is digital security. Within this goal, the strategy recognises the right to personal integrity and stresses that this must be safeguarded through a technology that is adapted to protect personal integrity. Private and public authorities need to develop awareness of information and cyber security to maintain confidence in new technologies and services.<sup>165</sup></p> <p>In addition, the government decided on a national digitalisation strategy for schooling in 2017.<sup>166</sup> The overall objective of the strategy is that Swedish schools should lead the way in using the opportunities of digitalisation in the best way to achieve a high level of digital competence among children and pupils, and to promote knowledge development and equivalence.<sup>167</sup> In 2022, the government assigned the Swedish National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) to develop a national digitalisation strategy for 2023-2027. The strategy was submitted to the Government Offices (<i>Regeringskansliet</i>) in December 2022 and is currently being circulated for formal consultation. The consultation responses must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research</p>

<sup>161</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2014) Measures to strengthen the child's rights and conditions for growing up in Sweden (*Åtgärder för att stärka barnets rättigheter och uppväxtvillkor i Sverige*), official letter, 20 February 2014.

<sup>162</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Action plan 2016–2018 for the protection of children against human trafficking, exploitation and sexual abuse (*Handlingsplan 2016–2018 till skydd för barn mot människohandel, exploatering och sexuella övergrepp*), official letter, 27 June 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Sweden, , Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) Action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking of human beings (*Handlingsplan mot prostitution och människohandel*), annex to government decision 2018-02-08 nr II:1.

<sup>164</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation (*Näringsdepartementet*) (2017) National Digitalisation Strategy (*Digitaliseringsstrategin*), N2017/03643/D, 18 May 2017.

<sup>165</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation (*Näringsdepartementet*) (2017) National Digitalisation Strategy (*Digitaliseringsstrategin*), N2017/03643/D, 18 May 2017, p. 18.

<sup>166</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Proposal on a national digitisation strategy for 2023-2027 (*Förslag på en nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet 2023–2027*), 2022.

<sup>167</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.



		<p>(<i>Utbildningsdepartementet</i>) by 28 April 2023 at the latest.<sup>168</sup> The strategy's overall goal focuses on children's and students' digital competences and on the possible uses of digitalisation in teaching and learning. One of the sub-goals focuses on children's ability to act safely, respectfully and responsibly in digital environments.</p> <p>In 2020, the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>), the Swedish Authority for Data Protection (<i>Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten, IMY</i>) and the Swedish Media Council (<i>Statens medieråd</i>) developed guidelines on the rights of children and young people on digital platforms. The target groups are primarily actors who create and operate various digital environments commonly used by children and young persons, such as on online gaming, social media and other platforms. The aim of the guide is to provide general support on the right to personal integrity based on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and a child-rights perspective based on the CRC. The guide also contains advice on protecting children from harmful media influences.<sup>169</sup></p>
<p>1.3.4. Is there a (regular) child participation policy and/or mechanism and/or body related to child rights and/or other child-related governance at national or sub-national level to ensure children have a (direct) voice in or can indirectly influence policy making, e.g. children's rights forum, child surveys, child participation platform?</p> <p><u>If yes, are appropriate child protection and safety measures in place?</u></p>	X	<p>Although it is not subject to one particular policy, one of the principles in the Strategy to strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden is that children shall be given the opportunity to express their views in matters affecting them.<sup>170</sup> The strategy states that the fundamental principles of the CRC should be observed in the formulation of all relevant legislation, regulations and general advice, regardless of policy area.</p> <p>In some assignments for special inquirers and government agencies they are tasked with gathering children's and young people's views and experiences, and/or with gathering child right organisations' views and experiences. Inquiry reports which affect children and young people are often circulated to child right organisations for referral.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the Budget Bill for 2023 the government states that the experiences and views of children and young people shall be taken into account in both the government's long-term, systematic and strategic measures to ensure the rights of the child, and in the measures to ensure the rights of certain vulnerable groups of children.</p> <p>The task of the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) includes compiling knowledge</p>

<sup>168</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2023) Consultation of the Swedish National Agency for Education to develop a national digitalisation strategy for schooling 2023-2027 ([Remiss av Statens skolverks förslag till nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet 2023–2027](#)), Consultation referral, 11 April 2023.

<sup>169</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) (2020) The rights of children and young people on digital platforms ([Barns och ungas rättigheter på digitala plattformar](#)), 12 October 2020.

<sup>170</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Strategy to Strengthen Children's Rights in Sweden ([Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige](#)), government bill, 2009/10:232, 28 June 2010.

		<p>and statistics on the living conditions of children and young people in its sphere of activity,<sup>171</sup> including an annual follow-up consisting of monitoring and analysing the development of indicators and other statistics within one or more focus areas.<sup>172</sup> The Ombudsman for Children is tasked with representing the rights and interests of children and young people in light of Sweden's commitments under the CRC.<sup>173</sup> A prerequisite for the Ombudsman to be able to represent and monitor children's rights in society is that the authority bases its activities on direct and indirect contacts with children and young persons.<sup>174</sup> In light of this, the Ombudsman for Children highlights dialogue with children as an important part of their work.<sup>175</sup> Thus, the Ombudsman conducts regular dialogue with children and young people to gain knowledge about their situations and opinions on policy issues.<sup>176</sup> Within the framework of most of the Ombudsman for Children's assignments, both government assignments and self-initiated ones, the Ombudsman gather experiences from children and young persons. The methods and forms for this differ depending on the nature and purpose of the assignment. The Ombudsman for Children uses both qualitative methods (for example, interviews both individually and in groups) and quantitative methods (for example, surveys). In some assignments, the Ombudsman uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.<sup>177</sup> The selection of children for dialogue is governed by the nature and purpose of the assignment. In some cases, it is a matter of obtaining a general picture from children about an area or issue, while in other cases it is about obtaining knowledge from children who have special experiences (for example, children placed in care). In the first-mentioned example, it may involve visiting school classes and carrying out, for example, workshops or sending out questionnaires to a random selection of children. In the second example, it may involve conducting group discussions or individual discussions with children who have specific experiences in an area or based on a specific question. This may also involve gathering information from children via targeted surveys, for example.<sup>178</sup> According to the Ombudsman for Children, the authority bases its selection of children for consultation in accordance with Article 2 of the CRC. This includes, for example, equal distribution of gender,</p>
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<sup>171</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children ([Lag \[1993:335\] om Barnombudsman](#)), 1 July 2002, section 3.

<sup>172</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>173</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children ([Lag \[1993:335\] om Barnombudsman](#)), 1 July 2002, section 1.

<sup>174</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2002) A strengthened Ombudsman for Children ([En förstärkt barnombudsman](#)) government bill, 2001/02:96, 21 February 2002.

<sup>175</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>176</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Our assignment '[Vårt uppdrag](#)', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>177</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>178</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

		<p>geographical distribution, children with different backgrounds, LGBTI perspectives and children with disabilities.<sup>179</sup> Within the framework of the Ombudsman for Children's internal participation work, the Ombudsman created a reference group with children in 2022.<sup>180</sup> The working group is linked to the Ombudsman's work with their annual report.<sup>181</sup> Within the framework of the annual report, the Ombudsman for Children also had a reference group of six children under the age of 18. These children also participated in the meeting with the minister when the report was delivered.<sup>182</sup> The Ombudsman processes personal data in line with the provisions in the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).<sup>183</sup> The Ombudsman has developed a policy for processing data when collecting experiences from children.<sup>184</sup></p> <p>Some government authorities have developed mechanisms and supporting materials to enable children's participation. For example, the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (<i>Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten</i>) has a children's panel to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard within its area of operations.<sup>185</sup> Furthermore, the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) has developed supporting materials for acquiring information about children's knowledge and experiences.<sup>186</sup></p> <p>In addition, some government authorities conduct recurring national surveys for children. For instance, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (<i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF</i>) conducts recurring surveys and analyses on young persons' living conditions.<sup>187</sup> Since 2006 the National Council for Crime Prevention (<i>Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå</i>) has conducted the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS) annually. The National Council for Crime Prevention also carries out the</p>
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<sup>179</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>180</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>181</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002.

<sup>182</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>183</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Processing of personal data '*Behandling av personuppgifter*', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>184</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Policy, regulations and procedures for the processing of data when collecting experiences from children (*Policy, regler och rutiner för hantering av uppgifter vid inhämtning av erfarenheter från barn*), S 2021:0017, 11 November 2011.

<sup>185</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>186</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) Children's participation in the work of the National Board of Health and Welfare - A support material for gathering children's knowledge and experiences (*Barns medverkan i Socialstyrelsens arbeten – Ett stödmaterial för att inhämta barns kunskaper och erfarenheter*), June 2020.

<sup>187</sup> See for example Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*) Report series (*Rapportserier*), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

			<p>School Survey on Crime (SSC), which measures reported exposure to and involvement in crime among year 9 students.<sup>188</sup> Statistics Sweden (<i>Statistikmyndigheten, SCB</i>) conducts surveys on children's living conditions (Barn-ULF), and since 2001 it has regularly interviewed children aged 10–18 (since 2015, 12–18) about their living conditions in the areas of finance, leisure, health, helping at home, relationships, school and safety. The survey is conducted within the framework of the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC).<sup>189</sup> For Statistics Sweden, the legal ground for data collection is set out in the Official Statistics Act (<i>Lag [2001:99] om den officiella</i></p>
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<sup>188</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>189</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) [National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#), S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

		<p><i>statistiken</i>)<sup>190</sup> and the Official Statistics Ordinance (<i>Förordning [2001:100] om den officiella statistiken</i>),<sup>191</sup> the Statistics Sweden Instructions Ordinance (<i>Förordning [2016:822] med instruktion för statistiska centralbyrån</i>),<sup>192</sup> and other special provisions on the processing of personal data.</p> <p>For more information on surveys and data collection, see chapter 5 below.</p>
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#### 1.4. Particular groups of children: information on legislative and policy developments (if any) related to their protection

Please report on any significant developments in the last five years and comment briefly.

When answering you should consider all relevant civil, criminal, and administrative legislation, including regulations, ordinances, codes, ministerial decisions. On policy developments please include any relevant action plan, protocol, procedure, or guidance issued by competent authorities. Please always specify how children's participation in any respective judicial (civil, criminal, and administrative) proceedings are regulated and supported (e.g. procedural safeguards to be in place, ensuring children's right to be heard).

##### 1.4.1. Children victims of abuse, exploitation, or neglect

In the areas of online and offline sexual abuse, pornography, exploitation and child labour, trafficking; domestic violence and gender-based violence including harmful practices, such as genital mutilation, child/forced marriage, honour-related violence; abuse or discrimination; ICT and cyber bullying; school bullying; neglect and children at risk of abuse and neglect, including street children (begging or selling things)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>National strategy to prevent and combat violence against children</b></p> <p>As mentioned under section 1.3.1. above, a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children was recently proposed in the government report "An upbringing free from violence" (<i>En uppväxt fri från våld</i>).<sup>193</sup> The strategy covers all forms of violence to which children may be exposed, regardless of where or by whom the violence is inflicted. This includes abuse and violence in digital environments. Among other things, the strategy highlights the digital environment as a specific arena where children are particularly exposed</p>	<p><b>Sexual offences legislation</b></p> <p>In 2018, new sexual offences legislation was adopted as part of the Criminal Code. Among other things, the provision on the rape of a child was amended, and the minimum penalty was raised. At the same time, it was clarified in the preparatory works that the provisions on, e.g. the rape of a child and the sexual assault of a child, also cover situations where the victim performs a sexual act on themselves or the act is carried out by a third</p>

<sup>190</sup> Sweden, Official statistics act ([Lag \[2001:99\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001.

<sup>191</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001.

<sup>192</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for Statistics Sweden ([Förordning \[2016:822\] med instruktion för Statistiska centralbyrån](#)), 22 June 2016.

<sup>193</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023.

to negative experiences and violence.<sup>194</sup> The strategy sets out an overall goal and five long-term objectives to direct the focus for the work over the next ten years. Within the strategy's five long-term objectives, a number of horizontal priority areas have been identified. Linked to these priority areas, 23 assessments and 59 proposals for measures have been identified for implementation.<sup>195</sup> The starting points for all the proposals are the views received from children in the development of the report.<sup>196</sup>

### **National strategy to combat men's violence against women**

As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, in 2017 the government adopted a national strategy to combat men's violence against women for 2017 to 2026. The strategy also includes children. The strategy includes work against prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes, as well as the commercialisation and exploitation of the female body in advertising, media and pornography in order to reproduce notions of women's subordination.<sup>197</sup>

### **Action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking of human beings**

As mentioned in chapter 1.3.2. above, the government adopted an action plan to combat the prostitution and trafficking of human beings in 2018. The action plan aims to prevent and combat the prostitution and trafficking of human beings for all purposes, and to contribute to better protection and support for people who are subjected to trafficking. One objective is that no child should be exposed to the trafficking of human beings, exploitation or sexual abuse.<sup>198</sup>

party.<sup>212</sup> In 2018, the criminal liability for the crime of contact with a child for sexual purposes (grooming) was extended,<sup>213</sup> and the maximum punishment for the crime was increased.

In 2020, the minimum penalty for gross child pornography offences was raised. At the same time, the culpability requirement in the provision was changed so that anyone who depicts a child in a pornographic image can be punished for the offence of child pornography, even if he or she did not act with intent but was negligent regarding the circumstance that the person depicted is under 18. In 2020, the statute of limitation for, e.g., the rape of a child was abolished.<sup>214</sup>

In June 2021, the results of a public inquiry on enhanced protection against sexual abuse were presented, proposing, among other things, that the penalty scale for most sexual crimes be increased.<sup>215</sup> In 2022, the parliament voted to approve a proposal for an increased penalty scale for rape and sexual assault and corresponding crimes against children. The proposal included increased penalties for: use of children for sexual posing; rape of a child; sexual assault; and exploitation of a child through the purchase of a sexual act.<sup>216</sup> The provisions on rape and sexual assault and the corresponding crimes against children were also amended in order to strengthen protection against serious sexual violations committed from a distance, for example, over the internet. The provisions on rape and the rape of a child have been amended in order to be more neutral in relation to gender and sexual orientation. The provision on the use of children for sexual posing is extended to include acts where the child

<sup>194</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 220-223.

<sup>195</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 49.

<sup>196</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 57.

<sup>197</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Power, objectives and authority - feminist politics for an equal future (*Makt, mål och myndighet - feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid*), official letter, Skr. 2016/17:10, 21 November 2016.

<sup>198</sup> Sweden, , Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) Action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking of human beings (*Handlingsplan mot prostitution och människohandel*), annex to government decision 2018-02-08 nr II:1.

<sup>212</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) *Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*, 15 October 2021.

<sup>213</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalk [1962:700]*), 18 January 2018, chapter 6, section 10a.

<sup>214</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2019) Child pornography and statutory limitation provisions on crimes against children (*Barnpornografibrottet och preskription av brott mot barn*), government bill, 2019/20:69, 28 January 2020.

<sup>215</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2021) Enhanced protection against sexual abuse (*Ett förstärkt skydd mot sexuella kränkningar*), SOU 2021:43, 1 June 2021.

<sup>216</sup> Sweden, Committee on Justice (*Justitieutskottet*) (2022) A sharper view of rape and other sexual violations (*Skärpt syn på våldtäkt och andra sexuella kränkningar*), 2021/22:JuU41, 21 June 2022.



### National violence prevention program

As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, the government adopted a national violence prevention program in the area of men's violence against women in 2022. The program also includes children.<sup>199</sup>

### The establishment of an exit program for persons exposed to prostitution

The government has appointed an inquiry chair to submit proposals for an exit program for persons who are exposed to prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes. The assignment also includes submitting proposals for a program for children exposed to sexual exploitation and human trafficking for sexual purposes.<sup>200</sup>

### Strengthened work against the sexual exploitation of children, prostitution and human trafficking

#### *The Swedish Gender Equality Agency*

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) has a national assignment to coordinate the work to combat all forms of trafficking in human beings, including trafficking in children. The authority operates the National Task Force against prostitution and human trafficking (NMT), which includes the Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*), the Swedish Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*), the Swedish Work Environment Authority (*Arbetsmiljöverket*), the Swedish Tax Agency (*Skatteverket*) and the regional coordinators against prostitution and trafficking in human beings within the social services.<sup>201</sup> In addition to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency's coordination assignment, in 2019 the government gave the authority a specific assignment to strengthen its work to prevent children, young people and adults from being used in prostitution and trafficking in human beings, and to map the extent of prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes in

has been passive. New penal provisions have been introduced on the sexual molestation of a child and the gross sexual molestation of a child.<sup>217</sup> The amendment entered into force 22 August 2022.<sup>218</sup>

### Review the criminal legal protection against sexual violations of a child

In February 2022, the government proposed to appoint a special inquirer to review the criminal law protection for groups in particularly vulnerable situations. The special inquirer will, among other things:

- review the criminal law protection against sexual violations of a child aged 15–17 years, in particular in relation to the exploitation of a child through the purchase of sexual acts;
- review the regulations on the exploitation of a child through the purchase of sexual acts, the purchase of sexual services and the procuring of prostitution through the use of internet-based tools, in particular with regard to children and so-called "sugar dating";
- evaluate the effect of criminal responsibility in relation to the age of the child victim of sexual violence being framed as negligence;
- consider whether the criminal designations for the offences of child pornography and gross child pornography should be amended in order to clarify that certain pornography offences amount to documentation of a sexual assault on a child.<sup>219</sup>

### Review the non-contact order legislation

In 2022, the government appointed an Inquiry to review the Non-contact Order Act (*Lag [1988:688] om kontaktförbud*).<sup>220</sup> The purpose of the review is to ensure that the legislation provides protection to women and children who are exposed to violence and other

<sup>199</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) National violence prevention program ([Nationellt våldsförebyggande program](#)), information material, 3 June 2022.

<sup>200</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) Exit program for people exposed to prostitution ([Exitprogram för personer som är utsatta för prostitution](#)), committee directive, 12 juli 2022.

<sup>201</sup> See; Sweden, Swedish Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) '[Prostitution and human trafficking](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>217</sup> Sweden, Committee on Justice (*Justitiekottet*) (2022) A sharper view of rape and other sexual violations ([Skärpt syn på våldtäkt och andra sexuella kränkningar](#)), 2021/22:JuU41, 21 June 2022.

<sup>218</sup> Sweden, Committee on Justice (*Justitiekottet*) (2022) A sharper view of rape and other sexual violations ([Skärpt syn på våldtäkt och andra sexuella kränkningar](#)), 2021/22:JuU41, 21 June 2022.

<sup>219</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Protection of children against sexual abuse and certain questions about crimes against women and older persons ([Barns skydd mot sexuella kränkningar samt vissa frågor om brott mot kvinnor och äldre](#)), committee directive, 25 February 2022.

<sup>220</sup> Sweden, Non-contact order act ([Lag \[1988:688\] om kontaktförbud](#)), 26 May 1988.

Sweden.<sup>202</sup> The authority shall map occurrences of, and disseminate knowledge about the need for specific efforts to counter, children being used in prostitution or exposed to trafficking in human beings.<sup>203</sup> In 2022, the government granted an additional SEK four million to the Gender Equality Agency. Part of the financial reinforcement was due to an increased need for strengthened coordination and increased efforts in the work against prostitution, human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children in connection to the war in Ukraine and those who are fleeing from it to Sweden.<sup>204</sup>

#### *The Swedish Police Authority*

In 2016, the government tasked the Swedish Police Authority with identifying and implementing actions to strengthen and develop the ability to detect, investigate and prevent sexual offences against children, develop the ability to identify the victims and perpetrators of these crimes, and improve cooperation within the Authority and with relevant actors both nationally and internationally. Since 2016, the Authority has adopted several competence-enhancing initiatives.<sup>205</sup> Since 2019, the Authority has developed several knowledge and method materials focusing on combating sexual abuse against children.<sup>206</sup> The Authority has, among other things, developed guidelines on investigating

violations in intimate relationships to the greatest extent possible.<sup>221</sup>

#### **Investigations to prevent certain injuries and deaths**

According to the Act on Investigations To Prevent Certain Injuries And Deaths (*Lag [2007:606] om utredningar för att förebygga vissa skador och dödsfall*), the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) shall carry out investigations when a child has been killed or when an adult has been killed by a relative or someone who was previously close to them. The aim of such an investigation is to identify failings in society's safety net and to provide the government with data for deciding on actions.<sup>222</sup> In 2019, the Act was expanded to include cases where a child has been subjected to aggravated assault or exceptional aggravated assault by a relative or someone who was previously close to them.<sup>223</sup>

#### **Strengthened child rights perspective in sheltered accommodation**

In 2016, the government assigned an inquiry to strengthened the child rights perspective in sheltered accommodation.<sup>224</sup> In 2019 the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence's (Grevio) latest review of Sweden's implementation of the Istanbul Convention resulted in 41 recommendations for Sweden to act upon in order to fully comply with its obligations under the Convention.<sup>225</sup> Among other things, Grevio addressed the situation of children residing in domestic violence shelters with their mothers and urged the Swedish authorities to "swiftly

<sup>202</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2019) Assignment to strengthen the work to prevent children, young people and adults from being used in prostitution and trafficking in human beings, and to map the extent of prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes (*Uppdrag att stärka arbetet mot att barn och unga respektive vuxna utnyttjas i prostitution och människohandel samt kartlägga omfattningen av prostitution och människohandel*), government assignment, 18 September 2019.

<sup>203</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>204</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) Strengthened work against sexual exploitation of children, prostitution and human trafficking (*Arbetet mot sexuell exploatering av barn, prostitution och människohandel förstärks*), press release, 25 March 2022.

<sup>205</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>206</sup> Sweden, Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*) (2022) Report – the Police Authority's work regarding sexual offences against children (*Rapport - Polisens arbete avseende sexualbrott mot barn*), A042.475/2020, 8 July 2022.

<sup>221</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) A review of the non-contact order legislation (*En översyn av kontaktförbudslagstiftningen*), committee directive, 8 July 2022.

<sup>222</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>223</sup> Sweden, Act on investigations to prevent certain injuries and deaths (*Lag [2007:606] om utredningar för att förebygga vissa skador och dödsfall*), 1 January 2019, section 2.

<sup>224</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) A window of opportunity - strengthened child rights perspective for children in sheltered accommodation (*Ett fönster av möjligheter – stärkt barnrättsperspektiv för barn i skyddat boende*), government official report, 15 January 2018.

<sup>225</sup> Council of Europe (2019) '[GREVIO's \(Baseline\) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence \(Istanbul Convention\) Sweden](#)', Appendix I, 21 January 2019.



cases of online sexual abuse and a system for handling reports of online sexual abuse.<sup>207</sup>

#### **New regulations and general advice on violence in intimate relationships**

The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) has adopted new regulations and general advice on violence in intimate relationships. The regulations target adults and children as exposed to violence, witnessing violence or perpetrating violence. The regulation is aimed at social services, health care and dental care, and entered into force in 2022.<sup>208</sup>

#### **Initiatives to combat harassment, etc., online**

Since 2013, the Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) has been responsible for the “No Hate Speech Movement”, which aims to improve knowledge about racism, sexism and similar forms of hostility online among children and young people. This has involved producing information materials and educational tools for target groups such as pupils and teachers. In 2020, the Council submitted its final report covering measures taken during 2017-2020. The Council also manages an initiative for children's safety online together with Bris (since 2021) and ECPAT (since 2023) called “Safer Internet Centre”. The initiative aims to increase children's safety online by providing knowledge and support to children and young people, guardians and professionals. It has a knowledge centre, a helpline and

implement the proposals made by the Committee of Inquiry on a strengthened ‘child rights perspective’ in sheltered accommodation”.<sup>226</sup> Since the submission of the inquiry’s report in 2018<sup>227</sup> and Grevio’s review in 2019, further action has been taken to strengthen the child rights perspective in sheltered accommodation. In 2020 and 2022, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs presented legislative proposals to strengthen the child rights perspective in sheltered accommodation.<sup>228229</sup> In June 2023, the government submitted legislative proposals to the Council of legislation. The proposals aim, among other things, to strengthen the child rights perspective for children accompanying a guardian into sheltered accommodation.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Sweden, Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*) (2022) Police Authority’s guidelines for the investigation of Internet-related sexual abuse of children (*Polismyndighetens riktlinjer för utredning av internetrelaterade sexuella övergrepp mot barn*), A218.779/2016, 2 July 2020.

<sup>208</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Regulations and general advice (HSLF-FS 2022:39) on violence in intimate relationships (*Föreskrifter och allmänna råd (HSLF-FS 2022:39) om våld i nära relationer*), 22 June 2022.

<sup>208</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) Strong reinforcement of work against men's violence against women (*Kraftfull förstärkning av arbetet mot mäns våld mot kvinnor*), press release, 8 July 2022.

<sup>226</sup> Council of Europe (2019) ‘GREVIO’s (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) Sweden’, Appendix I, 21 January 2019, paragraph 149.

<sup>227</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) A window of opportunity - strengthened child rights perspective for children in sheltered accommodation (*Ett fönster av möjligheter – stärkt barnrättsperspektiv för barn i skyddat boende*), government official report, 15 January 2018.

<sup>228</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) (2020) Strengthened child rights perspective for children in sheltered housing - proposals for regulations concerning, among other things immediate placement, confidentiality and schooling (*Stärkt barnrättsperspektiv för barn i skyddat boende – förslag till bestämmelser rörande bl.a. omedelbar placering, sekretess och skolgång*), memorandum, 10 July 2020. According to the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the government’s proposed legislative changes takes into account the criticisms of Grevio, see Sweden, Swedish Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) (2022) Violence preventive measures give results (*Våldsförebyggande satsningar ger resultat*), april 2022, page 93-94.

<sup>229</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) The draft legislative council referral: A window of opportunity - strengthened rights for children and adults in sheltered accommodation (*Utkastet till lagrådsremiss: Ett fönster av möjligheter – stärkta rättigheter för barn och vuxna i skyddat boende*), 31 August 2022. See further information about Sweden’s implementation of the Istanbul Convention with regard to sheltered accommodation below.

<sup>230</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) A window of opportunity – strengthened rights for children and adults in sheltered accommodation (*Ett fönster av möjligheter – stärkta rättigheter för barn och vuxna i skyddat boende*), Legislative council referral, 22 June 2023.

<p>a reporting function (hotline).<sup>209</sup> The Council is also tasked with identifying and compiling methods for countering racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes on the internet among children and young people.<sup>210</sup></p> <p><b>Mapping of children's and young persons' exposure to sexual abuse</b></p> <p>The Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (<i>Allmänna Barnhuset</i>) has, with government funding, produced several studies on children's exposure to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The latest report was published in 2021 and shows that the number of young persons who have been subjected to some form of abuse has increased significantly since the previous report was issued in 2014.<sup>211</sup></p>	
<p><b>1.4.2. Children with disabilities</b></p> <p>Please include children with learning difficulties, autism, and mental health impairments / psycho-social disabilities, severe chronic illnesses that prevent them e.g. from attending onsite school or sports activities</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p><b>National strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy from 2021 to 2031</b></p> <p>As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, in 2021 the government presented a national strategy for systematically following up the national objective for a disability policy.<sup>231</sup> The strategy clarifies the rights of the child in all measures concerning children with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Measures to support children with special needs</b></p> <p>In 2015, the government assigned the Swedish National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) the responsibility for arranging in-service training in special needs education for compulsory school teachers and for equivalent in-service training to be provided at residential homes for young people (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>) and the Sami</p>	<p><b>Legislative amendments to strengthen the right to personal assistance</b></p> <p>Following a number of decisions by the Supreme Administrative Court (<i>Högsta förvaltningsdomstolen</i>) in recent years, the right to personal assistance has been restricted. Currently, children are entitled to personal assistance on the same basis as adults. However, on average children are granted fewer assistance hours. One of the reasons for this is that, when assessing children's need for assistance, the care that a guardian must normally provide under the Parental Code,<sup>239</sup> the so-called "parental responsibility" (<i>föräldra-ansvar</i>), must be taken into account.</p> <p>In 2021, a public inquiry presented its proposals for strengthening the right to personal assistance.<sup>240</sup> One of</p>

<sup>209</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) 'Safer Internet Centre', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>210</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) Assignment to identify and compile methods for countering racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes on the internet among children and young people (*Uppdrag att ta fram metoder som kan motverka rasism på nätet bland barn och unga*), government assignment, A2021/00972, 30 April 2021.

<sup>211</sup> Sweden, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Allmänna Barnhuset*) Young persons, sex and Internet (*Unga, sex och internet*), 25 August 2021.

<sup>231</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 (*Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspolitiken under 2021–2031*), government assignment, 23 September 2021.

<sup>239</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 10 June 1949.

<sup>240</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2021) Strengthened right to personal assistance - Increased legal certainty for children, more basic needs and safer health care interventions (*Stärkt rätt till personlig assistans – Ökad rättssäkerhet för barn, fler grundläggande behov och tryggare sjukvårdande insatser, SOU 2021:37*), government official report, 26 May 2021.

School.<sup>232</sup> Since 2018, the Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten*) have been jointly responsible for the initiative 'Special needs education for learning'.<sup>233</sup>

In 2019, the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) conducted an evaluation of the impact of the CRC concerning measures under the Act for support and service to persons with certain functional impairments (LSS).<sup>234</sup> The authority has also developed knowledge and method support aimed at staff working with children with disabilities. Among other things, in 2020 the authority updated the handbook on support to children and young persons with disabilities.<sup>235</sup>

In 2022, the Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten*) were tasked with producing support material for investigating a pupil's need for special support. In addition, the two agencies will arrange skills-development courses for staff working with pupils studying the curriculum of either compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, or upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. The two agencies, together with the Swedish Institute for Educational Research (*Skolforskningsinstitutet*), are also tasked with compiling knowledge summaries in the areas of pupil health and support. The knowledge summaries aim to aid the school authorities, school principals and teachers in choosing

the objectives of the inquiry was to strengthen personal assistance for children. The inquiry showed that there were significant problems surrounding legal certainty with regard to how the principle of parental responsibility is applied in relation to personal assistance and financial support for assistance.

In 2022, the parliament voted to approve two bills amending the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS)<sup>241</sup> based on the inquiry. According to the government, this is the largest investment in strengthening the right to personal assistance since the Act was introduced in 1994.<sup>242</sup>

Among other things, LSS was amended to include a standard deduction for parental responsibility (*schablonavdrag för föräldransvar*).<sup>243</sup> Simultaneously, the parliament decided to issue three communications to the government:

- it should be possible to make exceptions to the standard deduction provision for parental responsibility;
- a special provision should be introduced to ensure that the child's best interests are taken into account in terms of personal assistance according to the LSS;
- a follow-up and evaluation of the new legislation should be conducted in order to ensure quality and prevent fraud.<sup>244</sup>

The amendments entered into force on 1 January 2023.

<sup>232</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2015) Assignment to arrange in-service training in special needs education for compulsory school teachers and for equivalent in-service training to be provided at residential homes for young people and Sami School ([Uppdrag att svara för genomförandet av fortbildning i specialpedagogik för lärare i grundskolan, motsvarande utbildning vid särskilda ungdomshem och sameskolan](#)), government decision, 10 December 2015.

<sup>233</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2018) Assignment to arranging in-service training in special needs education for compulsory school teachers and for equivalent in-service training to be provided at residential homes for young people and Sami School ([Uppdrag att svara för genomförandet av fortbildning i specialpedagogik för lärare i grundskolan, motsvarande utbildning vid särskilda ungdomshem och sameskolan](#)), government decision, 12 July 2018.

<sup>234</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2019) evaluation on the impact of the CRC concerning measures under the LSS ([Uppföljning av barnkonventionens genomslag vid tillämpning av LSS](#)), 11 February 2019.

<sup>235</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) Support to children and young persons with disabilities ([Stöd till barn och unga med funktionsnedsättning](#)), November 2020.

<sup>241</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022), Several proposals for legislative changes to strengthen the right to personal assistance ([Flera förslag på lagändringar för att stärka rätten till personlig assistans](#)), press release, 24 March 2022.

<sup>242</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022), Several proposals for legislative changes to strengthen the right to personal assistance ([Flera förslag på lagändringar för att stärka rätten till personlig assistans](#)), press release, 24 March 2022.

<sup>243</sup> Sweden, Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) (2021) Strengthened right to personal assistance – basic needs for people with a mental disability and increased legal certainty for children ([Stärkt rätt till personlig assistans – grundläggande behov för personer som har en psykisk funktionsnedsättning och ökad rättssäkerhet för barn](#)), Report of the Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottets betänkande 2021/22:SoU34*), 21 June 2022.

<sup>244</sup> Sweden, Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*) (2021) Strengthened right to personal assistance – basic needs for people with a mental disability and increased legal certainty for children ([Stärkt rätt till personlig assistans – grundläggande behov för personer som har en psykisk funktionsnedsättning och ökad rättssäkerhet för barn](#)), Report of the Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottets betänkande 2021/22:SoU34*), 21 June 2022.

effective interventions aimed at assisting pupils in achieving their learning outcomes.<sup>236</sup>

### Knowledge overview on violence against children with disabilities

In 2016, the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Allmänna Barnhuset*) was tasked by the Agency for Participation to carry out a systematic compilation of knowledge about the exposure to violence and abuse of girls and boys with disabilities. In 2023, the foundation published a report highlighting the particular exposure to violence that affects children and young persons with disabilities, including chronic illness.<sup>237</sup>

### Chart and develop support material to detect and prevent exposure to violence among children and young people with certain disabilities

In June 2023, the government tasked the Agency for Participation to survey the supply, access to and need for adapted working methods and communication support for conversations with children and young people with certain disabilities, e.g. intellectual, cognitive or neuropsychiatric disabilities. Based on the survey, the authority will develop support material with a focus on conversations with children and young people with disabilities.<sup>238</sup>

### Children with learning difficulties

During 2022, the Parliament approved several bills targeting children with learning difficulties:

- a bill entitled 'Resource Schools and additional funds for particular support' (*Resursskolor och tilläggsbelopp för särskilt stöd*). One of the aims of the proposal is to clarify the regulatory framework for students with disabilities. The term "Resource School" (*Resursskola*) is proposed to be introduced in the Swedish Education Act for municipal schools as well as private schools that limit their education to students who are in need of special support within preschool (*Förskoleklass*), primary school (*grundskolan*), primary special school (*grundsärskolan*) and upper secondary school (*gymnasieskolan*).<sup>245</sup>
- a bill entitled 'More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school' (*Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola*). The aim of the bill is to reinforce schools' compensatory tasks and to increase the number of pupils eligible for entry into the national upper secondary school programmes.<sup>246</sup>
- a bill entitled 'Preschool for more children' (*Förskola för fler barn*). The bill aims at increasing participation in early childhood education, in order to create positive effects on the child's development and learning, as well as for the society.
- a bill entitled 'A safe and supportive study environment in schools' (*Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero*). The bill aims to increase safety and security in schools in order to create a supportive environment for study and, by extension, to improve learning outcomes.<sup>247</sup>
- a bill entitled 'Pupil health and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities' (*Elevhälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning*). One of the aims of the

<sup>236</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2021) Appropriations directions for the financial year 2022 regarding the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Regeringsbrev för budgetåret 2022 avseende Statens skolverk*), 16 December 2021.

<sup>237</sup> Sweden, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Allmänna Barnhuset*) More exposed than others – on violence and abuse against children with disabilities (*Mer utsatta än andra – om våld och övergrepp mot barn med funktionsnedsättningar*), 2022.

<sup>238</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) Assignment to chart and develop support material on violence against children and young people with disabilities, as well as in-depth mapping of honour-related violence and oppression against people with disabilities (*Uppdrag att kartlägga och utveckla stödmaterial om våld mot barn och unga med funktionsnedsättning samt fördjupad kartläggning av hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck mot personer med funktionsnedsättning*), government assignment, 29 June 2023.

<sup>245</sup> Sweden, Committee on Education (*Utbildningsutskottet*), Learning disabilities special schools and additional funds for special support (*Resursskolor och tilläggsbelopp för särskilt stöd*), 2021/22:UbU31, 1 June 2022.

<sup>246</sup> Sweden, Committee on Education (*Utbildningsutskottet*), More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school (*Mer tid till lärande, extra studietid och utökad lovskola*), 2021/22:UbU30, 1 June 2022.

<sup>247</sup> Sweden, Committee on Education (*Utbildningsutskottet*) (2021) A safe and supportive study environment in schools (*Skolans arbete med trygghet och studiero*), 2021/22:UbU28, 8 June 2022.

	<p>proposals is to clarify the role of the School Health Service.<sup>248</sup></p> <p><b>Public inquiry report on cohesive, good and nearby care for children and young persons</b></p> <p>In 2021, an inquiry proposed initiatives to enhance equality in care, including preventive and health-promoting initiatives for children and young persons throughout the country. The inquiry's report also set out six steps for better support to children and young persons with mental health issues.<sup>249</sup> The inquiry also found that the ongoing transition in health care to the provisions of good care that is close at hand needs to be supplemented and strengthened to satisfy children's rights under the CRC. This applies to the national, regional and local levels. The inquiry further points out that children and young persons have been affected in several ways by the social changes caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. In Sweden, many children and young persons have experienced increased vulnerability in the home and a deterioration in their mental health during the crisis. The most exposed children and young persons are those who were already in a vulnerable situation or who had mental health issues before the crisis. The inquiry is currently being circulated for formal consultation.<sup>250</sup></p> <p><b>Appointment of a special inquirer to follow up on the situation in the school system for children and students with disabilities</b></p> <p>In 2022, the government appointed a special inquirer to follow up on the situation in the school system for children and students with disabilities. The assignment must report to the government in 2023.<sup>251</sup></p>
<p>1.4.3. Children in the context of migration</p> <p>Specific thematic areas: unaccompanied-separated children from third countries and within the EU; children in undocumented – irregular migrant families; asylum seeking children; refugee children</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p><b>Handbook on unaccompanied children</b></p>	<p><b>Amendments to the migration legislation</b></p>

<sup>248</sup> Sweden, Committee on Education (*Utbildningsutskottet*) (2021) Pupil health and better education for pupils with intellectual disabilities (*Elevhälsa och stärkt utbildning för elever med intellektuell funktionsnedsättning*), 2021/22:UbU27, 21 June 2022.

<sup>249</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2021) Start with the kids! Cohesive good and close care for children and young persons (*Börja med barnen! Sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga, SOU 2021:34*), government official report, 4 May 2021.

<sup>250</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2021) Start with the kids! Cohesive good and close care for children and young persons (*Börja med barnen! Sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga, SOU 2021:34*), referral, 5 November 2021.

<sup>251</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and Research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2022) More knowledge about children and students with disabilities in the school system (*Mer kunskap om barn och elever med funktionsnedsättning i skolväsendet*), press release, 9 June 2022.



The municipalities are responsible for the practical reception of asylum-seeking children who come to Sweden without their guardians. In 2020, the National Board on Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) developed a handbook on unaccompanied children that aimed to complement other guidance on the investigation, placement and follow-up of cases within the social services concerning children and young persons.<sup>252</sup>

### Legal positions by the Swedish Migration Agency following the incorporation of the Convention on the rights of the child

The Swedish Migration Agency draws up legal positions and legal comments which, wherever relevant, should highlight the principle of the child's best interests and issues requiring particular attention to children's specific vulnerable positions and particular needs. The authority has also produced case-management support on specific issues relating to assessing children's asylum applications. Since the CRC has become Swedish law, the authority has produced legal support on the consequences of this for assessment.<sup>253</sup> In 2020, the Migration Agency issued a legal position on assessing the best interests of the child, including examples of child-specific grounds for asylum and child-specific persecution,<sup>254</sup> as well as a legal position on the child's right to be heard.<sup>255</sup> In 2021, the authority issued a legal position on conflicts between asylum-seeking children, conservators, public counsels and guardians,<sup>256</sup> as well as on medical age assessments.<sup>257</sup>

### Oral societal introduction for asylum-seekers

In 2016, the Act on temporary restrictions on granting residence permits in Sweden (*Lag [2016:752] om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige*) was adopted.<sup>272</sup> Its validity was extended in 2019. In 2019, the government appointed a parliamentary committee to develop a proposal on a long-term sustainable migration policy. The proposal was submitted in 2020.<sup>273</sup> Amendments to the Aliens Act (*Utlänningslag [2005:716]*) entered into force in 2021, when the Act concerning temporary restrictions on granting residence permits ceased to apply.<sup>274</sup> The amendments to the Aliens Act were largely based on the Act concerning temporary restrictions on granting residence permits adopted in 2016. The preparatory work included analysis of the possible consequences of the proposed changes for children in relation to both the Aliens Act and the Act concerning temporary restrictions on granting residence permits. The government considered that the proposals would bring improvements compared to the Act concerning temporary restrictions on granting residence permits, but that some weakening of protection might occur from a child-rights perspective compared with returning to the rules of the Aliens Act.<sup>275</sup>

Changes to the Aliens Act in 2021 concerned, among other things, that:

- temporary residence permits continue to be applicable as the main rule;
- the length of residence permits differs depending on the protection status and thus is different among children (13 months or three years depending on their protection status);

<sup>252</sup> Sweden, National Board on Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) Unaccompanied children and young persons – Handbook for social services (*Ensamkommande barn och unga – Handbok för socialtjänsten*), February 2020.

<sup>253</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>254</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) (2020) Legal position. Assessing the best interest of the child ([Rättsligt ställningstagande. Prövning av barns bästa](#)), RS/009/2020, 20 July 2021.

<sup>255</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) (2020) Legal position. The child's right to be heard ([Rättsligt ställningstagande. Att höra barn](#)), RS/010/2020, 20 July 2021.

<sup>256</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) (2021) Legal position. Conflicts between asylum-seeking children, conservators, public counsels and guardians ([Rättsligt ställningstagande. Motsättningar mellan asylsökande barn, god man, offentligt biträde och vårdnadshavare](#)), RS/060/2021, 21 April 2021.

<sup>257</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) (2021) Legal position. Medical age assessments ([Rättsligt ställningstagande. Åldersbedömning](#)), RS/040/2021, 18 March 2021.

<sup>272</sup> Sweden, Act on temporary restrictions on granting residence permits in Sweden ([Lag \[2016:752\] om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige](#)), 22 June 2016.

<sup>273</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2020) Amended provisions in the Aliens act ([Ändrade regler i utlänningslagen](#)), government bill, 2020/21:191, 29 April 2021.

<sup>274</sup> Sweden, Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottet*) (2020) Amended provisions in the Aliens act ([Ändrade regler i utlänningslagen](#)), Committee report, 2020/21:SfU28, 22 June 2021.

<sup>275</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2020) Amended provisions in the Aliens act ([Ändrade regler i utlänningslagen](#)), government bill, 2020/21:191, 29 April 2021, page 150.

In 2021, the Migration Agency was assigned to introduce a mandatory oral societal introduction for all asylum-seekers over the age of 15. The information should include Swedish legislation on honour-based violence and oppression, including issues of child marriage and genital mutilation. Adapted written information shall be given to children in families under the age of 15 and to unaccompanied migrant children.<sup>258</sup>

### **The Tidö Agreement and its implications for asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children**

In 2022, the Sweden Democrats, the Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberals announced a new reform program through the so-called “Tidö Agreement” (*Tidöavtalet*),<sup>259</sup> which is a political agreement between the government parties and the Sweden Democrats. The reform area of “migration and integration” covers 33 reforms that are aimed to create a “paradigm shift” in Sweden’s asylum and migration policy. The aim is to ensure that Sweden does not, in any respect, have a more generous asylum and migration policy than what is required under European Union law and other legally binding international treaties. In the agreement, the government and the Sweden Democrats expressed its intentions to, for example, restrict the ability to obtain permanent residence permits and family reunification; establish transit centres; limit financial support for asylum seekers; and adapt asylum legislation to the legal minimum level according to European Union law.<sup>260</sup> Several child-rights actors have expressed deep concerns about the agreement and its implications (directly and indirectly) for children. For example, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda Barnen*) highlights several challenges from a child-rights perspective. According to Save the Children, several proposals severely limit the rights of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children.<sup>261</sup>

- the maintenance requirement, which previously applied as the main rule for family reunification, applies not only to the sponsor in Sweden but also the family member.

According to the government, the changes to the Aliens Act are sustainable in the long-term and provide legal certainty.

As a consequence of the Act concerning temporary restrictions on granting residence permits ceasing to apply, the ground for protection “especially distressing circumstances” (*särskilt ömmande omständigheter*) for children was reintroduced.

In 2022, further amendments were adopted to the Aliens Act following the inquiry ‘Deportation due to crime – a stricter set of regulations’ (*Utvisning på grund av brott – ett skärpt regelverk*).<sup>276</sup> The amendments entail, among other things, that the prohibition, in certain cases, on deporting a person who had arrived in Sweden as a youth was removed. The prohibition was replaced with a qualified requirement for deportation.<sup>277</sup>

### **Medical age assessments within the asylum process**

In 2020, the government appointed an inquiry chair to review the medical-age assessments applied by the National Board of Forensic Medicine (*Rättsmedicinalverket*) within the asylum process. The aim was to strengthen the basis for the degree of certainty with which it can be assessed whether people of unknown age are likely to be over or under 18 using the method applied by the authority. An interim report was submitted in 2021. The final report was to be submitted in 2024,<sup>278</sup> but in December 2022, the government decided to discontinue the inquiry.<sup>279</sup>

### **Amendments to the Citizenship Act**

<sup>258</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2021) Assignment to the Migration Agency to prepare the introduction of a mandatory societal introduction for asylum-seekers ([Uppdrag till Migrationsverket att förbereda införandet av en obligatorisk samhällsintroduktion för asylsökande](#)), government assignment, 4 February 2021.

<sup>259</sup> Sweden, Sweden Democrats, Moderate Party, Christian Democrats and the Liberals (2022) The Tidö Agreement – Agreement for Sweden ([Tidöavtalet – Överenskommelse för Sverige](#)), October 2022, page 21.

<sup>260</sup> Sweden, Sweden Democrats, Moderate Party, Christian Democrats and the Liberals (2022) The Tidö Agreement – Agreement for Sweden ([Tidöavtalet – Överenskommelse för Sverige](#)), October 2022, page 21.

<sup>261</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda Barnen*) (2022) The Tidö agreement and child rights ([Tidöavtalet och barnrätten](#)), 28 October 2022.

<sup>276</sup> Sweden, Committee on Social Insurance (*Socialförsäkringsutskottet*) Deportation due to crime – a stricter set of regulations’ ([Utvisning på grund av brott – ett skärpt regelverk](#)), committee report 2021/22:SfU28, 14 June 2022.

<sup>277</sup> Sweden, Committee on Social Insurance (*Socialförsäkringsutskottet*) Deportation due to crime – a stricter set of regulations’ ([Utvisning på grund av brott – ett skärpt regelverk](#)), committee report 2021/22:SfU28, 14 June 2022.

<sup>278</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2021) Review of the method of medical age assessments applied by the National Board of Forensic Medicine ([Granskning av Rättsmedicinalverkets metod för medicinsk åldersbedömning i asylprocessen](#)), government official report, 28 October 2021.

<sup>279</sup> Sweden, Swedish refugee law center (*Asylrättscentrum*) ‘[Kommentar till nedlagd utredning om medicinska åldersbedömningar](#)’, official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

### Ukrainian children seeking asylum under the Temporary Protection Directive

Children granted protection under the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) are by and large covered by the same social welfare protection as asylum-seeking children from other parts of the world.<sup>262</sup> The difference mainly concerns the processing at the time of application.<sup>263</sup> Following the war in Ukraine, the Migration Agency developed a process for issuing residence permits under the TPD for unaccompanied children.<sup>264</sup> When an unaccompanied child arrives, the Migration Agency reports to the social services in the municipality of arrival (*ankomstkommun*). The arrival municipality then has the social service responsibility for the child until the Migration Agency has decided on a residence permit and assigned a responsible municipality (*anvisningskommun*). The responsible municipality then takes over the long-term responsibility under the Social Services Act.<sup>265</sup> Many of the unaccompanied children from Ukraine arrive with relatives who are not their guardians. After approval from the social services in the municipality of arrival, children can be placed in arrival accommodation or their own accommodation together with the persons they arrived with.<sup>266</sup>

Legislative changes came into force in July 2022 in order to ensure an equitable distribution of the responsibility regarding housing for asylum-seekers under the TPD among municipalities.<sup>267</sup> These changes allowed the Migration Agency to instruct a municipality to arrange accommodation for people with a residence permit according to the TPD. This is according to section 3 of the Act on reception of asylum-seekers and others as well as the Ordinance on the assignment of a municipality to organise accommodation for certain foreigners. According to the TPD unaccompanied children with a residence permit are not covered by these provisions. However, the legislative changes may affect

In 2021, the Citizenship Act (*Lag [2001:82] om svenskt medborgarskap*)<sup>280</sup> was amended. Following the amendments, certain stateless children and young adults, born in Sweden and having lived in the country for a certain period, are exempted from the previous requirement for a residence permit to be permanent in order to obtain Swedish citizenship.<sup>281</sup>

<sup>262</sup> Sweden, Act on the reception of asylum seekers, and others (*Lag [1994:137] om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl.*), 1 July 2022, section 1; Sweden, Population Registration Act (*Folkbokföringslag [1991:481]*), sections 1 and 4.

<sup>263</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Unaccompanied children from Ukraine '*Ensamkommande barn från Ukraina*', official website, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>264</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Unaccompanied children from Ukraine '*Ensamkommande barn från Ukraina*', official website, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>265</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Unaccompanied children from Ukraine '*Ensamkommande barn från Ukraina*', official website, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>266</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Unaccompanied children from Ukraine '*Ensamkommande barn från Ukraina*', official website, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>267</sup> Sweden, Act (1994:137) on the reception of asylum seekers, and others (*Lag (1994:137) om mottagande av asylsökande m.fl.*), as updated 1 July 2022; Sweden, Ordinance on the assignment of a municipality to organize accommodation for certain foreigners (*Förordning [2022:1008] om anvisning av en kommun som ska ordna boende för vissa utlänningar*), 1 July 2022.

<sup>280</sup> Sweden, Citizenship act (*Lag [2001:82] om svenskt medborgarskap*), 1 March 2001.

<sup>281</sup> Sweden, Citizenship act (*Lag [2001:82] om svenskt medborgarskap*), 2 July 2021, section 6.



<p>unaccompanied children who apply for protection under the TPD together with relatives who are not their guardians.<sup>268</sup></p> <p>Access to medical care for persons under temporary protection is provided at the same level as for asylum seekers.<sup>269</sup> For children this includes healthcare and dental care to the same standard as children residing in Sweden. Children who have applied for or have received temporary protection under the TPD have the same right to attend preschool, compulsory and upper secondary school (the latter before they turn 18) as Swedish children.<sup>270</sup> They are, however, not subject to compulsory school attendance.<sup>271</sup></p>	
<p>1.4.4. Children in alternative care</p> <p>Specific thematic areas: residential – institutional care; foster care; adoption (including international adoption)</p>	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>Information efforts to increase public awareness of family homes</b></p> <p>A family home is a home offered to children who, for various reasons, cannot live with their parents. The child can live for a shorter or longer period in a family home. Some children live in their family home throughout their entire upbringing. During the period 2020–2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare was tasked with supporting municipalities in improving their efforts to recruit family homes through awareness campaigns, including making adapted information available. In 2022, the government assigned the authority to initiate and coordinate information efforts to increase public awareness of what it means to be a family home, with a view to increasing the interest in becoming a family home.<sup>282</sup></p>	<p><b>Legislative amendments to strengthen the protection of children in alternative care</b></p> <p>In recent years, several legislative amendments have been made to strengthen the protection of children in alternative care.</p> <p>In 2018, a number of legislative amendments were made with the aim of strengthening children's protection during care at residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>) or at institutions run by the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>). Among other things, a requirement for the presence of witnesses during body searches, the shortening of the time the child can be kept in isolation and</p>

<sup>268</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Instruction of unaccompanied children together with relatives '[Anvisning av ensamkommande barn med medsökande anhöriga](#)', official website, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>269</sup> Sweden, Act (2008:344) on health and medical care for asylum seekers and others ([Lag \(2008:344\) om hälso- och sjukvård åt asylsökande m.fl.](#)).

<sup>270</sup> See for example, Sweden, Education act (*Skollag [2010:800]*), chapter 7, section 2; chapter 8, section 3; chapter 29, sections 2-3, and: Aliens act (*Utlänningslag [2005:716]*), chapter 21, section 2.

<sup>271</sup> This has been highlighted as incompatible with the Convention on the rights of the child by several actors, including a government inquiry and the Ombudsman for Children. See Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes Swedish law ([Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag](#)), government official report, 11 March 2016.

Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>282</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about foster homes, etc. for children and young people ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government assignment, 14 April 2022.

### Increased knowledge of the application of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act

In 2022, the government announced its intention to increase knowledge and competence about the application of the Act on the care of young persons. The National Board of Health and Welfare is therefore tasked with developing supporting materials for the application of the law. The support must have a particular focus on honour-related problems and on criminality. The authority will also produce supporting materials for the application of the provisions to ensure the best interests of the child after care when coverage under the Act on the Care of Young Persons ends.<sup>283</sup>

### Handbook on national adoptions

In 2020, the National Board of Health and Welfare developed a handbook on national adoptions. The handbook is primarily aimed at professionals within the social services.<sup>284</sup>

### Statistics on unaccompanied children from Ukraine

The Swedish Migration Agency publishes statistics on applications under the TPD due to the war in Ukraine.<sup>285</sup> Among other things, the authority publishes statistics on cases unaccompanied children. In 2022, 783 unaccompanied children were granted protection under the TPD. As of March 2023, 35 unaccompanied children have been granted protection under the TBD this year. The authority also publishes information on the number of Ukrainian persons enrolled in the Migration Agency's reception system per municipality for 2022 and 2023, disaggregated by age.<sup>286</sup>

an opportunity for the child to appeal against a decision on the use of certain coercive measures was implemented.<sup>287</sup>

In 2019, amendments were made to the provisions for when a Swedish court can decide on care according to the Act on the Care of Young Persons regarding a child who does not have Sweden as the country of residence. Through the amendment, it became possible for a Swedish court to decide on care according to the Act until a referral to the authorities of the country of residence can be carried out in a way that is compatible with the best interests of the child.<sup>288</sup>

In 2020, legislative amendments came into force with regard to the Act on compulsory psychiatric care, involving specific regulation on the use of coercive measures. The amendments concerned restraint using straps, isolation from other patients and restrictions on the right to use electronic communication services for patients under 18. This specific regulation has tightened the conditions for using these coercive measures and shortened the time for which they can be used.<sup>289</sup>

In 2022, a number of legal amendments to the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act and to the Social Services Act entered into force. The amendments include, among other things:

- compulsory care in accordance with the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act must not end until the circumstances that gave rise to the care have changed in a lasting and comprehensive way;
- an obligation for the Social Welfare Board to follow up on the child after compulsory care has ended, and;
- an obligation for the Social Welfare Board, in certain situations, to consider whether there are any reasons to apply for a ban on moving the child (*flyttningsförbud*).

The Social Welfare Board was also given the authority to use the drug tests of a guardian or parent prior to socialising with the child during care and before the termination of care when

<sup>283</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Knowledge of the application of Act on Care of Young Persons must increase (*Kunskapen om tillämpningen av LVU ska öka*), press release, 4 July 2022.

<sup>284</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) National adoptions – handbook for social services (*Nationell adoption – handbok för socialtjänsten*), March 2020.

<sup>285</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Applicants from Ukraine (*Sökande från Ukraina*), official webpage, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>286</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) Applicants from Ukraine (*Sökande från Ukraina*), official webpage, accessed 25 April 2023.

<sup>287</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Strengthened legal certainty when implementing special powers at special youth homes and LVM homes (*Stärkt rättssäkerhet vid genomförande av särskilda befogenheter på särskilda ungdomshem och LVM-hem*), government bill, 2017/18:169, 19 March 2018.

<sup>288</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) Immediate custody of children in certain international situations (*Omedelbart omhändertagande av barn i vissa internationella situationer*), government bill, 2018/19:102, 12 April 2019.

<sup>289</sup> Sweden, Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottet*) (2019) Improvements for children in compulsory psychiatric care (*Förbättringar för barn inom den psykiatriska tvångsvården*), 2019/20:SoU15, 27 May 2020.

	<p>children are in compulsory care due to drug abuse in the home.<sup>290</sup></p> <p>In 2021, the Parliamentary Committee on Health And Welfare (<i>Socialutskottet</i>) appointed an inquiry to review how the principle of the best interests of the child can be strengthened in connection with assessments on ending compulsory care. The proposal was submitted in 2022, and proposed, among other things, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a new assessment is carried out by social services when compulsory care ends, where the child's best interests, and not just the parents' right to the child, is fixed by law;</li> <li>- mandatory and recurring drug tests are introduced to ensure a drug-free home environment; and</li> <li>- social services follow up and evaluate the transfer of custody over the course of a year.<sup>291</sup></li> </ul> <p>In 2021, the government also appointed an inquiry tasked with reviewing and proposing measures to improve the quality of care for children and young people cared for in foster homes, residential support (<i>stödboende</i>), residential care homes for young persons and special youth detention centres. The best interests of the child should be the starting point for assessing how quality can be ensured and which measures are proposed. The inquiry reports to the government in October 2023.<sup>292</sup></p> <p><b>Lowered age limit for open interventions for children without the consent of the guardian</b></p> <p>In 2023, the government submitted a bill aimed at giving social services better tools to support and protect children.<sup>293</sup> The parliament passed the bill in May 2023 and the legislative amendments entered into force in July 2023.<sup>294</sup> According to the bill, the municipalities' Social Welfare Board are mandated to decide on so-called "open interventions", a contact person or a specially qualified contact person for children who have turned 12 years old, without the consent of the guardians. Previously, the age limit for such interventions is 15. The interventions can be used if deemed appropriate and if the child consents to the intervention. Open interventions do not cover placements outside the child's own home.</p>
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<sup>290</sup> Sweden, Committee on Health and Welfare (*Socialutskottet*) (2022) Best interests of the child when care according to the Act on care of young persons ends (*Barnets bästa när vård enligt LVU upphör*), 2021/22:SoU33, 31 May 2022.

<sup>291</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Inquiry on new legislation to strengthen the best interests of children (*Utredning om ny lagstiftning för att stärka barns bästa*), press release, 13 December 2022.

<sup>292</sup> Sweden, , Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) Additional directive on the inquiry on children and young people in community care (*Tilläggsdirektiv till Utredningen om barn och unga i samhällets vård*), 27 January 2023.

<sup>293</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Lowered age limit for open interventions to children without consent of the guardian (*Sänkt åldersgräns för öppna insatser till barn utan vårdnadshavarens samtycke*), press release, 20 December 2022.

<sup>294</sup> Sweden, Parliament (*Riksdag*) (2023) A lowered age limit for open interventions to children without consent of the guardian (*En sänkt åldersgräns för öppna insatser till barn utan vårdnadshavarens samtycke*), committee report, 24 May 2023.

	<p><b>Modernised adoption regulations</b></p> <p>In 2018, new, more flexible adoption provisions entered into force, aiming to strengthen the child-rights perspective. Prior to an adoption decision, special consideration must be given to the child's need for adoption, and the child must be given greater participation in the adoption process. In addition, cohabitants must be able to adopt under the same conditions as married couples.<sup>295</sup></p> <p><b>Assignment to map and analyse international adoptions</b></p> <p>In 2021, the government appointed an inquiry chair to map and analyse how regulations, organisation and processes within Sweden's international adoption operations have worked in the past up until today. The inquiry chair reports to the government in October 2023.<sup>296</sup></p>
1.4.5. Children affected by custody disputes, including parental abduction	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>Supporting materials from the Family Law and Parental Support Authority</b></p> <p>In 2017, the Family Law and Parental Support Authority (<i>Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd</i>) developed general recommendations on the Social Welfare Boards' responsibility for certain questions in cases concerning custody, residence and contact,<sup>297</sup> as well as general recommendations on the Social Welfare Boards' responsibility concerning the need for a new guardian.<sup>298</sup> In 2018, the authority was tasked by the government with drawing up case-management support for risk assessments in investigations into custody, residence and</p>	<p>Special Inquiry to review the Parental Code</p> <p>In 2021, the government launched an inquiry to improve children's protection from violent parents and to increase safety and security for children in foster care.<sup>305</sup> The special inquirer is to review the rules in the Parental Code. The aim is to create continuity, stability and safety for children placed in foster care and children who have experienced violence from close relatives. In 2023, the inquiry was submitted to the government and has recently been circulated for review.<sup>306</sup></p> <p><b>Amendments to the Parental Code</b></p> <p>In 2021, the amendments presented in the bill 'A strengthened child-rights' perspective in custody disputes' (<i>Ett stärkt barnrättsperspektiv i vårdnadstvister</i>) entered into force. As a result, children's position, right to information and right to be heard in processes relating to custody, residence</p>

<sup>295</sup> Sweden, Committee on Civil Affairs (*Civilutskottet*) (2017) Modernised adoption regulations ([Modernare adoptionsregler](#)), committee report, 2017/18:CU14, 13 June 2018.

<sup>296</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Sweden's international adoption activities - lessons learned and the way forward ([Sveriges internationella adoptionsverksamhet – lärdomar och vägen framåt](#)), committee directive, 28 October 2021.

<sup>297</sup> Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2017) General recommendations on the Social Welfare Boards' responsibility for certain questions in cases concerning custody, residence and contact ([Allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för vissa frågor om vårdnad, boende och umgänge](#)), HSLF-FS 2017:51, 16 June 2017.

<sup>298</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2017) General recommendations on the Social Welfare Boards' responsibility concerning the need for a new guardian ([Allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar vid behov av ny vårdnadshavare](#)), HSLF-FS 2017:47, 16 June 2017.

<sup>305</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*), Committee Directive (*kommitteedirektiv*) (2021) The importance of safety and continuity for children in vulnerable situations - a review of the regulations in the Parental Code ([Vikten av trygghet och kontinuitet för barn i utsatta situationer – en översyn av reglerna i föräldrabalken](#)), 16 September 2021.

<sup>306</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2023) Safer homes for children ([Tryggare hem för barn](#)), government official report, 20 January 2023.

contact.<sup>299</sup> In 2021, the authority mapped and analysed the family law unit activities' need for support and conditions for cooperation in family law matters on behalf of the government.<sup>300</sup> In 2022, the authority developed general recommendations on information interviews,<sup>301</sup> following the new Act on information interviews (*Lag [2021:530] om informationssamtal*).<sup>302</sup> The act aims to improve the conditions for parents to reach consensual solutions.

### Report by the Swedish Gender Equality Agency

In 2020, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and the Family Law and Parental Support Authority were tasked with investigating how information about violence and other abuse is taken into account in custody rulings. The final report was submitted in 2022.<sup>303</sup> According to the report, children had not been heard in any of the 198 reviewed cases. Only 5 of 198 cases referred to the CRC. According to the report, it appears that there is a lack of systematic risk assessments regarding violence and abuse in custody cases.

### Joint authority guidance on honour-related crimes

In 2022, the national competence team against honour-related violence and oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) developed guidance on honour-related crimes aimed at professionals in social services, health care, the school system and the police authority. The guidance forms part of the work to prevent children from being abducted abroad and exposed to

and contact have been strengthened. In general, the amendments entail that the child's right to information and to participation is strengthened; the conditions for parents to reach consensual solutions are improved through a new Act on information interviews (*Lag [2021:530] om informationssamtal*);<sup>307</sup> and the protection for children at risk of harm is strengthened. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Board can listen to a child during such a process without the guardian's consent and without the guardian being present. According to the government, these changes mean that more children and younger children can participate in the process, which may result in details of exposure to violence emerging and being dealt with in more cases.<sup>308</sup>

In addition, the best interests of the child should be the deciding factor in all issues relating to custody, residence and contact, and not only in decisions on custody, residence and contact.<sup>309</sup> According to the government, the amendments to the Parental Code clarify the broad application of the provisions and the child-rights perspective, which shall characterise all measures affecting children.<sup>310</sup>

Several of the other legislative changes also aim to support children who are at risk of harm. For example, a possibility has been introduced in certain cases, such as when one guardian has killed the other parent, for courts to transfer the custody of a child to a temporary guardian.

<sup>299</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2018) The case management support "Risk assessments in investigations into custody, residence and contact" ([Handläggningssstödet "Riskbedömning i utredningar om vårdnad, boende och umgänge"](#)), 7 September 2018.

<sup>300</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2021) Report – assignment on strengthened cooperation in family law matters ([Rapport – uppdrag om stärkt samverkan i familjerättsliga ärenden](#)), 31 March 2021.

<sup>301</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2022) Regulations and general recommendations on information interviews ([Föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens informationssamtal](#)), HSLF-FS 2022:18, 15 March 2022.

<sup>302</sup> Sweden, Act on information interviews ([Lag \[2021:530\] om informationssamtal](#)), 3 June 2021.

<sup>303</sup> Sweden, Swedish Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) (2022) Information about violence is no exception ([Uppgifter Om Våld Är Inget Undantag](#)), 21 January 2022.

<sup>307</sup> Sweden, Act on information interviews ([Lag \[2021:530\] om informationssamtal](#)), 3 June 2021.

<sup>308</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>309</sup> Sweden, Committee on Civil Affairs (*Civilutskottet*) (2020) A strengthened child rights perspective in custody cases ([Ett stärkt barnrättsperspektiv i vårdnadstvister](#)), committee report, 2020/21:CU17, 26 May 2021.

<sup>310</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

various forms of honour-related violence or coercion. <sup>304</sup>	
1.4.6. Missing children	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>Report by the Ombudsman for Children on missing unaccompanied children</b></p> <p>In 2016, the Ombudsman for Children was given a government assignment concerning missing unaccompanied children. Within the framework of the assignment, the Ombudsman for Children met unaccompanied children to find out the reasons why they disappeared and the circumstances connected to their disappearance. The report was published in 2017.<sup>311</sup></p> <p><b>Increased knowledge, mapping, analysis and follow-up on missing unaccompanied children</b></p> <p>Unaccompanied children have been identified as a risk group for prostitution and human trafficking.<sup>312</sup> During 2016-2017, the County Administrative Boards (<i>Länsstyrelserna</i>) were given a government assignment concerning missing unaccompanied children.<sup>313</sup> In cooperation with other relevant authorities and actors, the County Administrative Boards were tasked with conducting a national mapping of missing unaccompanied children and proposed measures to the government to prevent the disappearances of unaccompanied children. Results and methods have been spread to authorities, municipalities, county councils and other concerned actors.<sup>314</sup></p> <p>In 2018 the County Administrative Boards received an extension of the assignment. The County Administrative Boards have since developed regional routines on how to prevent unaccompanied children disappearing. The</p>	

<sup>304</sup> Sweden, National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) (2022) Guidance for authority cooperation regarding honour-related crimes (*Myndighetsgemensam vägledning vid hedersrelaterad brottslighet*), 2022:23.

<sup>311</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Unaccompanied children who disappear (*Ensamkommande barn som försvinner*), 2017.

<sup>312</sup> Sweden, , Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) Action plan to combat prostitution and trafficking of human beings (*Handlingsplan mot prostitution och människohandel*), annex to government decision 2018-02-08 nr II:1.

<sup>313</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Board Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*) (2016) '*Lost in Migration - a Report on Missing Unaccompanied Minors in Sweden*', 2016.

<sup>314</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Board Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*) Unaccompanied children who disappear '*Ensamkommande barn som försvinner*', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.



regional methodological support is aimed at all actors involved in regional work with regard to the target group missing unaccompanied children.<sup>315</sup>

According to the appropriation directions (*regleringsbrev*) for 2022, the County Administrative Boards must, with regard to unaccompanied children and young people, work to prevent their disappearance.<sup>316</sup> Among other things, the County Administrative Boards have produced a report that presents statistics from the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) on registered disappearances among unaccompanied children between 2013-2020. The report aims to strengthen awareness of the problem and highlight important knowledge gaps in the area.<sup>317</sup>

#### **Assignment to strengthen work to counteract the disappearance of unaccompanied children**

In July 2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Migration Agency, and the Police Authority was assigned a mission to strengthen the work to counteract the disappearance of unaccompanied children. The purpose is to raise awareness and build capacity of relevant staff and to develop coordinated and long-term sustainable working methods that prevent children from disappearing. The assignment also contains collaboration around statistics. A final report on the assignment will be submitted by September 15 2025.<sup>318</sup>

### **1.4.7. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity (AROPE)**

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<b>National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee</b> As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, the government adopted a national action plan to implement the European Child Guarantee in 2022. According to the government, there are groups of	<b>Convention on the Rights of the Child preventing foreclosure of residential properties</b> In December 2021, the Swedish Supreme Court ( <i>Högsta domstolen</i> ) revoked the foreclosure of a residential property, making reference to the CRC in its judgement. The Swedish

<sup>315</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Boards (*Länsstyrelserna*) Unaccompanied children and young persons ([Ensamkommande barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>316</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Appropriation Directions 2022 County Administrative Boards ([Regleringsbrev 2022 Myndighet länsstyrelserna](#)), 22 December 2021.

<sup>317</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Boards (*Länsstyrelserna*) (2022) Compilation of unaccompanied children who disappear ([Sammanställning om ensamkommande barn som avvikit](#)), 2022.

<sup>318</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to strengthen work to counteract the disappearance of unaccompanied children ([Uppdrag om att stärka arbetet med att motverka att ensamkommande barn försvinner](#)), government assignment, 15 July 2022.

children who do not receive or risk not having access to community services. This includes children in families in economically vulnerable situations, children living in unsafe conditions, children with disabilities and children who are placed outside their own homes. The action plan contains a mapping of actual access to basic community services in Sweden, with applicable regulations and measures, to achieve the goals in the Child Guarantee. Such measures include engaging children who are at risk of dropping out or have already dropped out of their education. The government emphasises that in most of the areas mentioned in the EU Child Guarantee, work is already underway to fulfil the recommendations.<sup>319</sup>

#### **National homelessness strategy**

As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, the government has adopted a national homelessness strategy for the period 2022–2026. The aim of the national homelessness strategy is to reduce the number of homeless adults and children.<sup>320</sup>

#### **Increased government funding to civil-society organisations**

A government subsidy was introduced during 2021–2022 to support certain non-profit organisations that need to adapt or strengthen their support activities to meet increased or changed needs because of the outbreak of COVID-19 in the following areas: children in vulnerable situations; women, children and LGBTQI persons subjected to violence; domestic violence; honour-related violence and oppression.<sup>321</sup> In its budget for 2022 the government proposed that a grant of 20 million SEK per year be dedicated to civil-society organisations working with children's rights and children in vulnerable situations in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

#### **Temporary allowances to families with children**

Between July to December during 2020 and 2021, a temporary increase in the housing allowance for families with children was introduced as an additional support in the context of the economic

Enforcement Authority (*Kronofogdemyndigheten*) had seized a property in payment of debts. The debtor lived in the property with her six children. Some of the children had disabilities. There were great difficulties for the family in finding another suitable home. According to the law, a residential property may be foreclosed only if this is justifiable. According to the Supreme Court, it must be determined that any foreclosure of property is compatible with the rights a child has under the CRC. The Supreme Court weighed the children's own interest in having their home protected against the creditor's financial interest. In the current case, the Court found that a foreclosure of the residential property could not be considered justified.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>319</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) '[National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#)', 24 May 2022.

<sup>320</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) The government's strategy to combat homelessness 2022–2026 ([Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet 2022–2026](#)), 7 July 2022.

<sup>321</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on state subsidies to certain non-profit organizations due to the outbreak of COVID-19 ([Förordning \[2021:133\] om statsbidrag till vissa ideella organisationer med anledning av utbrottet av covid-19](#)), 26 February 2021.

<sup>332</sup> Sweden, Supreme Court (*Högsta domstolen*), Stockholm, [Ö 4545-21](#), 15 December 2021.

difficulties resulting from COVID-19.<sup>322</sup> In July 2022, an amendment to the Social Insurance Code (*Socialförsäkringsbalk [2010:110]*) re-introduced the temporary additional allowance for financially vulnerable households, due to increased living expenses. This allowance is paid to families with children who are entitled to a special allowance (*särskilt bidrag*) or custody support (*umgängesbidrag*).<sup>323</sup> The temporary additional allowance has been increased and extended until 31 December 2023.<sup>324</sup>

### **Raised parental and maintenance support**

The government has raised the basic level of parental insurance to strengthen households with low or no earned incomes. The government has also raised maintenance support on several occasions and introduced age differentiation to better match costs for children of different ages.<sup>325</sup>

### **A leisure card giving children and young persons the opportunity to participate in sports and associations**

In 2022, the government announced its intention to introduce a so-called “leisure card” to enhance children’s and young people’s access to sports and associations. According to the government, the leisure card will in particular increase the opportunities for children and young persons from socio-economically vulnerable households to participate in leisure activities. According to the proposal, SEK 50 million will be allocated during 2023 to develop the necessary infrastructure for the introduction of a leisure card.<sup>326</sup>

### **Actions to counter homelessness**

In 2020 the government tasked the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare to analyse and present proposals for preventing and countering homelessness in the long term. This

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<sup>322</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*), Amendments to the budget bill for 2021 ([Vårändringsbudget för 2021](#)), government bill, 2020/21:99, 8 April 2021.

<sup>323</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022), Extension of the temporary additional allowance to families with children within the housing allowance due to increased living expenses ([Förlängning av det tillfälliga tilläggsbidraget till barnfamiljer inom bostadsbidraget med anledning av ökade levnadsomkostnader](#)), 21 October 2022, and; Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023), The temporary additional allowance to families with children within the housing allowance is extended ([Det tillfälliga tilläggsbidraget till barnfamiljer med bostadsbidrag förlängs](#)), 3 January 2023.

<sup>324</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) Extension and increase of the temporary additional allowance for families with children within the housing allowance due to increased living expenses ([Förlängning och höjning av det tillfälliga tilläggsbidraget till barnfamiljer inom bostadsbidraget med anledning av ökade levnadsomkostnader](#)), 23 March 2023.

<sup>325</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>326</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) and Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*), Investments for increased health care and public health ([Satsningar för bättre vård och ökad folkhälsa](#)), press release, 1 November 2022.

commission proposed measures to support the introduction of the Housing First initiative by municipalities and to increase outreach work aimed at people who are or are at risk of becoming homeless, as well as proposing measures to improve local work to prevent evictions.<sup>327</sup>

In 2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) presented its guidance and knowledge support on how to prevent evictions based on the best interests of the child.<sup>328</sup>

The government has also tasked the County Administrative Boards with supporting the municipalities in their work to prevent evictions of families with children. The Swedish Enforcement Authority (*Kronofogden*) has produced method support to assist landlords and municipalities in their work to prevent evictions. In the beginning of 2022, the Enforcement Authority was given a government assignment to work on ensuring that social services and landlords throughout the country work together to prevent evictions. The work must be particularly focused on preventing evictions that affect children.<sup>329</sup>

In order to strengthen the work of municipalities with combatting homelessness, the government is targeting a multi-annual government grant to the municipalities during the strategy period 2022–2026 for implementing the Housing First method.<sup>330</sup> During the period 2018–2021, the government issued grants to combat acute homelessness, mainly targeted at municipalities with a large number of people in acute homelessness.<sup>331</sup>

#### 1.4.8. Children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma, Sami, etc.

##### Policy developments

##### Legislative developments

<sup>327</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) Prevent and counter homelessness (*Förebygga och motverka hemlöshet*) September 2021.

<sup>328</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Support for the social services in their work to prevent evictions (*Stöd för socialtjänsten i arbetet med att förebygga avhysningar*), June 2022.

<sup>329</sup> Sweden, Swedish Enforcement Authority (*Kronofogden*) To prevent evictions '*Att förebygga vräkning*', official webpage, accessed 29 march 2023.

<sup>330</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) The government's strategy to combat homelessness 2022–2026 (*Regeringens strategi för att motverka hemlöshet 2022–2026*), 7 July 2022, p. 16.

<sup>331</sup> Sweden Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2022) Budget bill for 2023 (*Budgetpropositionen för 2023*), 2022/23:1, budget area 9, 3 November 2022.

### **National plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes, and specific action plans to combat Antigypsyism and Anti-Sami Racism**

As mentioned under section 1.3.2. above, the government adopted a national plan against racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes in 2016. In 2022, as part of its national action plan against racism and hate crime, the government adopted five specific action plans against different forms of racism, including one action plan on Antigypsyism<sup>333</sup> and one on Anti-Sami Racism.<sup>334</sup> Both action plans cover the vulnerability of children and young persons to discrimination and contain different measures aimed at children and young persons.<sup>335</sup>

### **Action program for the preservation and promotion of national minority languages**

In 2022, the government developed a national action program for the preservation and promotion of national minority languages. In the action program, the government presents directions and measures for the long-term work of preserving and promoting national minority languages in five strategic areas.<sup>336</sup>

### **Children and young person's exposure to racism**

In 2021, the Ombudsman for Children, at the request of the government, produced and compiled information on the exposure of children and young people to racism. In carrying out the assignment, the Ombudsman consulted children and young people, as well as relevant civil-society actors.<sup>337</sup>

In 2021, the Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) was assigned to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes online among children and young people. The assignment included developing initiatives that increase knowledge and awareness of racism and similar

### **Roma and Sami children**

In 2019, amendments to the National Minorities And Minority Languages Act (*Lag [2009:724] om nationella minoriteter och minoritetsspråk*),<sup>344</sup> the Education Act<sup>345</sup> and the Social Services Act entered into force. The amendments in the National Minorities And Minority Languages Act entailed that administrative authorities must ensure that national minorities shall be given the opportunity of influence in issues affecting them, and that this influence shall be adapted to children and young people. According to the government, these amendments reinforce the national minorities' rights and strengthen the requirements to include children and young people in the minority policy's implementation.<sup>346</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Antigypsyism](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>334</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Anti-Sami Racism](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>335</sup> See for example; Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2022), [Action program against Afrophobia](#), 4 July 2022.

<sup>336</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (Kulturdepartementet) (2022) National action program for the preservation and promotion of the national minority languages ([Handlingsprogram för bevarande och främjande av de nationella minoritetsspråken](#)), 28 April 2022.

<sup>337</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2020) Assignment to develop knowledge about children and young people's exposure to racism ([Uppdrag att ta fram kunskap om barns och ungas utsatthet för racism](#)), government assignment, 10 November 2020.

<sup>344</sup> Sweden, National minorities and minority languages act ([Lag \[2009:724\] om nationella minoriteter och minoritetsspråk](#)), 1 January 2019, section 5a.

<sup>345</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag \[2010:800\]](#)), 23 June 2010. See for example chapter 25, section 5a and amendments in 2022 in relation to pre-school, chapter 8, section 12.

<sup>346</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

forms of hostility in digital environments among children and young people.<sup>338</sup>

#### **Government assignments to promote Roma inclusion**

In 2022, the government presented two new government assignments to complement the work on Roma inclusion. The Swedish National Agency for Education and the National Board of Health and Welfare were tasked with developing education for bridge-builders (*brobyggare*) with competence in the Romani language and culture. The bridge-builders will act as a link between Roma families and the public sector. The training will be developed for employees in, for example, the education system, social services and the health-care sector. In addition, the government tasked the County Administrative Board in Stockholm with distributing state subsidies to municipalities to promote Roma inclusion in the areas of education, work, housing, health, social care, culture and language, and the organisation of civil society.<sup>339</sup>

#### **Children's and young person's experiences of participation and influence regarding the implementation of the minority policy**

In 2022, the government tasked the Ombudsman for Children to conduct a mapping of children's and young person's experiences of influence and participation in the implementation of the general minority policy as required by the CRC. The Ombudsman will examine if children and young people who belong to a national minority feel that they can exercise their right to participation and influence in the implementation of the minority policy. The assignment also includes an assessment of what kind of influence children and young people want to have in the future.<sup>340</sup>

#### **Government assignments to combat anti-gypsyism in primary and secondary schools**

In 2022, the Living History Forum (*Forum för levande historia*) was tasked with conducting a survey of knowledge of anti-gypsyism in primary and secondary schools and to propose measures to combat anti-gypsyism. Within the framework of the assignment, the Living History Forum will:

- assess the level of knowledge about the history of Roma in Sweden and about

<sup>338</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) Assignment to develop methods that can counteract racism online among children and young people ([Uppdrag att ta fram metoder som kan motverka rasism på nätet bland barn och unga](#)), 30 April 2021.

<sup>339</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2022) The government invests in promoting Roma inclusion ([Regeringen satsar på att främja romsk inkludering](#)), press release, 7 April 2022.

<sup>340</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2022) Government assignment to examine children's and young person's experiences of participation and influence in the implementation of the minority policy ([Uppdrag att kartlägga barns och ungas erfarenheter av delaktighet och inflytande i genomförandet av minoritetspolitiken](#)), government assignment, 12 May 2022.



<p>Romas' vulnerability to anti-gypsyism by students and teachers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- examine the sources of knowledge used by students, teachers and student health staff about Roma history and their current situation;</li> <li>- if necessary, submit proposals for measures on how the level of knowledge about Roma living conditions and history in Sweden can be increased within the school system to combat anti-gypsyism.<sup>341</sup></li> </ul> <p>In 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (<i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor</i>) was assigned to carry out measures aimed at preventing and combatting anti-gypsyism. As part of the assignment, the authority will strengthen the conditions for young Roma to carry out initiatives that can contribute to increased visibility and knowledge about young Roma and their vulnerability to anti-gypsyism.<sup>342</sup></p> <p><b>National strategy to strengthen Jewish life in Sweden</b></p> <p>In 2022, the government assigned a special inquiry to submit proposals for a national strategy for strengthening Jewish life in Sweden with a focus on the transmission of Jewish culture and Yiddish to younger and future generations.<sup>343</sup></p>	
1.4.9. Children involved in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses or parties	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
	<p><b>New criminal offence (<i>Barnfridsbrott</i>)</b></p> <p>In 2021, a new criminal offence was added to the Criminal Code (<i>Brottsbalken</i>) concerning children who witness criminal acts such as domestic violence and sexual offences.<sup>347</sup> To witness a criminal offence is seen as a violation of the child's integrity (<i>barnfridsbrott</i>). If a child is a witness to a criminal act perpetrated by or to a parent, guardian or close relative, such as violent or sexual crimes, the perpetrator can be given a prison sentence of up to two years. The offence requires that</p>

<sup>341</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2022) Government assignments to examine the knowledge of anti-Gypsyism in primary and secondary schools (*Uppdrag att kartlägga kunskapen om antiziganism i grundskolan och gymnasiet*), government assignment, 30 May 2022.

<sup>342</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2022) Appropriation Directions for the fiscal year 2022 regarding the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Regeringsbrev för budgetåret 2022 avseende Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*), government decision, 7 June 2022.

<sup>343</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2022) National strategy to strengthen Jewish life in Sweden (*Nationell strategi för att stärka judiskt liv i Sverige*), Committee directive, 2022:78, 27 June 2022.

<sup>347</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalken 1962:700*), 1 August 2022, chapter 4, section 3.

	<p>the child is a close relative or a former close relative of both the perpetrator and the person who is the victim of the criminal offence (the witnessed crime). With particularly serious crimes the sentence shall be no less than nine months and no more than four years. A child who has been a victim of this new criminal offence has the right to file for criminal damages and the right to a special representative. This new criminal offence is an explicit part of Sweden's work to bring domestic law into closer compliance with the CRC.<sup>348</sup> To this end, the legislation fundamentally changes a child's right of redress, making children plaintiffs in cases where they have witnessed domestic violence.<sup>349</sup> Previously they were not treated as plaintiffs because the domestic violence was not directed at them, and they could only receive a relatively limited amount of compensation.</p> <p><b>Special representatives for children during the preliminary investigation and in the subsequent trial</b></p> <p>In 2021, the Act on Special Representatives for Children was amended. The allocation of a person to be the child's special representative has been extended to include the child's rights during measures relating to the enforcement of damages and the application for criminal damages.<sup>350</sup> Previously the representative was only responsible for the child during the preliminary investigation and the subsequent trial.</p>
<b>1.4.10. Children involved in judicial proceedings as suspects or accused persons</b>	
<b>Policy developments</b>	<b>Legislative developments</b>
	<p>EU Directive 2016/800</p> <p>Following the implementation of EU Directive 2016/800, the Remand Prisons Act was amended. The amendment entailed a possibility for an inmate who turns 18 during the period of deprivation of liberty to continue to be placed together with inmates under the age of eighteen if this is justified with regard to the inmate's personal circumstances and is otherwise deemed appropriate.<sup>351</sup> Further, the Code of Judicial Procedure's provisions on when a public defence counsel must be appointed was amended. Following the amendment, the court must appoint a public defence counsel beside the defender the person has appointed on his/her own if there are extraordinary reasons.<sup>352</sup></p>

<sup>348</sup> Sweden, Swedish Prosecution Authority (Åklagarmyndigheten) (2021), [Factsheet – violation of a child's integrity](#), 1 July 2021.

<sup>349</sup> Sweden, Swedish Prosecution Authority (Åklagarmyndigheten) (2021), [Violation of a child's integrity – a new crime by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July](#), 1 July 2021.

<sup>350</sup> Sweden, Act on special representatives for children ([Lag \(1999:997\) om särskild företrädare för barn](#)), 1 July 2021, section 3.

<sup>351</sup> Sweden, Remand prisons act ([Häkteslag \[2010:611\]](#)), 11 June 2019, chapter 2, section 3.

<sup>352</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure ([Rättegångsbalk \[1942:740\]](#)), 1 July 2021, chapter 21, section 3a.

	<p><b>Legislative changes to increase legal certainty and secure the application of the child-rights perspective for children suspected of crimes</b></p> <p>In 2021, the parliament voted to approve a number of legislative amendments in order to increase legal certainty and secure the application of the child-rights perspective in cases of children suspected of a crime.<sup>353</sup> The following amendments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A suspect who is under the age of 18 and who has been arrested may be detained in police custody only if it is absolutely necessary.<sup>354</sup></li> <li>- A suspect who is under the age of 18 may only be detained if there are special reasons to do so.<sup>355</sup></li> <li>- A suspect may be detained for a continuous period of no more than nine months. If there are special reasons, the court may, at the request of the prosecutor, decide to extend this period.<sup>356</sup> Persons under the age of 18 cannot be detained for a continuous period of more than three months.<sup>357</sup> This time limit may be exceeded if there are exceptional reasons, e.g. if the suspected crime is particularly difficult to investigate because it is part of organised or gang-related crime.</li> <li>- A suspect who is under 18 and held on remand should have the right to stay with staff or another person for at least four hours every day in order to reduce isolation.<sup>358</sup></li> </ul> <p>These changes entered into force on 1 July 2021.</p> <p><b>Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes</b></p> <p>In 2019, the government appointed a special inquirer to review the legislative framework on children suspected of a crime. The aim of the inquiry was to improve the regulations for criminal investigations against children and to ensure that a high degree of legal certainty and effectiveness can be maintained in investigations concerning children suspected of crimes.<sup>359</sup> In 2021, the government extended the assignment through an additional directive to also include an analysis of</p>
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<sup>353</sup> Sweden, Swedish Parliament (*Riksdagen*), More efficient handling of arrests and reduced isolation ([Effektivare hantering av häktningar och minskad isolering](#)), Report of the Committee on Justice (*Justitiekommitténs betänkande* 2020/21: JuU43).

<sup>354</sup> Sweden, Act with special provisions on young offenders ([Lag \[1964:167\] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare](#)), 1 July 2021, section 6a.

<sup>355</sup> Sweden, Act with special provisions on young offenders ([Lag \[1964:167\] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare](#)), 1 July 2021, section 23.

<sup>356</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure ([Rättegångsbalk \[1942:740\]](#)), 1 July 2021, chapter 24, section 4a.

<sup>357</sup> Sweden, Act with special provisions on young offenders ([Lag \[1964:167\] med särskilda bestämmelser om unga lagöverträdare](#)), 20 March 1964, section 23a. In its consultation response, the Ombudsman for Children criticised the time limit of three months, arguing that the time limit for children should instead be set at 30 days, in accordance with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's general comment 24; see Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), Consultation Response BO 2020-0386 ([Remissvar BO 2020-0386](#)), 29 January 2021.

<sup>358</sup> Sweden, Remand prisons act ([Häkteslag \[2010:611\]](#)), 1 July 2021, chapter 2, section 5a.

<sup>359</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes ([Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott](#)), government official reports, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022.

	<p>the need for increased possibilities to carry out seizures, house searches and body searches against children under the age of 15.<sup>360</sup></p> <p>In 2022, a public inquiry report on improved procedures when children are suspected of crimes was submitted to the government. In Sweden, children under the age of 15 who are suspected of crimes may be subject to a criminal investigation according to the provisions of section 31 of the Act on special provisions for young offenders. The inquiry analysed these provisions and their application in order to determine if they are appropriate and applied in their intended manner. When a child under the age of 15 is suspected of a crime, the question of guilt is, as a rule, not tried in court. However, according to section 38 of the Act on special provisions for young offenders, the question of the guilt of a child who has not reached the age of criminal responsibility (<i>straffmyndig</i>) and who is suspected of having committed a crime can be tried in court through evidentiary proceedings (<i>bevistalan</i>). The public inquiry report proposed a number of legislative amendments to the Act on special provisions for young offenders. According to the public inquiry report, there were no apparent needs for more possibilities to carry out seizures, house searches and body searches against children under the age of 15.<sup>361</sup></p> <p>In 2023, the government submitted a bill based on the public inquiry report. The referral proposes, among other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that more crimes committed by children under the age of 15 must be investigated by the Police Authority;</li> <li>- that there should be a right for the injured party to a legal counsel or special representative during criminal investigations when the suspect is under the age of 15;</li> <li>- that evidentiary proceedings should be used to a greater extent;</li> <li>- that the Police Authority shall be given the possibility to use drug-testing to a greater extent on children under the age of 15 who are suspected of using drugs; and</li> <li>- that the prosecutor shall be able, through a summary imposition (<i>strafföreläggande</i>), to order youth services (<i>ungdomstjänst</i>) for crimes committed by young offenders.</li> </ul> <p>The amendments entered into force on 1 July 2023.<sup>362</sup></p> <p><b>Amendments to the Criminal Code</b></p>
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<sup>360</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes ([Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott](#)), government official reports, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, pages 19-20 and 25.

<sup>361</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes ([Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott](#)), government official reports, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, pages 18-22 and 24-26.

<sup>362</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes ([Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott](#)), government official reports, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022.

	<p>In January 2022, new sentencing rules in the Swedish Criminal Code entered into force. Previously, persons younger than 21 years old had been entitled to a youth discount (<i>ungdomsrabatt</i>) that applied to sentencing for all crimes. Under the new rules, the youth discount no longer applies for criminal offenders aged 18 to 20 in relation to crimes carrying a minimum sentence of more than one year of imprisonment.<sup>363</sup></p> <p><b>New information about the defendant's age in criminal proceedings</b></p> <p>In 2022, amendments to the Code of Judicial Procedure and the Act on special provisions for young offenders entered into force with regard to new information about the defendant's age in criminal proceedings. With the amendments, a new criminal trial (<i>resning</i>) can be granted if new information is revealed about the defendant's age that probably would have led to a significantly higher sanction or a different outcome in a deportation decision.<sup>364</sup></p>
1.4.11. Children at risk of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; child /forced marriages, honour-related violence	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>National strategy to combat men's violence against women</b></p> <p>As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, in 2017 the government adopted a national strategy for 2017 to 2026 to combat men's violence against women. The strategy also includes children. The strategy covers all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence and threats of violence directed at women and girls, including honour-related violence and oppression, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage.<sup>365</sup></p> <p><b>Joint assignment to prevent and combat female genital mutilation</b></p> <p>In 2021, the government decided on a joint government assignment tasking a number of</p>	<p><b>Legislation against child marriage and honour-based violence and oppression</b></p> <p>Between 2014 and 2019, several laws were introduced that criminalised coercion to marry, deception for the purposes of marriage abroad, attempting, preparation or conspiracy to coerce to marry, and child marriage.<sup>375</sup> In 2020, a specific child marriage offence (<i>barnäktenskapsbrott</i>) and a new ground for more severe penalties targeting criminal offences where honour is a motive were introduced. In addition, "honour motives" were introduced as an aggravating circumstance in the Criminal Code in 2020.<sup>376</sup> In 2014, the possibility for persons under the age of 18 to obtain permission to marry was removed. In 2019, the provisions for the recognition of foreign child marriages were also amended.<sup>377</sup></p>

<sup>363</sup> Sweden, Criminal code (*Brottsbalk [1962:700]*), 2 January 2022, chapter 29, section 7.

<sup>364</sup> Sweden, Committee on Justice (*Justitiekommittén*) (2021) New information about the defendant's age in criminal proceedings (*Nya uppgifter om den tilltalades ålder i straffprocessen*), 2021/22:JuU33, 21 June 2022.

<sup>365</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Power, objectives and authority - feminist politics for an equal future (*Makt, mål och myndighet - feministisk politik för en jämställd framtid*), official letter, Skr. 2016/17:10, 21 November 2016.

<sup>375</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2019) Increased protection against honour related crimes (*Ökat skydd mot hedersrelaterad brottslighet*), government bill, 2019/20:131, 24 March 2020.

<sup>376</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Sweden's work to reduce violence against children (*Sveriges arbete för att minska våld mot barn*), 1 December 2021.

<sup>377</sup> Sweden, Committee on Civil Affairs (*Civilutskottet*) (2018) Prohibition against the recognition of foreign marriages (*Förbud mot erkännande av utländska barnäktenskap*), committee report, 2018/19:CU4, 21 November 2018.

government agencies with implementing measures to prevent and combat female genital mutilation.<sup>366</sup> The authorities include the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the County Administrative Board in Östergötland, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Migration Agency, the National Board of Forensic Medicine (*Rättsmedicinalverket*), the Police Authority, the Prosecution Authority and the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities (*Myndigheten för stöd till trossamfund*). Within this framework, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency will conduct an inventory of effective working methods for changing attitudes and behaviour towards the genital mutilation of women and girls and disseminate these to relevant actors. The assignment shall be reported in September 2023.<sup>367</sup>

#### **Assignment to produce and disseminate a knowledge base with a focus on honour-related violence**

In 2021, the government assigned the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*) to produce and disseminate a knowledge base with a focus on honour-related violence and oppression and on violence prevention work aimed at youth and leisure leaders and other professionals who work with young people's leisure activities outside the school system.<sup>368</sup>

#### **New assessment support materials for social services in the work against honour-related violence**

In 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare published new assessment support materials for the social services. The assessment support materials will provide practical support to the profession's work with honour-related violence. The assessment support materials, which consist of a manual and a questionnaire, is aimed at

In 2022, the parliament voted to approve a bill on amendments to the Criminal Code which proposed a new special offense for honour-based oppression (*hedersförtryck*). The new offence entails that a special stricter penalty scale is introduced for perpetrators who 1) repeatedly commit certain criminal acts with a motive to preserve or restore the honour of a person or of an immediate or wider family or some other similar group; 2) where these acts constituted part of a repeated violation of the person's integrity; and 3) where the acts are liable to severely damage the person's self-esteem.<sup>378</sup>

In 2021 an amendment to the Public Notice On Preliminary Investigations (*Förundersökningskungörelse [1947:948]*)<sup>379</sup> made it possible for plaintiffs in cases regarding female genital mutilation to ask for an interrogator of a specific sex during interrogations if they so choose.<sup>380</sup>

Since 2020, the LVU has contained an exit ban that aims at protecting children from being abducted to another country for the purposes of being subjected to child marriage or genital mutilation. The exit ban covers both civil law marriages and "marriage-like relationships" (*äktenskapsliknande förbindelser*).<sup>381</sup>

#### **Virginity controls, virginity certificates and virginity operations to be criminalised**

In 2022, the government assigned an ongoing government inquiry to develop proposals for legislative amendments to criminalise virginity controls, virginity certificates and virginity operations. The government stresses that such acts are instances of honour-related violence and oppression aimed at controlling the sexuality of girls and women. Since November 2021, the ongoing government inquiry has been assigned, among other things, to assess how protection against this form of undue control of girls' and women's sexuality can be strengthened.<sup>382</sup> The inquiry was submitted to the government on 30 June 2023. Among other things, the inquiry proposes to introduce a new penalty provision on virginity testing in the Criminal Code and that virginity surgery be

<sup>366</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) Assignment to prevent and combat female genital mutilation ([Uppdrag att förebygga och bekämpa könsstympning av flickor och kvinnor](#)), government assignment, 29 April 2021.

<sup>367</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) Assignment to prevent and combat female genital mutilation ([Uppdrag att förebygga och bekämpa könsstympning av flickor och kvinnor](#)), government assignment, 29 April 2021.

<sup>368</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) Assignment to produce and disseminate a knowledge base with focus on honor-related violence and oppression and on violence prevention work ([Uppdrag att ta fram och sprida kunskapsunderlag med fokus på hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck och på våldsförebyggande arbete](#)), government assignment, 3 July 2021.

<sup>378</sup> Sweden, Criminal code ([Brottsbalk \[1962:700\]](#)), 21 December 1962, 1 June 2022, section 4e.

<sup>379</sup> Sweden, Public notice on preliminary investigations ([Förundersökningskungörelse \[1947:948\]](#)), 19 December 1947.

<sup>380</sup> Sweden, Public notice on preliminary investigations ([Förundersökningskungörelse \[1947:948\]](#)), 31 May 2021, section 5b.

<sup>381</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 July 2020, section 31a.

<sup>382</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022), Virginity checks, virginity certificates and virginity operations to be criminalised ([Oskuldskontroller, oskuldsintyg och oskuldsoperationer ska kriminaliseras](#)), press release, 25 November 2022.



professionals working with children who are, or may be, exposed to honour-related violence.<sup>369</sup>

#### **Initiatives by the Swedish Police Authority's and the Swedish Prosecution Authority's work with honour-related crime**

Since 2017, the police has had a national competence network for honour-related crime, and new method support has been produced. Method support has been produced for prosecutors to use when dealing with cases of honour-related crime, forced marriage, child marriage and female genital mutilation. Specific honour-related crime prosecutors have been appointed at all public prosecution offices and at the National Unit against International and Organised Crime to deal with these types of cases. The Swedish Prosecution Authority has also appointed a thematic specialist with responsibility for honour-related crime.<sup>370</sup>

#### **Initiatives by Barnafriid, a national centre for knowledge on violence against children at Linköping University**

Since 2018, Barnafriid, a national centre for knowledge on violence against children at Linköping University (*Barnafriid – ett nationellt centrum för kunskap om våld mot barn vid Linköpings universitet*), has received several government assignments in relation to honour-based violence and oppression and its various forms such as child marriage, forced marriage and genital mutilation. Barnafriid carries out education efforts regarding honour-based violence and oppression and its various forms for Sweden's child advocacy centres, and compiles and disseminates these centres' experiences of investigating honour-based crime. In relation to these government assignments, Barnafriid published a handbook on honour-based violence and oppression in 2020, which was reviewed in 2021.<sup>371</sup> In December 2021, their assignment to carry out competence-enhancing initiatives on honour-related violence

prohibited through new provisions in the Swedish Act prohibiting female genital mutilation.<sup>383</sup>

<sup>369</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) (2021) Assessment of honor-related violence and oppression as well as violence in close relationships - Support for social services and health care ([Bedömning av hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck samt våld i nära relationer - Stöd till socialtjänst och hälso- och sjukvård](#)), November 2021.

<sup>370</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>371</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - a national centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid – ett nationellt centrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2020) Handbook on honour-based violence and oppression within Barnahusen ([Handbok om hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck för dig inom Barnahusen](#)), Linköping University, December 2020.

<sup>383</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (Justitiedepartementet) (2023) Enhanced protection for personal integrity ([Förstärkt skydd för den personliga integriteten](#)), government official report, 3 July 2023.

<p>and oppression for the country's Barnahus operations was renewed. The assignment is to be reported to the government in 2023.<sup>372</sup></p> <p><b>Guidelines on children in international human trafficking and exploitation</b></p> <p>In 2018, the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) developed guidelines for social services on children in international human trafficking and exploitation. The guidelines include information about the social services' role and responsibility.<sup>373</sup></p> <p><b>Joint authority guidance on honour-related crimes</b></p> <p>As mentioned under section 1.4.5. above, the National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county has developed a guidance for authority cooperation regarding honour-related crimes. The guidance focuses on cooperation in cases of missing children and child abductions.<sup>374</sup></p>	
1.4.12. Children whose parents are in prison/custody	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>Mapping of children whose parents are deprived of liberty</b></p> <p>In 2018, the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare conducted a mapping of children whose parents are deprived of liberty. The report reveals that children do not have the support they need concerning, for example, information, support in maintaining good contact with the parent under safe conditions, or opportunities to talk to a professional about their situation. The report also revealed that the majority of the municipalities did not have specific measures for children whose parents are receiving correctional treatment. There was also a lack of preventive measures aimed at children whose parents are receiving correctional treatment.<sup>384</sup></p> <p>The Ombudsman for Children reports that the Swedish Prison and Probation Service have</p>	

<sup>372</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - a national centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid – ett nationellt centrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) An issue about honour '[En fråga om heder](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>373</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2018) Children in international human trafficking and exploitation ([Barn i internationell människohandel och exploatering](#)), November 2018.

<sup>374</sup> Sweden, National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) (2022) Guidance for authority cooperation regarding honour-related crimes ([Myndighetsgemensam vägledning vid hedersrelaterad brottslighet](#)), 2022:23.

<sup>384</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2018) Children whose parents are deprived of liberty ([Barn med frihetsberövade föräldrar](#)), December 2018.

<p>undertaken measures, including allowing temporary measures to ensure that children could stay in contact with their parents during COVID-19. However, most of the support given to children in this situation is provided by civil-society organisations. According to the Ombudsman, problems persist. The Ombudsman therefore urges the government to ensure access to support for children whose parents are deprived of liberty.<sup>385</sup></p>	
<p>1.4.13. Children who drop out of compulsory education and working children under the legal age for work</p>	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p><b>National plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools</b></p> <p>As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, the government presented a national plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools in 2021. The national plan proposes changes to the Education Act and development work at the school and principal levels. The purpose of the proposals is to set the direction for long-term and systematic work for increased safety in education and supportive study environments in schools.<sup>386</sup></p> <p><b>Initiatives for children placed in care</b></p> <p>According to the government, children and young people placed in care often drop out of school.<sup>387</sup> In 2021, the Swedish National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>), the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (<i>Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten</i>), and the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) developed methodological support for collaboration between the school and social services for continuity in the schooling of children and young people placed in care and better attachment to school (SAMS).<sup>388</sup></p>	<p><b>Amendments to the Education Act</b></p> <p>In 2018, a new provision was added to the Education Act (<i>Skollag [2010:800]</i>), whereby, if a pupil has repeated or extended absence from school, the head teacher – regardless of whether or not the absence is justified – ensures that the absence is investigated promptly to determine whether it is necessary.<sup>393</sup> In matters relating to pupils who are obliged to attend school, the home municipality shall, if necessary, coordinate actions with societal institutions, organisations or other relevant bodies.<sup>394</sup></p> <p><b>Other legislative developments</b></p> <p>During 2022, the Parliament approved two bills targeting the prevention and reduction of pupils leaving school early:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a bill entitled ‘Preschool for more children’ (<i>Förskola för fler barn</i>). The bill aims at increasing participation in early childhood education in order to create positive effects on the child’s development and learning, as well as for the community.</li> </ul> <p>a bill entitled ‘More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school’ (<i>Mer tid till lärande – extra studietid och utökad lovskola</i>). The aim of the bill is to reinforce schools’</p>

<sup>385</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>386</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Education and research (*Utbildningsdepartementet*) (2021) National plan for a safe and supportive study environment in schools ([Nationell plan för trygghet och studiero](#)), Ds 2021:13, 18 May 2021.

<sup>387</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) [National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#), S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

<sup>388</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (*Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten*), and the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) SAMS – cooperation social services and education – uninterrupted schooling for children and young persons placed in care ([SAMS – Samverkan socialtjänst skola – Obruten skolgång för placerade barn och unga](#)), September 2022.

<sup>393</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag \[2010:800\]](#)), 1 July 2019, chapter 7, section 19a.

<sup>394</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag \[2010:800\]](#)), 1 July 2018, chapter 7, section 21.

<p>There is also support for collaboration between the school and the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>). The authority has developed support materials ensuring the agreements and handovers in connection with a placement at the National Board of Institutional Care (SiSam). In this way, SiSam is a complement to SAMS.<sup>389</sup></p> <p>Since 2013, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (<i>Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset</i>) is the national coordinator for 'Skolfam'. Skolfam is a municipal model aiming to improve school results among children in foster care. Publications and methodological support are developed within the framework for Skolfam.<sup>390</sup></p> <p><b>Completed upper secondary education</b></p> <p>Between 2012-2018, SALAR, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (<i>Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR</i>) ran a 'plug In'-project. This was Sweden's largest collaborative project aiming to reduce the proportion of study interruptions and enabling more young persons to complete upper secondary education. Around 70 municipalities participated in the project, which was financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). Between 2020-2022, SALAR was running a project called "completed education" (<i>fullföljd utbildning</i>), to achieve a more cohesive, sustainable national work so that a greater proportion of young people can complete upper secondary education. In 2021, the government co-financed this work with SEK 8 million.<sup>391</sup> SALAR will continue to run this project between 2023-2026 with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).<sup>392</sup></p>	<p>compensatory tasks and to increase the number of pupils eligible for national upper secondary school programmes.<sup>395</sup></p>
<p>1.4.14. Please insert any other group of children that is not listed above, such as children with drug or alcohol addictions (<i>add rows as needed</i>)</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>

<sup>389</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (*Statens institutionsstyrelse*), Cooperation for uninterrupted schooling ([Samverkan för obruten skolgång](#)), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>390</sup> Sweden, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset*), '[Skolfam](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>391</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>392</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) Development program for completed education '[Utvecklingsprogram för fullföljd utbildning](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>395</sup> Sweden, Committee on Education (*Utbildningsutskottet*) (2021) More time for learning – extra study time and extended summer school ([Mer tid till lärande, extra studietid och utökad lovskola](#)), 2021/22:UbU30, 1 June 2022.

## *Young LGBTIQ persons*

### **Strategy and action plan for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression**

As mentioned in section 1.3.2. above, the government adopted a strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in 2014. One of the designated focus areas for the strategy deals with reducing violence, discrimination and harassment. The strategy covers both adults and children, and young LGBTIQ people are highlighted as a special focus area in the strategy.<sup>396</sup> In 2021, the government adopted an action plan for the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTIQ people in order to strengthen work further in this area. The action plan complements the existing strategy and consolidated the work with concrete measures for the period 2020–2023. Several of the measures are specifically aimed at the target group of children and young people. The government emphasises the importance of highlighting children's rights and a youth perspective in all assignments where children and young people are affected.<sup>397</sup>

### **Strategy for the Swedish National Agency for Education's work with LGBTIQ-issues**

In 2021, the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) developed a strategy for its work with LGBTIQ issues.<sup>398</sup>

### **Strategic authorities for LGBTIQ issues**

Since 2014, the government has selected government authorities to become so-called LGBTIQ strategic authorities. There are currently 12 LGBTIQ strategic authorities, three of which are the Ombudsman for Children, the Family Law And Parental Support Authority and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society.

### **A safe and inclusive school for young transgender and non-binary people**

The Ombudsman for Children has an ongoing government assignment to make the school a safer and more inclusive place for young transgender and non-binary persons. In 2022, the Ombudsman submitted a report on the results of the assignment. The report is based on three parts:

<sup>396</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2014) A strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (*En strategi för lika rättigheter och möjligheter oavsett sexuell läggning, könsidentitet eller könsuttryck*), information material, 23 January 2014.

<sup>397</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) 'Action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people', information material, 25 November 2021.

<sup>398</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2021) Strategy for the National Agency for Education's work with LGBTIQ-issues (*Strategi för Skolverkets arbete med hbtqi-frågor*), 19 October 2021.

current knowledge about the situation in schools for young LGBTIQ people based on authorities' reports and investigations of relevance to the assignment; processed material from young trans-people's accounts to the Ombudsman for Children in a report published in 2021;<sup>399</sup> and responses to a survey about the schools' work on LGBTIQ issues. This survey was carried out in collaboration with the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society.<sup>400</sup>

### **Actions against honour-related oppression and violations due to sex, sexual orientation or transgender identity or expression**

In 2022, the government announced its intention to increase efforts to counter honour-related oppression and equivalent violations against pupils due to sex, sexual orientation or transgender identity or expression. The Swedish National Agency for Education will be assigned to provide methodological support to teachers.<sup>401</sup>

### **Exposure of young LGBTIQ people to conversion attempts**

In 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) presented its government assignment to map and compile knowledge about the exposure of young LGBTIQ people to so-called "conversion attempts" (*omvändelseförsök*).<sup>402</sup> The report is based, among other things, on results from the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society's National Youth Survey<sup>403</sup> and interviews with young people.<sup>404</sup> The authority also conducted interviews on support activities (*stödverksamheter*) with young people at risk and consulted with other actors, for example, the National Competence Team against honour-related violence and oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) and Barnafriid, a national centre for

<sup>399</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2021) Experiences from children and young people with trans experience (*Erfarenheter från barn och unga med transexfarenhet*), 2021.

<sup>400</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2022) For a safer and more inclusive school for young transgender and non-binary people (*För en mer trygg och inkluderande skola för unga transpersoner och icke-binära*), 6 September 2022, summary.

<sup>401</sup> Sweden, Sweden Democrats, Moderate Party, Christian Democrats and the Liberals (2022) The Tidö Agreement – Agreement for Sweden (*Tidöavtalet – Överenskommelse för Sverige*), October 2022, page 54. The Tidö Agreement is a political agreement of the Parliamentary parties developed after the elections in September 2022.

<sup>402</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) (2022) Exposure of young LGBTIQ persons to conversion attempts (*Unga hbtq-personers utsatthet för omvändelseförsök i Sverige*), 1 March 2022. Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society's definition of conversion attempts in Swedish "försök att få någon att förändra, permanent dölja eller avstå från att leva i enlighet med sin sexuella läggning eller könsidentitet eller uttrycka kön på det sätt personen själv vill".

<sup>403</sup> The national youth survey is aimed at young persons between the ages of 16 and 25 and is conducted every third year. In the latest round conducted in 2021, the survey was sent to 12,000 young persons. 52% answered the survey. See Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) National youth survey (*Nationella ungdomsenkäten*), webpage.

<sup>404</sup> The qualitative analysis is mainly based on interviews with nine young LGBTIQ people and seven anonymous stories submitted via the website.



knowledge on violence against children at Linköping University.<sup>405</sup>

#### **Living conditions of young LGBTIQ people**

In 2022, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society published a report on the living conditions of young LGBTIQ people.<sup>406</sup> On behalf of the government, the authority has mapped the health and living conditions of young LGBTIQ people in Sweden. It has studied results from the national youth survey conducted by the authority in 2021;<sup>407</sup> the national public health survey conducted by the Public Health Agency in 2020;<sup>408</sup> the EU LGBTI Survey II conducted by FRA in 2019; and a survey targeting persons with conditions affecting their gender development conducted by the authority in 2021.<sup>409</sup> In addition, a number of interviews with young LGBTIQ persons have been conducted.<sup>410</sup>

### **1.5. Contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards**

Are there any contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards that have been pointed out by international bodies, national human rights institutions, ombudspersons, or civil society organisations? Please also refer to any contradictions within national and sub-national legislation.

In 2020, a government inquiry on “The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*) was tasked with mapping how Swedish legislation and practice correspond with the CRC. The inquiry assessed that Swedish legislation and practice largely correspond with the CRC, except for around 30 incompatibilities. The inquiry also made certain observations on provisions in Swedish legislation that could comply more clearly with the CRC. The inquiry in particular noted that the provisions on the best interests of the child and the child’s right to express an opinion and have it taken into account do not have full impact within certain legal fields.<sup>411</sup>

Given the limited amount of space, it is not possible to address all potential contradictions, conflicts, or gaps. However, a few examples highlighted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their latest concluding observations are presented below.

<sup>405</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) (2022) Exposure of young LGBTIQ persons to conversion attempts (*Unqa hbtq-personers utsatthet för omvändelseförsök i Sverige*), 1 March 2022, page 15.

<sup>406</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) (2022) “I am not alone, there are others like me” (*”Jag är inte ensam, det finns andra som jag”*), 6 June 2022.

<sup>407</sup> The national youth survey is aimed at young persons between the ages of 16 and 25 and is conducted every third year. In the round conducted in 2021, the survey was sent to 12,000 young persons. 52% answered the survey.

<sup>408</sup> The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has analysed the responses from young people aged 16–25. A total of 1,439 young people responded to the survey.

<sup>409</sup> In total, 30 people answered the survey in 2021.

<sup>410</sup> The qualitative analysis is mainly based on interviews with young people and stories that young people have sent anonymously to the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society. In total, 52 people participated in the interview study, some of whom participated in group interviews and others in individual interviews. In addition to the interviews, 67 young people have sent in anonymous stories about their experiences of being young and an LGBTIQ person in Sweden.

<sup>411</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020, pages 73-80.

In relation to the best interests of the child, the Committee recommended Sweden to “[e]nsure legislative amendment to clarify the best interests determination of the child in the Aliens Act and the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) in accordance with the Inquiry on Children’s Rights”.<sup>412</sup> The Committee also urged Sweden to ensure that the best interests of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children are given primary consideration in all asylum processes.<sup>413</sup> These and other issues related to determining the best interests of the child have also been raised by civil-society organisations.<sup>414</sup>

In relation to respect for the views of the child, the Committee recommended Sweden to “[a]dopt relevant legislative amendments to ensure that children’s views are heard and taken into account in [...] decisions [affecting them], including by abolishing the exception of inappropriateness in family legislation and the Aliens Act and with regard to decisions of the Social Welfare Board concerning children with disabilities”.<sup>415</sup>

In relation to the family environment, the Committee recommended Sweden to “[r]evise the legislation to ensure sufficient guarantees for the child’s perspective to be considered in cases of parental disputes including the right to be heard and consider the provision of separate representation of children”.<sup>416</sup>

On the use of coercive measures in alternative care settings, the Committee recommended Sweden to “[t]ake legislative measures to explicitly prohibit the use of solitary confinement, isolation and restraint on children in alternative care settings, and ensure that all staff receive training on non-coercive methods of care”.<sup>417</sup>

The Committee also expressed deep concerns “about the impact of the amendments in 2021 to the Swedish Aliens Act restricting family reunification and eligibility for permanent residence permits and social security, and the 33 reforms envisaged in the Tidö Agreement to further restrict the rights of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children”.<sup>418</sup> As mentioned in section 1.4.3. above, several referral bodies issued critical statements on the consequences for children and young people, e.g. regarding the fixed-term residence permits in the amendments to the Aliens Act.<sup>419</sup> The Ombudsman for Children disapproved the amendments in their entirety and stressed that they do not respect the CRC and that the CRC requires that there is a possibility to issue permanent residence permits to children and their parents at the first decision.<sup>420</sup>

When Articles 1-42 of the CRC were incorporated into Swedish law, they were not given a higher legal status than other legislation. This means that any contradictions between the CRC and other legislation must be determined using general legal principles of interpretation. The Ombudsman for Children has expressed concerns over the fact that Sweden’s general legal principles of interpretation allow other legislation to take precedence over the CRC. The Ombudsman therefore urged Sweden to “ensure that the Convention is given priority in the event of a conflict with other law and that the Convention is applied in accordance with international treaty law”.<sup>421</sup> In their latest concluding observations, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Sweden “ensure that the Convention prevails whenever there is a conflict with domestic legislation or common practice”.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 18 (b).

<sup>413</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 43 (a).

<sup>414</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF Sweden), [Report from civil society organisations working with child rights](#) (2022), 2015.

<sup>415</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 20 (b).

<sup>416</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 28 (a).

<sup>417</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 23 (a).

<sup>418</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 42.

<sup>419</sup> See for example; Unicef ‘[Barnets bästa saknas i nya utlänningslagen](#)’, official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023, and; Children’s right in society (*Barnens rätt i samhället, Bris*) ‘[Förslag om ny utlänningslag urholkar barnets mänskliga rättigheter](#)’, official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>420</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2020) The report A long-term sustainable migration policy and supplementary memorandum to the report ([Betänkandet En långsiktigt hållbar migrationspolitik samt kompletterande promemoria till betänkandet](#)), 7 December 2020.

<sup>421</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 4(b).

<sup>422</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 6 (a).

## 1.6. Orientation/fragmentation of national child protection policy and legislation

Based on the above information please assess and explain if the national child protection policy and legislation is fragmented and if the child protection system is oriented towards prevention and/or intervention.

Based on the above information, it could be argued that the Swedish child protection policy and legislation is aiming towards a more integrated approach to child protection. Even though parts of the child protection policy and legislation remain fragmented, the incorporation of the CRC in 2020 and the subsequent efforts – including a guidance document, a knowledge boost and continued systematic transformation efforts to ensure the CRC’s impact in practical applications –<sup>423</sup> indicate a more comprehensive and integrated child protection legislation and policy. Thus, the intention is to create more comprehensive and integrated child protection legislation and policy. However, it is, so far, difficult to assess if this is actually happening, since the incorporation took place only three years ago.

The recently proposed national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children is also an attempt to combat violence against children in a systematic and structural way at all levels of society and by a wide range of societal actors.<sup>424</sup> The strategy aims to establishing an overall perspective and facilitate a cohesive focus for the work over the next ten years.<sup>425</sup> In addition, the government’s child rights policy is intersectoral, meaning that children’s rights and interests shall permeate all policies and operations affecting children.<sup>426</sup>

As mentioned in section 1.1. above, the Swedish welfare system, including the child protection system, has historically been oriented towards the prevention of harm and the provision of a safety net for children and families, rather than interventions to rectify harmful circumstances.<sup>427</sup> The Swedish child welfare system is often distinguished by a family service orientation,<sup>428</sup> placing its main emphasis on social support and services provided on a voluntary basis. Based on the above information, the child protection system is still oriented towards prevention, even though aspects of intervention can be found. The focus on prevention can, for example, be seen in the proposed national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children, where the first long-term objective is to prevent violence against children.<sup>429</sup> Furthermore, the report makes it clear that all violence against children can be prevented.<sup>430</sup> Aspects on intervention can, for example, be seen in some of the recent legislative amendments on children in alternative care.

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<sup>423</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Inkopporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter*), government bill, 17 Mars 2018, page 76.

<sup>424</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>425</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>426</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Inkopporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter*), government bill, 17 Mars 2018.

<sup>427</sup> See for example Leviner, P. (2017) ‘[Child Participation in the Swedish Child Protection System – Childfriendly Focus But Limited Child Influence on Outcomes](#)’, Faculty of Law, Stockholm University Research Paper, No. 13; Leviner, P. (2013) ‘[The ban on corporal punishment of children, Changing laws to change attitudes: the Swedish experience](#)’, *Alternative Law Journal*, ISSN 1037-969X, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 156-159.

<sup>428</sup> See for example Lundström, T Sallnäs, M. Pålsson, D. Shanks, E. (2021) ‘[A Crisis in Swedish Child Welfare? On Risk, Control and Trust](#)’ *Social Work & Society*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 2021, and; Leviner, P. (2017) ‘[Child Participation in the Swedish Child Protection System – Childfriendly Focus But Limited Child Influence on Outcomes](#)’, Faculty of Law, Stockholm University Research Paper, No. 13.

<sup>429</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>430</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 51.

### 1.7. Development in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection legislation and policies in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

The incorporation of the CRC into Swedish law can be seen as a milestone in Sweden's efforts to strengthen the rights of the child. Since 2014, two government-appointed inquiries have examined whether Swedish legislation conforms to the CRC: "The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes Swedish law" (*Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag*), and "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*). As mentioned in section 1.5. above, the latest assessment shows that Swedish legislation and case law largely conform to the CRC, except for around 30 incompatibilities. Certain amendments have already entered into force, and the incorporation of the provisions of the CRC into relevant legislation is ongoing.

Since 2014, several legislative amendments have been made within the area of child protection, for example, on isolation-breaking actions regarding children in detention and the introduction of a time limit for detention. Legal amendments have also been introduced to strengthen the protection of children in alternative care and to improve access to personal assistance for children with disabilities. Legislative amendments have been made to the sexual offence legislation, and a new criminal offence has been added to the Criminal Code, namely violation of a child's integrity. Legislative amendments have also been made to ensure a child-rights perspective for children suspected of crimes. Several new strategies and action plans have been developed, such as the national action plan to implement the European Child Guarantee, the national strategy to combat men's violence against women and the national strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy. The most recent development with specific relevance to the child protection area is, as mentioned above, the proposed national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children.

Given the limited amount of space, it is not possible to address all gaps and challenges in relation to child protection legislation and policies. However, a few general comments highlighted by the Ombudsman for Children and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child are presented below.

In their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the incorporation of the CRC and the inquiry on the compatibility of national legislation and practice with the CRC. The Committee recommended Sweden to "[a]ddress the incompatibilities identified in the inquiry".<sup>431</sup> One shortcoming identified by both the Ombudsman for Children and the UN Committee concerns child-rights impact assessments in Sweden's preparatory work.<sup>432</sup> The Ombudsman for Children stresses that "[w]ork on child rights impact assessments in the legislative work needs to be systematised and follow-up mechanisms need to be set up".<sup>433</sup> The Committee recommends Sweden to "[e]nsure that child-rights impact assessments are an integral part of inquiries in preparation of new legislation and in the provision of child-friendly avenues for child participation in national and subnational legislation and regulations relevant to the fulfilment of children's rights."<sup>434</sup>

Furthermore, the Ombudsman for Children highlights shortcomings in relation to the strategy for strengthening the rights of the child in Sweden enacted in 2010, including the fact that it lacks an end date and a clear follow-up system. Despite several major changes in the legislative and policy framework on children's rights, the strategy has never been updated.<sup>435</sup> The UN Committee notes this with concern and recommends Sweden to "[u]pdate the national strategy on children's rights and develop an action plan for its effective implementation that includes a specific strategy for addressing disparities in the implementation of the Convention between municipalities and regions [...] and

<sup>431</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 6 (a).

<sup>432</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 4(c).

<sup>433</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 4(c).

<sup>434</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 6 (b).

<sup>435</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 5(a).

[e]ffectively monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of children's rights in accordance with the strategy and action plan [...]."<sup>436</sup>

### 1.8. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection legislation and policies that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

In connection with the incorporation of the CRC, the government stressed the need for increased knowledge of the Convention to ensure that the rights of the child are respected in the implementation.<sup>437</sup> The government therefore produced method support for interpreting and applying the CRC.<sup>438</sup> The method support aims to describe how to proceed methodically when interpreting and applying an international convention like the CRC. It also contains information on other support and legal guidance from, for example, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The Ombudsman for Children has disseminated this guidance and produced an online training course and a webinar about the guidance.<sup>439</sup> The online training takes 2.5 hours and covers the purpose of the government's method support, the CRC and how it is interpreted. The webinar covers the government's method support on an overarching level.

As mentioned in chapter 1.4.5. above, the national competence team against honour-related violence and oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) has developed guidance on honour-related crimes aimed at professionals in social services, health care, the school system and the police authority. The guidance forms part of the work to prevent children from being abducted abroad and exposed to various forms of honour-related violence or coercion.<sup>440</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 1.4.7. above, the Swedish Supreme Court (*Högsta domstolen*) revoked the foreclosure of a residential property, making reference to the CRC in its judgement, in which the Supreme Court weighed the children's own interest in having their home protected against the creditor's financial interest. In the current case, the Court found that a foreclosure of the residential property could not be considered justified.<sup>441</sup>

<sup>436</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 7 (a) (b).

<sup>437</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Inkorporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter](#)), government bill, 17 Mars 2018.

<sup>438</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2019) Guidance on interpretation and application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Vägledning vid tolkning och tillämpning av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter](#)), Ministry Publications Series, 14 November 2019.

<sup>439</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (Barnombudsman) Guidance on interpretation and application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Vägledning vid tolkning och tillämpning av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>440</sup> Sweden, National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*) (2022) Guidance for authority cooperation regarding honour-related crimes ([Myndighetsgemensam vägledning vid hedersrelaterad brottslighet](#)), 2022:23.

<sup>441</sup> Sweden, Supreme Court (*Högsta domstolen*), Stockholm, [Ö 4545-21](#), 15 December 2021.

## 2. Governance, coordination structures, and services

### 2.1. Primary institutions and main service providers responsible for child protection

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>2.1.1. Is there any lead institution/body (e.g. child protection agency, ministry, etc.) primarily responsible for child protection at the national level?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the name in the comments box.</p>	x		<p>The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) is a government agency established in accordance with the Act on the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman</i>).<sup>442</sup> The Ombudsman for Children is tasked with promoting and advancing children's rights and interests in Sweden on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>443</sup> The Ombudsman shall monitor compliance with the CRC within society and drive its implementation in agencies, municipalities and regions. The Ombudsman shall note shortcomings in the CRC's application and propose amendments to legislation and ordinances.<sup>444</sup></p> <p>On 1 January 2022, the Swedish Institute for Human Rights (<i>Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter</i>) commenced operations. The Institute is a national agency established in accordance with the Swedish Act on the Institute for Human Rights (<i>Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter</i>).<sup>445</sup> Within the limits of its mandate and responsibilities, the Institute decides on its own organisation and on the details and focus of its work. In this way, the Institute has, in comparison to other government authorities, a more independent role.<sup>446</sup></p>

<sup>442</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 13 May 1993.

<sup>443</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002, section 1.

<sup>444</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002, section 2-3.

<sup>445</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag (2021:642) om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*), 22 June 2021.

<sup>446</sup> Sweden, Swedish Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) (2022) Annual report 2022 (*Årsrapport 2022*), 25 March 2022, page 8.



		<p>Under the Act, the purpose of the Institute is to promote the safeguarding of human rights in Sweden. The Institute aims to promote the guaranteeing of human rights based on, inter alia, international human rights conventions.<sup>447</sup> It shall monitor, investigate and report on how human rights are respected and realised in Sweden. It shall also propose necessary actions to the government.<sup>448</sup></p> <p>The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (<i>Socialdepartementet</i>) is responsible for the child rights policy, including the coordination and development of issues relating to the rights of the child and other children's issues, in so far as such matters do not belong to any other ministry. The Minister for Social Services (<i>Socialtjänstminister</i>) has the primary responsibility for the child rights policy.<sup>449</sup></p>
<p>2.1.2. Are there different structures sharing the primary responsibility (e. g. departments in the same or different ministries, different agencies etc.)?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the name under the comments box and please also mention which body has the lead in coordinating child protection policies and actions.</p>	X	<p>The government has the ultimate responsibility for the realisation of the rights of the child. The Prime Minister is head of the Government Offices (<i>Regeringskansliet</i>). The latter is responsible for, among other things, the Prime Minister's Office (<i>Statsrådsberedningen</i>), which in turn leads and coordinates the work of the Government Offices, as well as the Ministries that are responsible for various thematic issues.</p> <p>The government's policy within the area of child rights and child protection is governed by various policy areas and ministries. The child rights policy is an intersectoral policy area, meaning that the child's rights and interests must permeate all politics.<sup>450</sup> According to the Ordinance with Instructions for the Government Offices (<i>Förordning [1996:1515] med instruktion för Regeringskansliet</i>)<sup>451</sup> the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (<i>Socialdepartementet</i>) is responsible for the child rights policy, including the coordination and development of issues relating to the rights of the child and other children's issues, in so far as such matters do not</p>

<sup>447</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights ([Lag \(2021:642\) om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter](#)), 22 June 2021, section 1.

<sup>448</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights ([Lag \(2021:642\) om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter](#)), 22 June 2021, section 2.

<sup>449</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*), Child rights '[Barnets rättigheter](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>450</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 ([Budgetpropositionen 2009](#)), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Child rights policy – the objective is that children and young people should be respected and given the opportunity of development and safety as well as participation and influence.

<sup>451</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for the Government Offices ([Förordning \[1996:1515\] med instruktion för Regeringskansliet](#)), 17 December 1996.

		<p>belong to any other ministry. The ministries sharing the responsibility for child rights and child protection policies and actions are for example primarily the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (<i>Socialdepartementet</i>). The Minister for Social Services (<i>Socialtjänstminister</i>) has the primary responsibility for the child rights policy;<sup>452</sup></li> <li>2. Ministry of Justice (<i>Justitiedepartementet</i>);</li> <li>3. Ministry of Employment (<i>Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet</i>);</li> <li>4. Ministry of Education (<i>Utbildningsdepartementet</i>); and</li> <li>5. Ministry for Foreign Affairs (<i>Utrikesdepartementet</i>).</li> </ol> <p>Several government authorities are attached to the ministries, some of which are important in the area of child protection. Some government authorities are sectoral authorities, such as the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) and the Swedish National Board of Education (<i>Skolverket</i>). Others are cross-sectorial government authorities, such as the Swedish Gender Equality Agency (<i>Jämställdhetsmyndigheten</i>), the Swedish Public Health Agency (<i>Folkhälsomyndigheten</i>) and the Swedish Agency for Participation (<i>Myndigheten för delaktighet</i>). In addition, there are a number of relevant actors with special assignments from the government. Examples of these are Linköping University's Barnafriad, a national centre for knowledge concerning violence against children (<i>Barnafriad – nationellt center för kunskap om våld mot barn</i>), Uppsala University's National Centre for Knowledge On Men's Violence Against Women (<i>Nationellt center för kvinnofriad, NCK</i>) and the National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county (<i>Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland</i>).</p> <p>With regard to the implementation of the rights of the child in practice, this is the responsibility of Sweden's 21 regions and 290 municipalities, which have responsibility for providing a significant proportion of all public services. They are responsible for, among other things, health-care, childcare, schooling and social services. In the practical work on child protection, there are also government authorities with important roles, such as the Police Authority (<i>Polismyndigheten</i>), the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (<i>Kriminalvården</i>) and the Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>). The practical work also comes under the supervision of national actors whose task is to assess whether the individual's</p>
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<sup>452</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*), Child rights '[Barnets rättigheter](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

			<p>legal certainty is being maintained and that legislation and regulations in the area are being complied with. For example, the Swedish School Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>), the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) and the Parliamentary Ombudsman (<i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i>) are involved in such work.</p> <p>The Swedish Parliament (<i>Riksdag</i>), the government and the government authorities issue legalisation, ordinances and regulations governing regional and municipal actors. However, through the principle of local self-government (<i>kommunalt självstyre</i>), the regions and municipalities have a considerable degree of autonomy when it comes to implementation in practice. They also have independent powers of taxation. In order to strengthen the link between the government and the region/municipality, each county has a County Administrative Board (<i>Länsstyrelse</i>). Each County Administrative Board is an independent state authority.<sup>453</sup></p>
<p>2.1.3. Are there child focal points or similar in different ministries or agencies?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, in which ministry are they located, what are they called, and what role/functions do they have? How do they coordinate?</p>		X	<p>There are no child focal points or similar in the different ministries and agencies.<sup>454</sup></p> <p>In order for the work on promoting and protecting the rights of the child to have an impact, for several years past there has been a coordination function for child rights issues in the Government Offices, located in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The coordination function's task is to develop the work on child's rights within the Government Offices. The work aims, among other things, to initiate, support and coordinate processes so that the child-rights perspective is reflected in all parts of the government's policy and in the societal activities that concern children and young people.<sup>455</sup></p>

Please provide in the table below a list of the national/regional/local bodies or authorities having certain responsibilities related to child protection, e.g. child ombuds institution.

<sup>453</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 267-68. The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report.

<sup>454</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 10 March 2023.

<sup>455</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 10 March 2023.

Please note: For the regional and the local levels please indicate only the type of body, do not list all different bodies at regional/local level in the country.

Name of the body	Level (national/regional/local).	Area of responsibility and roles in child protection  (for example coordination, legislation, policy making, training, monitoring, financing, implementing)	Comments  (for example in case of ombuds institution, compliance with the Paris Principles)
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs ( <i>Socialdepartementet</i> )	National	The Ministry is responsible for the child rights policy; social care and older persons policy; health care policy; public health policy; disability policy; youth policy; and civil society and sports policy. Some objectives governing different policy areas are relevant with regard to child protection. <sup>456</sup>	
Ministry of Employment ( <i>Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet</i> )	National	The Ministry is responsible for the gender equality policy and the democracy and human rights policy. Some objectives governing different policy areas are relevant with regard to child protection. <sup>457</sup>	
Ministry of Justice ( <i>Justitiedepartementet</i> )	National	The Ministry is responsible for the democracy and human rights policy and the justice system and criminal policy. The Ministry is also responsible for	

<sup>456</sup> The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report 'An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children' ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)).

<sup>457</sup> The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report 'An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children' ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)).

		the migration and asylum policy. Some objectives governing different policy areas are relevant with regard to child protection. <sup>458</sup>	
Ministry of Education ( <i>Utbildningsdepartementet</i> )	National	The Ministry is responsible for children and youth education policy. Some objectives governing different policy areas are relevant with regard to child protection. <sup>459</sup>	
Ministry for Foreign Affairs ( <i>Utrikesdepartementet</i> )	National	The Ministry is responsible for the democracy and human rights policy. Some objectives governing different policy areas are relevant with regard to child protection. <sup>460</sup>	
Ombudsman for Children ( <i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i> )	National	The Ombudsman's responsibility is to promote and advance children's rights and interests in Sweden on the basis of the CRC, including: suggesting amendments to legislation; monitoring; developing knowledge and methodological support; awareness raising and advocacy. <sup>461</sup>	The Ombudsman for Children has responsibility connected specifically to child rights. The Ombudsman is an independent government agency that, based on the Paris Principles, monitors the implementation of the CRC within municipalities, regions and government authorities.

<sup>458</sup> The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report 'An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children' (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*).

<sup>459</sup> The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report 'An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children' (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*).

<sup>460</sup> The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described the government report 'An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children' (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*).

<sup>461</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 13 May 1993.

Institute for Human Rights ( <i>Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter</i> )	National	The Institute's task is to promote the safeguarding of human rights in Sweden based on the constitution and Sweden's obligations under international law in the field of human rights; suggest amendments to legislation; monitoring; coordination; policy-making; developing knowledge and methodological support; awareness raising and advocacy, etc. <sup>462</sup>	The Institute commences operations in January 2022. The Institute will operate in accordance with the Paris Principles. The Institute will promote the safeguarding of human rights in Sweden based on the Constitution and Sweden's obligations under international law in the field of human rights. The Institute shall, from a holistic perspective, contribute to an overall picture of the human rights situation in Sweden.
The Swedish Gender-Equality Agency ( <i>Jämställdhetsmyndigheten</i> )	National	The authority has a government assignment to specifically work to combat violence against women. The authority's mandate concerns violence covered by the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, which also includes certain forms of violence against children. <sup>463</sup>	
Linköping University – Barnafriid – a national centre for knowledge concerning violence against children ( <i>Barnafriid – nationellt center för kunskap om våld mot barn</i> )	National	Barnafriid has a government assignment to work specifically to combat violence against children. Barnafriid has the broadest assignment related to violence against children as it includes all forms of violence that children are exposed to, regardless of where the violence takes place and who perpetrates it. <sup>464</sup>	
Uppsala University – National centre for knowledge on men's	National	The Centre has a government assignment to work specifically to combat violence against women. The	

<sup>462</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights ([Lag \(2021:642\) om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter](#)), 22 June 2021.

<sup>463</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for the Gender Equality Agency ([Förordning \[2017:937\] med instruktion för Jämställdhetsmyndigheten](#)), 26 October 2017.

<sup>464</sup> Sweden, Linköping University – Barnafriid – National centre for knowledge concerning violence against children ([Barnafriid – nationellt center för kunskap om våld mot barn](#)), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.



violence against women ( <i>Nationellt center för kvinnofrid, NCK</i> )		centre's activities concerning violence are covered by the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, which also includes certain forms of violence against children. The information and training that the centre provides also covers situations when children are exposed to violence and how children are affected by men's violence against women. Children are thus both a direct and indirect target group. <sup>465</sup>	
National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county ( <i>Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland</i> )	National	The Centre has a government assignment to specifically work to combat violence against children. The situations covered by the centre's assignment concern both adults and children. <sup>466</sup>	
Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden ( <i>Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset</i> )	National	The Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden is a government foundation with a significant role in the area of child protection. The foundation is tasked with developing and supporting method and knowledge development with the aim of strengthening children and young people in socially vulnerable situations. <sup>467</sup>	

<sup>465</sup> Sweden, Uppsala University – National centre for knowledge on men's violence against women (*Nationellt center för kvinnofrid, NCK*) [official webpage](#), accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>466</sup> Sweden, National Center against Honor-Related Violence and Oppression at the County Administrative Board in Östergötland county (*Nationellt centrum mot hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck vid Länsstyrelsen Östergötland*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>467</sup> Sweden, Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

National Board of Health and Welfare ( <i>Socialstyrelsen</i> )	National	The authority's area of responsibility in the area of child protection relates to activities in sector-specific areas, such as health and medical care, social services, support and services for persons with disabilities and questions related to alcohol and drugs of abuse.	
Swedish National Board of Education ( <i>Skolverket</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection is linked to responsibility for the school system.	
National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools ( <i>Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection is linked to responsibility for the school system.	
County Administrative Board ( <i>Länsstyrelsen</i> ).	National	The authority supports the regions and municipalities work to implement rights of the child in practice.	
Swedish Public Health Agency ( <i>Folkhälsomyndigheten</i> )	National	The authority's area of responsibility in the area of child protection relates to a specific perspective of its work. The Agency's mandate is linked to the public health policy goal. The target areas have a bearing on the area of violence against children in several ways, including the consequences of violence against children and implications for good and equal health.	

Swedish Agency for Participation ( <i>Myndigheten för delaktighet</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection relates to a specific perspective of its work, namely, to promote respect for and awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, adults and children, as well as working for full participation in social life and equality in living conditions for persons with disabilities.	
Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society ( <i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor</i> )	National	The authority's mandate covers areas relating to child protection. The mandate is, among other things, linked to the youth policy goal that all young people should have good living conditions, power to shape their lives and influence over social development.	
Family Law and Parental Support Authority ( <i>Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection is linked to certain efforts or situations. Parental support constitutes an important part of violence prevention and the process within family law matters is relevant to the area of child protection.	
The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention ( <i>Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection relates to a specific perspective of its work, namely, to contribute to the development of knowledge within the judiciary and the field of criminal policy and to promote crime prevention. Through its focus on crime prevention, the agency's activities have a clear link to the area of child protection.	

Swedish Crime Victim Authority ( <i>Brottsoffermyndigheten</i> )	National	The authority's responsibility in the area of child protection relates to a specific perspective of its work. Through its focus on victims of crime, the activities of the authority have a clear link to the area of violence against children, though limited to violence that constitutes a crime in accordance with the law.	
Swedish Media Council ( <i>Statens medieråd</i> )	National	The authority's primary task is to promote the empowerment of children as conscious media users and to protect them from harmful media influences. The agency also coordinates the national effort for a strengthened media and information literacy in the general population.	
Swedish School Inspectorate ( <i>Skolinspektionen</i> ),	National	The authority has a supervisory responsibility related to children's exposure to violence within the education system. The authority also includes the Child and School Student Representative, ( <i>Barn och elevombudet, BEO</i> ).	
Health and Social Care Inspectorate ( <i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i> )	National	The authority has a supervisory responsibility related to children's exposure to violence within the social care and health-care system.	
Parliamentary Ombudsman ( <i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i> )	National	The Ombudsman has a supervisory responsibility related to children's exposure to violence within the education system, the justice system and the health-care system.	

Equality Ombudsman ( <i>Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO</i> )	National	The Ombudsman has a supervisory responsibility related to children's exposure to discrimination and harassment within the education system, the justice system and the health-care system.	
Swedish work environment authority ( <i>Arbetsmiljöverket</i> )	National	The authority has a responsibility related to children's exposure to violence within the education system.	

2.1.4. Please indicate if there were in the past five years any important changes concerning the child protection mandate/roles/responsibilities and outline what caused or influenced these changes (for example, a transfer of responsibility for child protection from one ministry to another ministry or a body or merging of responsibilities, etc. Please indicate notably if an integrated approach has been sought and/or achieved.

As indicated in the answers above, the objective of the child rights policy was adopted in 2009.<sup>468</sup> The government's policy within the area of child rights is intersectoral, meaning that the child's rights and interests must permeate all politics and all operations that concern children. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) has the responsibility for the child rights policy in so far as such matters do not belong to any other ministry.<sup>469</sup> Each cabinet minister (*statsråd*) is responsible for the efforts carried out within the respective policy area related to child protection. There have been no changes concerning responsibilities.<sup>470</sup>

In 2020, a national coordinator was appointed to support the government in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the UN sustainable development goals. The assignment, which runs until 2024, emphasises that human rights and equality are central starting points for Sweden's implementation of the 2023 Agenda. A special focus must be placed on the rights of the child, including the perspective of children and young people, the right to participation and on children in particularly vulnerable situations. The coordinator must, among other things, strengthen, promote and deepen the work of the various actors in implementing the agenda and collaborate with government authorities and universities.<sup>471</sup> Within the Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*), there is a function to coordinate the work with the 2030 Agenda. The coordination function organises regular meetings with the national coordinator's office to receive updates on the work and the opportunity to arrange follow-up meetings to deepen the dialogue on various issues.<sup>472</sup>

<sup>468</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 ([Budgetpropositionen 2009](#)), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Child rights policy – the objective is that children and young people should be respected and given the opportunity of development and safety as well as participation and influence.

<sup>469</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for the Government Offices ([Förordning \[1996:1515\] med instruktion för Regeringskansliet](#)), 17 December 1996.

<sup>470</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 10 March 2023.

<sup>471</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Climate and Enterprise (*Klimat- och näringslivsdepartementet*) (2020) A national coordinator for 2030 Agenda ([En nationell samordnare för Agenda 2030](#)), committee directive, 25 February 2020.

<sup>472</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 10 March 2023.

Since 2022, the government also has a national coordinator for the European Child Guarantee at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Division for Social Services and Disability Policy).<sup>473</sup> All the relevant ministries were involved in preparing the national action plan to implement the child guarantee and contributed with their expertise in their respective subject areas. According to the government, relevant ministries will be involved in the following up the action plan to the European Commission.<sup>474</sup>

2.1.5. Please indicate, in the table below, the major service providers at national level in the area of child protection. Include family support services /measures (i.e. counselling, financial assistance) that are part of the overall social protection/welfare system for children in risk.

Service providers	Type of services	Target groups	Funding
<i>(include the name and the type of institution i.e. public authority, NGOs, religious institutions, private)</i>	<i>(Include counselling, care institutions, day care centres, financial assistance, legal advice, rehabilitation services for victims, education awareness –training activities, etc.)</i>	<i>(For example, children with disability, children in risk of or living in poverty, immigrant children, children deprived form parental care, child victims of abuse or exploitation. When relevant, please indicate if third country nationals and irregular immigrants are entitled to such services)</i>	<i>(national budget, EU funded, other)</i>
Sweden's 20 Regions ( <i>Regioner</i> )	The regions are the main health-care service providers. <sup>475</sup>	All children within the region	Health care is mainly financed by the regions and municipalities themselves through their right to levy taxes, as well as through government grants and stimulus funds in various forms. Health-care is also financed to some extent by patient fees. <sup>476</sup>

<sup>473</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) [National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#), S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

<sup>474</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 10 March 2023.

<sup>475</sup> See for example, Sweden, Health and social services act ([Hälsö- och sjukvårdslag \[2017:30\]](#)), 9 February 2017, chapter 8, and; Act on regional development responsibility ([Lag \[2010:630\] om regionalt utvecklingsansvar](#)), 10 June 2010.

<sup>476</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) Distribution of responsibilities, healthcare '[Ansvarsfördelning, sjukvård](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 march 2023.

			When the government makes decisions involving increased ambitions or new mandatory tasks for municipalities and regions, the government must also allocate funds, according to the so-called “financing principle” ( <i>finansieringsprincipen</i> ). <sup>477</sup>
Sweden’s 290 municipalities ( <i>kommuner</i> )	The municipalities are responsible for mandatory social services, such as childcare, pre-school, compulsory school, upper secondary school, individual and family-care, children in care, care for persons with disabilities, barnahus centers etc. <sup>478</sup>	All children within the municipality.  Asylum-seeking children have the same right to education as other children under the Education Act but are not subject to compulsory school attendance. <sup>479</sup>	Social services are mainly financed by the municipalities themselves, through their right to levy taxes as well as through government grants.  When the government makes decisions involving increased ambitions or new mandatory tasks for municipalities and regions, the government must also allocate funds, according to the so-called “financing principle” ( <i>finansieringsprincipen</i> ). <sup>480</sup>
Swedish Police Authority ( <i>Polismyndigheten</i> )	The authority has a general responsibility for preventing, detecting and investigating crimes against children.	Children being victims of crime	National budget

<sup>477</sup> The principle of financing is not a law but has been approved by the Parliament (*Riksdag*) and applied since 1993.

<sup>478</sup> Sweden, Local government act ([Kommunallag \[2017:725\]](#)), 1 January 2020, chapter 2, section 1. The main limitation for the work that the municipalities are allowed to engage in is matters that only the state, another municipality or region or someone else are responsible for, see chapter 2, section 2.

<sup>479</sup> This has been highlighted as incompatible with the Convention on the rights of the child, by several actors, including a government inquiry and the Ombudsman for Children, see Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) The Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes Swedish law ([Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag](#)), government official report, 11 March 2016; Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>480</sup> The principle of financing is not a law but has been approved by the Parliament (*Riksdag*) and applied since 1993.



Swedish Migration Agency ( <i>Migrationsverket</i> )	The responsibilities of the authority include: investigating asylum applications; appointing a public counsel; financial support; and deciding what municipality will be responsible for accommodation, school education and a guardian.	Asylum-seeking children	National budget
The National Board of Institutional Care ( <i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i> )	The authority is responsible for the individually adapted compulsory care and treatment of young people with serious psychosocial problems.	Children in compulsory care.	National budget
Swedish Social Insurance Agency ( <i>Försäkringskassan</i> )	The authority is responsible for the Swedish social insurance system, including certain allowances for children with disabilities, child allowance, and housing allowances for families etc. <sup>481</sup>	Children in risk of or living in poverty, children with disabilities etc.	National budget
Victim Support Sweden ( <i>Brottsofferjouren</i> ), NGO <sup>482</sup>	Victim Support Sweden helps and supports victims, witnesses and others affected by crime and offers emotional support; practical help; information about police reports and legal proceedings; and information about and help in applying for crime victim compensation and criminal	Children being victims of crime.	Victim Support Sweden is to a large part funded by government grants from the Crime Victims' Fund and the National Board of Health and Welfare. The local Victim Support Centres often receive grants from the municipalities whose residents they offer support to.

<sup>481</sup> See for example Sweden, Swedish Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*) Allowances for children with disabilities '[Assistansersättning för barn](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 march 2023.

<sup>482</sup> Sweden, Victim Support Sweden (*Brottsofferjouren*) '[Home page](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 march 2023.

	injuries compensation. Victim support Sweden also runs the national support line on 116 006.		
Children's Rights in Society ( <i>Barnens rätt i samhället, Bris</i> ), NGO <sup>483</sup>	Bris' support services offer children and young adults up to 18 years old a safe, anonymous way to e-mail, chat, or call a counsellor at Bris. The support is free of charge. Bris is a member of the Child Helpline International. They also conduct trainings for staff members of social services, schools, and the judiciary.	All children in need of support (abuse, neglect violence etc.)	Membership fees, donations and government grants
Child Rights Agency ( <i>Barnrättsbyrå</i> ), NGO <sup>484</sup>	The Child Rights Agency works to prevent children and young people from having their rights violated. The Child Rights Agency provides direct support to children in, for example, contact with authorities, applying for support and help, accompanying the child to meetings or helping the child complain about decisions the child has received.	Children in need of support (abuse, neglect violence etc.) in Stockholm and Umeå	Donations and grants

<sup>483</sup> Sweden, Children's Rights in Society (*Barnens rätt i samhället, Bris*) '[Bris](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 march 2023.

<sup>484</sup> Sweden, Child Rights Agency (*Barnrättsbyrå*) '[Barnrättsbyrå](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 march 2023.

Swedish Refugee Law Center ( <i>Asylrättscentrum</i> ), NGO <sup>485</sup>	Swedish Refugee Law Center offers children under 18 legal support in the asylum process free of charge.	Asylum seeking children	Donations and grants
Ecpat Sverige, NGO <sup>486</sup>	Ecpat is a child-rights organisation working to combat the sexual exploitation of children. They offer support and knowledge online and via a support line about sexual harassment, threats and violations, both online and offline. Ecpat also has a Hotline where anyone can report child sexual exploitation and abuse, for example, an image, a video or something you have seen or suspect.	Children being victims of abuse or exploitation	Donations and grants
Friends, NGO <sup>487</sup>	Children can e-mail Friends with any questions or request information about their right to feel safe at school, and how the school staff can help them if they experience bullying in schools.	Children exposed to bullying	Donations and grants

<sup>485</sup> Sweden, Swedish refugee law center (*Asylrättscentrum*) '[Asylrättscentrum](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>486</sup> Sweden, Ecpat Sweden (*Ecpat Sverige*), '[ECPAT](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>487</sup> Sweden, Friends, '[United Against Bullying](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<p>The Mayflower Charity Foundation for Children (<i>Majblomman</i>) NGO<sup>488</sup></p>	<p>Child-rights organisations working to improve the living conditions of children with parents who have an addiction, a mental illness or who expose them to violence. Among other things, the Mayflower Charity Foundation offers chat support, support calls, digital counselling support, youth meetings and the opportunity to be accompanied to meetings with, for example, social services. The organisations also offer certain interventions that can be given following a decision by social services, for example, the coaching program through which young people receive continuous and individually tailored support.</p>	<p>Children with parents who have an addiction, a mental illness or who expose them to violence.</p>	<p>Selling of Mayflowers. Donations and grants.</p>
<p>The national organisation Never Forget Pela and Fadime (<i>Riksorganisationen Glöm Aldrig Pela och Fadime, GAPF</i>), NGO<sup>489</sup></p>	<p>Works against honour-related violence and oppression and has a national support hotline for persons exposed to honour-related violence and oppression. GAPF provides information about rights and assists victims of honour-related violence in their contacts with authorities. They also offer psychological support calls and legal advice.</p>	<p>Children being victims of honour-related violence and oppression</p>	<p>Donations and grants</p>

<sup>488</sup> Sweden, The Mayflower Charity Foundation for Children (*Majblomman*), '[Majblomman](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>489</sup> Sweden, The national organisation Never Forget Pela and Fadime (*Riksorganisationen Glöm Aldrig Pela och Fadime, GAPF*) '[Riksorganisationen GAPF](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

Save the Children ( <i>Rädda Barnen</i> ), NGO <sup>490</sup>	Save the Children works, among other things, to give children knowledge about what violence is and child rights, for example, through lectures, training and the development and distribution of information materials. They also organise activities and create safe places for children, and offer psychological support and treatment to children. Operates a national radicalisation support line and the support chat 'Love is free' on honour-related issues.	Children in risk of or living in poverty, children being victims of abuse or exploitation	Donations and grants.
1000 Opportunities Foundation ( <i>Stiftelsen 1000 Möjligheter</i> ), NGO <sup>491</sup>	Works for the rights of children and young people and combating violence. Runs the platform <a href="https://ungarelationer.se">ungarelationer.se</a> , a national support and knowledge platform to combat boy's violence against girls and violence in intimate relationships among young persons. The foundation also offers help and support to persons between the ages of 15 and 25 regarding dating violence and prostitution.	Children being victims of violence and exploitation	Donations and grants

<sup>490</sup> Sweden, Save the Children (*Rädda Barnen*) '[Rädda Barnen](https://www.raaddabarnen.se)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>491</sup> Sweden, 1000 Opportunities Foundation (*Stiftelsen 1000 Möjligheter*) '[Stiftelsen 1000 Möjligheter](https://www.stiftelsen1000mojligheter.se)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

Girls' rights in society ( <i>Tjejers rätt i samhället</i> , TRIS), NGO <sup>492</sup>	Works against honour-related violence and oppression targeting young women and men. Offers, among other things, a hotline and a chat service providing advice and support.	Children being victims of honour-related violence and oppression	Donations and grants
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#### 2.1.6. Please indicate if any child participation or feedback mechanisms are part of child protection services.

According to the Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), efforts within social services must be of good quality and must be systematically and continuously developed.<sup>493</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd (2011:9) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete*), actors providing social services are obliged to receive and investigate complaints and opinions on the quality of the operations from, among others, care recipients and their relatives.<sup>494</sup> Generally, the municipalities' social services may have different working methods and different approaches in their endeavour to involve the children in their activities.<sup>495</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young people in family homes, emergency homes or residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende*), the Social Welfare Board must provide the child with contact details to the specially appointed social secretary (*socialekreterare*). Children must also receive information on how to reach the regulatory authority. Children should also be informed about their rights to submit complaints and views to the Social Welfare Board.<sup>496</sup> When the child is placed in compulsory care according to the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU), he or she has the right to a public counsel in order to have their rights ensured.<sup>497</sup>

<sup>492</sup> Sweden, Girls' rights in society (*Tjejers rätt i samhället*, TRIS) '[TRIS](#)', official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>493</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 July 2009, chapter 3, section 3.

<sup>494</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd (2011:9) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete*), 10 December 2020, chapter 5, section 3.

<sup>495</sup> For example, the family law units: National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2014) Children's participation in investigations on custody, residence and contact (*Barns delaktighet i utredningar om vårdnad, boende och umgänge*), December 2014.

<sup>496</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Boards' responsibility for children and young people in family homes, emergency homes or residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende*), 30 December 2019, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>497</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] om särskilda bestämmelser för vård av unga*), 1 March 2021, 39 § section 1.

Children and young persons placed outside their family home can submit complains or opinions to: the municipality's Social Welfare Board (*socialnämnden*), for example through the specially appointed social secretary<sup>498</sup> or through the personnel at the municipal residential support (*stödboende*) for residential care homes for young persons (*Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem*); the National Board of Institutional Care (*Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS*); or privately operated residential support residential care homes for young persons.<sup>499</sup>

The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*) is responsible for the supervision of health care, health-care personnel, social services and activities according to LSS. Activities for children and young people covered by the authority's supervision include residential support to residential care homes for young persons, homes with special services for children and young people, and homes run by the National Board of Institutional Care. The Health and Social Care Inspectorate's supervisory task means that the authority must receive and handle complaints from individuals who are dissatisfied with health care or social services. The authority has a special children's and young people's telephone and chat line, where children and young people who have contact with health-care, social services or live in a student residence can get in touch with them. The authority can provide general information about the child's rights, explain and clarify, give advice and refer the child to the right authority. The authority can also, in the light of the child's complaint, decide to open a supervisory case (*tillsynsärende*) against the authority concerned.<sup>500</sup>

Young persons who have turned 16 years old can make a report to the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*).<sup>501</sup> The Child and School Student Representative (*Barn och Elevombudet, BEO*) is an independent function at the School Inspectorate to which children can report if they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, bullying or abusive behaviour in school. The Student Representative can also claim damages on behalf of children and school students who have been subjected to abusive behaviour and bullying.<sup>502</sup> In a report to the Ombudsman for Children, the Child and School Student Representative states that children can turn to the authority with questions on their own, without the consent or participation of a guardian or other adult.<sup>503</sup>

For further information on child participation, see chapter 7 below.

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<sup>498</sup> See for example Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 7 c.

<sup>499</sup> See for example Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020, chapter 2, section 1.

<sup>500</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) 'For Children and Young persons' ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>501</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag 2010:800](#)), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>502</sup> Sweden, Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) 'About BEO' ([Om BEO](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>503</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Children and young persons' opportunities to complain – Ombudsman for Children's survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their case heard when their rights are violated ([Barns och ungas klagomöjligheter, Barnombudsmannens kartläggning av barns och ungas möjlighet att framföra klagomål och få sin sak prövad när deras rättigheter kränks](#)), 2016.



2.2. Civil society organisations active in the area of child protection. Please consider also including information on the role of religious institutions and groups active in the area of child protection.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.2.1. Is there a registry of civil society organisations operating in the child protection area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly provide information on the legislative-regulatory framework and the responsible authority.</p>		X	<p>Swedish civil society can be divided into a formalised and a non-formalised part. Within the formalised part there are various organisational forms, such as non-profit associations, registered faith communities, foundations, economic associations etc. There is no complete register of all non-profit associations because there is no requirement to register an association.<sup>504</sup></p> <p>Since 1 January 2023, idea-based organisations which run publicly funded welfare activities<sup>505</sup> can, at their own request, be registered in a special register by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (<i>Kammarkollegiet</i>).<sup>506</sup></p> <p>A faith community can, at its own request, be registered by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (<i>Kammarkollegiet</i>), if: 1) there are statutes that determine the purpose of the faith community and that specify how decisions are made; and 2) there is a board or equivalent body.<sup>507</sup></p> <p>A foundation is registered at the County Administrative Board (<i>Länsstyrelsen</i>).<sup>508</sup></p> <p>An economic association is registered at the Swedish Companies Registration Office (<i>Bolagsverket</i>).<sup>509</sup></p>
<p>2.2.2. Is there a legal obligation for the accrediting; licensing; registering; inspecting the activity of any type of civil society organisations, e. g. NGOs, charities, church</p>		X	<p>There are no laws regulating the creation, operation or termination of non-profit associations. However, non-profit associations are obliged to follow national laws and regulations even if they are not governed by a specific law.<sup>510</sup></p>

<sup>504</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) Organisation of civil society '[Civilsamhällets organisationsformer](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>505</sup> A legal entity that exclusively has a public benefit purpose (*allmännyttigt syfte*) – see Sweden, Act on registration of idea-based organisations ([Lag \[2022:900\] om registrering av ideburna organisationer](#)), 9 June 2022.

<sup>506</sup> Sweden, Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*) Registration of idea-based organisations '[Registrering av ideburna organisationer](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>507</sup> Sweden, Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (*Kammarkollegiet*) Registration of Faith communities '[Registrering av trossamfund](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>508</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) Organisation of civil society '[Civilsamhällets organisationsformer](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>509</sup> Sweden, Act on economic associations ([Lag \[2018:672\] om ekonomiska föreningar](#)), 31 May 2018.

<sup>510</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) Organisation of civil society '[Civilsamhällets organisationsformer](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<p>organisations, etc. in the area of child protection?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, which is the responsible authority? How frequent are reviews and inspections?</p>		<p>The registration of an idea-based organisation is regulated by the Act on the Registration Of Idea-Based Organisations (<i>Lag [2022:900] om registrering av ideburna organisationer</i>). The Act has provisions for registration, deregistration and supervision.<sup>511</sup></p> <p>A registered faith community is regulated by the Act on Faith Communities (<i>Lag [1998:1593] om trossamfund</i>), which has provisions for, among other things, registration and the organisational parts of the faith community.<sup>512</sup></p> <p>A foundation is regulated by the Act on Foundations (<i>Stiftelselag [1994:1220]</i>), which has provisions on, among other things, registration, supervision, audits etc.<sup>513</sup></p> <p>An economic association is regulated by the Act on economic associations (<i>Lag [2018:672] om ekonomiska föreningar</i>), which has provisions on, among other things, creation, registration, audits etc.<sup>514</sup></p>
<p>2.2.3. Are there cooperation agreements/partnerships between government and the civil society at national or local level?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, What is the prevalence of this practice?</p> <p>Please provide <u>indicative examples</u> and information regarding the main areas covered, type of services targeted, and financial aspects of such partnerships (i.e. if done in view of accessing EU funds).</p>	X	<p><b>National structure for cooperation</b></p> <p>The Children's Rights Delegation (<i>Barnrättsdelegationen</i>) is a forum for dialogue between the government and civil-society organisations in Sweden. The Delegation consists of representatives from civil-society organisations working with children's rights, as well as the Ombudsman for Children and the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (<i>Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset</i>). The Delegation was established in 2016, and the government and the dialogue take their starting point in recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>515</sup></p> <p>The National Body For Dialogue And Consultation Between The Government And Civil Society (<i>Nationellt organ för dialog och samråd mellan regeringen och det civila samhället, NOD</i>) is a support structure for cooperation between the government and civil society.<sup>516</sup></p>

<sup>511</sup> Sweden, Act on registration of idea-based organisations (*Lag [2022:900] om registrering av ideburna organisationer*), 9 June 2022.

<sup>512</sup> Sweden, Act on faith communities (*Lag [1998:1593] om trossamfund*), 26 November 1998. See also; Sweden, Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency's regulations on fees for registration of religious communities (*Kammarkollegiets föreskrifter om avgifter vid registrering av trossamfund*), 16 November 2022.

<sup>513</sup> Sweden, Act on foundations (*Stiftelselag [1994:1220]*), 25 August 1994.

<sup>514</sup> Sweden, Act on economic associations (*Lag [2018:672] om ekonomiska föreningar*), 31 May 2018.

<sup>515</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Children's Rights Delegation '*Barnrättsdelegationen*', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>516</sup> Sweden, National body for dialogue and consultation between the government and civil society (*Nationellt organ för dialog och samråd mellan regeringen och det civila samhället, NOD*), [official webpage](#), accessed 30 March 2023.

			<p>The Party Joint Forum (<i>Partsgemensamt forum, PGF</i>) is a structured dialogue between the government and civil society organisations.<sup>517</sup></p> <p>The Advisory Council (<i>Sakråd</i>) is a working method used in the Government Offices to make use of civil society's knowledge and perspectives on various issues, for example, child rights. It is a working method that complements other forms of consultation and increases the quality of the government's documentation.<sup>518</sup> For example, Advisory Councils were held when drafting Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>519</sup></p> <p>The Youth Policy Council (<i>Ungdomspolitiska rådet</i>) is an important part of the government's dialogue with young people and the youth movement. The Council was established in 2008 and consists of, among other, representatives of youth organisations.<sup>520</sup></p> <p><b>Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society</b></p> <p>The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (<i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor</i>) is responsible for several different networks at the local, regional and national levels.<sup>521</sup> The authority, together with representatives of civil society and the public sector, has developed a model for collaborative processes (<i>samverkansprocesser</i>).<sup>522</sup> In addition, they have developed different tools and methods to promote collaboration between civil society and public actors.</p>
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### 2.3. Inter-agency cooperation in the area of child protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
2.3.1. Is there <u>coordination between national, regional, or local authorities</u> in developing and implementing policies and	X		As mentioned in section 2.1.2. above, Sweden's 21 regions and 290 municipalities have responsibility for providing a significant proportion of all public services. They are responsible for, among other things, health-care, child-care, schooling and social services.

<sup>517</sup> Sweden, National body for dialogue and consultation between the government and civil society (*Nationellt organ för dialog och samråd mellan regeringen och det civila samhället, NOD*), Party joint forum '[Partsgemensamt forum](#)' official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>518</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Advisory Council '[Sakråd](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>519</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021, p. 6.

<sup>520</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2021) Official letter by the government ([Regeringens skrivelse](#)), 2020/21/105, 18 March 2021, p. 22.

<sup>521</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) Network for municipalities and civil society '[Nätverk för kommuner och civilsamhället](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>522</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) Cooperation model for public actors '[Samverkansmodell för offentliga aktörer och civilsamhället](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<p>legislation in the area of child protection?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, how is this done? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>For <u>example</u>, is this cooperation – coordination regulated by the legislative framework? Does cooperation take place ad hoc, e.g. addressing specific issues and on specific thematic areas of interest or is it a key feature of the system?</p>		<p>According to the Social Services Act, the Social Welfare Board must (<i>socialnämnden</i>), in matters concerning children who are abused or at risk of harm, cooperate/coordinate with community bodies, organisations and others who are concerned.<sup>523</sup></p> <p>Parliament, the government and the government authorities issue legalisation, ordinances and regulations governing both regional and municipal actors. However, the regions and municipalities have, through the principle of local self-government (<i>kommunalt självstyre</i>),<sup>524</sup> a considerable degree of autonomy when it comes to implementation in practice. They also have independent powers of taxation. In order to strengthen the link between government and the region/municipality, each county has a County Administrative Board (<i>Länsstyrelse</i>). Each of Sweden's 21 County Administrative Boards is an independent government authority.<sup>525</sup> The County Administrative Boards support the municipalities and regions in their work to implement the rights of the child in practice. This includes, among other things, 1) providing an opportunity for coordination and exchange of experience on how the implementation of the rights of the child is ensured in practice; and 2) contributing to targeted support for municipalities and regions based on the County Administrative Boards' regional knowledge and the needs and conditions of the county.</p> <p><i>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions</i></p> <p>The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR</i>) is an employers' organisation for local government in Sweden. All of Sweden's municipalities and regions are members of SALAR. SALAR represents and advocates for local government and functions as a network for sharing knowledge and coordination. The government sometimes makes use of agreements between itself and SALAR as a policy instrument to influence areas over which the state has limited influence linked to the municipalities' and regions' areas of responsibility. For example, it is common for SALAR to be a party to agreements in the areas of health care and social care. Some agreements can, by their nature or content, be linked to a child protection</p>
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<sup>523</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 30 June 2009, chapter 5, section 1a.

<sup>524</sup> Sweden, Instrument of government (*Kungörelse om beslutad ny Regeringsform*), 28 February 1974, and; Sweden, Local government act (*Kommunallag [2017:725]*), 22 June 2017.

<sup>525</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 267-68. The description of policy areas is based on the situation on 28 November 2022, as described in the government report.

		<p>area, for example, mental health and suicide prevention, or increased accessibility in health care.<sup>526</sup></p> <p><i>Health care and social service actors</i></p> <p>Health-care actors and social-service actors are of vital importance in the work to combat violence against children. Within this area, there are several structures linked to knowledge management, knowledge exchange and knowledge development; some are regulated by regulations and controlled by authorities, others are voluntary collaborations between municipalities and regions and other actors.<sup>527</sup></p> <p>The Council For Governance With Knowledge (<i>Rådet för styrning med kunskap</i>) is regulated by the Ordinance on State Management with knowledge regarding health care and social services (<i>Förordning [2015:155] om statlig styrning med kunskap avseende hälso- och sjukvård och socialtjänst</i>);<sup>528</sup> the regional cooperation and support structure (<i>Regional samverkans- och stödstruktur, RSS</i>) operates with regard to cooperation and development at the county level;<sup>529</sup> the National Board of Health and Welfare and SALAR work together with representatives of the regional cooperation and support structures (RSS) through a partnership between the local, regional and national levels;<sup>530</sup> the national collaboration group for knowledge management in social services (<i>Nationell samverkansgrupp för kunskapsstyrning i socialtjänsten, NSK-S</i>) is a collaboration between representatives for municipalities and representatives of the National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency;<sup>531</sup> the national system for knowledge management in health care (<i>Nationellt system för kunskapsstyrning hälso- och sjukvård</i>) is a common system for knowledge management for Sweden's 20 regions; and<sup>532</sup> the National Board of Health and Welfare, together with five government authorities, is part of a partnership with the regions' national system</p>
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<sup>526</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>527</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>528</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on state management with knowledge regarding health care and social services (*Förordning [2015:155] om statlig styrning med kunskap avseende hälso- och sjukvård och socialtjänst*), 19 March 2015.

<sup>529</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) Regional cooperation and support structure (*Regional samverkans- och stödstruktur, RSS*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>530</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Partnership for knowledge management within social services (*Partnerskapet till stöd för kunskapsstyrning inom socialtjänsten*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>531</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) National collaboration group for knowledge management in social services (*Nationell samverkansgrupp för kunskapsstyrning i socialtjänsten, NSK-S*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>532</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) National system for knowledge management in health care (*Nationellt system för kunskapsstyrning hälso- och sjukvård*), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

		<p>for knowledge management of health-care, called the partnership for knowledge management within healthcare (<i>partnerskapet till stöd för kunskapsstyrning inom hälso- och sjukvård</i>).<sup>533</sup></p> <p>Among the strengths of this system are that it clearly distinguishes politics from implementation. Among its weaknesses are that it is complex and has a built-in distance between the implementation of services (locally/regionally) and the political decision-making (nationally).</p>
<p>2.3.2. Is there inter-agency cooperation between the relevant actors having responsibility in the area of child protection (including civil society organisations)?</p> <p>If yes, please mention how this is done (for examples are there standing inter-agency committees or meetings, are digital tools used?). Which actor has a leading role?</p>	X	<p>According to the Administrative Procedure Act (<i>Förvaltningslag [2017:900]</i>), all government authorities have a general obligation to cooperate with other authorities within their areas of operation.<sup>534</sup></p> <p><b>Network of government authorities for children and youth issues</b></p> <p>The network of government authorities for children and youth issues is based on CRC and focuses on the rights of the child. Within the network, approximately 25 authorities collaborate to identify and coordinate interventions that affect children and young people. The network also has a preparation group which consists of the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>), the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (<i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor</i>), the Swedish National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) and the Swedish Consumer Agency (<i>Konsumentverket</i>).<sup>535</sup> The Directors-General of the various authorities gather twice a year in a coordination forum. The coordination forum is divided into different subject groups, where, for example, children's and young people's rights to education, safety and participation are discussed.<sup>536</sup></p> <p><b>Extended cooperation between authorities</b></p> <p>Extended cooperation between authorities in the area of child protection is sometimes also decided through government assignments. For example, in 2018, the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>), the Public Employment Authority (<i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i>), the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (<i>Försäkringskassan</i>) and the Migration Agency (<i>Migrationsverket</i>) were assigned to develop a plan for extended cooperation to detect violence in intimate</p>

<sup>533</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Partnership for knowledge management within healthcare ([Partnerskapet till stöd för kunskapsstyrning inom hälso- och sjukvård](#)), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>534</sup> Sweden, Administrative procedure act (*Förvaltningslag [2017:900]*), section 8.

<sup>535</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Network of government authorities for children and youth issues '[Myndighetsnätverket för barn- och ungdomsfrågor](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>536</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Coordination forum '[Samordningsforum](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.



		relationships, including honour-based oppression and violence. In 2019, the National Board of Health and Welfare submitted its plan to the government. Based on the plan, the government assigned the four authorities, supplemented by the Gender Equality Agency ( <i>Jämställdhetsmyndigheten</i> ), the continuing task of working to improve the detection of violence. The Gender Equality Agency coordinated the work, which was finalised in March 2022. <sup>537</sup> In August 2022, the government extended the assignment until 2024. Within the framework of the assignment, the government authorities must, among other things, consider obligations regarding reporting to the Social Welfare Board in the event of knowledge or suspicion of a child being subject to harm or neglect. <sup>538</sup>
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### 2.3.3. What are the main challenges regarding effective cooperation and coordination? (For example, lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and roles of actors, overlaps of responsibilities, and communication between organisations is not adequately structured and resourced)?

Several actors have raised concerns regarding effective cooperation and coordination in the areas of child protection and child rights.

For example, in their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recalled its recommendation from 2015 and recommended Sweden to “[e]stablish or designate a body at the national level responsible for ensuring the effective coordination of the implementation of the Convention at the central, regional and municipal levels and across the different sectors such as education, health and social services and the justice system”.<sup>539</sup> The Committee also recommended Sweden to “[p]romote institutionalized collaboration between local authorities in ensuring access and improving [the] quality of service delivery for children and families”.<sup>540</sup>

Furthermore, the most recent report on Swedish legislation’s compliance with CRC, “The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*) submitted in 2020, observed during their work that “[t]here is insufficient collaboration between different actors working with children”<sup>541</sup> and that “[t]here may be reason to review secrecy legislation to ensure that there is a balance between the possibilities of collaboration and protection for the private life of [the] child.”<sup>542</sup>

In one of the most recent reports, “An upbringing free from violence” (*En uppväxt fri från våld*) the inquiry indicates that, in preparing the report, actors concerned have repeatedly highlighted the following challenges related to cooperation within the area of violence against children: the assignments and objectives of the actors differ; there is a lack of knowledge about actor’s different assignments and opportunities, and lack of trust between actors; there are uncertainties or obstacles linked to information exchange; there is lack of resources and different priorities; and there is a lack of continuity in terms of personnel. The report also highlights that another challenge with collaboration

<sup>537</sup> Sweden, Gender Equality Agency (*Jämställdhetsmyndigheten*) Cooperation for increased detection of violence ([Samverkan för ökad upptäckt av våld](#)), 2022:9.

<sup>538</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment on increased detection of violence, etc. ([Uppdrag om ökad upptäckt av våld m.m.](#)), government assignment, 25 August 2022.

<sup>539</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 8.

<sup>540</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 8.

<sup>541</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020, page 80.

<sup>542</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020, page 80.



is that professionals consider different forms of violence/violent situations/vulnerability as separate areas of work, and that a lot of work is carried out in isolation from other areas.<sup>543</sup>

There are also reports on challenges in relation to cooperation and coordination within specific service areas. For example, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*) carried out a national inspection of the coordination of health care and social care for children with mental health issues. In its supervision, the authority identified major challenges in the coordination of health-care and social-care efforts for children with mental health issues who need interventions from several principals.<sup>544</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
2.3.4. Are child protection authorities engaging in <u>transnational cooperation</u> in the area of child protection, for example with regards to missing children, parental abduction, or migrant children?	X		<p>In cases where parents wrongfully remove their children to another country, it is mainly the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the 1980 Hague Convention) that governs how the case is handled. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (<i>Utrikesdepartementet</i>) is the Swedish central authority. The Brussels II regulation states that a decision on sole custody by a Swedish court is also applicable in other EU countries. Since 1 January 2013, the 1996 Hague Convention is applicable in Sweden. Here again, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the central authority.</p> <p>The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs can be contacted regarding child abductions both to and from Sweden.<sup>545</sup> Social services can support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in these cases. The municipality has the ultimate responsibility for children in their municipality and, according to case law,<sup>546</sup> the responsibility remains even though the child is temporarily abroad if the intention is to return to Sweden. The Social Services Act (<i>Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]</i>) and the Care for Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (<i>Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga</i>) are therefore applicable to children who are staying abroad, and the social services may need to assist financially as well as with investigations and interventions for the child's protection and support. In line with the social services responsibility to investigate, they may provide relevant information to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs if this is necessary to protect the child.<sup>547</sup> Thus, social services</p>

<sup>543</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 366.

<sup>544</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2021) They don't take care of the whole of me - Coordination of interventions for children with mental health issues needs to be improved (*De tar inte hand om hela mig - Samordning av insatser för barn med psykisk ohälsa behöver förbättras*), 24 May 2021.

<sup>545</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Utrikesdepartementet*) (2016) 'Children who are wrongfully removed or retained in another country', information material, 17 June 2016, see also; Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Abducted children '*Bortförda barn*', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>546</sup> Sweden, Supreme Administrative Court (*Regeringsrätten*), Stockholm, RÅ 1987 ref. 174, 1987 and; Sweden, Supreme Administrative Court (*Regeringsrätten*), Stockholm, RÅ 1995 ref. 70, 27 November 1995.

<sup>547</sup> Sweden, Swedish Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*), 20 May 2009, chapter 10, section 2.

		generally need to cooperate with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and embassies and consulates abroad. <sup>548</sup>
		Wrongfully removing a child is a crime under Swedish law. The crime is regulated in chapter 7, section 4 of the Criminal Code ( <i>Brottsbalk [1962:700]</i> ). Such cases are handled by the Police Authority ( <i>Polismyndigheten</i> ) and the Prosecution Authority ( <i>Åklagarmyndigheten</i> ). Sweden's Single Point of Operational Contact, or SPOC, is located in the International Affairs Division of the National Operations Department and acts as the Europol National Unit.

If yes, please briefly comment and include information on transnational agreements-protocols of cooperation as well as on the interaction between child protection authorities and other actors involved in transnational cooperation processes, for example law enforcement and judicial authorities, migration authorities, social services, Central Authorities under Brussels IIbis Regulation/Hague Convention, consular or diplomatic authorities. Are there any challenges relating to transnational cooperation? Are the challenges different for cross-border cases among EU countries or with third countries?

Please provide information on main relevant agreements – cooperation schemes in two of the following areas: missing children, parental abduction, inter-country adoption, migrant children (family tracing-family reunification –return-relocation).

As mentioned in the section above, Sweden is a signatory to several international agreements. Sweden also belongs to a number of transnational cooperation networks on child protection, such as the Baltic Sea states organisation and the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk (EGCC),<sup>549</sup> and it is also included in an EU-wide network of National Rapporteurs who are responsible for monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level and play a key role in data collection on trafficking in human beings at the national and EU levels.<sup>550</sup> In 2016, Sweden became one of the first pathfinding countries in the Global Partnership to end violence against children.<sup>551</sup>

### Parental abduction

As indicated in the section above, the three most relevant agreements in the field of civil law in relation to child abduction, custody disputes and access are: 1) the 1980 Hague Convention; 2) the Brussels II Regulation; and 3) the 1996 Hague Convention. In addition, the CRC is relevant.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is the Swedish central authority. The 1980 Hague Convention is an important instrument for international cooperation regarding wrongfully removed children. According to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, there are relatively good chances of having the child returned in cases where the Hague Convention applies. On average, around 85 per cent of these cases are solved.<sup>552</sup> In non-Convention countries, there are no central authorities for these cases, and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs has no natural counterpart to cooperate with. This, combined with the fact that it is the country's national legislation that applies, means that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a limited ability to act. An estimated 25–30 per cent of non-Convention cases are solved.<sup>553</sup>

<sup>548</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2018) Children in international trafficking of human beings and exploitation (*Barn i internationell människohandel och exploitering*), November 2018, page 37.

<sup>549</sup> Council of the Baltic Sea States, [official webpage](#), accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>550</sup> European Commission, [‘Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings’](#), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>551</sup> Global Partnership to end violence against children, [‘Sweden’](#), official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>552</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Utrikesdepartementet*) (2016) [‘Children who are wrongfully removed or retained in another country’](#), information material, 17 June 2016, page 7.

<sup>553</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Utrikesdepartementet*) (2016) [‘Children who are wrongfully removed or retained in another country’](#), information material, 17 June 2016, page 13.

## Inter-country adoption

The two most relevant agreements in relation to inter-country adoptions are the CRC and the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation In Respect Of Intercountry Adoption. The Family Law and Parental Authority is the Central Authority under the 1993 Hague Convention. There are also several Swedish legal provisions concerning inter-country adoptions, such as the Social Services Act; the Parental Code; the Act on Adoption In International Situations (*Lag [2018:1289] om adoption i internationella situationer*) and the Ordinance on Adoption In International Situations (*Förordning [2018:1296] om adoption i internationella situationer*); the Act subsequent to Sweden's accession to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption (*Lag [1997:191] med anledning av Sveriges tillträde till Haagkonventionen om skydd av barn och samarbete vid internationella adoptioner*); and the Intercountry Adoption Intermediation Act (*Lag [1997:192] om internationell adoptionsförmedling*). As mentioned under section 1.4.4. above, the government has appointed an inquiry chair to map and analyse how regulations, organisation and processes within Sweden's international adoption operations have worked in the past and up until today. The inquiry chair reports to the government in October 2023.<sup>554</sup>

## 2.4. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection governance, coordination structures, and services in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

As indicated in the tables above, two new government agencies with certain responsibilities related to child protection have been established since 2014: the Institute for Human Rights and the Swedish Gender Equality Agency. In addition, a national centre for knowledge concerning violence against children, Barnafriid, was established at Linköping University in 2015 through a government assignment. In relation to cooperation and coordination between the government and civil society, the Children's Rights Delegation (*Barnrättsdelegationen*) was established in 2016.

The fact that the CRC has become national law is an important step in developing governance and services in relation to child protection and the realisation of child rights in practice. However, certain challenges persist. The most recent report on Sweden's legislative compliance with the CRC, "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*) submitted in 2020, observed during their work that there is uncertainty about how to interpret and apply the CRC in services and that "[t]here is also uncertainty about service specific legislation and what it entails". The inquiry also noted that children's rights do not have sufficient impact in practical applications within agencies, municipalities or regions.<sup>555</sup>

As mentioned in several sections above, however, the government has adopted an action plan to implement the EU Child Guarantee. The action plan includes an analysis of actual access to key services in Sweden, which regulations apply, and which measures are in place to achieve the objectives. Even though the obligation to offer certain services, such as health-care, education and social services, is regulated in national policies, laws and regulations, it is largely up to the respective region and municipality to decide on their implementation. This, together with other factors, such as economic and geographical conditions and differences in the level of knowledge and political will among decision-makers, have led to disparities between municipalities and regions in the implementation of the CRC and in ensuring equal access to services for children. As mentioned in section 2.3.3. above, several actors have expressed concerns over these disparities, not least the UN Committee on the rights of the child in their two latest concluding observations on Sweden.<sup>556</sup> The Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*) has repeatedly pointed out major differences in children's access to their rights under

<sup>554</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2021) Sweden's international adoption operations – lessons learned and the way forward (*Sveriges internationella adoptionsverksamhet – lärdomar och vägen framåt*), committee directive, 28 October 2021.

<sup>555</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020, page 80.

<sup>556</sup> See for example United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2015), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 March 2015, and; United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023.

the Convention, including major regional differences regarding access to medical care, social services and the national protection system, and in the quality of education, as well as regarding how reports of suspected neglect or abuse are handled.<sup>557</sup> The report “An upbringing free from violence” (*En uppväxt fri från våld*) confirms that these challenges persist and risks leading to, for example, unequal health care and social care for children.<sup>558</sup>

In relation to child protection services, the development of Barnahus centres has continued since 2014. There are currently 33 Barnahus centres in Sweden.<sup>559</sup> However, Barnahus centres are not available throughout Sweden, and there are large differences across the country in accessing the specialised units that Barnahus offers. The latest review of Barnahus centres was conducted in 2018 by Barnafriid at Linköping University. The review reveals several shortcomings, including that some children fall outside the target group of the operations and that the geographical expansion of Barnahus centres seems to have stopped. The review also highlights a need for clearer national guidelines, uniform national governance and national coordination of operations. According to the evaluation, differences between regions entail a risk of unequal treatment, support and protection.<sup>560</sup> The Ombudsman for Children has called upon the government to address the identified shortcomings and to ensure equal access to the support that Barnahus offers.<sup>561</sup> In their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the rights of the child urged Sweden to “[a]dopt legislation aimed at ensuring multisectoral coordination in investigations and comprehensive quality standards of support services of Barnahus, including for forensic interviews, medical evaluation and therapeutic support to victims”.<sup>562</sup>

## 2.5. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in governance, coordination structures, and services that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Before the CRC was incorporated into Swedish law on 1 January 2020, the government assigned the Ombudsman for Children with the task of supporting municipalities, regions and particularly the relevant authorities in ensuring the application of the rights of the child based on the CRC. One result of that assignment is the process support enshrined in “Children’s Rights Journey” (*Barnrättsresan*).<sup>563</sup> Barnrättsresan is primarily aimed at officials in municipalities, regions or authorities. Through Barnrättsresan, participants gain knowledge and tools for the structured mapping and development of their work on children’s rights. The process support works both for organisations that are at the beginning of their child rights work and for those that have come further.<sup>564</sup> Barnrättsresan was launched in 2019. Since the launch, its webpage has had 117,959 page views,<sup>565</sup> according to the Ombudsman for Children.<sup>566</sup>

<sup>557</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>558</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 18.

<sup>559</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) Network for barnahus ‘[Nätverk för barnahus](#)’, official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>560</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2019) Final report - Evaluation of barnahus ([Slutrapport - Utvärdering av barnahus](#)), Linköping University, 2019.

<sup>561</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, pages 22 and 36.

<sup>562</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 26 (d).

<sup>563</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Children’s Rights Journey ‘[Barnrättsresan](#)’, official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>564</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Children’s Rights Journey ‘[Barnrättsresan](#)’, official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>565</sup> Between 1 November 2019 and 26 April 2023.

<sup>566</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

The Ombudsman for Children has also developed an online training course providing basic knowledge about the CRC aimed at professionals working with the implementation of the CRC in, for example, a municipality, region or government agency.<sup>567</sup> The training is available online for anyone to access at any time. It comprises eight standalone sessions. Each module takes around 15 minutes to complete. The Ombudsman for children recommends answering the reflection questions in the format of group discussions. According to the Ombudsman for Children, it is not possible to provide information about the number of trained professionals. However, it is possible to provide the number of individuals who have visited the first webpage of each session. Between 1 December 2019 and 26 April 2023, the page views are as follows: session 1, 71 044; session 2, 28 299; session 3, 28 299; session 4, 14 826; session 5, 11 482; session 6, 11 204; session 7, 9 051; and session 8, 9 000.<sup>568</sup>

In relation to cooperation models, there are several promising practices. One is the Children's Rights Delegation (*Barnrättsdelegationen*), mentioned in section 2.2.3. above, which functions as a forum for dialogue between the government and civil-society organisations in Sweden and the Government Offices Advisory Council (*Sakråd*) on child rights. It is a working method that complements other forms of consultation and increases the quality of the government's documentation.<sup>569</sup> Another is the network of government authorities for children and youth issues, which is based on the CRC and focuses on the rights of the child. Within the network, approximately 25 authorities collaborate to identify and coordinate interventions that affect children and young people.<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Online training on the Convention on the rights of the child '[Webbutbildning om barnkonventionen](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>568</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>569</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Advisory Council '[Sakråd](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>570</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) Network of government authorities for children and youth issues '[Myndighetsnätverket för barn- och ungdomsfrågor](#)', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

### 3. Capacities (human and financial resources)

#### 3.1. Information on budget allocation and funding

Question	YES	NO	Comments
3.1.1. Is budget allocation on child protection incorporated into legislative and policy instruments?	X		<p>The national budgetary allocation in relation to child protection is guided by policy objectives within several policy areas, such as the policy for social services,<sup>571</sup> the disability policy<sup>572</sup> and the child rights policy.<sup>573</sup> The overarching policy objectives are incorporated into different legislative and policy instruments. The child rights policy is intersectoral. This means that children's rights and interests should characterise all policies and operations affecting children.<sup>574</sup> Resource allocations linked to the child rights policy's objectives are reported within each policy area of the budget bill.<sup>575</sup></p> <p>At the local and regional levels, the municipalities budget is regulated by the Local Government Act (<i>Kommunallag [2017:725]</i>).<sup>576</sup> However, the Act does not stipulate specific areas of child protection such as child rights. This is instead developed through policy. For example, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges kommuner och Regioner, SKR</i>) has developed support materials on child rights in the budget process which are aimed to guide municipalities and regions in drawing up their budgets.<sup>577</sup></p> <p>An important part of the governance of municipalities and regions is financial contributions in the form of state subsidies from parliament and the government. These state subsidies can be targeted, being open to applications from individual regions and municipalities. They can also be general,</p>

<sup>571</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 (*Budgetpropositionen 2009*), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Individual and family care - the objective is to strengthen protection for children in vulnerable situations.

<sup>572</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) National goal and direction for disability policy (*Nationellt mål och inriktning för funktionshinderspolitiken*), government bill, 2016/17:188, 18 May 2018.

<sup>573</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2008) Budget bill 2009 (*Budgetpropositionen 2009*), budget bill, 2008/09:1, 12 September 2009. Child rights policy – the objective is that children and young people should be respected and given the opportunity of development and safety as well as participation and influence.

<sup>574</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) Incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Inkopporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter*), government bill, 17 Mars 2018.

<sup>575</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 (*Budgetpropositionen 2022*), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021, page 183.

<sup>576</sup> Sweden, Local government act (*Kommunallag [2017:725]*), 22 June 2017.

<sup>577</sup> See for example, Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) (2018) The rights of the child in the budget process (*Barnets rättigheter i budgetprocessen*), 15 May 2018.



		<p>indicating that the municipalities and regions can decide themselves for which initiatives and activities the subsidies will be used.<sup>578</sup> Targeted subsidies are often regulated by ordinances laying down certain conditions.<sup>579</sup> They can also be granted through an assigned authority distributing funds for a certain purpose. These are often based on government decisions.<sup>580</sup> Targeted state subsidies can also be granted in combination with agreements between the government and SALAR.<sup>581</sup></p> <p>In addition, several targeted state subsidies aimed at organisations are regulated by ordinances. For example, the Ordinance on state subsidies to certain organisations in the social field (<i>Förordning [2011:1062] om statsbidrag till vissa organisationer inom det sociala området</i>)<sup>582</sup> and the Ordinance on temporary state subsidies to non-profit organisations for quality-enhancing measures in sheltered accommodation (<i>Förordning [2022:291] om tillfälligt statsbidrag till ideella organisationer för kvalitetshöjande åtgärder på skyddade boenden</i>).<sup>583</sup></p>
3.1.2. Is the budget allocated to child protection (alternatively on children's rights or on social welfare) clearly specified in the annual national budget? Please refer to the specific budget item allocated to this in 2022?	X	<p>In the budget bill for 2022, the rights of the child (<i>barnets rättigheter</i>) and the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) were allocated specific budget posts within the framework of the child rights policy belonging to budget area 9, "Health, medical and social care".<sup>584</sup> However, these specific budget allocations are only complementary to the general budget posts containing central measures to ensure that children have access to an adequate child protection system. As stated in section 3.1.1. above, the child rights policy is intersectoral and should characterise all policies and operations affecting children. Further, the budget allocated to child protection is divided between several budget posts. For example, budget area 9</p>

<sup>578</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) (2022) The development of the state governance of municipalities and regions in 2021 ([Utvecklingen av den statliga styrningen av kommuner och regioner 2021](#)), page 23.

<sup>579</sup> See for example; Sweden, Ordinance on state subsidies for certain violence preventive work (*Förordning [2022:722] om statsbidrag för visst våldsförebyggande arbete*), 2 June 2022.

<sup>580</sup> See for example Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2019) Assignment on development work regarding certain activities at the National Board of Institutional Care ([Uppdrag om utvecklingsarbete avseende viss verksamhet vid Statens institutionsstyrelse](#)), government assignment, 25 September 2019; and Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2020) Assignment to distribute funds and provide competence support for work against violence in intimate relationships, etc ([Uppdrag att fördela utvecklingsmedel och ge kompetensstöd för arbete mot våld i nära relationer m.m.](#)), government decision, 12 March 2020.

<sup>581</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis (*Myndigheten för vård och omsorgsanalys*) (2022) In right direction? ([I rätt riktning?](#)), report 2022:3, 1 July 2022, page 8.

<sup>582</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on state subsidies to certain organisations in the social field (*Förordning [2011:1062] om statsbidrag till vissa organisationer inom det sociala området*), 13 October 2011.

<sup>583</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on temporary state subsidies to non-profit organisations for quality-enhancing measures in sheltered accommodation (*Förordning [2022:291] om tillfälligt statsbidrag till ideella organisationer för kvalitetshöjande åtgärder på skyddade boenden*), 21 April 2022.

<sup>584</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 9 - Health, medical and social care ([Utgiftsområde 9 - Hälsovård, sjukvård och social omsorg](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.



			<p>“Health, medical and social care” also includes specific budget posts in relation to the health-care policy, the policy for social services, and the disability policy.<sup>585</sup></p> <p>In addition to budget area 9, the following parts of the budget are relevant to social welfare and children protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- budget area 4, “Judiciary”;<sup>586</sup></li> <li>- budget area 8, “Migration”;<sup>587</sup> budget area 10, “Financial security in illness and disability”;<sup>588</sup></li> <li>- budget area 12, “Financial security for families and children”;<sup>589</sup></li> <li>- budget area 13, “Equality and the establishment of newly arrived persons”, and;<sup>590</sup></li> <li>- Budget area 16, “Education and university research”.<sup>591</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>3.1.3. What percentage of the total state budget was allocated to child protection in the last five years? If data is not available, please provide information on the budget allocated to social protection/social welfare in general.</b></p>			
<p>As stated in the section above, the rights of the child and the Ombudsman for Children are visible within the framework of the child rights policy under budget area 9, “Health, medical and social care”. The percentages of the total state budget allocated to the child rights policy in the last five years were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.06% (2022);<sup>592</sup> 0.04% (2021);<sup>593</sup> 0.045% (2020);<sup>594</sup> 0.047% (2019);<sup>595</sup> and 0.047% (2018).<sup>596</sup></li> </ul>			

<sup>585</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 9 - Health, medical and social care ([Utgiftsområde 9 - Hälsovård, sjukvård och social omsorg](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>586</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 4 - Judiciary ([Utgiftsområde 4 - Rättsväsende](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>587</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 8 - Migration ([Utgiftsområde 8 - Migration](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>588</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 10 - Financial security in illness and disability ([Utgiftsområde 10 – Ekonomisk trygghet vid sjukdom och funktionsnedsättning](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>589</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 12 - Financial security for families and children ([Utgiftsområde 12 – Ekonomisk trygghet för familjer och barn](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>590</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 13 - Equality and the establishment of newly arrived persons ([Utgiftsområde 13 – Jämställdhet och nyanlända invandrares etablering](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>591</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget area 16 – Education and university research ([Utgiftsområde 16 – Utbildning och universitetsforskning](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021.

<sup>592</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 ([Budgetpropositionen 2022](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021. Child rights policy: SEK 69,200,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,137,819,105,000.

<sup>593</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2020) Budget bill 2021 ([Budgetpropositionen 2021](#)), budget bill, 2020/21:1, 21 September 2020. Child rights policy: SEK 48,810,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,173,215,475,000.

<sup>594</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2019) Budget bill 2020 ([Budgetpropositionen 2020](#)), budget bill, 2019/20:1, 18 September 2019. Child rights policy: SEK 48,518,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,069,194,854,000.

<sup>595</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2018) Budget bill 2019 ([Budgetpropositionen 2019](#)), budget bill, 2018/19:1, 15 November 2018. Child rights policy: SEK 48,112,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,018,973,476,000.

<sup>596</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2017) Budget bill 2018 ([Budgetpropositionen 2018](#)), budget bill, 2017/18:1, 20 September 2017. Child rights policy: SEK 47,184,000. Total state budget: SEK 998,584,095,000.

Budget area 9 also includes additional budget posts in relation to health, social services and disabilities of relevance to social protection and social welfare. The percentages of the total state budget allocated to the entire budget area 9, "Health, medical and social care", in the last five years were as follows:

- 9.8% (2022);<sup>597</sup> 8.6% (2021);<sup>598</sup> 7.8% (2020);<sup>599</sup> 7.6% (2019);<sup>600</sup> 7.7% (2018).<sup>601</sup>

In addition, budget area 12, "Financial security for families and children", is aimed solely at social protection/social welfare. The percentages of the total state budget allocated to budget area 12 in the past five years were as follows:

- 9% (2022);<sup>602</sup> 8.8% (2021);<sup>603</sup> 9.5% (2020);<sup>604</sup> 9.5% (2019);<sup>605</sup> 9.4% (2018).<sup>606</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.1.4. Is the existing budget and funding of child protection services/institutions considered sufficient <u>and</u> sustainable (as compared to only project based for a limited period of time)?</p> <p>(Please consider available studies, reports at national level conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</p>		X	<p>The Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) has on several occasions stressed the importance of implementing a child-rights perspective in both national and local government budgets with a special focus on ensuring adequate resources for the rights of children in vulnerable situations. In their supplementary report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2022, the Ombudsman highlighted that it has "[...] repeatedly pointed out the inequality across the country in terms of children's access to their rights [...]". The Ombudsman emphasises that "[t]he lack of resources in social services, school health services and psychiatric care services for children and adolescents has become particularly evident during the pandemic" and that "Sweden needs to ensure that the implementation of the Convention takes</p>

<sup>597</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 ([Budgetpropositionen 2022](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021. Budget area 9: SEK 112,483,613,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,137,819,105,000.

<sup>598</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2020) Budget bill 2021 ([Budgetpropositionen 2021](#)), budget bill, 2020/21:1, 21 September 2020. Budget area 9: SEK 101,941,904,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,173,215,475,000.

<sup>599</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2019) Budget bill 2020 ([Budgetpropositionen 2020](#)), budget bill, 2019/20:1, 18 September 2019. Budget area 9: SEK 84,167,142,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,069,194,854,000.

<sup>600</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2018) Budget bill 2019 ([Budgetpropositionen 2019](#)), budget bill, 2018/19:1, 15 November 2018. Budget area 9: SEK 78,122,185. Total state budget: SEK 1,018,973,476,000.

<sup>601</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2017) Budget bill 2018 ([Budgetpropositionen 2018](#)), budget bill, 2017/18:1, 20 September 2017. Budget area 9: SEK 77,696,041,000. Total state budget: SEK 998,584,095,000.

<sup>602</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 ([Budgetpropositionen 2022](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021. Budget area 12: SEK 103,040,770,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,137,819,105,000.

<sup>603</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2020) Budget bill 2021 ([Budgetpropositionen 2021](#)), budget bill, 2020/21:1, 21 September 2020. Budget area 12: SEK 103,578,007,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,173,215,475,000.

<sup>604</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2019) Budget bill 2020 ([Budgetpropositionen 2020](#)), budget bill, 2019/20:1, 18 September 2019. Budget area 12: SEK 101,430,320,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,069,194,854,000.

<sup>605</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2018) Budget bill 2019 ([Budgetpropositionen 2019](#)), budget bill, 2018/19:1, 15 November 2018. Budget area 12: SEK 97,332,203,000. Total state budget: SEK 1,018,973,476,000.

<sup>606</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2017) Budget bill 2018 ([Budgetpropositionen 2018](#)), budget bill, 2017/18:1, 20 September 2017. Budget area 12: SEK 77,696,041,000. Total state budget: SEK 998,584,095,000.

		<p>place equally across the country regardless of municipal and/or regional economic conditions”.<sup>607</sup></p> <p>In their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended Sweden to “[a]llocate sufficient financial, technical and human resources to social services and improve their collaboration with education and health authorities.”<sup>608</sup></p> <p>In its report, “An upbringing free from violence” (<i>En uppväxt fri från våld</i>), the inquiry highlights the importance of allocating sufficient financial resources to increased efforts within the area of combating violence against children. According to the report, it is common for government authorities to be allocated specific government assignments through government decisions or their directions for appropriations (<i>regleringsbrev</i>).<sup>609</sup> The report states that there are both advantages and disadvantages in specific government assignments. Some government authorities who are assigned a large number of government assignments each year state that this work risks taking place at the expense of their regular work. The fact that many government assignments fall outside the authority’s ordinary processes is also described as influencing the anchoring and long-term impact. Some government authorities indicate difficulties in allocating sufficient resources after the completion of the assignments, even though there is a clear need for continual effort.<sup>610</sup> Several authorities emphasise the significant advantages of long-term assignments. Short and more time-limited assignments are described as less efficient and risky, resulting in a lack of continuity in their work.<sup>611</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in response to question 3.1.1. above, an important part of the governance of municipalities and regions is financial contributions in the form of state subsidies (targeted or general) from parliament and the government. According to a report by the Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis (<i>Myndigheten för vård- och omsorgsanalys</i>), the use of targeted state subsidies within the health-care and social-care sectors has</p>
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<sup>607</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 6(a).

<sup>608</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 29(d).

<sup>609</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 668.

<sup>610</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 667-670.

<sup>611</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 667-670.

			<p>increased in recent years. The authority found that the use of targeted state subsidies lacks preparatory analysis, long-term implementation and conditions for follow-up. This means that the use of such subsidies risk failing to produce long-term development.<sup>612</sup></p> <p>Furthermore, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges kommuner och Regioner, SKR</i>) has for a long time stressed the need for more general and fewer targeted state subsidies to municipalities and regions as a prerequisite for the sector to enable the sustainable, long-term and stable planning of budgets and operations. According to SALAR, targeted state subsidies provide uncertain planning conditions for municipalities and regions, contributing to reduced efficiency in the welfare sector and increasing inequality between municipalities.<sup>613</sup></p> <p>With regard to sufficient and sustainable funding to the Ombudsman for Children, see chapter 5 below.</p>
<p>3.1.5. Do EU funds play a substantial role in the funding of the national child protection system and/or related policies?</p> <p>Please provide information on the child protection areas and related services incl. providers that use EU funds (including what type of funds for which period of time).</p>		X	<p>EU funds do <i>not</i> play a substantial role in the funding of the national child protection system. As described in the sections above, the child rights policy and other social welfare areas are financed by the national budget. In addition, social services are financed by each municipality' budget.</p> <p>However, there are specific projects and other initiatives related to child protection that are financed by EU funds. For example, Save the Children Sweden (<i>Rädda barnen</i>) has several projects funded by ECHO and EuropeAid.<sup>614</sup> They are currently running a project partly funded by Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) called "JOURNEYS", which seeks to improve access to child-friendly justice, protection and recovery for child victims.<sup>615</sup> The aim of the project is to make the legal process more child-friendly for children who have been the victims of crime and to strengthen their right to protection and recovery. In addition, over two years, the national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children - Barnafriid, Save the Children Sweden, Marie Cederschiöld college (<i>Marie Cederschiöld högskola</i>), Gothenburg's church city mission (<i>Göteborgs kyrkliga stadsmision</i>) and Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (<i>Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset</i>) have participated in an EU-funded project</p>

<sup>612</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis (*Myndigheten för vård och omsorgsanalys*) (2022) In right direction? ([I rätt riktning?](#)), report 2022:3, 1 July 2022.

<sup>613</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) '[Hur ger statsbidragen bäst effekt?](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>614</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda barnen*) '[EU-finansierade projekt](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>615</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda barnen*) '[EU-finansierade projekt](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

		<p>called "After the Violence: Ensuring Child Rights Based Protection and Support to children who are victims of domestic violence, during and after their stay at women shelters in Sweden".<sup>616</sup> The project aims to strengthen the right to protection, support and participation for children who have experienced domestic violence both during and after their time in sheltered accommodation.</p> <p>A number of projects are financed through the Swedish Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The Swedish AMIF programme aims at ensuring a long-term sustainable migration policy and aims, among other things, to safeguard asylum law. The national managing authority is the Swedish Migration Agency. In 2021 and 2022, Save the Children Sweden, together with partners in the Netherlands, Italy and France, implemented the "IMPACT project" aiming to improve existing alternative care initiatives for unaccompanied and separated children in Sweden, France, Italy, the Netherlands and beyond.<sup>617</sup> In addition, some of the AMIF projects granted funding during the period 2021-2027 focus on strengthening the child rights perspective for migrant and asylum-seeking children. For example, Strömsunds municipality currently runs a project called "Children in families" (<i>Barn i familj</i>) aiming to ensure a clear child perspective for asylum-seeking children in families and strengthen child rights.<sup>618</sup> Save the Children Sweden (<i>Rädda Barnen</i>) runs a project called "Children in focus" (<i>Barn i fokus</i>), aiming to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive integration for children and their parents by focusing on children's rights in early and needs-based interventions.<sup>619</sup> SOS Children's Villages Sweden (<i>SOS Barnbyar</i>) runs a project called "Family partner" (<i>Familjepartner</i>) conducting family-strengthening national activities. SOS Children's Villages Sweden has developed a methodology based on a holistic approach that offers comprehensive support to the family, while also working strategically with advocacy work and knowledge dissemination.<sup>620</sup> During the period 2014-2020, the project "Unaccompanied in work" (<i>Ensamkommande i jobb</i>) was granted funding through the AMIF programme. The project aims to provide young people with employment preparation efforts in Uppsala and Stockholm.<sup>621</sup> During the same period, the</p>
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<sup>616</sup> Sweden, Linköping University (*Linköpings universitet*) '[Efter våldet - Rättigheter för barn i skyddat boende](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>617</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda barnen*) '[EU-finansierade projekt](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>618</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) '[Barn i familj](#)', official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>619</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda barnen*) '[Barn i fokus](#)', official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>620</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) '[SOS Barnbyar Sverige – Familjepartner](#)', official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>621</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) '[Ensamkommande i jobb](#)', official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

			<p>municipality of Strömsund was granted funds for the project “The best interests of the child in return processes” (<i>Barnens bästa vid återvändande</i>). The project aimed to reduce problems for unaccompanied children in the return process.<sup>622</sup></p> <p>Sweden’s national recovery and resilience plan does not include any initiatives or measures specifically targeting children.<sup>623</sup></p>
<p>3.1.6. Is corporate social responsibility developed at national level in relation to child protection services?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information on major child protection national programmes and actions that are primarily funded by the private sector or by public-private schemes/synergies.</p>		X	<p>In 2015, Sweden developed a national action plan on business and human rights.<sup>624</sup> The action plan refers to the United Nations Global Compact’s ‘Children’s Rights and Business Principles’, which provides guidance for companies on children’s rights. The strategy also mentions the role and responsibility of the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>). However, Sweden does not have a legally binding framework that requires businesses to respect children’s rights.<sup>625</sup></p>
<p>3.1.7. Has the involvement of the private sector in child protection recently significantly increased? Are there projects or programmes receiving governmental funding which outsource protection services for children? Please include civil society organisations and private companies contracted by government/local authorities to provide services.</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please explain the changes and the reasons hereof. Please provide information on the legal provisions regulating this and on the main services / groups of children that are</p>	X		<p>As stated in chapter 2 and section 3.1.1. above, the Swedish social welfare and child protection system includes tax-funded services falling within the responsibility of the government, regions or municipalities. This includes services within, for example, health care, social care and schooling/education. According to the Local Government Act (<i>Kommunallag [2017:725]</i>), municipalities and regions can delegate the management of certain municipal responsibilities to a legal entity or an individual.<sup>626</sup> However, if the municipal responsibility concerns the exercise of public authority (<i>myndighetsutövning</i>), it may only be delegated if this is based in law.<sup>627</sup></p> <p>Through public procurement, municipalities can assign private actors to provide certain services. The Social Services Act (<i>Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]</i>)<sup>628</sup> and the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) (<i>Lag</i></p>

<sup>622</sup> Sweden, Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*) ‘*Barnens bästa vid återvändande*’, official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>623</sup> European Council, Council of the European Union, [Annex to the Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Sweden](#), 26 April 2022.

<sup>624</sup> Sweden, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (*Utrikesdepartementet*) (2015) Action plan on business and human rights (*Handlingsplan för företagande och mänskliga rättigheter*), August 2015.

<sup>625</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF Sweden), [Report from civil society organisations working with child rights](#) (2022), 2015.

<sup>626</sup> Sweden, Local government act (*Kommunallag [2017:725]*), 1 January 2020, chapter 10, section 1.

<sup>627</sup> Sweden, Local government act (*Kommunallag [2017:725]*), 1 January 2020, chapter 10, section 1, second paragraph.

<sup>628</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]*), 7 June 2001, chapter 7.



<p>covered. Provide information based on indicative examples.</p>	<p>[1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade)<sup>629</sup> include provisions on the regulation of such delegations to private actors. According to the Local Government Act, the municipality or the region must control and follow up the services provided when they have been delegated to a private actor.<sup>630</sup></p> <p>During the past 20 years, an increasing part of services within the welfare system (health-care, the school system, and child and youth social services)<sup>631</sup> are provided by non-state actors, such as private companies, non-profit associations, municipal associations or foundations. There are several reasons behind the changes such as certain legislative changes<sup>632</sup> and the implementation of New Public Management (NPM)-related reforms.<sup>633</sup></p> <p>For example, NPM-related reforms have involved the outsourcing of out-of-home care to private providers.<sup>634</sup> Therefore, so-called residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) and residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>) are often run by private actors.<sup>635</sup> As mentioned above, the municipalities lay down the requirements for the quality of their operations, primarily through public procurement.<sup>636</sup> The phrase “residential care homes for young persons” embraces a number of different kinds of institutions. Some residential care homes for young persons fall under the responsibility of the National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>). These are called special residential homes for young people (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>). The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) has directed clear and recurring criticism against both residential support and residential care homes for young persons, as well as the special residential</p>
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<sup>629</sup> Sweden, the Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (LSS) ([\[1993:387\] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade](#)), 1 January 2020, section 23.

<sup>630</sup> Sweden, Local government act ([\[2017:725\]](#)), 1 January 2020, chapter 10, section 8.

<sup>631</sup> For data, see Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) '[Kommunernas köp av verksamhet](#)', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>632</sup> See for example Järkestig Berggren, U. Arnesson, K. Bergman, A-S. (2021) '[The Take-off for Private Consultants in Child Protection Investigations—How Did Sweden Get Here?](#)' *British Journal of Social Work*, 51, pp. 1463–1481, page 1465.

<sup>633</sup> See for example, Lundström, T Sallnäs, M. Pålsson, D. Shanks, E. (2021) '[A Crisis in Swedish Child Welfare? On Risk, Control and Trust](#)' *Social Work & Society*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 2021; and Järkestig Berggren, U. Arnesson, K. Bergman, A-S. (2021) '[The Take-off for Private Consultants in Child Protection Investigations—How Did Sweden Get Here?](#)' *British Journal of Social Work*, 51, pp. 1463–1481.

<sup>634</sup> Lundström, T Sallnäs, M. Pålsson, D. Shanks, E. (2021) '[A Crisis in Swedish Child Welfare? On Risk, Control and Trust](#)' *Social Work & Society*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 2021.

<sup>635</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) (2021) Procurement and follow-up of HVB ([Upphandling och uppföljning av HVB](#)), 978-91-7585-964-4, 7 June 2021.

<sup>636</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) (2021) Procurement and follow-up of HVB ([Upphandling och uppföljning av HVB](#)), 978-91-7585-964-4, 7 June 2021.



			<p>homes for young people run by the National Board of Institutional Care.<sup>637</sup></p> <p>Another evolving practice within the area of child protection is the use of private consultants in child protection investigations. Since 2014, there has been a significant increase in the use of privately employed social workers in child protection investigations.<sup>638</sup> This practice has, however, been subject to debate concerning, among other things, the legal conditions of child protection investigations in relation to the exercise of public authority.<sup>639</sup></p> <p>Moreover, sheltered accommodation for women and children is to a large extent run by non-profit organisations. Currently there is, as mentioned under section 3.1.1. above, an Ordinance on temporary state subsidies to non-profit organisations regarding quality-enhancing measures in sheltered accommodation.<sup>640</sup></p>
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### 3.2. Information on human resources, qualification requirements, and training

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.2.1. Are the allocated human resources in the area of child protection at all levels sufficient? (services, institutions etc.)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United</i></p>		X	<p>Several actors have stressed that allocated human resources in certain areas in relation to child protection are insufficient. The major insufficiencies are reported at the regional and local levels, as regions and municipalities are the main service providers.</p> <p>As stated under question 3.1.4 above, the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) has on several occasions highlighted the lack of resources in social services, school health services and psychiatric care services and the inequalities across the country in terms of children's access to</p>

<sup>637</sup> See for example, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*) (2022) What has IVO seen in 2021? ([Vad har IVO sett 2021?](#)), 3 March 2022.

<sup>638</sup> Järkestig Berggren, U. Arnesson, K. Bergman, A-S. (2021) [‘The Take-off for Private Consultants in Child Protection Investigations—How Did Sweden Get Here?’](#) *British Journal of Social Work*, 51, pp. 1463–1481, page 1465.

<sup>639</sup> See for example: Järkestig Berggren, U. Arnesson, K. Bergman, A-S. (2021) [‘The Take-off for Private Consultants in Child Protection Investigations—How Did Sweden Get Here?’](#) *British Journal of Social Work*, 51, pp. 1463–1481; Linnéuniversitetet [‘Projekt: Barnavårdsutredning i privat regi – förekomst, organisering och betydelse för praktiken’](#), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023; Göteborgsposten [‘Se över privatiseringen av barnavården’](#), 29 June 2021.

<sup>640</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on temporary state subsidies to non-profit organisations for quality-enhancing measures in sheltered accommodation ([Förordning \[2022:291\] om tillfälligt statsbidrag till ideella organisationer för kvalitetshöjande åtgärder på skyddade boenden](#)), 21 April 2022.

<p><i>Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>			<p>their rights.<sup>641</sup> Likewise, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has on several occasions criticised Sweden for allocating insufficient resources to social services and for the large regional differences when it comes to efforts and processes for children in need of protection and support.<sup>642</sup> As mentioned under question 3.1.4 above, the UN Committee on the rights of the child recommended Sweden to “[a]llocate sufficient financial, technical and human resources to social services [...]” in their latest concluding observations on Sweden.<sup>643</sup></p> <p>At the regional level, a recent report from the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) reveals that children with mental health issues have to wait a long time in order to receive care due to, among other things, a lack of human resources. Most regions do not live up to the health-care guarantee granting children access to mental health support within 30 days. There are also children who have undergone mental health evaluations and been diagnosed but still have to wait a long time for treatment.<sup>644</sup> The lack of human resources within child and youth psychiatric care has also repeatedly been reported in the media.<sup>645</sup></p> <p>There are also reports of a lack of resources at the national level. For example, in 2021, the Swedish National Audit Office (<i>Riksrevisionen</i>) published a report on whether the Swedish police and prosecutors are working effectively to counteract and handle the internet-related sexual abuse of children.<sup>646</sup> The review reveals a number of internal shortcomings, including major difficulties in obtaining sufficient support from the police authority's IT and human resource departments.</p>
<p>3.2.2 Are the allocated human resources competent in the area of child protection and appropriately trained?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by</i></p>		X	<p>Municipalities are the main actors responsible for social services and child protection. As will be described in section 3.2.3. below, municipalities' Social Welfare Boards (<i>socialnämnd</i>) must, as a general rule, employ officers who have completed a degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work (<i>socionomexamen</i>) for the performance of tasks</p>

<sup>641</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 6(a).

<sup>642</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 24.

<sup>643</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 29(d).

<sup>644</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022) Children who suffer from mental health problems have to wait a long time to receive care (*Barn som mår psykiskt dåligt får vänta länge på hjälp*), 20 June 2022.

<sup>645</sup> See for example; Swedish Radio (Sveriges Radio) (2022) [‘BUP saknar personal i nästan hela landet – hundratals anställda fattas’](#), 31 January 2022; Läkartidningen (2022) [‘Regioner saknar personal till BUP – växande köer kritiserar av Ivo’](#), 31 January 2022.

<sup>646</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Audit Office (*Riksrevisionen*) (2021) Internet-related sexual abuses against children - major challenges for police and prosecutors ([Internetrelaterade sexuella övergrepp mot barn – stora utmaningar för polis och åklagare](#)), 12 October 2021.

<p>public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</p>		<p>within the social services concerning children and young persons.<sup>647</sup></p> <p>According to the latest status report on individual and family care<sup>648</sup> by the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is a balance in the availability of newly graduated officers who have completed a degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work, but a lack of applicants with professional experience;<sup>649</sup></li> <li>- currently, all municipalities' Social Welfare Boards are licenced by the National Board of Health and Welfare for using "Children's needs in the centre"<sup>650</sup> (<i>Barns behov i centrum</i>, BBIC).<sup>651</sup> However, only 15% of municipalities indicate that they have an up-to-date joint plan for the competence development of officers within the social service's area of children and young persons.<sup>652</sup> The percentage has basically been at the same level for the past five years.</li> </ul> <p>The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg</i>, IVO) has repeatedly reported on shortcomings in child and youth social care. For example, in a report from 2020 the authority states that the municipalities have not managed to remedy the shortcomings in child and youth social care to maintain a good quality in their services. It specifically notes that, despite extensive knowledge support, there are social workers who lack the necessary knowledge to ensure a legally secure procedure. Furthermore, one of the most common deficiencies in housing with special services for children and young persons is the lack of competence among the personnel.<sup>653</sup> In another report, the authority states that professional competence at special residential homes for young people (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>) run by the National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens</i></p>
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<sup>647</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]*), 15 April 2016, chapter 3, section 3a.

<sup>648</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Individual and family care - Status report 2022 (*Individ- och familjeomsorg – Lägesrapport 2022*), 2022-3-7832, March 2022.

<sup>649</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Individual and family care - Status report 2022 (*Individ- och familjeomsorg – Lägesrapport 2022*), 2022-3-7832, March 2022.

<sup>650</sup> BBIC is a help and a tool for social workers to work with social services' child care in a structured way, with a focus on the child and its needs, see National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) '*Krav för att få använda Barns behov i centrum*', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>651</sup> In 2014, only 72 percent of the municipalities had been licenced.

<sup>652</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Individual and family care - Status report 2022 (*Individ- och familjeomsorg – Lägesrapport 2022*), 2022-3-7832, March 2022.

<sup>653</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2020) Social child and youth care (*Sociala barn- och ungdomsvården*), 21 February 2020.

		<p><i>institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>), needs to be improved.<sup>654</sup> Several reports by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate have also stated that the social services and health-care services do not always consider and investigate the situation of children who may be exposed to violence and/or have witnessed violence in intimate relationships.<sup>655</sup></p> <p>A 2017 report from the national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children - Barnafriid on knowledge needs in social services on violence against children highlighted shortcomings and needs in basic training, introductory training and specialist training for personnel within child and youth social care.<sup>656</sup></p> <p>Another report from Barnafriid on children's houses (<i>barnahus</i>) conducted in 2018 revealed a lack of trained investigating officers for children (<i>barnförhållsledare</i>).<sup>657</sup> This lack is confirmed in the recently published report "An upbringing free from violence" (<i>En uppväxt fri från våld</i>). According to the inquiry, the deficiency has become more evident after the introduction of the new offence of "violation of a child's integrity" which entered into force in 2021<sup>658</sup> and led to an increased number of reported cases. The shortcomings have resulted in a delay to interviewing children or interviews being conducted by police officers and civilian employees without adequate training.<sup>659</sup></p> <p>In their latest concluding observations, the UN Committee on the rights of the child recommended Sweden provide training to several professions. For example, the Committee recommended Sweden to "[e]nsure that all relevant professionals working with and for children, including the judiciary, systematically receive appropriate training on</p>
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<sup>654</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022) Supervision at special residential homes for young people run by SiS (*Tillsyn av SiS särskilda ungdomshem*), January 2023.

<sup>655</sup> See for example; Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2020) Children risk being left without support and help (*Barn riskerar att bli utan stöd och hjälp*), 7 January 2020; and Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022) Men's violence against women, violence in intimate relationships and honour-related violence and oppression 2022-2023 (*Mäns våld mot kvinnor, våld i nära relationer och hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck åren 2022-2023*), 28 April 2022.

<sup>656</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2017) Knowledge needs in social services on violence against children (*Kunskapsbehov inom socialtjänsten om våld mot barn*), Linköping University, 2017.

<sup>657</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2019) Final report - Evaluation of barnahus (*Slutrapport - Utvärdering av barnahus*), Linköping University, 2019.

<sup>658</sup> The new offence is described in chapter 1 above.

<sup>659</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 577.

			children's right to be heard and to have their views taken into account". <sup>660</sup>
<p>3.2.3. Is there a <u>compulsory certification or licencing process</u> for social workers and other professionals who work for child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly describe the process.</p>	X		<p>As indicated in section 3.2.2. above, the Social Services Act (<i>Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]</i>) explicitly states that the municipalities' Social Welfare Boards (<i>socialnämnd</i>) must employ officers who have completed a degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work (<i>socionomexamen</i>) or other relevant Bachelor's degree in university colleges. This applies to the performance of tasks within the social services concerning children and young persons involving: assessment of whether an investigation should be initiated; investigation and assessment of the need for intervention or other action; or following up already decided interventions.<sup>661</sup> In this context, an investigation means an assessment of whether a child may need protection or support.</p> <p>Students receive a degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Work (<i>socionomexamen</i>) after completing the study programme for social work (<i>socionomprogrammet</i>), which includes 3.5 years full-time university studies. The objectives of the degree are outlined in the Ordinance on Higher Education (<i>Högskoleförordning [1993:100]</i>).<sup>662</sup> Students must, among other things, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of children's needs and of the social and family conditions that affect women's and men's living conditions. They must also demonstrate knowledge of men's violence against women and violence in intimate relationships.<sup>663</sup></p> <p>Anyone who is offered a position in the state, a municipality, a region, a company or an organisation where work involves direct and regular contact with children shall on request show an extract from their register kept under the Act for Criminal Records (<i>Lag [1998] om belastningsregister</i>).<sup>664</sup> Mandatory register control is, among other things, regulated in the Education Act,<sup>665</sup> the Act on register checks of personnel at certain housing receiving children (<i>Lag [2007:171] om registerkontroll av personal vid vissa boenden som tar emot barn</i>),<sup>666</sup> and the Act on register checks of personnel who carry out certain interventions for children with disabilities (<i>Lag</i></p>

<sup>660</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 20 (e).

<sup>661</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:453]*), 15 April 2016, chapter 3, section 3a.

<sup>662</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education (*Högskoleförordning [1993:100]*), 4 February 1993.

<sup>663</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education (*Högskoleförordning [1993:100]*), 4 February 1993, annex 2.

<sup>664</sup> Sweden, Act on registration and control of persons who intend to work with children (*Lag [(2013:852] om registerkontroll av personer som ska arbeta med barn)*), 14 November 2013.

<sup>665</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag [2010:800]*), 1 July 2021, chapter 2, section 31.

<sup>666</sup> Sweden, Act on register control of personnel at certain housing receiving children (*Lag [2007:171] om registerkontroll av personal vid vissa boenden som tar emot barn*), 19 April 2007.

		<p>[2010:479] om registerkontroll av personal som utför vissa insatser åt barn med funktionshinder).<sup>667</sup></p> <p>The National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) has developed regulations and general advice in relation to other relevant bachelor degrees in university colleges for the performance of tasks within the social services (including foreign degrees).<sup>668</sup> The authority has also developed regulations and general advice in relation to the processing of cases involving young offenders, including competence requirements.<sup>669</sup> In addition, the authority has developed general recommendations on knowledge of personnel who provide support, service or care to persons with disabilities.<sup>670</sup></p>
<p>3.2.4. Are there any <u>selection criteria</u> (for example qualification requirements) and <u>vetting procedures</u> for volunteers working with children in various areas?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>	X	<p>In 2013, the Act on the registration and checking of persons who intend to work with children (<i>Lag [2013:852] om registerkontroll av personer som ska arbeta med barn</i>) entered into force. As stated in the section above, the Act requires anyone who is offered a position in the state, a municipality, a region, a company or an organisation where work involves direct and regular contact with children must on request show an extract from the register kept under the Act for Criminal Records (<i>Lag [1998] om belastningsregister</i>).<sup>671</sup> An extract from the register shall also, on request, be provided by anyone who is assigned a task involving direct and regular contact with children within these actors/authorities through, for example, an assignment or internship.<sup>672</sup></p> <p>Certain civil-society organisations also require a register check in order to become a volunteer, for example, Save the Children Sweden (<i>Rädda barnen</i>).<sup>673</sup></p>

<sup>667</sup> Sweden, Act on register control of personnel who carry out certain interventions for children with disabilities (*Lag [2010:479] om registerkontroll av personal som utför vissa insatser åt barn med funktionshinder*).

<sup>668</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on competence to perform certain tasks in social services' child and youth care (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om behörighet att utföra vissa arbetsuppgifter i socialtjänstens barn- och ungdomsvård*), HSLF-FS 2017:79, 1 July 2019.

<sup>669</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's general advice on the processing of cases concerning young offenders (*Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om handläggning av ärenden som gäller unga lagöverträdare*), 17 December 2019.

<sup>670</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's general advice on the knowledge among personnel who provide support, service or care according to SoL and LSS to persons with disabilities (*Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om kunskaper hos personal som ger stöd, service eller omsorg enligt SoL och LSS till personer med funktionsnedsättning*), SOSFS 2014:2, 1 February 2022.

<sup>671</sup> Sweden, Act on registration and control of persons who intend to work with children (*Lag [(2013:852)] om registerkontroll av personer som ska arbeta med barn*), 14 November 2013.

<sup>672</sup> Sweden, Act on registration and control of persons who intend to work with children (*Lag [(2013:852)] om registerkontroll av personer som ska arbeta med barn*), 14 November 2013, section 3.

<sup>673</sup> Save the Children Sweden (Rädda barnen) '*Bli volontär*', official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.



<p>3.2.5. Is there <u>regular training</u> on issues related to the identification, referral, and intervention for children delivered to specialists involved in this area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please include information on the training of law enforcement officials (judges, persecutors, police), health and education personnel (doctors, nurses, teachers, school counsellors).</p> <p>Please provide information on the mandatory nature of training, its frequency, funding, if it relates to specific needs of children, etc.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p><b>Swedish Police Authority</b></p> <p>The Police Authority's training for investigating officers for children (<i>barnförhållsledare</i>), mentioned under section 3.2.1. above, has recently been amended. A new training regime (<i>utredning fördjupad barn</i>) was initiated during the autumn of 2021.<sup>674</sup> The training is aimed at all investigating officers who investigate crimes involving children, i.e. persons under the age of 18, whether appearing as accused, witnesses or suspects. The new training includes rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), procedural regulations with regard to children, the penalty system for children who have reached the age of criminal responsibility, evidence evaluation, children's special vulnerability and dependency, developmental psychology, interrogation methods with regard to children, the role of the social services, cooperation between social services and other actors, and confidentiality legislation. The training is carried out under the Police Authority's own auspices and has 40 different training locations. It comprises 30 study days, which are spread over seven weeks.<sup>675</sup> The training was carried out for the first time during the autumn of 2021, encompassing 40 training places. In 2022, the training was revised to include 288 training places. The training planned for 2023 has 96 training places.<sup>676</sup> The number of training places and the regularity of the course is determined based on current needs, but also by the extent to which it is possible to spare officers from regular activities in order to conduct the training.<sup>677</sup> The training is funded by the Police Authority's Human Resource Competence Department. An additional part of the training is currently under development and is expected to be completed in 2024.<sup>678</sup></p> <p>According to the Police Authority, 336 employees have completed the new training as of today. In parallel with the introduction of the new training, about 90 child investigators who previously completed stage 1 of the former training have also completed stage 2.<sup>679</sup> The government reports that, since 2017, the Swedish Police Authority offers all</p>
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<sup>674</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes (*Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott*), government official report, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, page 168.

<sup>675</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes (*Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott*), government official report, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, page 169.

<sup>676</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*), 25 April 2023.

<sup>677</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes (*Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott*), government official report, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, page 169.

<sup>678</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*), 25 April 2023.

<sup>679</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*), 25 April 2023.



		<p>employees interactive training on trafficking in human beings with children.<sup>680</sup></p> <p><b>Swedish Prosecution Authority</b></p> <p>According to the Prosecution Authority's handbook on Children, each prosecutor's office should concentrate child cases and allocate them to a number of specially appointed prosecutors. These prosecutors should have completed the authority's course on Child Abuse - Basic, Sexual Abuse And Violence (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – bas, sexuella övergrepp och våld</i>). The prosecutors who handle children's cases must also be offered supervision.<sup>681</sup></p> <p>The authority offers a wide range of courses relevant for child rights and child protection. The courses are aimed at prosecutors.<sup>682</sup> The courses offered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic training for newly employed prosecutors</li> </ul> <p>The basic training consists of four educational blocks of a total of 14 weeks. The training is carried out over a period of approximately 2.5 years and includes training sessions such as "Child abuse" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn</i>), "IT crimes and crimes in IT environment" (<i>It-brott och brott i it-miljö</i>) and "documented sexual abuse against children" (<i>Dokumenterade sexuella övergrepp av barn</i>). In addition, there is a training session on the CRC. The basic training for newly employed prosecutors is undergoing a review, and a new basic training course will be introduced in autumn 2023.<sup>683</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing education on crimes against children</li> </ul> <p>For prosecutors who have completed the basic training and are public prosecutors (<i>kammaråklagare</i>), a number of optional training courses are offered. There are in total three courses on Child Abuse: "Child Abuse - Basic" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – bas</i>), "Child Abuse - Violence" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – våld</i>) and "Child Abuse - Sex" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – sex</i>). In addition, there is a course on "IT Crimes Advanced" (<i>It-brott avancerad</i>), which, among other things, addresses investigation methods in cases concerning the internet-related sexual abuse of children and child pornography offences. In addition, there are courses on "Violence in Intimate Relationships" (<i>Våld i nära relationer</i>) and</p>
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<sup>680</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>681</sup> Sweden, Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*) (2019) Crimes against Children – Prosecutors Handbook on Children (*Brott mot barn – Åklagarens barnhandbok*), 2019.

<sup>682</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 30 March 2023.

<sup>683</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 30 March 2023.

		<p>"Honour-related Crimes" (<i>Hedersrelaterat brottslighet</i>) where the child-rights perspective is highlighted.<sup>684</sup></p> <p>"Child abuse - basic" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – bas</i>) is offered every year;  "Child abuse - violence" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – våld</i>) is offered every second year;  "Child abuse - sex" (<i>Övergrepp mot barn – sex</i>) is offered every second year;  "Violence in intimate relationships" (<i>Våld i nära relationer</i>) is offered every second year;  "Honour-related crimes" (<i>Hedersrelaterat brottslighet</i>) is offered 2022 and 2023;  "IT crimes advanced" (<i>It-brott avancerad</i>) is offered in 2023.<sup>685</sup></p> <p>The Prosecution Authority's entire educational operation (<i>Utbildningsverksamheten</i>) is financed from the general grant that the authority receives from the government.<sup>686</sup></p> <p>The Prosecution Authority's educational activity does not cooperate with the Police Authority or the Judicial Training Academy regarding training at the national level. However, cooperation between the Prosecution Authority and the Police Authority may exist at the local or regional level.<sup>687</sup></p> <p><b>Judicial Training Academy</b></p> <p>According to the Judicial Training Academy (<i>Domstolsakademin</i>), the Academy offers a wide range of courses relevant for child rights and child protection. The courses are held each year, have the same course content and are primarily aimed at permanent judges. As there are no mandatory courses for permanent judges, it is up to each judge to sign up for the courses.<sup>688</sup> The courses offered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Court-joint courses  "Convention on the rights of the child" (<i>Barnkonventionen</i>).  "In the name of honour" (<i>I hederns namn</i>) the focus is not only on children, but highlights issues of honour, which also include children.</li> <li>- Criminal law  "Youth cases" (<i>ungdomsmål</i>) – the course focuses on juvenile cases and penalties for juveniles.</li> </ul>
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<sup>684</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 30 March 2023.

<sup>685</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 30 March 2023.

<sup>686</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 21 April 2023.

<sup>687</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Prosecution Authority (*Åklagarmyndigheten*), 21 April 2023.

<sup>688</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 7 March 2023.

		<p>“Sexual offences and violence in intimate relationships” (<i>Sexualbrott och våld i nära relationer</i>) - the focus is not only on children, but it is relevant since children can be plaintiffs, witnesses and defendants in these types of cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family cases</li> </ul> <p>“Best interests of the child” (<i>Barnets bästa</i>)  LVU for general courts (<i>LVU för allmän domstol</i>) – the course describes the administrative law’s provisions on the compulsory custody of children.  Choice of path in matters of custody, residence and contact (<i>Vägval i mål om vårdnad, boende och umgänge</i>) – the course deals with the choices the court faces in complicated custody cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migration law</li> </ul> <p>Children and young persons in migration cases (<i>Barn och unga i migrationsmål</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compulsory cases</li> </ul> <p>Advanced course on compulsory cases – LVU (<i>Fördjupning i tvångsmål – LVU</i>).<sup>689</sup></p> <p>The Academy also offers “subject days” (<i>ämnesdagar</i>) where the content varies but usually covers current topics (e.g. a bill, new law or new practice).<sup>690</sup></p> <p>In addition, to the courses aimed at permanent judges, the Academy offers certain courses aimed at junior judges (<i>fiskaler</i>) with relevance for child protection. The following courses are mandatory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative Courts</li> </ul> <p>Course FD 6 includes a child rights perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Courts</li> </ul> <p>Course AD4 – focuses on civil proceedings; day 4 focuses on family cases.  Course AD8 - focuses on civil proceedings; day 4 focuses on family cases and the best interests of the child.<sup>691</sup></p> <p>The Judicial Training Academy is financed through grants from the government. The authority is allocated a certain amount each year which is distributed within certain areas. Exact sums for specific training courses cannot be provided, as this depends on issues such as whether the training takes place online, the number of participants etc.<sup>692</sup></p>
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<sup>689</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 7 March 2023.

<sup>690</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 7 March 2023.

<sup>691</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 7 March 2023.

<sup>692</sup> Telephone call with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 20 April 2023.

		<p>Currently, the Judicial Training Academy has no collaborations or joint courses with the Prosecution Authority or the Police Authority. However, cooperation between the Judicial Training Academy and the Prosecution Authority/Police Authority may exist at the local or regional level. Such cooperations are not regulated centrally.<sup>693</sup></p> <p><b>Health-care personnel</b></p> <p>The National Board of Health and Welfare offers a range of training courses relevant for child rights and child protection.<sup>694</sup> Most courses are conducted online, free of charge and accessible to everyone. A few courses are instructor-based. The authority offers the courses but has no requirements for employees in the health-care sector to undergo them. However, regions, municipalities and other employers may require employees to attend some of the training sessions. Higher education institutions may also require students to take the courses within the framework of their education.<sup>695</sup> Some relevant courses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Honour-related violence and oppression - health care (<i>Hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck - hälso- och sjukvården</i>),<sup>696</sup></li> <li>- Female genital mutilation of girls and women (<i>Könsstympning av flickor och kvinnor</i>),<sup>697</sup></li> <li>- Act on Compulsory Psychiatric Care for children and young persons (<i>Lag om psykiatrisk tvångsvård för barn och unga</i>).<sup>698</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Education personnel</b></p> <p>Since 2017, the National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) has had a collaboration and agreement with Save the Children Sweden<sup>699</sup> regarding Training in Trauma-Aware Care (<i>Utbildning i traumamedveten omsorg, TMO</i>).<sup>700</sup> The training is offered to personnel in all types of schools, from preschool to adult education. The training is carried out in four stages, with approximately 3–4 weeks between each stage.</p>
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<sup>693</sup> Telephone call with senior official at the Judicial Training Academy (*Domstolsakademin*), 20 April 2023.

<sup>694</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Training '*Utbildningar*', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>695</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), 13 March 2023.

<sup>696</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Honour-related violence and oppression - health care (*Hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck - hälso- och sjukvården*), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>697</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Female genital mutilation of girls and women (*Könsstympning av flickor och kvinnor*), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>698</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Act on compulsory psychiatric care for children and young persons (*Lag om psykiatrisk tvångsvård för barn och unga*), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>699</sup> Sweden, Save the Children Sweden (*Rädda Barnen*) Trauma-aware care (*Traumamedveten omsorg*), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>700</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) Training in trauma-aware care (*Utbildning i traumamedveten omsorg, TMO*), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

			<p>The principal reports interest to the National Agency for Education, who then decides an allocation based on the application in dialogue with Save the Children. The principal thereafter decides on participation. The training is open to all personnel, regardless of professional category.<sup>701</sup></p> <p>In 2022, the authority started a new collaboration with Save the Children, "Listen, Calm, Strengthen" (<i>Lyssna, Lugna, Stärk</i>) which is offered to personnel at preschools and schools. The training provides a theoretical basis on important aspects of common acute-stage crisis reactions by children and on concrete tools assisting adults to help and support children in different ages.<sup>702</sup></p> <p>In both the courses above, the National Agency for Education has procured Save the Children to conduct the training.<sup>703</sup></p> <p>The National Agency for Education also offers a number of online training courses regarding honour-related violence and oppression. One is targeting school management and student health in primary, secondary and upper secondary schools.<sup>704</sup> The authority also offers online training courses on sexuality, consent and relationships, targeting honour-related violence and oppression.<sup>705</sup></p>
<p>3.2.6. Are child rights and child protection topics included in the curriculum of studies for professionals other than social workers and psychologists involved in child protection systems? (Please include information regarding law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, health, and education personnel)</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>		X	<p>Child rights and child protection topics are included in some curriculums, but not all.</p> <p><b>The Police Authority's basic training for police officers</b></p> <p>Child rights and child protection topics are not explicitly mentioned in the training curricula (<i>utbildningsplan</i>) for the Police Authority's basic training for police officers (<i>polisprogrammet</i>). However, the training curricula states that students shall be able to apply human rights in all aspects of the police authority's areas of operation and working methods. The students must also be able to apply national and EU legislation relevant to policing and have gained knowledge of how the crime victim's perspective should permeate the police authority's</p>

<sup>701</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Agency for Education, 13 March 2023.

<sup>702</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Agency for Education, 13 March 2023.

<sup>703</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), 20 April 2023.

<sup>704</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) Honour-related violence and oppression ([Hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>705</sup> See for example: Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) Sexuality, consent and relationships ([Sexualitet, samtycke och relationer](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

		<p>crime prevention and crime investigation activities.<sup>706</sup></p> <p><b>Degree of Master of Laws, LL.M</b></p> <p>All judges, prosecutors and lawyers in Sweden must have a degree of Master of Laws (<i>juristexamen</i>) which includes 4.5 years full-time university studies at those of Sweden's seven universities that offer the programme. Family law is included in all course curricula (<i>kursplaner</i>).<sup>707</sup> Within the area of family law, children's law is specifically mentioned in 6 out of 7 curricula. In 2018, a new degree objective for the Master of Laws was introduced within the framework of the Ordinance on Higher Education (<i>Högskoleförordning [1993:100]</i>) regarding men's violence against women and violence in intimate relationships.<sup>708</sup></p> <p><b>Medical Degree</b></p> <p>To become a registered medical practitioner, students must have a medical degree (<i>läkarexamen</i>). The new degree objective within the framework of the Ordinance on Higher Education regarding men's violence against women and violence in intimate relationships mentioned above is also applicable to medical degrees.<sup>709</sup> The Higher Education Ordinance also stipulates that, in order to obtain the degree, the student must demonstrate the ability to take a health-promoting approach with a holistic view of the patient based on a scientific approach and with particular consideration of ethical principles and human rights.<sup>710</sup> The training curricula (<i>utbildningsplaner</i>) available include knowledge of children's diseases and pediatric medicine.<sup>711</sup> None of the curricula refer to child rights. However, a few mention child abuse (<i>barnmisshandel</i>) and deviations (<i>avvikelser</i>) within the field of clinical medicine (<i>klinisk medicin</i>).<sup>712</sup></p> <p><b>Degrees in Education</b></p> <p>According to the degree objectives for the Degree of Master of Arts in Primary Education</p>
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<sup>706</sup> Sweden, Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*) (2022) Training curricula for the Police Authority's basic training for police officers (*Utbildningsplan för Polisprogrammet*), 21 December 2021.

<sup>707</sup> See for example, Gothenburg University, Family law (*familjerätt*); Karlstad University, Family law (*Familjerätt*); Lund University, The social dimension of Private Law (*Civilrättens sociala dimension*); Stockholm University, Civil Law C (*Civilrätt C*); Umeå University Civil Law (*Civilrätt*); Uppsala University, Civil Law (*Civilrätt*); and Örebro University, Privacy Law (*Privaträtt*).

<sup>708</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education (*Högskoleförordning [1993:100]*), 4 February 1993.

<sup>709</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education (*Högskoleförordning [1993:100]*), 4 February 1993. This requirement is also applicable to psychology degrees, nursing degrees, dental care degrees.

<sup>710</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education (*Högskoleförordning [1993:100]*), 4 February 1993.

<sup>711</sup> See for example Uppsala University: '*Utbildningsplan för Läkarprogrammet*', Örebro University: '*Utbildningsplan Läkarprogrammet*'; Linköping University, '*Utbildningsplan Läkarprogrammet.pdf*' Umeå University: '*Utbildningsplan Läkarprogrammet*', Karolinska Institutet: '*Läkarprogrammet*', University of Gothenburg: '*Utbildningsplan Läkarprogrammet*', Lund University: '*Läkarprogrammet*'.

<sup>712</sup> Lunds University and University of Gothenburg.

			<p>(<i>grundlärarexamen</i>), Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Secondary Education (<i>ämneslärarexamen</i>), Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Pre-School Education (<i>förskollärarexamen</i>) and Degree of Vocational Education (<i>yrkeslärarexamen</i>) in the Ordinance on higher education, the student must demonstrate the ability to conduct assessments in pedagogical work based on relevant scientific, societal and ethical aspects with a particular consideration for human rights, in particular the rights of the child according to the CRC.<sup>713</sup> Furthermore, the Ordinance states that students must be able to demonstrate the ability to prevent and counteract discrimination and other abusive treatment of children.<sup>714</sup> In 2020, a study on the occurrence of children's rights in syllabi for Swedish teacher education was published. 49 programme study plans and 313 syllabi at twelve Swedish universities were examined.<sup>715</sup> The results suggested that university syllabi closely mirror the national aim in the Ordinance on Higher Education. In most cases, 43 of 49, university syllabi use the exact wording of the Ordinance. Despite this, only 14 out of 313 course curriculum (<i>kursplan</i>) include goals and content descriptions regarding the CRC.<sup>716</sup></p>
<p>3.2.7. Are there <u>joint training activities</u> involving professionals and personnel from various disciplines in place?</p> <p>Please provide some examples.</p>		X	<p>In addition to the courses and training mentioned under section 3.2.4. above, specifically targeting certain groups of personnel, a number of actors offer training open to several categories of professionals. These are, however, often offered as online training or given to particular groups of professionals and might therefore not fall into the category of 'joint' trainings.</p> <p>For example, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges kommuner och regioner, SKR</i>) offers online training on children's rights for personnel within regions and municipalities.<sup>717</sup> The Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) has developed an online training course on the CRC, aimed at personnel working with the implementation of the CRC in municipalities, regions or government authorities.<sup>718</sup> The national knowledge centre on violence and other</p>

<sup>713</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education ([Högskoleförordning \[1993:100\]](#)), 4 February 1993.

<sup>714</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on higher education ([Högskoleförordning \[1993:100\]](#)), 4 February 1993.

<sup>715</sup> Olsson, Å. Elvstrand, H. Thelander, N (2020) '[Allt eller inget? Barns rättigheter i lärarutbildning](#)', *Utbildning & Demokrati* 2020, Vol 29, No. 1, pp. 25–47.

<sup>716</sup> Olsson, Å. Elvstrand, H. Thelander, N (2020) '[Allt eller inget? Barns rättigheter i lärarutbildning](#)', *Utbildning & Demokrati* 2020, Vol 29, No. 1, pp. 25–47.

<sup>717</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och Regioner*) Trainings child rights ([Utbildningar barnets rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>718</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Online training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Webbutbildning om barnkonventionen](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.



		forms of abuse - Barnafriid offers online training on violence against children and young persons, available to all professionals working with children. <sup>719</sup> Most of the online training can be completed on one's own but, but some can be completed together with others in the same group track. <sup>720</sup>
3.2.8. Outline briefly the <u>main challenges and/ or gaps relating to human resources, qualification requirements and training</u> underlined the relevant authorities and/ or child protection civil society organisations.	<p>There are several areas where reports on challenges and/or gaps relating to human resources, qualification requirements and training have been highlighted, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Lack of resources in social services, school health services and psychiatric care.</i> As stated under several sections above, the lack of resources in social services, school health services and psychiatric care services leading to inequalities across the country in terms of children's access to their rights has been highlighted for several years.<sup>721</sup></li> <li>- <i>Lack of trained investigating officers.</i> As mentioned in section 3.2.2. above, there was already a reported lack of trained investigating officers for children within the Police Authority (<i>Polismyndigheten</i>) in 2018.<sup>722</sup> The shortcomings have resulted in a delay to child interviews and to interviews being conducted by police officers and civilian employees without adequate training.<sup>723</sup></li> <li>- <i>Lack of competence in how to apply legislation in cases involving children.</i> The Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) has on several occasions highlighted the need for judges specialised in cases involving children. According to the Ombudsman for Children, those working practically within the legal system often do not have sufficient knowledge about children, children's needs and children's rights in accordance with the CRC. According to the Ombudsman, Sweden is currently "the only Nordic country that does not require special expertise on children for judges in first instance courts".<sup>724</sup></li> <li>- <i>Lack of competence in health and social care.</i> As mentioned under section 3.2.2. above, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) has repeatedly reported shortcomings in social child and youth care</li> </ul>	

<sup>719</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*), Basic training on violence against children and young persons ([Basprogram om våld mot barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>720</sup> See for example; Sweden, National knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid*), Basic training on violence against children and young persons ([Basprogram om våld mot barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>721</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 6(a).

<sup>722</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2019) Final report - Evaluation of barnahus ([Slutrapport - Utvärdering av barnahus](#)), Linköping University, 2019.

<sup>723</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 577.

<sup>724</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

	<p>in relation to, among other things, competence,<sup>725</sup> qualifications and knowledge.<sup>726</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Lack of competence in schools.</i> A study from 2016 by the National Agency for Education (<i>Skolverket</i>) showed large shortcomings among teachers regarding the educational consequences of different disabilities.<sup>727</sup></li> </ul>
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### 3.3. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection capacities in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

In 2017, the government launched an initiative to boost knowledge about children's rights (*Kunskapslyft för barnets rättigheter*), which is still ongoing. The aim of the initiative is to improve the competence of professionals working with children or taking decisions affecting children in government agencies, municipalities and regions. The Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*) has had a central role within the initiative to support these actors in their work with the application of children's rights in 2017-2019.<sup>728</sup> The results and experiences of the initiative showed a continued need for increased knowledge and strengthened competence about the rights of the child within government authorities. The Ombudsman for Children was therefore given a continued assignment to support government authorities in the work of ensuring the application of the child's rights in 2020–2022.<sup>729</sup> Since 2017, a total of 27 government agencies have participated in this initiative. In 2019, the County Administrative Board in Dalarna County (*Länsstyrelsen Dalarna*) was assigned by the government, in collaboration with the Ombudsman for Children, to coordinate and develop the County Administrative Boards' application of children's rights and support the work to ensure the application of children's rights in municipalities and regions.<sup>730</sup> In 2022, the government assigned the Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) to follow up and

<sup>725</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022) Supervision at special residential homes for young people run by SiS (*Tillsyn av SiS särskilda ungdomshem*), January 2023.

<sup>726</sup> Sweden, The Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) (2022) SiS care of children and young people according to LVU - prerequisites for safe and effective care (*SiS vård av barn och unga enligt LVU – förutsättningar för en trygg och ändamålsenlig vård*), 2022:4; Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*) (2017) Knowledge needs in social services on violence against children (*Kunskapsbehov inom socialtjänsten om våld mot barn*), Linköping University, 2017; Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2019) Reports of children who faring poorly or suspected of faring poorly. A national survey 2018 (*Anmälningar om barn som far illa eller misstänks fara illa: Nationell kartläggning 2018*).

<sup>727</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2016) Accessible learning environments? A national study of the work of school operators for comprehensive school pupils with disabilities (*Tillgängliga lärmiljöer? En nationell studie av skolhuvudmännens arbete för grundskoleelever med funktionsnedsättning*), 2016.

<sup>728</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Assignment to support the work of ensuring the application of children's rights in municipal and county council activities (*Uppdrag att stödja arbetet med att säkerställa tillämpningen av barnets rättigheter i kommuners och landstings verksamheter*), government assignment, 22 December 2016; and Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Assignment to support the work of ensuring the application of children's rights in government agencies activities (*Uppdrag att stödja arbetet med att säkerställa tillämpningen av barnets rättigheter i statliga myndigheters verksamhet*), government assignment, 22 December 2016.

<sup>729</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2019) Appropriations Directions for the budget year 2020 regarding the Ombudsman for Children (*Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2020 avseende Barnombudsmannen*), 19 December 2019; and Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) Appropriations Directions for the budget year 2020 regarding grant 5:2 The rights of the child (*Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2021 avseende anslag 5:2 Barnets rättigheter*), 22 December 2020.

<sup>730</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2019) Assignment to coordinate and develop the county administrative boards' application of children's rights and support the work to ensure the application of children's rights in municipalities and county councils (*Uppdrag att samordna och utveckla länsstyrelsernas tillämpning av barnets rättigheter samt stödja arbetet med att säkerställa tillämpningen av barnets rättigheter i kommuner och landsting*), government assignment, 16 December 2019.

analyse the initiative to boost knowledge about children's rights in government agencies, regions and municipalities since the start in 2022.<sup>731</sup>

The main challenges in relation to child-protection capacities have been described under the different sections above. It is, however, worth emphasising the persistent challenge repeatedly highlighted by actors such as the UN Committee on the rights of the child and the Ombudsman for Children in relation to the inequality across the country in terms of children's access to their rights, linked to the allocation of resources.<sup>732</sup> The most recent report on Sweden's legislative compliance with the CRC, "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*) submitted in 2020, observed that the rights of the child are affected by resource shortages in respect of both financial and actual access to human resources. The inquiry also noted that "[a] child's possibilities of having their rights met differ depending on where in the country the child lives".<sup>733</sup>

In relation to budgeting, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in their latest concluding observations, recommended Sweden to "[i]mplement a tracking system for the allocation, use and monitoring of resources for children throughout the State party[,] [d]efine budget lines for children in disadvantaged or vulnerable situations [and] [s]trengthen transparent and participatory budgeting processes at national and municipal levels [..]".<sup>734</sup> The Committee also recommended Sweden provide trainings to a range of different professions and actors. For example, the Committee recommended Sweden to "[e]nsure systematic training on children's rights, the Convention and its first two Optional Protocols for all professionals working for and with children".<sup>735</sup>

### 3.4. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection capacities that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

The knowledge guide (*Kunskapsguiden*)<sup>736</sup> is a website that collects the best available knowledge-supporting products from the National Board of Health and Welfare, as well as other authorities and actors on children and young people.<sup>737</sup> The website is mainly aimed at personnel in the social services and the health-care sector. It contains information, publications, online training, podcasts, films, checklists etc. on child rights and child protection. The content is free of charge and open to everyone.<sup>738</sup>

As mentioned in section 3.2.4. above, the Police Authority's training for investigating officers for children has recently been amended. A new training regime (*utredning fördjupad barn*) was initiated during the autumn of 2021.<sup>739</sup> The training is aimed at all investigating officers who investigate crimes involving children, i.e. persons under the age of 18, whether appearing as the accused, witnesses or suspects.

<sup>731</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to follow up and analyse the initiative to boost knowledge about children's rights ([Uppdrag att följa upp och analysera kunskapslyftet för barnets rättigheter](#)), 6 July 2022.

<sup>732</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2015), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 March 2015; United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023; Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>733</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020, page 80.

<sup>734</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 9.

<sup>735</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 13(b).

<sup>736</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Knowledge guide ([Kunskapsguiden](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>737</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Areas and themes ([Områden och teman](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>738</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) About the knowledge guide ([Om kunskapsguiden](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>739</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Justice (*Justitiedepartementet*) (2022) Improved measures when children are suspected of crimes ([Förbättrade åtgärder när barn misstänks för brott](#)), government official report, SOU 2022:1, 25 January 2022, page 168.

As mentioned in section 3.2.6. above, there are several online training courses on child rights and child protection. For example, the national knowledge centre on violence and other forms of abuse - Barnafriid offers an online course on violence against children and young persons, available to all professionals working with children. The course is developed through evidence-based research and practice, and was updated in 2022 with new research and practical knowledge. The training is free of charge and can be completed in one day.<sup>740</sup> Barnafriid also runs a knowledge portal on violence against children aimed at professionals meeting children in their work. It contains training, tools, method support and publications.<sup>741</sup>

The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (*Brottsoffermyndigheten*) recently launched an online training program for professionals who encounter children in their work. The online training has been developed as a result of a government assignment to increase knowledge about the needs of children who have witnessed violence and who are or have been living in sheltered accommodation. The training is open to everyone but is primarily aimed at those who work in family law units in social services (*familjerätter*), and judges and legal representatives in custody cases, but other professionals in social services can also benefit from the training. The training is designed to be conducted in groups, but it is also possible to take part of the material individually.<sup>742</sup>

The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) has a number of government assignments aimed at distributing targeted state subsidies to municipalities and regions. Several are relevant for child protection and child rights, for example:

- contributing to strengthening the conditions for good and equal health among children in socio-economically vulnerable areas;<sup>743</sup>
- promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;<sup>744</sup>
- improving care for children and young people in special residential homes for young people run by the National Board of Institutional Care in accordance with LVU.<sup>745</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*), Basic training on violence against children and young persons ([Basprogram om våld mot barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>741</sup> Sweden, Barnafriid - national knowledge centre for knowledge on violence against children (*Barnafriid - nationellt kunskapscentrum för kunskap om våld mot barn*), Knowledge portal on violence against children ([Kunskapsportal om våld mot barn](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>742</sup> Sweden, Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (*Brottsoffermyndigheten*) (2022) New online training about children who have witnessed violence ([Ny webb utbildning om barn som betvittnad våld](#)), press release, 1 June 2022.

<sup>743</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Pilot activities in child health care in municipalities and regions ([Pilotverksamhet i barnhälsovården i kommuner och regioner](#)), official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>744</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on state subsidies to municipalities and regions for promoting LGBTI persons situation ([Förordning \[2014:1542\] om statsbidrag till kommuner och regioner för att främja hbtqpersoners situation](#)), 18 December 2014.

<sup>745</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2019) Assignment on development work regarding certain activities at the National Board of Institutional Care ([Uppdrag om utvecklingsarbete avseende viss verksamhet vid Statens institutionsstyrelse](#)), government assignment, 25 September 2019.

## 4. Care

### 4.1. Prevention measures and services

4.1.1. Please provide information on the interaction between the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection system in place. Is there an inherent coordination of measures and interventions? Are responsible authorities and service providers the same or different?

The municipal social services have an explicit obligation to cooperate with responsible authorities, organisations and others concerned with children who are neglected or abused or are at risk of being neglected or abused.<sup>746</sup> The social services cooperate in overall issues, not just in individual cases or in outreach operations.<sup>747</sup> Relevant authorities with which the social services cooperate are the school,<sup>748</sup> the Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*),<sup>749</sup> health-care,<sup>750</sup> the Prison and Probation Service (*Kriminalvården*)<sup>751</sup> and the Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*).<sup>752</sup>

The social services shall perform outreach to inform rights-holders about the services it offers, and in that respect cooperate with the above-mentioned relevant authorities.<sup>753</sup> Any assistance given will be designed taking the recipient and relevant authorities into account.<sup>754</sup>

The interaction between the responsible authorities and service providers is also shown through the general obligation for authorities and officials working with children to report to the social services. The reporting obligation entails informing the Social Welfare Board (*socnämnd*) when an official becomes suspicious or learns that a child is at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>755</sup> Public officials working at an authority whose activities affect children and young people should immediately report to the social services if suspicion occurs.<sup>756</sup> The authorities that are obliged to report are those conducting operations relating to children and young persons, like the school authority or the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*). Other authorities that are obliged to report are those operating in the health-care sector and forensic psychiatric operations, the social services, the Prison and Probation Service, the Police Authority, and the Swedish Security Service (*Säkerhetspolisen, SÄPO*).<sup>757</sup> The provision is applicable for officials as well as employees of private enterprises who have tasks in regard to children and/or in health-care or social services.<sup>758</sup> The Social Service Act also contains a provision calling on each and everyone, including members of

<sup>746</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 2 June 2009, chapter 5, section 1a.

<sup>747</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 2 June 2009, chapter 5, section 1a; Administration act ([Förvaltningslag \[2017:900\]](#)), 28 September 2017, section 6.

<sup>748</sup> Sweden, Education act, ([Skollag \[2010:800\]](#)), 23 June 2010, chapter 29, section 13.

<sup>749</sup> Sweden, Police act ([Polislag \[1984:387\]](#)), 27 June 2014, section 6.

<sup>750</sup> Sweden, Health and medical services act ([Hälsa- och sjukvårdslag \[2017:30\]](#)), 1 January 2023, chapter 5, section 8.

<sup>751</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Prison and Probation service ([Förordning \[2007:1172\] för med instruktion för Kriminalvården](#)), 29 November 2007, section 4.

<sup>752</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Social Insurance Agency ([Förordning med instruktion för Försäkringskassan](#)), 3 December 2019, section 5.

<sup>753</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 2 June 2009, chapter 3, section 3.

<sup>754</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 3, section 5.

<sup>755</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) [For those who are legally responsible to report concern for a child's welfare](#) (in English), page 2.

<sup>756</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012 & 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1c & 1; Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022) Reporting suspicion for children- support for actors that are obligated to report and other reporters ([Anmäla oro för barn – stöd för anmälningsskyldiga och andra anmälare](#)), June 2022, page 17.

<sup>757</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>758</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

the public, to notify the Social Welfare Board if there is a suspicion that a child is being neglected or abused or is at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>759</sup> This provision calls for reporting, while the former provision outlined above is an obligation on persons in their official capacity.

The Ombudsman for Children's (*Barnombudsman*, *BO*) obligation to report stems from its legal foundation.<sup>760</sup> Authorities, regions and municipalities are obliged, if asked, to report to the Ombudsman about measures taken to comply with the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>761</sup>

Authorities bound by the Swedish Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*) still have a legal obligation to report. Generally, secret information can only be given to other authorities if the concerned person consents.<sup>762</sup> Secret information is information that is confidential, often personal, in contrast to most information that is public under Swedish law. Employees of private enterprises who have tasks in regard to children and/or in health-care or social services are not bound by the Swedish Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, but of rules of secrecy in the social services act and the Patient Safety Act. They too have a legal obligation to report, despite the rules of secrecy.

Authorities in health care or social service may exchange secret information ensure that the children in question receive the necessary care or support.<sup>763</sup> According to the preparatory work, this is a provision that authorities may apply in exceptional cases if the concerned person does not consent or if the matter is urgent.<sup>764</sup> The Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act is applicable to all authorities.<sup>765</sup>

4.1.2. Is there evidence that families are supported in their role of primary caregivers? Is the primary position of families in child caregiving and protection recognised and supported through universal and targeted services and through every stage of the intervention, particularly through prevention? Which type of support (incl. financial, medical, psycho/social advice, legal advice, care staff, care equipment, guidance and training etc.) is available to families in need.

According to the Parental Code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), children are under the guardianship of their parents, or if not under that of a specially appointed guardian.<sup>766</sup> Specially appointed guardians are appointed for children who are asylum-seekers or children without residence permits. Parents or families are the primary care-givers. The same section states that guardians have responsibility for children's personal circumstances and must see that children's needs are fulfilled. The implication is that it is primarily the children's parents who has the guardianship.<sup>767</sup>

According to the Social Services Act, children may not, without the Social Welfare Board's consent or decision on alternative care, be received for permanent care and upbringing in a private home that does not belong to either of the parents or to someone else who has custody of the child. No one but the parent or appointed guardian can permanently care for the child if the home has not been previously assessed by the Social Welfare Board.<sup>768</sup> According to the Parental Code, the District Court (*Tingsrätt*) can impose a change in guardianship if

<sup>759</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012 & 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1c & 1.

<sup>760</sup> Sweden, Act on the ombudsman for children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 13 May 1993, section 7.

<sup>761</sup> Sweden, Act on the ombudsman for children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 13 May 1993, section 7.

<sup>762</sup> Sweden, Public access to information and secrecy act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*), 20 May 2009 & 30 November 2018, chapter 10, section 1 and chapter 12, section 2.

<sup>763</sup> Sweden, the Public access to information and secrecy act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*), 10 June 2013, chapter 26, section 9.

<sup>764</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (1990) About secrecy within and between authorities in healthcare (*Om sekretess inom och mellan myndigheter på vårdområdet*), government bill, 1990/91:111, page 17.

<sup>765</sup> Sweden, the Public access to information and secrecy act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*), 20 May 2009, chapter 1.

<sup>766</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 15 February 1983, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>767</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 8 June 2021, chapter 6, section 2.

<sup>768</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 6, section 6.



a parent, during guardianship, abuses or neglects the child, or in any other way fails to care for the child in a way that entails permanent danger to the child's health or development.<sup>769</sup>

Services are offered through the Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*) or the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*). Services are primarily provided through the Social Services Act, as it requires the guardians' consent and is thus less intrusive. If children are at risk of being neglected or abused, they can be taken into care by the social services against the will of their guardian(s) and/or their own will under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.

Guardianship implies that the parent (or other guardian) can make decisions that are personal to the child, for example, acceptance of support from the social services.<sup>770</sup> Under certain provisions, the Social Welfare Board can decide to take action with the consent from only one of two parents (if both are guardians). Actions that can be taken includes support (but not placement outside home) under the Social Services Act.<sup>771</sup>

Society's legal responsibility for children and young persons is summarised in the Social Services Act chapter 5, section 1. It stipulates that, if young persons are in need of support, assistance or protection, the Social Welfare Board has responsibility to offer this to them. It is primarily voluntary, and any actions taken should be taken in accordance with the individuals affected.<sup>772</sup>

The list of services provided is lengthy.<sup>773</sup> Generally, support is non-institutional and needs-oriented. Support can, for instance, take the form of the social services offering the child contact with child welfare officers or with other children in similar positions.<sup>774</sup> Other support can be in form of parental or family support, like family therapy, family treatment or giving the family priority for a kindergarten place. The most common services are the use of a contact person and family home (*familjehem*), the Swedish term for foster care.<sup>775</sup> The family home is a supplemental or extraordinary placement in another family arranged by the Social Welfare Board when necessary.<sup>776</sup>

The social services can also provide social assistance (a financial form of assistance).<sup>777</sup> Around 182,000 households received social assistance at some time during the 2021 fiscal year. The number of recipients of social assistance is descending, including the number of children.<sup>778</sup>

Medical support includes the social services providing the child contact with health centres, child-care centres, maternity care centres, etc.<sup>779</sup>

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<sup>769</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 14 June 2006, chapter 6, section 7.

<sup>770</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 8 June 2021, chapter 6, section 11.

<sup>771</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 21 February 2017, chapter 6, section 13a & Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 5 March 2021, chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>772</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 3, section 5.

<sup>773</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of SoL, LVU, LVM and LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om dokumentation i verksamhet som bedrivs med stöd av SoL, LVU, LVM och LSS*), SOSFS 2014:5, 2 June 2022.

<sup>774</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) The Social Services' work with children and young people – for parents (*Socialtjänstens arbete med barn och unga – för föräldrar*), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>775</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities & Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och regioner*) (2022) Mapping of the Social Services' support (*Kartläggning av socialtjänstens insatser*), Stockholm, SKR, page 26 and forward.

<sup>777</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 2 June 2009, chapter 3, section 1.

<sup>778</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Statistics on financial assistance (*statistik om ekonomiskt bistånd*) official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>779</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016), Violence – Handbook on the Social Services' and the healthcare's work with abusive relationships (*Väld- handbok om socialtjänstens och hälsovårdens arbete med våld i nära relationer*), Stockholm June 2016, page 60.



The services provided under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act are compulsory care, as well as compulsory support and prohibitions on children already under compulsory care moving.<sup>780</sup> The aim is to provide services in agreement with the child and their guardians, but the Act enables compulsory care when the child is in need.<sup>781</sup>

#### 4.1.3. When a child in need of care is identified, who coordinates support to the family and the child to ensure protection and prevent abuse and/ or placement of the child and how?

As mentioned under question 4.1.1, if a child is in need of support, assistance or protection, it is the responsibility of the Social Welfare Board to provide such services.<sup>782</sup> This is a supplement to the general obligation to provide support.<sup>783</sup>

As mentioned in previous chapters, through the principle of local self-government (*kommunalt självstyre*),<sup>784</sup> municipalities have a considerable degree of autonomy when it comes to the implementation of services in practice. The municipalities have the responsibility for ensuring that individuals receive the support and help they need, like social care, health-care, services, information, advice, and support.<sup>785</sup> The care provided by the municipality falls under the responsibility of the Social Welfare Board, which is politically appointed. Social services obey the Board and provide for the actual services.

The Social Welfare Board works through outreach, the aim of which is to identify needs.<sup>786</sup> The findings of the outreach will be conveyed to the social services for their work, together with information on other public institutions, as well as private organisations and associations.<sup>787</sup>

If the Social Welfare Board is conducting an investigation, information from other actors relevant for the investigation can be required.<sup>788</sup> Public authorities and officials working with children have a reporting obligation which entails informing the Social Welfare Board if they suspect or learn that a child is at risk of negligence or abuse. In addition, each and every one are called to report to the Social Welfare Board if there is a suspicion that a child is being neglected or abused or is at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>789</sup> This provision calls for reporting, while the former provision is an obligation on persons in their official capacity, as mentioned in question 4.1.1.<sup>790</sup>

If it is for the best interest of the child, the Social Welfare Board can decide to place a child in alternative care, outside the child's home.<sup>791</sup> The Social Welfare Board is responsible for that children in need of alternative care are put into family homes, residential support (*stödboende*) or residential care homes for young persons (*Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem*). The Social Welfare Board has the responsibility to ensure that children are given proper care in such placements, see chapter 4.5. below<sup>792</sup>

<sup>780</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 March 1990.

<sup>781</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>782</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 11 July 2017, chapter 5, section 1.

<sup>783</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 5 Mars 2021, chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>784</sup> Sweden, Instrument of government ([Kungörelse om beslutad ny Regeringsform](#)), 28 February 1974, and; Sweden, Local government act ([Kommunallag \[2017:725\]](#)), 22 June 2017.

<sup>785</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 4 May 2018, chapter 2, section 1.

<sup>786</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 19 June 2001, chapter 2, section 1.

<sup>787</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 3, section 5.

<sup>788</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>789</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012 & 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1c & 1.

<sup>790</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 14, section 1c.

<sup>791</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>792</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 1.

#### 4.1.4 What are the crisis emergency responses in place?

As mentioned above under question 4.1.2., the support provided by the social services is primarily voluntary. Compulsory care is possible under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>793</sup> Generally, compulsory care is decided by the Administrative Court (*Förvaltningsrätt*), but section 6 allows for compulsory care to be imposed immediately. Young persons under the age of 20 can be put into care immediately if it is probable that the child or the young person needs care under the provisions of this law and that the court's judgement cannot be delayed because of a risk to the health or development of the child or the young person. The Social Welfare Board (*socialnämnd*) takes the decision,<sup>794</sup> which is immediately legally binding.<sup>795</sup>

The Administrative Court identifies the needs based on the reports received from the social services. The reporting procedure is the same even in crisis or emergency, as described in question 4.1.1.

For sanctions in relation to the reporting obligation for certain authorities, see section 4.2.1. below.

#### 4.2. Identification and reporting procedures

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.1. Is there an identification/reporting obligation foreseen in the legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the relevant provisions and indicate authorities and/or individuals that have identification/reporting obligations.</p>	X		<p>As mentioned above in response to question 4.1.1, public authorities and officials working with children have a reporting obligation if there is a suspicion that a child is being neglected or abused or is at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>796</sup> Public officials working at an authority whose activities affect children and young people should immediately report suspicious cases to social services. In addition, each and every one are called to report if there is a suspicion that a child is being neglected or abused or is at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>797</sup> The former provision is an obligation, while the latter calls for reporting.<sup>798</sup></p> <p>The official obligation concerns authorities working with children, authorities operating in health-care and forensic psychiatric reporting, the social services, the Prison and Probation Service (<i>Kriminalvården</i>), the Police Authority (<i>Polismyndigheten</i>), and the Security</p>

<sup>793</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>794</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 March 1990, section 6.

<sup>795</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 29 May 2020, section 40.

<sup>796</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012 & 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>797</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 14, section 1c.

<sup>798</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012 & 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1c & 1.

		<p>Service (<i>Säkerhetspolisen, SÄPO</i>).<sup>799</sup> The list is not exhaustive.</p> <p>An authority failing to report a child being in need risks being charged with liability for official misconduct (<i>tjänstefel</i>) according to chapter 20, section 1 of the Criminal Code (<i>Brottsbalk [1962:700]</i>).<sup>800</sup> An employee may also be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with sections 15 and 16 of the Public Employment Act (<i>Lag [1994:260] om offentlig anställning</i>).<sup>801</sup> There may also be provisions in collective agreements that enable the employer to take disciplinary action.<sup>802</sup></p>
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4.2.2. Please describe available national and/or sub-national reporting procedures for cases of abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment, discrimination, or neglect against children in all available reporting mechanisms, including, helplines and hotlines. Include the legislative and regulatory framework, actors involved (e.g. police, child protection centres, victims support organisations), and timeframe.

Please provide details such as if there a common or different procedures or helplines/hotlines for specific issues. What is the profession of the staff receiving the reporting? Is the staff competent and trained for the purpose?

Reporting procedure to the municipalities' Social Welfare Boards (*socialnämnd*)

As mentioned under question 4.1.1 and 4.2.1., public authorities and officials working with children are obliged to report to the Social Welfare Board if there is a suspicion that a child is at risk of negligence and abuse.<sup>803</sup> There is also a possibility for members of the public to report.<sup>804</sup> The reporting is conducted to each Social Welfare Board, i.e., on the sub-national municipality level. As a rule, the reporting must be made to social services in the municipality where the child lives.<sup>805</sup> The Social Welfare Board must maintain information, including instructions on how to report, accessible on their webpage. The reporting procedure must be available round the clock.<sup>806</sup> Municipalities may have different reporting procedures, and each municipality designs its own reporting mechanism. For instance, the person doing the reporting can e-mail or call the social services in Stockholm municipality, while other municipalities like Uppsala municipality also offer e-services. There is no

<sup>799</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1; Health and medical services act (*Hälsö- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*), 21 February 2017, chapter 5, section 8; Dental care act (*Tandvårdslag [1985:125]*), 1 July 2014, section 3; Patient safety act (*Patientsäkerhetslag [2010:65]*), 22 June 2021, chapter 6, section 5; Act concerning Support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 4 June 2010, section 24g; Education act, (*Skollag [2010:800]*), 23 June 2010, chapter 29, section 13; Police act (*Polislag [1984:387]*), 27 June 2014, section 6.

<sup>800</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2002) Strengthened protection for children in vulnerable situations, etc. (*Stärkt skydd för barn i utsatta situationer m.m.*) government bill, 1 February 2003, page 65. See also Sweden, Supreme Court (*Högsta Domstolen*), case number B6273-13, 18 December 2018.

<sup>801</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2002) Strengthened protection for children in vulnerable situations, etc. (*Stärkt skydd för barn i utsatta situationer m.m.*) government bill, 1 February 2003, page 65.

<sup>802</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2002) Strengthened protection for children in vulnerable situations, etc. (*Stärkt skydd för barn i utsatta situationer m.m.*) government bill, 1 February 2003, page 65.

<sup>803</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>804</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 14, section 1c.

<sup>805</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Reporting to the Social Welfare Board when knowledgeable or suspicion of abuse or negligence of a child (*Anmälan till socialnämnden vid kännedom eller misstanke om att ett barn far illa*), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>806</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of SoL, LVU, LVM and LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om dokumentation i verksamhet som bedrivs med stöd av SoL, LVU, LVM och LSS*), SOSFS 2014:5, 2 June 2022, chapter 5, section 2.

formal requirement for reporting, but the National Board of Health and Welfare recommends doing it in written form.<sup>807</sup>

Once the Social Welfare Board has received a report and thus become aware of the concern, the Board must begin its investigation without delay.<sup>808</sup> If the report concerns a child, the Social Welfare Board must immediately do an assessment of whether the child is in immediate need of protection.<sup>809</sup> This assessment must be documented, which can be done by giving the child a personal file and adding notes to it.<sup>810</sup> The Social Welfare Board must decide whether to initiate an investigation or not within 14 days, unless it has extraordinary reasons for not deciding within 14 days. This procedure is called an advance notice and is merely an assessment of whether the Social Welfare Board should undertake an investigation.<sup>811</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare's handbook on children and young persons states that the assessment must not be too time-consuming.<sup>812</sup> According to chapter 11, section 2 of the Social Services Act, the investigation must be carried out as soon as possible in order for the Social Welfare Board to complete the investigation within 4 months at the latest.<sup>813</sup>

The Social Welfare Board must inform the child and their guardian when the investigation begins.<sup>814</sup> Both guardians must be informed if the child has two. Children over 15 years of age must also be informed in person, as they have the right to speak on their own behalf.

The investigation must be carried out in a manner that does not unnecessarily put anyone in danger or at inconvenience. It should not be more extensive than is necessary given the circumstances.<sup>815</sup> This is to protect the integrity of the affected persons.

If the investigation is about a child, the case officer must have a three-year tertiary or undergraduate degree in social work, or other equivalent degree. This criterion applies to three parts of the investigation: the decision of whether an investigation is to be started (early assessment, as mentioned above), the investigation itself, and following up any action taken based on the investigation. The Social Welfare Board ensures that the case officer has relevant experience.<sup>816</sup>

#### Other reporting proceedings

There are also several hotlines operated by civil-society organisations (CSOs). Children's Rights in Society (*Barnens rätt i samhället*, BRIS) is a member of the Child Helpline International and has a national hotline.<sup>817</sup> ECPAT Sweden is a children's-rights organisation working to combat the sexual exploitation of children and also

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<sup>807</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Reporting to the Social Welfare Board when knowledgeable or suspicion of abuse or negligence of a child ([Anmälan till socialnämnden vid kännedom eller misstanke om att ett barn far illa](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>808</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>809</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1a.

<sup>810</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016, page 56.

<sup>811</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016, page 54.

<sup>812</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016 page 54.

<sup>813</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>814</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>815</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>816</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 15 March 2016, chapter 3, section 3a.

<sup>817</sup> Sweden, Children's rights in Society (*Barnens rätt i samhället*), [BRIS in English](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

runs a helpline.<sup>818</sup> A third example is Victim Support Sweden (*Brottsofferjouren*), which runs a national support line.<sup>819</sup>

For children placed in residential care, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*) offers reporting possibilities for children relating to their care. The Health and Social Care Inspectorate also supervises health-care and social services. The authority runs a hotline that children can access by phone, form, or e-mail to be informed of their rights and report potential abuses or misconduct.<sup>820</sup>

Children and students can submit complaints to their school's principals in questions related to shortcomings in pre-schooling and schooling and their right to education. Children who have turned 16 years old can submit a report to the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*).<sup>821</sup> The Child and School Student Representative (*Barn och Elevombudet, BEO*) is an independent function at the School Inspectorate to which children can report if they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, bullying or abusive behaviour at school.

The Police Authority has a website targeting children who are victims of crimes. The website provides information to children and tells them where they can turn to for reporting crimes..<sup>822</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.2.3. Do children have the right to report independently?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide information on the availability of <u>age-appropriate and child-friendly</u> reporting procedures (to whom and how children can report child rights' violations and abuse). Is the anonymity and confidentiality of the child in the reporting protected? Please comment briefly.</p>	X		<p>Anyone can report to the Social Welfare Board, although it is not as accessible for children. Children are urged to report to other authorities, who in turn report to the Social Welfare Board. Children are encouraged to talk to an adult, as the reporting procedure is aimed at adults.</p> <p>As mentioned in response to question 4.2.2, children in Sweden have access to several hotlines operated by CSOs, such as the Children's Rights in Society<sup>823</sup> and Victim Support Sweden.<sup>824</sup></p> <p>Any official of relevant authority is obliged to report. Children are urged to talk to any official whom they feel comfortable talking to, who then reports in turn. There are school welfare officers (<i>skolkurator</i>), but their responsibility is mainly for the children's development and health in the school environment.<sup>825</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in response to question 4.2.2, children can report to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) to be informed</p>

<sup>818</sup> Sweden, ECPAT, [About ECPAT Sweden](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>819</sup> Sweden, Swedish Victim support (*Brottsofferjouren*), [Welcome to Victim Support Sweden](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>820</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), For you children or young persons ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>821</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag 2010:800](#)), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>822</sup> Sweden, Police Authority (*Polismyndigheten*), Crimes against children and youths ([Brott mot barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>823</sup> Sweden, Children's rights in Society (*Barnens rätt i samhället*), [BRIS in English](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>824</sup> Sweden, Swedish Victim support (*Brottsofferjouren*), [Welcome to Victim Support Sweden](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>825</sup> Sweden, Education act, ([Skollag \[2010:800\]](#)), 23 June 2010, chapter 29, section 13.

			<p>of their rights and report.<sup>826</sup> Children and students can also submit complaints to their school principals, and children who have turned 16 years old can submit a report to the Swedish School Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>).<sup>827</sup></p> <p>The anonymity and confidentiality of the child in reporting is governed in the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act <sup>828</sup> (<i>Offentlighets och sekretesslag [2009:400]</i>) in the cases of the Social Welfare Board, social services and public schools. Equivalent rules are found in the Education Act and the Patient Safety Act for private entities. CSOs, like Children's rights in society (<i>Barnens Rätt i Samhället, BRIS</i>), are governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (incorporated into the Act with complementary regulation to the General Data Protection Regulation (<i>Lag [2018:218] med kompletterande bestämmelser till EU:s dataskyddsförordning</i>)).<sup>829</sup></p>
4.2.4. Are children informed of their right to report and how they can do it? If yes, by whom and how?			<p>Insufficiently so. Reports suggest that children do not receive the information they need to access the help that is available to them.<sup>830</sup></p> <p>In 2016, the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) conducted a survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their cases heard when their rights are violated.<sup>831</sup> According to the Ombudsman for Children, the overall picture is that children and young people in Sweden have their rights disregarded in two fundamental respects: the right to be heard, and the right to have their cases heard when their rights are violated.<sup>832</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in section 2.1.5. above, according to the National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations, the Social Welfare Board must provide information to the child about contact details to the specially appointed</p>

<sup>826</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), For you children or young persons ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>827</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag 2010:800](#)), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>828</sup> Sweden, the Public access to information and secrecy act ([Offentlighets- och sekretesslag \[2009:400\]](#)), 20 May 2009.

<sup>829</sup> Sweden, Act with complementary regulation to the General Data Protection Regulation ([Lag \[2018:218\] med kompletterande bestämmelser till EU:s dataskyddsförordning](#)), 19 April 2018.

<sup>830</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 20.

<sup>831</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Children and young persons' opportunities to complain – Ombudsman for Children's survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their case heard when their rights are violated ([Barns och ungas klagomöjligheter, Barnombudsmannens kartläggning av barns och ungas möjlighet att framföra klagomål och få sin sak prövad när deras rättigheter kränks](#)), 2016.

<sup>832</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Children and young persons' opportunities to complain – Ombudsman for Children's survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their case heard when their rights are violated ([Barns och ungas klagomöjligheter, Barnombudsmannens kartläggning av barns och ungas möjlighet att framföra klagomål och få sin sak prövad när deras rättigheter kränks](#)), 2016.



		<p>social secretary. Children must also receive information on how to access the regulatory authority (the Health and Social Care Inspectorate). Children should also be informed about their rights in terms of submitting complaints and views to the Social Welfare Board.<sup>833</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in the responses to sections 4.7. and 6.3. below, the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) has developed a website about the social services aimed at children and young persons called “Check on soc” (<i>Koll på soc</i>).<sup>834</sup> The website provides support to children who are already in contact with, or might want to contact, the social services or simply want to know more about how to do so.<sup>835</sup> The website is written in a child-friendly language and contains information about, among other things, where children can turn if they are dissatisfied with a placement. The website also includes information the municipality’s social services and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>).<sup>836</sup> In February 2023, the National Board of Health and Welfare carried out an information campaign in social media targeting children between 12 and 16 years old. The aim of the campaign was to promote the website “Check on soc”. The campaign consisted of ads on the social media platforms Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok. The website also contains information material (digital and printed) about the social services for use by professionals working with children.<sup>837</sup></p> <p>Similarly, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate’s website contains information in child-friendly language for children or young persons who are in contact with the social services or health-care actors about their right to contact the authority, receive information about their rights and lodge complaints.<sup>838</sup> As mentioned above, according to the National Board of Health and Welfare’s regulations and general advice, the Social Welfare Board must provide information to children placed in care on how to reach the regulatory</p>
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<sup>833</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare’s regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board’s responsibility for children and young people in family homes, emergency homes or residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende*), 30 December 2019, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>834</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Check on soc’ (*Koll på soc*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>835</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘About the social services for children and young persons – Check on soc’ (*Om socialtjänsten för barn och unga – Koll på soc*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>836</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Check on soc’ (*Koll på soc*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>837</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Koll på soc should give more children and young people knowledge about social services’ (*Koll på soc ska ge fler barn och unga kunskap om socialtjänsten*), official webpage, accessed 8 May 2023.

<sup>838</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), For you who are a child or young person (*För dig som är barn eller ungdom*), official website, accessed 30 April 2023.



			authority (the Health and Social Care Inspectorate). <sup>839</sup> The regulations do not specify how children should be informed, or if they are directed to the website.
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#### 4.2.5. What are the main challenges and/or gaps relating to identification and reporting procedures underlined by relevant authorities and/or child protection civil society organisations?

The main challenges identified by civil-society organisations (CSO) in Sweden are the lack of reports from health-care personnel to the social services. According to the report “Report from civil-society organisations working with child rights”, written by several CSOs, only 10 percent of all abused children tell a professional, despite the general obligation for health-care professionals to ask when they suspect violence or abuse.<sup>840</sup> The report suggests that this is due to a lack of routine in asking about violence in settings of child health-care and student health-care.<sup>841</sup> The report further suggests that questions also needs to be posed to children with disabilities. Moreover, the routine guidelines do not include questions about the commercial sexual exploitation of children.<sup>842</sup> The report also argues that the easily accessible, early interventions for adults at risk of abusing children are not sufficient. This is also applicable to children who are at risk of using violence against other children.<sup>843</sup>

A government inquiry has found that a broad improvement in the general knowledge of officials is needed to manage and handle children’s accounts better, resulting in better assistance and interventions.<sup>844</sup> A Swedish government official report finds that children are often met with disinterest and passivity from officials.<sup>845</sup>

### 4.3. Referral procedures(s) and investigation and protection

#### 4.3.1. Please describe the referral mechanisms in place following reporting and identification procedures.

In the answer please include the legislative and regulatory framework, interagency protocols and guidelines, the actors involved and their role and responsibilities, as well as the applicable timeline. Please also specify the procedure, if different, for other groups of children (e.g. with disabilities, migrant, victim of a particular form of violence etc.)

<sup>839</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare’s regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board’s responsibility for children and young people in family homes, emergency homes or residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende*), 30 December 2019, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>840</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 20.

<sup>841</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 20.

<sup>842</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 20.

<sup>843</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 19.

<sup>844</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 261.

<sup>845</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 261.

Officials working with children have an obligation to report to the Social Welfare Board (*socialnämnd*) if they become aware or suspect that a child is being neglected or abused, as mentioned under question 4.1.1.<sup>846</sup> This is supplemented by the provision that urges each and every person to report to the Social Welfare Board if they suspect that a child is being neglected or abused.<sup>847</sup>

According to the Social Services Act, the Social Welfare Board shall start an investigation without delay once it has been made aware of circumstances that may result in assistance.<sup>848</sup> Before starting the investigation, the Social Welfare Board must conduct a first-hand assessment of whether the circumstances are severe enough to result in assistance or intervention. The first-hand assessment must be made rapidly, as the investigation must start without delay.<sup>849</sup> The Social Welfare Board must immediately assess whether the child is in need of immediate protection.<sup>850</sup>

Once the investigation has started, the Social Welfare Board shall contact the concerned persons, provided this does not harm the investigation.<sup>851</sup> The child's own will must be given importance in relation to the age and maturity of the child.<sup>852</sup>

The Social Welfare Board can in its investigation consult experts and make contact with any person necessary to assess the need for assistance.<sup>853</sup> The reference persons and experts concerned are the same as those who have an obligation to report in line with the Social Services Act.<sup>854</sup> The Social Welfare Board can disclose secret information if needed in these contacts.<sup>855</sup> This obligation applies to any information that may be of importance to the investigation and the assessment of the child's need for protection or support.<sup>856</sup> The obligation to inform is the same regardless of whether the reference person reported or the Social Welfare Board initiated the investigation on its own initiative.<sup>857</sup> If the social services approaches a reference person, they must provide the information even if they have not participated in the investigation previously.

Municipal social services use a protocol for handling children in need called "Children's needs at the centre" (*Barns behov i centrum – BBIC*), developed by the National Board for Health and Welfare.<sup>858</sup> The protocol is based on a "best interest" determination in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and places the will, needs of and communication with the child at the centre of its deliberations.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
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<sup>846</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>847</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 14, section 1c.

<sup>848</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>849</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>850</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1 a.

<sup>851</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>852</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 10; Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare's general guidance on handling of cases regarding children and young persons ([Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga](#)), SOSFS 2014:6.

<sup>853</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>854</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>855</sup> Sweden, the Public access to information and secrecy act ([Offentlighets- och sekretesslag \[2009:400\]](#)), 20 May 2009, chapter 10, section 1.

<sup>856</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbook för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016, page 95.

<sup>857</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbook för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016, page 95.

<sup>858</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Children's needs at the center ([Barns behov i centrum – BBIC](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<p>4.3.2. Are there applicable standards in the form of legal provisions, guidelines, protocols, interagency agreements or regulatory frameworks regarding investigation and assessment procedures following reporting and identification procedures?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>According to the Ordinance containing the terms of reference for the National Board of Health and Welfare,<sup>859</sup> the authority is instructed to make regulations and develop knowledge support for the social services.<sup>860</sup></p> <p>The Social Welfare Board (<i>socialnämnd</i>) is bound by legislation and general regulations and guidelines developed by relevant authorities in all its work.<sup>861</sup> The Social Welfare Board's work shall also be guided by science and experience.<sup>862</sup></p> <p>According to the Social Services Act, measures within the social services must be of good quality, and the quality of the operations must be continuously developed and secured.<sup>863</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work, operations must meet the requirements laid down by the laws, regulations, and decisions.<sup>864</sup> The systematic quality of the work is necessary to prevent any operational flaws.<sup>865</sup> Social services must identify, describe and determine the processes in their operations that are needed to ensure the quality of the operations. This includes identifying, describing and determining the activities and procedures needed to ensure quality.<sup>866</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare has also developed regulations and general advice on the processing of cases concerning children and young people,<sup>867</sup> as well as on the documentation of operations conducted under the Social Services Act</p>
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<sup>859</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the national board of health and welfare ([Förordning \[2015:284\] med instruction för Socialstyrelsen](#)), 21 may 2015.

<sup>860</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the national board of health and welfare ([Förordning \[2015:284\] med instruction för Socialstyrelsen](#)), 21 may 2015, section 4.

<sup>861</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016,, page 30.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid & Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare's general guidance on handling of cases regarding children and young persons ([Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga](#)), SOSFS 2014:6.

<sup>863</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 2 June 2009, chapter 3, section 3.

<sup>864</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd \(2011:9\) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), 10 December 2020, chapter 2, section 1.

<sup>865</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), June 2016, page 35.

<sup>866</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd \(2011:9\) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), 10 December 2020, chapter 4, section 2.

<sup>867</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on processing of cases concerning children and young people ([Handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga](#)), SOSFS 2014:6, 2 May 2014.

			<p>and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU).<sup>868</sup></p> <p>Generally, the National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice have the character of a framework. However, the regulations and general advice on processing cases concerning children and young people contains an annex with a reporting form to be submitted in cases of suspicion of crimes against children.<sup>869</sup></p>
4.3.3. Is the assessment carried out by a multidisciplinary team of professionals?		X	<p>The assessment is typically carried out by an assigned social secretary.<sup>870</sup> The case officer, who makes the initial assessment, must have a degree in social work or equivalent (see question 4.2.2).<sup>871</sup> Social Welfare Boards, like all authorities, have a legal obligation to cooperate with the relevant authorities.<sup>872</sup> In addition, they have a specific obligation to collaborate with public bodies, organisations and others regarding questions about children at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>873</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice also sets out the requirements in relation to collaboration.<sup>874</sup> However, it is up to the case officer to decide when cooperation is needed.<sup>875</sup></p> <p>According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's handbook on investigating children and young persons, collaboration may be needed at various stages throughout the process, and the need for collaboration may look different at the different stages of the process. Collaboration in individual cases can consist of various actors contributing knowledge about the child and different perspectives to arrive in an overall assessment of the child's needs within the</p>

<sup>868</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of SoL, LVU, LVM and LSS ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om dokumentation i verksamhet som bedrivs med stöd av SoL, LVU, LVM och LSS](#)), SOSFS 2014:5, 2 June 2022.

<sup>869</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on processing of cases concerning children and young people ([Handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga](#)), SOSFS 2014:6, 2 May 2014, annex.

<sup>870</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbook för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), 2016, page 33.

<sup>871</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 15 March 2016, chapter 3, section 3a.

<sup>872</sup> Sweden, Administrative procedure act ([Förvaltningslag \[2017:900\]](#)), 28 September 2017, section 8.

<sup>873</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 2 June 2009, chapter 5, section 1a.

<sup>874</sup> See, for example, Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020, chapter 4, section 5; and Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on processing of cases concerning children and young people ([Handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga](#)), SOSFS 2014:6, 2 May 2014.

<sup>875</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

			framework of an investigation. <sup>876</sup> If there are concerns that a child is at risk of negligence or abuse, collaboration can take place in, for example, the form of a meeting following a report on a child at risk of negligence or abuse, in accordance with chapter 14, section 1 of the Social Services Act. <sup>877</sup>
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#### 4.3.4. Please provide information on who is responsible to investigate and assess the situation of the child and the family and how this is done. Please provide information and describe the role and responsibilities of judicial authorities in the reporting and referral procedure.

As mentioned in several sections above, the Social Welfare Board is responsible for investigating and assessing the situation of the child and the family. As mentioned in sections 4.2.2. and 4.3.1 above, the Social Welfare Board (*socialnämnd*) shall without delay start an investigation once made aware of circumstances that may result in a need for support.<sup>878</sup> The Police Authority has a legal obligation to report to the Social Welfare Board if the authority suspects that a child is being subjected to negligence or abuse according to the Police Act (*Polislag [1984:387]*).<sup>879</sup>

Outside the general obligation to provide support to children,<sup>880</sup> the Social Welfare Board also has legal obligation to provide support and help for victims of crimes and their relatives.<sup>881</sup> The Social Welfare Board must also be particularly attentive to children who have witnessed violence or other abuse, or who is a victim of the crimes of close relatives.<sup>882</sup>

Under the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act, the Social Welfare Board has the option to report suspicion of certain crimes against children to the Police Authority.<sup>883</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice recommends the social services to do so in certain cases.<sup>884</sup>

The Social Welfare Board decides if the child needs to be taken into alternative care immediately.<sup>885</sup> If immediate care is deemed necessary, the social services may consult experts. The Police Authority can be part of the investigation team if there is a suspicion of crime.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.5. Are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and	X		As mentioned in responses to several sections above, each and every person is urged to immediately report to the Social Welfare Board when they suspect or know

<sup>876</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons– handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act (*Utreda barn och unga – handbook för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen*), 2016, pages 40-41.

<sup>877</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2013, chapter 14, section 1a.

<sup>878</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>879</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1; Police act (*Polislag [1984:387]*), 27 June 2014, section 6.

<sup>880</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 11 July 2017, chapter 5, section 1.

<sup>881</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 5, section 1.

<sup>882</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 December 2012, chapter 5, section 1.

<sup>883</sup> Sweden, Public access to information and secrecy act (*Offentlighets- och sekretesslag [2009:400]*), 1 January 2023, chapter 10, section 21.

<sup>884</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2014) National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the handling of matters concerning children and young people (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga*), SOSFS 2014:6, 30 May 2023.

<sup>885</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 2 December 2008, chapter 11, section 11a.

professionals involved in these procedures (including civil society organisations) clearly stated in the legislative and regulatory framework?			<p>that a child is being neglected or abused.<sup>886</sup> Some actors also have an obligation to report when a child is being neglected or abused. This includes authorities working with children, health-care, forensic psychiatry, social services, and the Prison and Probation Service.<sup>887</sup> Officials working in private enterprises that work with children, health-care or social services have the same obligation.<sup>888</sup></p> <p>Authorities also have the obligation to inform the Social Welfare Board in an investigation of a child's need of support and protection. This applies to all officials mentioned.<sup>889</sup></p> <p>These two obligations are further regulated in non-binding guidance for the authorities.<sup>890</sup></p>
4.3.6. Are there any inter-agency cooperation protocols and agreements in place to strengthen cooperation between actors with responsibility in the referral procedure and enhance the efficiency of their actions?	X		<p>Outside the legal obligation on the authorities, there are some examples of inter-agency cooperation guidelines.<sup>891</sup> One example is the guidelines for health-care and dental care,<sup>892</sup> drawn up by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which defines when a child is being neglected or abused or is at risk of being neglected or abused, which in turn is when health-care and dental care professionals have the obligation to report/refer the child to the Social Welfare Board.<sup>893</sup></p>
4.3.7. Is it likely that procedures will differ, depending on the migration – residential status of the child concerned? <i>Please also consider potential</i>	X		<p>The municipality has the legal obligation to provide support and assistance to anyone in need, regardless of nationality or residence status.<sup>894</sup> Under the Social Services Act, the Social Welfare Board has the same obligation to provide public care for all children.<sup>895</sup> The provision does not differentiate among children, and thus includes children with residence permits, seeking asylum or without papers. According to the National</p>

<sup>886</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 14, section 1c.

<sup>887</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>888</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>889</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>890</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2018) SAMS Cooperation Social services school – undisturbed schooling for children and young persons in care ([SAMS Samverkan socialtjänst skola obruten skolgång för placerade barn och unga](#)), 2018; and Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2014) Neglected or abused children and children at risk of being neglected and abused – a guidance for the healthcare and the dentalcare about the reporting obligation and responsibility ([Barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa- en vägledning för hälso- och sjukvården samt tandvården gällande anmälningsskyldighet och ansvar](#)), October 2014.

<sup>891</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), (2022) Cooperation is essential for correct care and support ([Samverkan är A och O för rätt vård och stöd](#)), official webpage, accessed 1 May 2023.

<sup>892</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2014) Children being neglected and abused and children at risk of being neglected and abused – a guidance for the healthcare and the dentalcare about the reporting obligation and responsibility ([Barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa- en vägledning för hälso- och sjukvården samt tandvården gällande anmälningsskyldighet och ansvar](#)), October 2014.

<sup>893</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 14, section 1.

<sup>894</sup> Sweden, Local government act ([Kommunallag \[2017:725\]](#)), 3 December 2019, chapter 2, section 1.

<sup>895</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 11 July 2017, chapter 5, section 1.



<i>divergences depending on main actors involved.</i>			<p>Board of Health and Welfare's general advice, the investigation procedure shall be the same.<sup>896</sup></p> <p>The residential status of the child might affect the authorities involved in the investigation process. The Migration Agency (<i>Migrationsverket</i>) will be involved if the child does not have residential status. All children have the right to the same health-care according to the law.<sup>897</sup></p>
<p>4.3.8. Are affected children heard as part of the procedures?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, are the hearings child-sensitive and designed age-appropriately and in child-friendly language? Do children receive information and support by competent and trained professionals?</p>	X		<p>Children's right to be heard is regulated in chapter 10, section 11 of the Social Services Act.<sup>898</sup> According to this provision, the child must receive relevant information and be given the opportunity to express their views in matters concerning them. If children do not express their opinions, their views must as far as possible be clarified in another way. Children's views must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity. Maturity suggests the ability to understand and assess the consequences of the question being put to them.<sup>899</sup></p> <p>According to the government bill preceding the Act,<sup>900</sup> the child must be given the opportunity to be heard. This must be done without presenting the child with difficult choices. The social services shall allow for expression in multiple forms, such as orally or in writing. It also states that the procedure, and thus the information given, must be adapted to the maturity of the child, which will also affect how much importance will be given to the child's views.<sup>901</sup></p> <p>The assigned case officer carries out the hearing. They are supposed to be trained in line with the competence criteria set out in question 4.2.2.</p> <p>The National Welfare Board has developed a guide for assessing the child's maturity.<sup>902</sup></p>

<sup>896</sup> Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare's general guidance on handling of cases regarding children and young persons (*Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om handläggning av ärenden som gäller barn och unga*), SOSFS 2014:6.

<sup>897</sup> Sweden, Act on healthcare to asylum seekers and others (*Lag [2008:344 om hälso- och sjukvård åt asylsökande m.fl.]*), 22 May 2008; and Act on healthcare to some foreigners that are in Sweden without necessary permits (*Lag [2013:407] om hälso- och sjukvård till vissa utlänningar som vistas i Sverige utan nödvändiga tillstånd*), 30 May 2013.

<sup>898</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 10.

<sup>899</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2012) Strengthened support and protection for children and young people (*Stärkt stöd och skydd för barn och unga*), government bill, 2012/13:10 page 37-39.

<sup>900</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Changes to the Social services act (*Ändring i socialtjänstlagen*), government bill, 1996/97:124, page 98.

<sup>901</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons– handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act (*Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen*), 2016, pages 27-28.

<sup>902</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2015), Assessing children's maturity for participation – knowledge support for health-care and dental-care (*Bedöma barns mognad för delaktighet – kunskapsstöd för socialtjänsten, hälso- och sjukvården samt tandvården*), 22 December 2015.



			It is worth noting that children over the age of 15 have the right to represent themselves in cases in line with the applicable law. <sup>903</sup> Support can be granted without the parents' consent if the child consents and is 15 years or older.
4.3.9. Are there mental health support services available for affected children?  If yes, how are services working together? How is it ensured that the child is informed and can make use of these services?	X		If the child needs assistance from both the social services and the health-care services, for example child and youth psychiatry, the municipality will develop an individual plan jointly with the region. <sup>904</sup>  A report by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate has shown that structures of cooperation are often lacking, resulting in a lack of knowledge transfer. <sup>905</sup> The report also suggests that the lack of cooperation affects the use of the services. <sup>906</sup>
4.3.10. What are the main challenges and gaps in the referral and investigation highlighted by relevant authorities, child protection, and civil society organisations? Briefly describe.			
<p>Reports suggest that children are not heard adequately.<sup>907</sup></p> <p>In a recent report, "An upbringing free of violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children", the inquiry highlights the fact that children often struggle to find an official to speak to.<sup>908</sup> The report is critical of a system in which children must seek support themselves, instead of society working proactively to protect them.<sup>909</sup> As mentioned in question 4.2.5. above, only 10 percent of children who have been abused have told a professional, despite the general obligation for health-care professionals to ask about violence on a routine basis.<sup>910</sup></p> <p>Another challenge is that there is a need for more cooperation among the authorities, according to reports. The same official government report identifies a lack of coordination, resulting in children being left without</p>			

<sup>903</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 7 December 2012, section 36.

<sup>904</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 3 December 2019, chapter 2, section 7.

<sup>905</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2021) They don't take care of the whole of me - Coordination of interventions for children with mental health issues needs to be improved ([De tar inte hand om hela mig - Samordning av insatser för barn med psykisk ohälsa behöver förbättras](#)), 24 May 2021, page 14.

<sup>906</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2021) They don't take care of the whole of me - Coordination of interventions for children with mental health issues needs to be improved ([De tar inte hand om hela mig - Samordning av insatser för barn med psykisk ohälsa behöver förbättras](#)), 24 May 2021, pages 13-16.

<sup>907</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 249; and Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 20.

<sup>908</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 252.

<sup>909</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 252.

<sup>910</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 19.

support.<sup>911</sup> The “Report from civil society organisations working with child rights”, written by several CSOs mentioned in section 4.2.5. above, concludes that professionals mainly work internally within their own authorities, which results in a lack of communication.<sup>912</sup> The same report also states that deficiencies in individual follow-up and evaluation tools result in the right to participate in decisions about the care of a child are not being met. Children’s right to participate is limited by the lack of implementation of the rules legislating for collaboration in the Social Services Act.<sup>913</sup>

#### 4.4. Placement decisions – care orders

##### 4.4.1. Following the investigation and assessment of the child’s situation, who is responsible to decide upon issuing a care order/decision and the placement of the child in alternative care?

If the investigation concludes that the child has a need that cannot be met by other means than assistance, assistance shall be carried out by the Social Welfare Board.<sup>914</sup> Assistance from the Social Welfare Board has the aim of ensuring that the individual has a reasonable standard of living and is able to live independently.<sup>915</sup>

Support should primarily be given through the Social Services Act, which requires consent.<sup>916</sup> Children can receive care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act if it can be assumed that the children’s guardians or the children themselves (if the child has turned 15) may not consent to the care and if one of the following two cases is applicable:<sup>917</sup> if there is a tangible risk that the young person’s health or development will be harmed,<sup>918</sup> or if the child uses drugs, commits crime or otherwise shows socially destructive behaviour.<sup>919</sup>

The Social Welfare Board applies to the Administrative Court (*Förvaltningsrätten*), which in turn takes the decision as to whether the child shall receive care and be removed from the guardian’s custody.<sup>920</sup> However, the Social Welfare Board can decide to remove the child immediately if the situation is acute.<sup>921</sup> Either way, the Social Welfare Board is the actor providing the care and deciding how the care should be performed and where the child should be placed during the care period.<sup>922</sup>

<sup>911</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>912</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 27.

<sup>913</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 27.

<sup>914</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 5 March 2021, chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>915</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 5 March 2021, chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>916</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>917</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>918</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 23 June 2003, section 2.

<sup>919</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 26 June 2006, section 3.

<sup>920</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 7 July 2009, section 4.

<sup>921</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 March 1990, section 6.

<sup>922</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 21 December 2007, section 11.

According to the Parental Code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), children who have reached the age of 12 may only be adopted if they consent to the adoption. However, consent is not required if the child is permanently prevented from consenting due to mental illness or any other similar condition. Before consent is given, the child must receive information about the meaning of an adoption and of such consent.<sup>923</sup> Moreover, children must receive information and be given the opportunity to express their views on matters relating to the adoption. The child's views must be indicative in relation to the child's age and maturity.<sup>924</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.4.2. Are there legislative and or regulatory provisions clearly stating the criteria that should be taken into consideration in the assessment of the situation and in the decision-making process?</p> <p>Are there provisions specifying the criteria that should be considered when deciding to remove the child from its family? Are the principles of necessity and appropriateness considered?</p>	X		<p>Care or support shall primarily be given consensually according to law.<sup>925</sup> The handbook on the application of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act states that the principles of voluntariness and self-determination shall be indicative.<sup>926</sup></p> <p>The best interests of the child is indicative when making decision in line with the law.<sup>927</sup> The best interests of the child prevail over other interests according to the government bill preceding the act.<sup>928</sup> For instance, the best interests of the child will prevail over the parent's interest in having guardianship over their biological child. The best interests of the child are not defined in law, but are subject to an individual assessment. The handbook states that both short- and long-term effects on the child must be considered, along with science and experience, information from relatives and authority contact persons, and the will of the child themselves.<sup>929</sup></p> <p>The child must receive relevant information and be able to express opinions in matters regarding them, as will be explained further in question 4.4.3.<sup>930</sup></p> <p>A decision on compulsory care is made by an Administrative Court (<i>Förvaltningsrätt</i>),<sup>931</sup> which must consider rights contained in the Instrument of Government, European Convention on Human Rights, etc. The court must also consider the UN Convention on</p>

<sup>923</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 7.

<sup>924</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 3.

<sup>925</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>926</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services (*LVU – handbook för socialtjänsten*), March 2020, page 45.

<sup>927</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>928</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services (*LVU – handbook för socialtjänsten*), March 2020, page 38.

<sup>929</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services (*LVU – handbook för socialtjänsten*), March 2020, page 39.

<sup>930</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>931</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 7 July 2009, section 4.

			the Rights of the Child (CRC) as it is incorporated into Swedish law.
<p>4.4.3. Are there provisions requiring that the views of the child should be taken into consideration in the decision-making process?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please specify if this is mandatory or left to the discretion of the responsible authorities, and if there are age-related requirements.</p>	X		<p>Placements under the Social Service Act are, as mentioned above, provided on a voluntary basis. According to chapter 1, section 2 of the Social Services Act, the best interests of the child must always be taken into account in measures concerning them. In the case of decisions or other measures relating to their care, the best interests of the child must be decisive.<sup>932</sup> Children's right to be heard is regulated by chapter 10, section 11 of the Social Services Act.<sup>933</sup> According to this provision, the child must receive relevant information and be given the opportunity to express their views in matters concerning them. If children do not express their opinions, their views must as far as possible be clarified in another way. Children's views must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity. Maturity is about the ability to understand and assess the consequences of the question in question.<sup>934</sup> There are no specific age limits for children's participation in decision-making. According to the bill preceding the act, the need to clarify children's views and opinions is particularly important in cases where the child is in need of protection. A child can express their views verbally, in writing or in other ways.<sup>935</sup></p> <p>Chapter 10, section 11 of the Social Services Act also states that children from the age of 15 have the right to make a claim in court under the Act. A younger child may be heard in court if the child cannot be assumed to be harmed by it.<sup>936</sup></p> <p>In order for care to be granted with the support of the Social Services Act, it is assumed that the individual consents to the intervention. If the child has reached the age of 12, assistance in the form of open interventions cannot be decided against the will of the child, but can be decided without the consent of the guardian.<sup>937</sup> For younger children, it is the guardian who must consent to the intervention.</p> <p>As mentioned in section 4.4.1. above, children can also receive care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act if it can be assumed that the children's guardians or the children themselves (if the child has</p>

<sup>932</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 1, section 2.

<sup>933</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 10.

<sup>934</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2012) Strengthened support and protection for children and young people ([Stärkt stöd och skydd för barn och unga](#)), government bill, 2012/13:10 page 37-39.

<sup>935</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2012) Strengthened support and protection for children and young people ([Stärkt stöd och skydd för barn och unga](#)), government bill, 2012/13:10 page 135.

<sup>936</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 10.

<sup>937</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 July 2023, chapter 3, section 6a.

		<p>turned 15) will not consent to the care and if one of the two prerequisites described above are applicable.<sup>938</sup> Even if children are subject to compulsory care, they still have the right to participate.<sup>939</sup> Section 36 of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions Act) states that the young person shall receive relevant information and be given an opportunity to express an opinion in matters relating to them. If the child chooses not to express an opinion, their opinion shall if possible be mapped in an alternative manner. Children's views</p>
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<sup>938</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>939</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 7 December 2012, section 36.

			<p>must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity.<sup>940</sup></p> <p>Children from the age of 15 have the right to make a claim in court under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act. A younger child may be heard in court if the child cannot be assumed to be harmed by it.<sup>941</sup></p> <p>The right to information is mandatory, but the right to participation is left to the discretion of the Social Welfare Board.</p>
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#### 4.5. Types of care with focus on alternative care

Types of care existing in the country	Yes	No	Who is offering such services? (State, regional, local authorities, civil society, religious institutions)	Please make differences between the different types of care explicit
Foster care	X		<p>Foster care is called family home (<i>familjehem</i>) in Sweden. The care is carried out in private homes that receive children for continuous care and upbringing.<sup>942</sup></p> <p>The municipal social services offer the service with families providing the care. There are also private businesses that offer consulting family homes, hired by the social services. The municipal social services have the ultimate responsibility for the family homes.</p> <p>A report by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) states that family homes are often not sufficiently assessed before placement. Furthermore, children are not matched with the families to fit their needs.<sup>943</sup></p>	
Residential – institutional care	X		<p>There are several kinds of residential care.</p> <p>The municipalities' Social Welfare Boards must ensure that those who need care or who live in a home other than their own are placed in residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) (see below) or residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>). Residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>) are run in accordance with</p>	

<sup>940</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 7 December 2012, section 36.

<sup>941</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 January 2013, section 36.

<sup>942</sup> Sweden, Ordinance for the social services ([Socialtjänstförordning \[2001:937\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>943</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2017) Children's right to good quality care in family homes ([Barns rätt till familjehemsvård av god kvalitet](#)), 13 June 2017.

		<p>chapter 7, section 1 of the Social Services Act. Residential care homes for young persons can be aimed at children and young persons with some kind of need within the social service's area of responsibility, for example, substance abuse or addiction problems. The target group can also be unaccompanied asylum-seeking children or children who have received a permanent residence permit in Sweden. The municipal social services provide the institutions in non-compulsory cases. There are also private companies that run such institutions under contract to the social services.</p> <p>Compulsory care in residential care homes for young people are also run by the National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens Institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>), which is an authority with services at national level. These are called "special residential homes for young persons" (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>). Placements at these homes are regulated in under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>944</sup> The Act does not specify any lower age limit for placements in special residential homes for young persons operated by the National Board of Institutional Care. According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) statistics on children in care for 2021, the number of children and young persons placed in special residential homes for young persons were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7-9 years: 1 child;</li> <li>- 10-12 years: 2 children;</li> <li>- 13-14 years: 70 children;</li> <li>- 15-17 years: 436 children, and;</li> <li>- 18-20 years: 373 young persons.<sup>945</sup></li> </ul> <p>Special residential homes for young persons run by the National Board of Institutional Care have been subjected to severe criticism in recent years, for example, in relation to the use of means of coercion.<sup>946</sup></p> <p>According to an annual report by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO), a fifth of all children in residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>) feel unsafe. The cause of this is the use of means of coercion, the lack of competence among personnel, and the fact that children are placed there without having the ability to care for themselves in an independent living arrangement.<sup>947</sup></p>
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<sup>944</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 October 2018, section 12.

<sup>945</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 ([Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021](#)), annex, tables.

<sup>946</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2023), Supervision of SiS' special residential homes for young persons ([Tillsyn av SiS särskilda ungdomshem](#)), January 2023; and Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022), What has IVO observed 2021? ([Vad har IVO sett 2021?](#)), 2022.

<sup>947</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022), What has IVO observed 2021? ([Vad har IVO sett 2021?](#)), 2022.



Other forms of family-based or family-like care placements	X		<p>Another form of family-based care is kinship care (<i>nätverkshem</i>)(including the informal kinship of, e.g., relatives, significant friends, neighbours). Kinship care is a form of family home that already has a relationship with the child and usually consists of relatives of the child.<sup>948</sup></p> <p>The municipal social services offer the care through civil society.</p>
Supervised independent living arrangements for children	X		<p>As mentioned above, the municipalities' Social Welfare Boards must ensure that those who need care or live in a home other than their own are placed in residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>) or residential support (<i>stödboende</i>).<sup>949</sup></p> <p>Residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) is available for young persons between the ages of 16 to 20. According to the Social Services Act, children aged 16-17 may only be placed in residential support if there are special reasons.<sup>950</sup></p> <p>As mentioned above, the municipal social services provide the institutions in non-compulsory cases. There are also private companies that run institutions under contract to the social services.</p>
Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.1. Is there data available on the number of children in care (disaggregated by type of care, gender/age, length of placement, etc)?	X		<p>The National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) provides statistics on children in care based on its data from its registry. One figure illustrates the number of children and young persons who received 24-hour measures sometime during 2021, disaggregated by gender and type of placement.<sup>951</sup> The types of placements are family homes, residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>), residential support (<i>stödboende</i>), special residential homes for young persons (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>), own homes, and other form of placement.<sup>952</sup></p> <p>The most common form of care provided to children and young persons are placements in family homes. In 2021, 18,700 children and young persons were placed in family homes, of whom 51 per cent were boys and 49 percent girls.<sup>953</sup></p> <p>The second most common form of placement is residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>).</p>

<sup>948</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) "family homes" (*familjehem*), official website, accessed 28 April 2023.

<sup>949</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>950</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>951</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 2.

<sup>952</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 2.

<sup>953</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 2.

			<p>In 2021, 6,000 children and young people were placed in residential care homes for young persons, of whom 59 percent were boys and 41 percent girls.<sup>954</sup> The number of placements in residential care homes for young persons has decreased to just over half the number since 2018. The decrease has been most evident among boys aged 15 and older.</p> <p>In 2021, 2,300 children and young persons were placed in residential support (<i>stödboende</i>), which was a decrease of 930 children since 2020. 61 percent were boys and 39 percent were girls.<sup>955</sup></p> <p>In 2021, 1,092 children and young persons were placed in special residential homes for young persons (<i>särskilda ungdomshem</i>),<sup>956</sup> regulated in under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>957</sup> Of this total, 712 were boys and 380 girls.</p> <p>This information can be disaggregated by type and reason of measure taken, type of placement, age-groups and gender.<sup>958</sup></p> <p>The National Board of Health and Welfare's (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) statistics provides information on, among other things, placements disaggregated by measures under the Social Services Act and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act. These placements are disaggregated by age and gender.<sup>959</sup></p> <p>In sum, data available on children in care from the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) can be disaggregated by, among other things, type and reason of measure taken, type of placement, age, length of placement (commenced and completed placement), unaccompanied children etc.<sup>960</sup></p>
4.5.2. Is there data available on the number of children placed in alternative care that disappeared and/or went missing from		X	<p>The National Board of Health and Welfare has no data on how many children have gone missing or disappeared from residential care institutions.<sup>961</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in section 1.4.6. above, in 2016 the government tasked the County Administrative Boards (<i>Länsstyrelserna</i>) with conducting a national mapping of unaccompanied children who</p>

<sup>954</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 2.

<sup>955</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 2.

<sup>956</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), annex, tables.

<sup>957</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 1 October 2018, section 12.

<sup>958</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), annex, tables.

<sup>959</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), figure 3.

<sup>960</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2022), Statistics on social services for children and young people 2021 (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga 2021*), annex, tables.

<sup>961</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), 16 March 2023.

residential care institutions?			<p>have disappeared.<sup>962</sup> The report called “Displaced and disappeared – a national mapping of unaccompanied children who have disappeared” (<i>På flykt och försvunnen – en nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som har försvunnit</i>)<sup>963</sup> contain statistics on how many children left the municipality but does not define which sectors of municipal care the children belonged to.<sup>964</sup></p> <p>The County Administrative Boards have also produced a report presenting statistics from the Migration Agency (<i>Migrationsverket</i>) on registered disappearances among unaccompanied children between the years 2013-2020.<sup>965</sup></p>
<p>4.5.3. Is there a <u>national</u> registry of foster care families?</p> <p>How many children can be fostered in one family?</p>		X	<p>There is no national registry of family homes (<i>familjehem</i>) in Sweden. There is no upper limit of how many children can be fostered in one family.<sup>966</sup> However, it might be a factor in the assessment of whether a family is suitable or not.</p> <p>The Social Welfare Boards have an obligation to keep a record of the children who, according to the board's decision, are placed in family homes or other private homes. The Social Welfare Board must send a copy of the record to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) no later than 31 January each year.<sup>967</sup></p>
<p>4.5.4. How and by whom foster families are <u>recruited, vetted, and trained</u>? Provide information on the legal framework and responsible authorities, recruitment requirements, selection criteria, reimbursement of costs, etc.</p>			
<p>The Social Welfare Board in each municipality is responsible for alternative care, in which foster families (called family homes [<i>familjehem</i>] in the Social Services Act) are included.<sup>968</sup> The municipality also has the legal obligation to ensure access to family homes.<sup>969</sup> According to the government, municipalities have had difficulties in recruiting family homes for several years. Currently, there is a shortage of family homes in many municipalities. In 2022, the government assigned the National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) to</p>			

<sup>962</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Board Stockholm (*Länsstyrelsen Stockholm*) Unaccompanied children who disappear '*Ensamkommande barn som försvinner*', official webpage, accessed 30 March 2023.

<sup>963</sup> Sweden, Stockholm County Administrative Board (*Stockholms Länsstyrelse*) (2016) Displaced and disappeared – a national mapping of unaccompanied children that have disappeared” (*På flykt och försvunnen – en nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som har försvunnit*), report 2016:25.

<sup>964</sup> Sweden, Stockholm County Administrative Board (*Stockholms Länsstyrelse*) (2016) Displaced and disappeared – a national mapping of unaccompanied children that have disappeared” (*På flykt och försvunnen – en nationell kartläggning av ensamkommande barn som har försvunnit*), report 2016:25, appendix 2.

<sup>965</sup> Sweden, Country Administrative Boards (*Länsstyrelserna*) (2022) Compilation of unaccompanied children who disappear (*Sammanställning om ensamkommande barn som avvikit*), 2022.

<sup>966</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), 16 March 2023.

<sup>967</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on social services (*Socialtjänstförordning [2001:937]*), 26 June 2018, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>968</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 1.

<sup>969</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 2.

initiate and coordinate information efforts targeting the public about, among other things, family homes.<sup>970</sup> This is described further in chapter 6 below.

The Social Welfare Board is responsible for recruiting family homes<sup>971</sup> and for providing the training needed for those whom the Social Welfare Board intends to employ for the care of children in family homes.<sup>972</sup> The training can include e.g., parental techniques and conflict resolution. The National Board of Health and Welfare has created material for education called “A home to grow into – basic training for on-call families and family homes” (*Ett hem att växa i – grundutbildning för jourfamiljer och familjehem*)<sup>973</sup> on applicable law and experience needed. The recruitment of family homes is conducted in accordance with a manual called “Initial assessment by social services’ recruitment of family homes” (*Initial bedömning av socialtjänstens rekrytering av familjehem*) looking at factors like physical and mental health, criminality, abuse, motives, the family structure, social network, the environment etc.<sup>974</sup>

4.5.5. Are any types of care (foster homes, residential care, other form of care arrangements) monitored once children are placed therein? If so, provide information on the applicable legislative provisions on monitoring procedures. Please specify the difference between the monitoring of different types of care. How frequently are they monitored, how and by whom?

Care in family homes and other arrangements is conducted together with the Social Welfare Board.<sup>975</sup> According to chapter 6, section 7 b of the Social Services Act, the Social Welfare Board shall carefully monitor the care for children placed in family homes (*familjehem*), on-call homes (*jourhem*), residential support (*stödboende*) and residential care homes for young persons (*Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem*). Such monitoring shall be conducted through visits in the home where the child is placed and by having conversations with the child, the foster parents and the guardian(s). The Social Welfare Board shall specifically observe the child and their health, development, social manners, schooling, and relations with their relatives.<sup>976</sup> Similar provisions are applicable to compulsory care, according to section 13 a of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>977</sup>

According to chapter 6, section 7 c of the Social Services Act, the child’s specially appointed social secretary must visit the child regularly and as appropriate based on the child’s needs and wishes.<sup>978</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare’s regulations and general advice, an assessment of how often a particular child should be visited by the social secretary should be made continuously during the placement.<sup>979</sup>

<sup>970</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about family homes, etc. for children and young people ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government assignment, 14 April 2022.

<sup>971</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 6, section 6b.

<sup>972</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 6, section 6c.

<sup>973</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), The knowledge guide – support and education ([Kunskapsguiden – stöd och utbildning](#)), official website, accessed 28 April 2023.

<sup>974</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), (2011) Initial assessment of the social services’ recruitment of family homes ([Initial bedömning av socialtjänstens rekrytering av familjehem](#)), (only available in Swedish) page 31.

<sup>975</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 4.

<sup>976</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 29 December 2015, chapter 6, section 7b.

<sup>977</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 January 2013, section 13a.

<sup>978</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 7c.

<sup>979</sup> Sweden, The National Board of Health and Welfare’s regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board’s responsibility of children and young persons in family homes, on on-call homes, residential support or residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)), SOSFS 2012:11, 2019, chapter 7, section 3.

According to the Social Services Act, care outside the child's own home shall be reconsidered by the Social Welfare Board every six months.<sup>980</sup> The legislation for monitoring is the same regardless of which type of care arrangement the child has been placed in under the Social Services Act.<sup>981</sup> Placements in accordance with the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act shall be reconsidered once every six months or within six months from the date of enforcement of the care decision, depending on the legal grounds for the placement.<sup>982</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.6. Are children placed in foster care homes geographically <u>close to their biological families</u> , school, friends, and/or community?		X	According to the statistics unit at the National Board of Health and Welfare ( <i>Socialstyrelsen</i> ), no information on the geographical distribution of family homes ( <i>familjehem</i> ) can be found. <sup>983</sup> However, in general, as the Social Welfare Board in each municipality is responsible for its residents, a child in the community should be taken care of by the municipality. Municipalities can and sometimes do buy places in other municipalities. <sup>984</sup>
4.5.7. Is there a <u>national registry</u> of residential institutions for children?  If <u>yes</u> , please provide information regarding the existent number of residential institutions and their capacity (beds).	X		The National Board of Institutional Care ( <i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i> ) has a list of its residential institutions with a total of 670 beds in 21 institutions nationally. <sup>985</sup> However, these institutions only comprise compulsory care. There are also private homes for children who are placed for non-compulsory reasons (for example, unaccompanied children seeking asylum). No registry has been identified for these.
4.5.8. Are there <u>accreditation and licensing procedures</u> for residential institutions in place?  If <u>yes</u> , please provide information on the legislative framework, the	X		The Health and Social Care Inspectorate has a supervisory responsibility related to the social services, including residential care for children. <sup>986</sup> The supervision consists of receiving and investigating complaints, and executing permit assessments, <sup>987</sup>

<sup>980</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 8 June 2022, chapter 6, section 8.

<sup>981</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 December 2015, chapter 6.

<sup>982</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act (*Lag [1990:52] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga*), 1 January 2013, section 13a.

<sup>983</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), 17 March 2023.

<sup>984</sup> Sweden, the Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001, chapter 6, section 6a.

<sup>985</sup> Sweden, National Board of Institutional Care (*Statens institutionsstyrelse*) (2021), *SiS I Korthet 2021 – en samling statistiska uppgifter om SiS*, page 5.

<sup>986</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Förordning [2013:176] med instruktion för inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), 2 September 2014, section 1.

<sup>987</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Förordning [2013:176] med instruktion för inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), 2 September 2014, section 1.

responsible authority and procedure.		<p>gathering data and statistics,<sup>988</sup> and carrying out risk analyses and control of operations.<sup>989</sup></p> <p>According to the Social Services Act, a private company, an association, a foundation or an individual may not, without a permit from the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>), professionally carry out residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) or run residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>).<sup>990</sup> A permit is granted if the running of the institution meets the requirements of good quality and safety.<sup>991</sup> Municipalities and regions running such activities must report this to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate before commencing operations.<sup>992</sup></p> <p>This means that residential institutions run by the National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens Institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>), are also supervised by the Health and Social Care Inspectorate.<sup>993</sup> Furthermore, the National Board of Institutional Care's educational facilities are supervised by the Schools Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>), and the whole board is, like any authority, supervised by the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (<i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i>) and the Office of the Chancellor of Justice (<i>Justitiekanslern, JK</i>).<sup>994</sup></p>
4.5.9. Are there <u>national applicable standards</u> relating to the operational framework of such institutions (requirements or quality standards related to the personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions,	X	<p>Under the Social Services Act,<sup>995</sup> the quality of the operations must be systematically and continuously developed and secured. The National Board of Health and Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) has developed regulations and general advice on management systems for work of systematic quality. These regulations and general advice require that the entire social services have a management system for work of systematic quality.<sup>996</sup> The regulations must be applied in the work of systematically and continuously developing and securing quality in these operations.<sup>997</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare has also developed regulations and general advice on documentation in</p>

<sup>988</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Health and Social Care Inspectorate ([Förordning \[2013:176\] med instruktion för inspektionen för vård och omsorg](#)), 23 December 2016, section 3a.

<sup>989</sup> Sweden, Ordinance containing terms of reference for the Health and Social Care Inspectorate ([Förordning \[2013:176\] med instruktion för inspektionen för vård och omsorg](#)), 3 December 2019, section 2.

<sup>990</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 26 June 2018, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>991</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 26 June 2018, chapter 7, section 2.

<sup>992</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 26 June 2018, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>993</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (*Statens institutionsstyrelse*), Supervision ([Tillsyn](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>994</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Board of Institutional Care (*Statens institutionsstyrelse*), Supervision ([Tillsyn](#)), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>995</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 July 2009, chapter 3, Section 3.

<sup>996</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020.

<sup>997</sup> See for example, Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 June 2001, chapter 3, section 3; Sweden.



and daily care of children)?		<p>operations conducted with the support of the Social Service Act and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU).<sup>998</sup></p> <p>The Ordinance on Social Services (<i>Socialtjänstförordning [2011:937]</i>)<sup>999</sup> states that a person with appropriate training shall manage the operation of residential care homes, such as residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) and residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>),. There shall also be such personnel as are needed for effective operations.<sup>1000</sup></p> <p>The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons<sup>1001</sup> and residential support.<sup>1002</sup> They contain regulations and general advice on, among other things, the management system, personnel (including competence) and premises. For example, the guidelines and general advice on residential care homes for young persons states that principals of residential care homes for young persons must adjust their number of personnel in order to provide the conditions to meet the care needs of the children and ensure safe and secure care. The personnel must also be available 24 hours a day.<sup>1003</sup> The premises and equipment must be suitable for the purpose and adapted to enable safe and secure care and be designed with consideration for personal integrity.<sup>1004</sup> The guidelines and general advice on residential support state, among other things, that principals for residential support must ensure that there are personnel specifically assigned to support children or young persons.<sup>1005</sup> The premises must be designed in such a way that they contribute to children's and young people's preparation for independence and meet the needs for safety and security. Children's own accommodation (being part of the residential support) must consist of rooms for accommodation, space for cooking and eating meals, and rooms for personal hygiene.<sup>1006</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in section 4.5.8. above, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>) is the regulatory authority conducting supervision at residential care homes for children and young persons operated by social services or other actors and at special residential homes for young people</p>
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<sup>998</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of SoL, LVU, LVM and LSS ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om dokumentation i verksamhet som bedrivs med stöd av SoL, LVU, LVM och LSS](#)), SOSFS 2015:5, 2 June 2022.

<sup>999</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on social services ([Socialtjänstförordning \[2011:937\]](#)), 29 November 2001.

<sup>1000</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on social services ([Socialtjänstförordning \[2011:937\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 3, section 5.

<sup>1001</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016.

<sup>1002</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016.

<sup>1003</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016, chapter 6, sections 1-2.

<sup>1004</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1005</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1006</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016, chapter 6, sections 1-2.



			( <i>särskilda ungdomshem</i> ) operated by the National Board of Institutional Care. <sup>1007</sup> Under the law, the Health and Social Care Inspectorate must conduct supervision of housing for children and young persons at least once a year, so-called frequency supervision ( <i>frekvenstillsyn</i> ). <sup>1008</sup>
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#### 4.5.10. How is the residential care staff recruited, vetted, and trained?

The personnel are often recruited through advertisements on the home pages of private institutions.<sup>1009</sup>

The Health and Social Care Inspectorate states in its booklet, "Safe and Secure Care – Are the Staff Adequately Trained?",<sup>1010</sup> that there are no standards when it comes to training and vetting personnel. According to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate, the authority's personnel are competent in line with the existing regulations.<sup>10111012</sup>

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.11. Are children placed in alternative care allowed to <u>lodge complaints</u> against the personnel /foster parents and care workers and report abuse or violations of their rights? Are these procedures child-friendly and respective of confidentiality?	X		As mentioned in chapter 2.1.5. above, actors providing social services are obliged to receive and investigate complaints and opinions on the quality of the operations from, among others, children and young care recipients and their relatives. <sup>1013</sup> Children and young persons placed outside their family homes can submit complains or opinions directly to the municipalities' Social Welfare Board ( <i>socialnämnd</i> ), for example, through the specially appointed social secretary. <sup>1014</sup> They can also submit complaints through the staff at the municipal residential support ( <i>stödboende</i> ), residential care homes for young persons ( <i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i> ), the National Board of Institutional Care ( <i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i> ), or privately operated residential support or residential care homes for young persons. <sup>1015</sup> The Social Welfare Board must provide information to the child about contact details to the specially appointed social secretary. Children must also receive information on how to access the regulatory authority. Children should also be informed about their rights in terms of submitting complaints and views to

<sup>1007</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 June 2013, chapter 13, section 1.

<sup>1008</sup> See for example, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) Frequency supervision of accommodation for children and young people ([Frekvenstillsyn av boende för barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 27 April 2023.

<sup>1009</sup> Homes for care or living guide (*HVB-guiden*) [www.hvbguiden.se/](http://www.hvbguiden.se/)

<sup>1010</sup> Sweden, The Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2013), A safe and Secure Care – Is Staff Adequately Trained? ([En trygg och säker vård – har personalen en lämplig utbildning? En granskning av vård- och omsorgspersonalens utbildning och metoder i HVB för barn och unga](#)), November 2013.

<sup>1011</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general guidance on residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende](#)), HSLF-FS 2016:55.

<sup>1012</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with official at the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), 17 March 2023.

<sup>1013</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd \(2011:9\) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), 10 December 2020, chapter 5, section 3.

<sup>1014</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 7c.

<sup>1015</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020, chapter 1.

<p>If <u>yes</u>, briefly describe to whom and how children can lodge complaints.</p>		<p>the Social Welfare Board.<sup>1016</sup> Children also have the possibility to submit complaints to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>).<sup>1017</sup> The authority has a special children's and young people's telephone and chat line, where children and young people who have contact with health-care, social services or live in a student residence can get in touch with the authority. The authority can provide general information about the child's rights, explain and clarify, give advice and refer the child to the right authority. The authority can also, in the light of the child's complaint, decide to open a supervisory case (<i>tillsynsärende</i>) against the authority concerned.<sup>1018</sup></p> <p>Children and young people can also submit complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (<i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i>) if they believe that they have been treated wrongly or unjustly by a public authority or an official employed by the civil service or local government.<sup>1019</sup></p>
<p>4.5.12. What is the <u>assistance available to adolescents that leave alternative care</u> to live independently?</p> <p>(e.g. financial, housing, vocational, educational, employment, life skills, mental health services, social or emotional)?</p> <p>Briefly describe who is responsible for such assistance?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The Social Welfare Board shall offer support and help when care has ended according to the Social Services Act.<sup>1020</sup> The Social Welfare Board may offer support with housing, studies or work.<sup>1021</sup></p> <p>In some instances, the placement in the family home will be transformed into a lodging. Support homes may also be used for children in need of adaption after placement in a support home or a family home,<sup>1022</sup> see question 4.5.</p>

<sup>1016</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young people in family homes, on-call homes or residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)), 30 December 2019, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1017</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1018</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) 'For Children and Young persons' ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1019</sup> Sweden, Act with instruction for the Parliamentary Ombudsman ([Lag \[1986:765\] med instruktion för riksdagens ombudsman](#)) 13 November 1986, section 1-2.

<sup>1020</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 11 July 2017, chapter 5, section 1, point 10.

<sup>1021</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2016) Investigating children and young persons— handbook for the social services' operations under the social services act ([Utreda barn och unga – handbok för socialtjänstens arbete enligt socialtjänstlagen](#)), 2016, page 316.

<sup>1022</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), (2020) Placed children and youths - handbook for the social services ([Placerade barn och unga - handbok för socialtjänsten](#)), April 2020, page 317.

4.5.13. What assistance is provided to families - while the child is placed to alternative care - to support the return of the child in the family? By whom? Who coordinates the assistance? Please briefly describe.

As mentioned in previous sections, care with the support of the Social Services Act is based on voluntariness. In the case of voluntary placements, the care must end if the guardian or the child (if he or she has reached the age of 15) requests it. As mentioned in the section above, the Social Welfare Board has an obligation under the Social Services Act to meet the special needs of service and support after care outside the child's own home has ended.<sup>1023</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's general recommendations and advice, the Social Welfare Board shall meet the guardian's need for support in the parental role in cases where the child returns to the family.<sup>1024</sup> According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's handbook on the placement of children and young persons, such support can, for example, consist of family therapeutic measures, training in the interaction between children and parents or advice and support contacts or program activities aimed at parents. Assistance in the form of a contact family, primarily the former family home, can also be given to support both children and parents.<sup>1025</sup>

Care according to the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act must be reviewed if the guardian or a child who has turned 15 requests it. There is no restriction on the right to request that care should end. The guardians and the child or young person can therefore at any time request the Social Welfare Board to decide on the termination of care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>1026</sup> However, the Social Welfare Board cannot decide that the care should end until the causes of the placement have changed in a permanent, persistent and pervasive manner.<sup>1027</sup> The Social Welfare Board has the responsibility to prepare for the child's reunion with the guardians when care in accordance with the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act ends.<sup>1028</sup> This shall be carried out with the best interests of the child in mind.<sup>1029</sup> The Social Welfare Board shall work for the reunion to be as smooth as possible<sup>1030</sup> through good contact between the child and the guardians during time of placement.<sup>1031</sup>

Social services offer support to guardians with placed children. This can be in the form of parental education, counselling, and support in contact as a parent and with the carers for the child.<sup>1032,1033</sup>

<sup>1023</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 11 July 2017, chapter 5, section 1, point 10.

<sup>1024</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young people in family homes, on-call homes, residential support, residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)) SOSFS 2012:11, 2019, chapter 8.

<sup>1025</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), (2020) Placed children and youths - handbook for the social services ([Placerade barn och unga - handbok för socialtjänsten](#)), April 2020.

<sup>1026</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1990.

<sup>1027</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 21.

<sup>1028</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 21.

<sup>1029</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 1.

<sup>1030</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services ([LVU – handbok för socialtjänsten](#)), March 2020, page 221.

<sup>1031</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services ([LVU – handbok för socialtjänsten](#)), March 2020, page 221.

<sup>1032</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Questions and answers about care under the Care of young persons (special provisions) act [Frågor och svar om omhändertagande av barn enligt LVU](#), official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>1033</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young people in family homes, on-call homes, residential support, residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)) SOSFS 2012:11.

<p>4.5.13. Is any <u>assistance</u> provided to children and families <u>upon</u> <u>return of the child in the family</u>? Briefly describe. Who is responsible for such assistance?</p> <p>Is there any monitoring and follow-up of such cases?</p> <p>Who is coordinating assistance and support?</p>	X		<p>As mentioned above, the main rule is that support in line with the Social Services Act is voluntary. The Social Welfare Board may decide that follow up shall be conducted after care has ended if the child is assessed to be in need of the Board's support or protection.<sup>1034</sup> The follow up consists of the Board being in contact with relevant people<sup>1035</sup> and with the child.<sup>1036</sup></p> <p>According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's general recommendations and advice, the Social Welfare Board shall, in its assessment of children's need of support and help after care in family home, municipal residential support (<i>stödboende</i>), and residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>), consider the need for continuous contact with the home they have been placed. The Board also has the responsibility for ensuring that the guardian receives support in their parental role.<sup>1037</sup></p> <p>With regard to care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act, the Social Welfare Board has an obligation to follow up after the end of an intervention. The Social Welfare Board must carefully prepare the children's reunification with the person or persons who have custody of them.<sup>1038</sup> The Social Welfare Board cannot decide that the care should end until the causes of the placement have changed in a permanent, persistent and pervasive manner.<sup>1039</sup> Additionally, the authority must consider applying for a prohibition on moving.<sup>1040</sup></p>
<p>4.5.14. Are decisions of placement in alternative care reviewed?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the applicable legislative provisions. How frequently is this done? By whom?</p>	X		<p>As described in several sections above, placements in line with the Social Services Act are voluntary. As mentioned in section 4.5.13. above, in the case of voluntary placement the care must end if the guardian or the child (if he or she has reached the age of 15) requests it.</p> <p>As mentioned in section 4.5.13. above, care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act must be reviewed if the guardian or a child who has turned 15 requests it. There is no restriction on the right to request that the care should end. The guardians and the child or young person can therefore at any time request the Social Welfare Board to decide on the termination of</p>

<sup>1034</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 8 June 2022, chapter 11, section 4b.

<sup>1035</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 2.

<sup>1036</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 7 December 2012, chapter 11, section 4c.

<sup>1037</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young persons in family homes, on-call homes, residential support, residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)) SOSFS 2012:11, chapter 8.

<sup>1038</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 21b.

<sup>1039</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 21.

<sup>1040</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 13b.

Are the children's views taken into consideration?		<p>care according to the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>1041</sup></p> <p>A placement into alternative care according to the Social Services Act and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act shall be reconsidered or retried every 6 months by the Social Welfare Board.<sup>1042</sup> The reconsideration is not a formal retrial but is an informal assessment by the case officer.</p> <p>With regard to placements under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act, this procedure is only applicable in cases where the child cannot live at home because of abuse, negligence or any other mistreatment (environment cases).<sup>1043</sup> The reconsideration can happen even if social services do not inform the person concerned.<sup>1044</sup> The retrial procedure is for so-called "behaviour cases", that is, when the child has been placed in involuntary care because their behaviour is considered harmful<sup>1045</sup> (see question 4.4.1 above). The retrial procedure shall occur every 6 months.<sup>1046</sup> The retrial is a formal procedure in line with the procedural rules of the administrative court,<sup>1047</sup> which means that the Social Welfare Board must inform the parties concerned of their right to appear before the court.<sup>1048</sup></p> <p>As mentioned in section 4.4.3. above, children's right to be heard is regulated in chapter 10, section 11 of the Social Service Act.<sup>1049</sup> According to this provision, the child must receive relevant information and be given the opportunity to express their views in matters concerning them. If children do not express their opinions, their views must as far as possible be clarified in another way. Children's views must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity. According to section 36 of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act, young persons shall receive relevant information and be given an opportunity to express an opinion in matters relating to them. If the child chooses to not express an opinion, the opinion shall if possible be mapped in an alternative manner. Children's views must be given importance in relation to their age and maturity.<sup>1050</sup></p>
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<sup>1041</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1990.

<sup>1042</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 13. & Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 8 June 2022, chapter 6, section 8.

<sup>1043</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 23 June 2003, section 2.

<sup>1044</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) The care of young persons (special provisions) act- handbook for the social services ([LVU – handbook för socialtjänsten](#)), March 2020, page 211.

<sup>1045</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskildabestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 26 June 2006, section 3.

<sup>1046</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 8 June 2022, section 13.

<sup>1047</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 23 november 2018, chapter 11, section 8; Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 29 May 2020, section 41.

<sup>1048</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 15 June 2018, chapter 11, section 9.

<sup>1049</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 10.

<sup>1050</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 7 december 2012, section 36.

4.5.15. Is there a legal framework regarding adoption? Briefly describe the core elements and responsible authorities, also considering differences between within-country and between-country adoptions. Is private adoption permitted in the country?

The Swedish legal framework on adoption includes the Social Services Act (chapter 5 and 6), the Parental Code (chapter 4), the Act on Adoption In International Situations (*Lag [2018:1289] om adoption i internationella situationer*), the Ordinance on Adoption In International Situations (*Förordning [2018:1296] om adoption i internationella situationer*),<sup>1051</sup> and the Inter-country Adoption Intermediation Act (*Lag [1997:192] om internationell adoptionsförmedling*).<sup>1052</sup> The 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption is incorporated into Swedish law through the Act subsequent to Sweden's accession to the Hague Convention on the protection of children and cooperation in respect of inter-country adoption (*Lag [1997:191] med anledning av Sveriges tillträde till Haagkonventionen om skydd av barn och samarbete vid internationella adoptioner*). According to the Parental Code, a child can only be adopted if this is considered suitable after considering all the circumstances.<sup>1053</sup> The consideration consists of the child's need to adopt and the applicant's suitability. The best interests of the child shall be of the utmost importance in all questions relating to adoption. The best interests of child shall always prevail.<sup>1054</sup>

According to the Social Services Act, a child domiciled abroad may not be received by anyone for the purposes of adoption without the consent of the Social Welfare Board. The consent must have been given before the child leaves the country where the child is domiciled.<sup>1055</sup> Approval is given only to suitable applicants that have gone through a parental course. Inter-country adoptions shall generally be carried out through an authorised adoption agency according to the Inter-country Adoption Intermediation Act.<sup>1056</sup> When the agency has suggested a child, the Social Welfare Board assesses consent to the continuation of the adoption process.

Private adoption (*enskild adoption*) is possible in Sweden under section 4 of the Inter-country Adoption Intermediation Act. Private adoption is conducted without an adoption agency. It is, however, only possible if the child is related to the potential guardian or if there are special reasons not to use a formal intermediation agency. The possibility of private adoption is only applicable if there are special reasons and if the alternative method of intermediation is reliable. Special reasons can, for example, be if the applicant has an affiliation with the country. A reliable method of intermediation ensures that the process in the country must be conducted in an ethically correct way and must not involve, for example, any form of child trafficking.<sup>1057</sup> The Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) will determine if the procedure is adequate and if there exist special circumstances for an adoption.<sup>1058</sup> If the Family Law and Parental Support Authority assesses that both of these conditions are met, the procedure is considered acceptable, and permission can be obtained to carry out a private adoption. A decision by the Family Law and Parental Support Authority not to grant permission to carry out an individual adoption can be appealed to an Administrative Court (*Förvaltningsrätt*).<sup>1059</sup>

National adoption is not common in Sweden. National adoptions are of a different nature and thus cover different groups of children and parents, from children who will acquire a new family to children or adults who will acquire an existing parent-child relationship that is valid in legal terms. Adoption by relatives is most

<sup>1051</sup> Sweden, Act on adoption in international situations (*Lag [2018:1289] om adoption i internationella situationer*), 20 June 2018.

<sup>1052</sup> Sweden, Act on international adoption agency (*Lag [1997:192] om internationell adoptionsförmedling*) 30 April 1997.

<sup>1053</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 29 June 2018, chapter 4, section 2.

<sup>1054</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 29 June 2018, chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>1055</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), chapter 6, section 12.

<sup>1056</sup> Sweden, Inter-country adoption intermediation act (*Lag [1997:192] om internationell adoptionsförmedling*), 30 April 1997, section 3.

<sup>1057</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) Individual adoption (*enskild adoption*), official webpage, accessed 28 April 2023.

<sup>1058</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 29 June 2018, chapter 6, section 12.

<sup>1059</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) Individual adoption (*enskild adoption*), official webpage, accessed 28 April 2023.



common, i.e. adoption of a child by a spouse, registered partner or cohabitant.<sup>1060</sup> An adoption application shall be submitted to the District Court (*Tingsrätt*).<sup>1061</sup> After receiving an adoption application for a child under 18 years of age, the District Court must instruct the Social Welfare Board to appoint an investigator who will carry out an adoption investigation.<sup>1062</sup> The Social Welfare Board is responsible for the investigation and must ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the District Court's request.<sup>1063</sup> As mentioned in 4.4.1. above, children who have reached the age of 12 may only be adopted if they consent to the adoption. Consent is, however, not required if the child is permanently prevented from consenting due to mental illness or any other similar condition. Before consent is given, the child must receive information about the meaning of an adoption and of such consent.<sup>1064</sup> Moreover, children must receive information and be given the opportunity to express their views on matters relating to the adoption. The child's views must be indicative of the child's age and maturity.<sup>1065</sup>

Since 2003, it has been possible in Sweden for (legally) same-sex married couples to apply for and receive consent for joint adoption. In 2018, that possibility has been extended to apply to cohabiting couples as well.

4.5.16. What are the main challenges encountered and gaps at the policy and legislative level in relation to alternative care? *Please consider available studies reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.*

Reports from CSOs suggest that children placed in alternative care are treated differently depending on where in the country they live. This is because it is the municipalities themselves who are responsible for ensuring placed children have qualitative care and follow-up.<sup>1066</sup> There is no sufficient tool for tracking inequalities, and there is a lack of frameworks to ensure quality and follow-up of each individual child's right to good and equal care.<sup>1067</sup>

The lack of collaboration is also a challenge according to several sources (see question 4.3.10 above). Reports suggest that professionals from different authorities work internally and that children may fall through the cracks as consequence.<sup>1068</sup> For example, a child in need of psychiatric care may only receive social services-provided care because the two authorities fail to communicate. Furthermore, the right to participate in decisions about care is not fulfilled due to deficiencies in evaluation tools and individual follow-up.<sup>1069</sup>

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<sup>1060</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) National adoptions – handbook for social services (*Nationell adoption – handbok för socialtjänsten*), March 2020.

<sup>1061</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 12.

<sup>1062</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 14.

<sup>1063</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 15.

<sup>1064</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 7.

<sup>1065</sup> Sweden, Parental code (*Föräldrabalk [1949:381]*), 1 September 2018, chapter 4, section 3.

<sup>1066</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022.

<sup>1067</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 25.

<sup>1068</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 27, and; Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>1069</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) *Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights*, 2022, page 27.



The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is concerned about the use of coercive measures in alternative care settings, due to the lack of prohibition in the legislation.<sup>1070</sup> The Parliamentary Ombudsman has observed that coercive measures have been misused in compulsory care due to the personnel's lack of knowledge.<sup>1071</sup> The Health and Social Care Inspectorate has concluded that isolation has been used without a proper legal basis.<sup>1072</sup> The legal basis can be found in chapter 24, section 2 of the Criminal Code. It states that a lawfully detained person can be subject to justifiable force by a person supervising, in order to maintain order or impede escape.

Despite the Social Welfare Boards' obligation to provide support and develop a plan for when care ends,<sup>1073</sup> reports observe shortcomings when institutional care ends. Children lose financial, practical and emotional support and are at risk of returning to social care.<sup>1074</sup>

#### 4.6. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection care system in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

As mentioned in responses to several chapters above, the CRC was incorporated into Swedish law in 2020.<sup>1075</sup> However, many actors consider the disparities in the implementation of the CRC still a challenge.<sup>1076</sup> Differences between regions and municipalities are significant, as have been highlighted in several state reports.<sup>1077</sup>

<sup>1070</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 6 (b).

<sup>1071</sup> Sweden, the Parliamentary Ombudsman (*JO-riksdagens ombudsmän*) (2018), [National Preventive Mechanism – NPM report from the OPCAT unit for 2018](#), p. 64.

<sup>1072</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) (2022) Supervision at special residential homes for young people run by SiS ([Tillsyn av SiS särskilda ungdomshem](#)), January 2023, page 20.

<sup>1073</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young persons in family homes, on-call homes, residential support, residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)) SOSFS 2012:11, chapter 8.

<sup>1074</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 28.

<sup>1075</sup> Sweden, Act on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Lag \[2018:1197\] om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter](#)), 20 June 2018.

<sup>1076</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 4, government reports (see following foot note).

<sup>1077</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2021) Start with the kids! Consistent good and close care for children and young people ([Börja med barnen! Sammanhållen god och nära vård för barn och unga](#)), government official report, 4 May 2021; Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law" ([Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt](#)), government official report, 12 November 2020; Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2017) The next step on the road to more equal health - final report of the Commission for equal health ([Nästa steg på vägen mot en mer jämlik hälsa - slutbetänkande av Kommissionen för jämlik hälsa](#)), government official report 2 June 2017.

The legislation states that collaboration shall occur, as the authorities have the legal obligation to do so (see question 4.3.1). However, there is a general acknowledgement<sup>1078</sup> that collaboration between different authorities is often problematic, and children often state that they fall through the cracks because of lack of collaboration.<sup>1079</sup>

Many reports point to the lack of effective remedies for children.<sup>1080</sup> Although the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomes the establishment of the NHRI, it is concerned with the lack of a mandate for the Ombudsman for Children to receive complaints. The procedure for filing complaints under specific mechanisms are complex.<sup>1081</sup>

One national daily newspaper in Sweden published an extensive article about a child called “Lilla Hjärtat”, which resulted in a public outcry.<sup>1082</sup> The child was placed into care in line with the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act due to her parent’s substance abuse. The child was placed in a family home. The care ended after an application by the parents. Later, the child was found dead at her parents’ home after a report to the social services.<sup>1083</sup> Following this incident, the government presented a proposal to amend the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>1084</sup> According to the amendments, the Social Welfare Board cannot decide for the care to end until the circumstances that resulted in the care have changed in a consistent and persuasive manner. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Board has an obligation to consider applying for a prohibition on moving to stop the child from moving home abruptly. There is also an obligation for the Social Welfare Board to follow up after care has ended. The new provisions of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act entered into force in 2022.<sup>1085</sup>

#### 4.7. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in the child protection care system that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

As mentioned in question 4.6., one challenge has been the children’s right to participation. One example of a promising practice is that the Health and Social Care Inspectorate has material aimed at children informing them about their rights and helping them lodge complaints.<sup>1086</sup> Similar actions have been taken by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which has launched a website, aimed at the recipient of support, containing easily accessible information about rights and where children can lodge complaints.<sup>1087</sup>

<sup>1078</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022; and Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Socialdepartementet) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>1079</sup> Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al. (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022, page 6.

<sup>1080</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Socialdepartementet) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023; and; and Sweden, ECPAT Sweden, Save the Children, Unizon et al (2022) [Report from children – appendix 1: Report from Civil Society Organisations working with Child Rights](#), 2022.

<sup>1081</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023.

<sup>1082</sup> Sweden, Dagens Nyheter (2020), ‘[Hon fick inte fylla fyra](#)’, 8 March 2020.

<sup>1083</sup> Sweden, Dagens Nyheter (2020), ‘[Hon fick inte fylla fyra](#)’, 8 March 2020.

<sup>1084</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Socialdepartementet) The best interest of the child when care under Care of young persons (special provisions) act ends – lex little heart ([Barnets bästa när vård enligt LVU upphör – lex lilla hjärtat](#)), government bill, 2021/22:178, 22 March 2022.

<sup>1085</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 3 June 2022.

<sup>1086</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (Inspektionen för vård och omsorg) ‘For Children and Young persons’ ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1087</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) ‘Check on soc’ ([Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

The government has given the National Board of Health and Welfare ongoing assignments to prevent the spread of rumors and disinformation about the social services<sup>1088</sup> and to inform society about family homes.<sup>1089</sup> Part of the task has also been to increase its social media presence and present accessible information texts, both in Swedish but also other relevant languages.<sup>1090</sup> The aim is to spread information to help the social services recruit suitable families for family homes, on-call families, kinship care and contact persons.<sup>1091</sup>

The National Board of Health and Welfare has also been tasked by the government to create regulations for the application of the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act.<sup>1092</sup> It has received funds especially in order to develop the regulations. One challenge has been the lack of a framework for the application of the Act, specifically on follow-up but also in general (see question 4.5.17). The regulation shall have a specific focus on honour culture and criminality, as well as the end of care.<sup>1093</sup> Honour culture is a system where oppression or violence may occur within a family to protect the family's honour and values.<sup>1094</sup>

As mentioned in section 4.3.6. above, one example of a promising practice within inter-agency cooperation is the National Board of Health and Welfare's guidelines for health-care and dental-care actors on the responsibility to report on children at risk of negligence or abuse.<sup>1095</sup>

On the legislative side, there has also been a proposal to lower the age limit for open interventions (*öppna insatser*) for children without the guardian's consent, as mentioned in chapter 1 above. The government proposes to lower the age to 12 years.<sup>1096</sup> Open interventions can be anything from a contact person to programs with goals that the child must adhere to.<sup>1097</sup>

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<sup>1088</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) Change of the assignment to prevent the spread of rumors and disinformation about the social services, ([Ändring av uppdraget att motverka ryktesspridning och disinformation om socialtjänsten](#)), government decision, 3 March 2023.

<sup>1089</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about foster care etc. for children and young persons, ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government decision, 13 April 2022.

<sup>1090</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) Change of the assignment to prevent the spread of rumors and disinformation about the social services, ([Ändring av uppdraget att motverka ryktesspridning och disinformation om socialtjänsten](#)), government decision, 3 March 2023.

<sup>1091</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about foster care etc. for children and young persons, ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government decision, 13 April 2022.

<sup>1092</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment about support for the application of care of young persons (special provisions) act, ([Uppdrag om stöd för tillämpning av lagen med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), government decision, 30 June 2022.

<sup>1093</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) Assignment about support for the application of care of young persons (special provisions) act, ([Uppdrag om stöd för tillämpning av lagen med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), government decision, 30 June 2022.

<sup>1094</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (2020), Honour-based violence and oppression ([Hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck](#)) official webpage, accessed 2 May 2023.

<sup>1095</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2014) Children being neglected or abused and children at risk of being neglected or abused – a guidance for the healthcare and the dentalcare about the reporting obligation and responsibility ([Barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa- en vägledning för hälso- och sjukvården samt tandvården gällande anmälningsskyldighet och ansvar](#)), October 2014.

<sup>1096</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) A lowered age limit for open assistance for children without guardian's consent ([En sänkt åldersgräns för öppna insatser till barn utan vårdnandshavarens samtycke](#)), legislative council referral, 19 December 2022.

<sup>1097</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) A lowered age limit for open assistance for children without guardian's consent ([En sänkt åldersgräns för öppna insatser till barn utan vårdnandshavarens samtycke](#)), government bill, 16 February 2023.

In 2022, the government appointed a special inquirer on children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the CRC.<sup>1098</sup> This is described further in chapter 6.2.2. below.

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<sup>1098</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([\*Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen\*](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

## 5. Accountability, data collection, and monitoring mechanisms

### 5.1. Accountability mechanisms

5.1.1. Are there accountability mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system? Is there any independent monitoring or reporting mechanisms on the performance of the child protection system? What is the role of child's ombudspersons, child commissioners or other independent national human rights institutions in monitoring child protection?

At the international level, the periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is an important accountability mechanism regarding the functioning of the child protection system in Sweden. In the latest reporting period, the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*), the Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) and several civil-society organisations have submitted supplementary reports.

As outlined in chapter 2.1 above, the Ombudsman for Children is a government agency established in accordance with the Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*).<sup>1099</sup> The Ombudsman is tasked with promoting and advancing children's rights and interests in Sweden on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>1100</sup> The Ombudsman monitors compliance with the CRC within society and supports its implementation in agencies, municipalities and regions. The Ombudsman shall also note shortcomings in the CRC's application and propose amendments to legislation and ordinances.<sup>1101</sup>

The Institute for Human Rights was established in 2022 in accordance with the Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*).<sup>1102</sup> Under the Act, the purpose of the Institute is to promote the safeguarding of human rights in Sweden.<sup>1103</sup> The Institute aims to promote guarantees of human rights based on, e.g., international human rights conventions. It shall monitor, investigate and report on how human rights are respected and realised in Sweden, as well as propose necessary actions to the government.<sup>1104</sup>

As outlined in chapter 2.1.2. above, there are several regulatory authorities whose task is to assess whether the individual's legal certainty is being maintained and that legislation and regulations in the area are being complied with. For example, the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*), the Parliamentary Ombudsman (*Justitieombudsmannen, JO*) and the Equality Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO*) are involved in such work.

In addition, there are several civil-society organisations focusing on child rights that routinely deliver critical reports about the child protection system in Sweden.<sup>1105</sup>

As mentioned in section 2.3.2. above, all government authorities have a general obligation to cooperate with other authorities within their area of operation.<sup>1106</sup> According to the Ombudsman for Children, the authority met with the Institute for Human Rights on three occasions during 2022. The aim was to identify common interests

<sup>1099</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 13 May 2013.

<sup>1100</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002, section 1.

<sup>1101</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002, section 2.

<sup>1102</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*), 22 June 2021.

<sup>1103</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*), 22 June 2021, section 1.

<sup>1104</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*), 22 June 2021, section 2.

<sup>1105</sup> For example, Save the Children (*Rädda Barnen*) and Child's rights in society (*Barnets rätt i samhället*).

<sup>1106</sup> Sweden, Administrative procedure act (*Förvaltningslag [2017:900]*), section 8.

that could be highlighted in the supplementary report to the UN Committee on the rights of the child. Generally, the Ombudsman for Children follows the Institute's activities as part of its external monitoring.<sup>1107</sup>

In relation to cooperation and exchanging information with civil society, the cooperation between the Ombudsman for Children and civil-society actors is conducted within the framework of different government assignments. The forms of cooperation differ depending on the nature and purpose of the assignment. It can, for example, consist of help in finding children with whom the Ombudsman for Children can have a dialogue. In addition, the Ombudsman for Children arranges round-table discussions aiming to acquire knowledge and exchange experiences with civil-society actors.<sup>1108</sup> The Ombudsman for Children participates in the government's Children's Rights Delegation (*Barnrättsdelegation*), which also consists of representatives of civil-society organisations (see chapter 2 above).

#### 5.1.2. How is the implementation of national action plans and strategies or other policy actions on child protection monitored? Briefly describe the established procedures and mention the actors involved and their roles.

The implementation of certain national action plans and strategies or other policy actions are part of the monitoring conducted by the actors mentioned above. For example, the Ombudsman for children (*Barnombudsmannen*) has stressed a number of weaknesses concerning the strategy for strengthening the rights of the child in Sweden. For example, the strategy lacks an end date and action plan, as well as a proper follow-up system.<sup>1109</sup>

Different government agencies also have responsibilities in relation to certain areas of protection. For example, the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) shall monitor, analyse and report on health care, social services and support and services for persons with certain functional impairments through, for example, follow-up and evaluation.<sup>1110</sup>

In addition, the government tasks government agencies with conducting evaluations and follow-ups on strategies and policy actions. The Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) is the government's organisation for analyses and evaluations of state and state-funded activities. As stated in chapter 3, the authority currently has a government assignment to follow up and evaluate the knowledge boost about children's rights (*Kunskapslyft för barnets rättigheter*). Through previous government assignments, the authority has, among other things, analysed government agencies' work on the national strategy to combat men's violence against women<sup>1111</sup> and evaluated the strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.<sup>1112</sup>

Certain strategies, action plans or policy actions also identify the actors responsible for the follow up and evaluation. For example, the government is responsible for the follow up of the strategy for the national work on human rights.<sup>1113</sup> Furthermore, the national strategy for systematically following up the national objective

<sup>1107</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>1108</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>1109</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>1110</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instruction for the National Board of Health and Welfare ([Förordning \[2015:284\] med instruktion för Socialstyrelsen](#)), 21 May 2015.

<sup>1111</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) (2021) Men's violence against women – an analysis of the government agencies work on the national strategy ([Mäns våld mot kvinnor – en analys av myndigheternas arbete med den nationella strategin](#)), 2021:3.

<sup>1112</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*) (2016) Evaluation of the strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression ([Utvärdering av strategin för lika rättigheter och möjligheter oavsett sexuell läggning, könsidentitet eller könsuttryck](#)), 2016:31.

<sup>1113</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2016) Strategy for the national work on human rights ([Strategi för det nationella arbetet med mänskliga rättigheter](#)), 13 October 2016, page 39.

for a disability policy<sup>1114</sup> outlines a number of government agencies, including the Ombudsman for Children, responsible for conducting a systematic follow up of the disability policy within their respective areas of responsibility.<sup>1115</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
5.1.3. Is there a child rights assessment existing or foreseen? Please note that child rights' assessment stands for the measurement of the impact of proposed or adopted legislation on children as a group. It is usually done at the parliamentary or ministerial level.	X		<p>Swedish legislative work is often based on government inquiries (<i>statlig utredning</i>),<sup>1116</sup> each based on a committee directive (<i>kommittédirektiv</i>). In the committee directive, the government specifies the guidelines for the work of the special inquirer or committee. The government also specifies, among other things, the issue to be assessed and certain perspectives or documents that need to be taken into consideration.<sup>1117</sup></p> <p>Based on the inquiry, a government bill is then drafted containing an analysis, legislative proposals and justification for the legislative proposals.<sup>1118</sup> According to the government, a child rights' assessment is specified in certain inquiries, though not in all.<sup>1119</sup> Inquiry reports including legislative proposals are often circulated for formal consultation to, among others, government authorities, municipalities, courts, and civil-society actors.<sup>1120</sup></p> <p>As indicated under section 2.1.1. above, one of the Ombudsman for Children's tasks is to pay particular attention to laws and other regulations compliance with the CRC, including noting shortcomings.<sup>1121</sup></p>
5.1.4. Are there quality standards for child protection services set in the legislation (including prevention programmes)? (e.g. number of cases per case workers, requirements regarding infrastructures of residential care and number of personnel, performance, and fiscal accountability mechanisms) Please describe.			

<sup>1114</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 (*Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspölitiken under 2021–2031*), 29 September 2021.

<sup>1115</sup> 28 authorities will have a clear follow-up responsibility – for a complete list of the different government agencies see; Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*), Strategy for systematic follow-up of disability policy during 2021–2031 (*Strategi för systematisk uppföljning av funktionshinderspölitiken under 2021–2031*), 29 September 2021.

<sup>1116</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Inquiries and Committees '*Utredningar och kommittéer*' official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>1117</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Inquiries and Committees '*Utredningar och kommittéer*' official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>1118</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Council on Legislation reviews the proposal '*Lagrådet granskar förslaget*', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>1119</sup> United Nations (UN) Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) (2023) *Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Sweden's Planned National Strategy on Preventing Violence against Children, Ask about the Use of Isolation and Restraints in Psychiatric Hospitals and the High Youth Crime Rate*, press release, 17 January 2023.

<sup>1120</sup> Sweden, Government Offices (*Regeringskansliet*) Inquiry's proposal is presented '*Utredningens förslag presenteras*', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>1121</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children (*Lag [1993:335] om Barnombudsman*), 1 July 2002, section 2.



Generally, the legislation rarely defines specific quality standards such as the number of cases per case worker, number of personnel or requirements regarding infrastructure etc., except in vague terms. The legislation in relation to social services, health care and service and support for persons with disabilities sets out the requirements for quality and management systems to perform work of systematic quality.

For example, the Health and Social Services Act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*)<sup>1122</sup> states that health-care activities must be conducted in line with the requirements for good health care, and there must be the personnel, premises and equipment necessary for good care to be provided.<sup>1123</sup> Furthermore, the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (LSS) (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*)<sup>1124</sup> states that the operations must be of good quality and the personnel must be able to provide good support, service and care.<sup>1125</sup> According to the Social Services Act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*),<sup>1126</sup> social services' operations must be of a good quality, and the personnel must have the appropriate training and experience to carry out their tasks.<sup>1127</sup> The Act requires the social welfare committee (*societnämnden*) to ensure that procedures are in place to prevent, detect and address risks and abuses of children in the social services.<sup>1128</sup> The Act also contains regulations for the costs of alternative care.<sup>1129</sup>

According to the Health and Social Services Act,<sup>1130</sup> LSS<sup>1131</sup> and the Social Services Act,<sup>1132</sup> the quality of their activities must be systematically and continuously developed and secured. The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) has developed regulations and general advice on management systems for work of systematic quality. These regulations and general advice require that the entire health-care system, the entirety of social services and all activities falling under the LSS have a management system for producing work of systematic quality.<sup>1133</sup> The regulations must be applied in systematically and continuously developing and securing quality in these operations.<sup>1134</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare has also developed regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of the Social Service Act, LSS, and the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU).<sup>1135</sup>

The Ordinance on Social Services (*Socialtjänstförordning [2011:937]*)<sup>1136</sup> states that in residential care homes, such as residential support (*stödboende*) and residential care homes for young persons (*Hem för vård eller*

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<sup>1122</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*), 9 February 2017.

<sup>1123</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*), 9 February 2017, chapter 5, sections 1-2.

<sup>1124</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 27 May 1993.

<sup>1125</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 1 July 2005, section 6.

<sup>1126</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001.

<sup>1127</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 July 2009, chapter 3, section 3.

<sup>1128</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 15 April 2016, chapter 3, section 3a.

<sup>1129</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001.

<sup>1130</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*), 9 February 2017, chapter 5, section 4.

<sup>1131</sup> Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 1 July 2005, section 6.

<sup>1132</sup> Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 1 July 2009, chapter 3, Section 3.

<sup>1133</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete*), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020.

<sup>1134</sup> Sweden, Health and social services act (*Hälso- och sjukvårdslag [2017:30]*), 9 February 2017, chapter 5, section 4; Sweden, Social services act (*Socialtjänstlag [2001:435]*), 7 June 2001, chapter 3, section 3; Sweden, Act concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Lag [1993:387] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 27 May 1993, section 6.

<sup>1135</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on documentation in activities conducted with the support of SoL, LVU, LVM and LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om dokumentation i verksamhet som bedrivs med stöd av SoL, LVU, LVM och LSS*), SOSFS 2015:5, 2 June 2022.

<sup>1136</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on social services (*Socialtjänstförordning [2011:937]*), 29 November 2001.

*boende, HVB-hem*), a person with appropriate education and training shall manage the operation. There shall also be such personnel as are needed for effective operations.<sup>1137</sup>

The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons<sup>1138</sup> and residential support.<sup>1139</sup> They contain regulations and general advice on, among other things, the management system, personnel (including competence) and premises. For example, the guidelines and general advice on residential care homes for young persons states that the principals of residential care homes for young persons must adjust the size of their staff in order to provide conditions to meet the care needs of the children and ensure safe and secure care. The personnel must be available 24 hours a day.<sup>1140</sup> The premises and equipment must be suitable to the purpose and adapted to enable safe and secure care and designed with consideration of personal integrity.<sup>1141</sup> The guidelines and general advice on residential support states, among other things, that principals for residential support must ensure that personnel are specifically assigned to support children or young persons.<sup>1142</sup> The premises must be designed in such a way that they contribute to children's and young people's preparation for independence and meet the needs for safety and security. Children's own accommodation, in being part of the residential support, must consist of rooms for accommodation, a space for cooking and eating meals and rooms for personal hygiene.<sup>1143</sup>

With regard to housing with special services for children or young people according to LSS, the Ordinance concerning support and service for persons with certain functional impairments (*Förordning [1993:1090] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*) states that the person in charge of the operation must have appropriate education.<sup>1144</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed regulations and general advice on housing with special services for children or young people according to LSS.<sup>1145</sup> They contain regulations and general advice on, among other things, the management system, personnel (including competence) and premises. According to the regulations, the premises must be designed so as to guarantee every child and young person a safe and secure living environment. Both the indoor and outdoor environment must be adapted to the needs of the children and young people.<sup>1146</sup> As a general rule, between two and four children shall be placed in the housing.<sup>1147</sup>

Question	YES	NO	Comments
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<sup>1137</sup> Sweden, Ordinance on social services (*Socialtjänstförordning [2011:937]*), 1 January 2016, chapter 3, section 5.

<sup>1138</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende*), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016.

<sup>1139</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende*), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016.

<sup>1140</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende*), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016, chapter 6, sections 1-2.

<sup>1141</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential care homes for young persons (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om hem för vård eller boende*), HSLF-FS 2016:55, 31 May 2016, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1142</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende*), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1143</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on residential support (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om stödboende*), HSLF-FS 2016:56, 31 May 2016, chapter 6, sections 1-2.

<sup>1144</sup> Sweden, Ordinance concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (*Förordning [1993:1090] om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade*), 10 October 1993, section 3.

<sup>1145</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on housing with special services for children or young people according to LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om Bostad med särskild service för barn eller ungdomar enligt LSS*), SOSFS 2012:6, 14 May 2012.

<sup>1146</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on housing with special services for children or young people according to LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om Bostad med särskild service för barn eller ungdomar enligt LSS*), SOSFS 2012:6, 14 May 2012, section 4.

<sup>1147</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on housing with special services for children or young people according to LSS (*Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om Bostad med särskild service för barn eller ungdomar enligt LSS*), SOSFS 2012:6, 14 May 2012, section 5.

<p>5.1.5. Is consultation with children and families foreseen and/or taking place in the process of the evaluation of services and measures and in the development of child protection policies and legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, at what level is this done? Please provide indicative examples.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>As stated under chapter 1.3.4. above, the task of the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) includes compiling knowledge and statistics about the living conditions of children and young people<sup>1148</sup> and conducting regular dialogue with children and young people to gain knowledge about their situation and their opinions on policy issues.<sup>1149</sup> For example, the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden always uses children's experiences and stories as the basis for its annual reports.<sup>1150</sup> Some government authorities have developed mechanisms and supporting materials to enable child participation, such as the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (<i>Specialpedagogiska skolmyndigheten</i>), which has a children's panel to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard within its area of operations.<sup>1151</sup> The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed supporting material for acquiring children's knowledge and experiences.<sup>1152</sup></p> <p>In addition, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (<i>Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF</i>) is, among other things, tasked with monitoring the living conditions of young people in Sweden. An important part of the Agency's work is conducting recurring surveys and analyses.<sup>1153</sup> Additional government authorities conduct recurring national surveys on children, which are described further below.</p> <p>Through assignments to government agencies, the government can also obtain knowledge about children's views and opinions. According to the government, a number of government inquiries have focused on obtaining children's views on, for example, family-based care.<sup>1154</sup></p> <p>As stated under chapter 2.1.5. above, actors providing social services are obliged to receive and investigate complaints and opinions on the quality of their activities from care recipients and their relatives.<sup>1155</sup> As stated under chapter 3.2.2. above, the National Board of Health and</p>
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<sup>1148</sup> Sweden, Act on the Ombudsman for Children ([Lag \[1993:335\] om Barnombudsman](#)), 1 July 2002, section 3.

<sup>1149</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Our assignment '[Vårt uppdrag](#)', official webpage, accessed 25 March 2023.

<sup>1150</sup> See for example, Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Annual report 2023 ([Årsrapport 2023](#)), 16 March 2023.

<sup>1151</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1152</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2020) Children's participation in the work of the National Board of Health and Welfare - A support material for gathering children's knowledge and experiences ([Barns medverkan i Socialstyrelsens arbeten – Ett stödmaterial för att inhämta barns kunskaper och erfarenheter](#)), June 2020.

<sup>1153</sup> See for example Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*) Report series ([Rapportserier](#)), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>1154</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) [National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#), S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

<sup>1155</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020, chapter 5, section 3.

			<p>Welfare (<i>Socialstyrelsen</i>) also encourages social services to use a tool called “Children’s needs at the centre” (<i>Barns behov i centrum, BBIC</i>) for processing, implementation and follow-up of services aimed at children.<sup>1156</sup> BBIC provides variables that can be used by social services for follow-up. However, using these variables is voluntary for the municipalities, and not every municipality focuses on follow-up.<sup>1157</sup> Involving children and families in the evaluation of services is therefore to a large extent left to the discretion of the municipalities.</p> <p>In recent years, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges kommuner och regioner, SKR</i>), together with the Council for the Promotion of Municipal Analyses (<i>Rådet för främjande av kommunala analyser, RKA</i>), has developed national user surveys for several areas within the social services, including child and youth social care (<i>barn och ungdomsvård</i>) and children placed outside their family home (<i>placerade barn och unga</i>).<sup>1158</sup></p>
5.1.6. Is the responsibility for data collection on child protection determined in the legislative framework?	X		<p>In general, the responsibility for data collection is determined by the legislative framework. The official statistics are regulated according to the Official Statistics Act (<i>Lag [2001:99] om den officiella statistiken</i>)<sup>1159</sup> and the Official Statistics Ordinance (<i>Förordning [2001:100] om den officiella statistiken</i>).<sup>1160</sup> The legislation states, among other things, that official statistics are to be available for the purposes of public information, investigative activities and research;<sup>1161</sup> they are to be objective and made available to the public;<sup>1162</sup> and official statistics related to individuals are to be disaggregated by sex, unless there are special reasons for not doing so.<sup>1163</sup> Excessively high levels of uncertainty in the statistics is an example of what may constitute special reasons against gender disaggregation.<sup>1164</sup></p> <p>The official statistics consist of 23 subject areas divided into 115 statistics areas, according to a decision by the</p>

<sup>1156</sup> National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘[Krav för att få använda Barns behov i centrum](#)’, official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>1157</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis (*Myndigheten för vård och omsorgsanalys*) (2018) Equal status for all? ([Lika läge för alla?](#)), report 2018:10, page 10.

<sup>1158</sup> Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges kommuner och regioner*) User survey ([Brukarundersökning](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1159</sup> Sweden, Official statistics act ([Lag \[2001:99\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001.

<sup>1160</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001.

<sup>1161</sup> Sweden, Official statistics act ([Lag \[2001:99\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 31 December 2013, section 3.

<sup>1162</sup> Sweden, Official statistics act ([Lag \[2001:99\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, section 3a.

<sup>1163</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, section 14.

<sup>1164</sup> See for example, Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) (2019) Guidelines and support in the application of Section 14 of the Official statistics ordinance ([Riktlinjer och stöd vid tillämpningen av 14 § statistikförordningen](#)), A2019/0896, 30 April 2019.

		<p>government.<sup>1165</sup> Statistics relevant to child protection are divided between different subject areas and statistical areas. The statistics are, according to a decision of the government, under the responsibility of several different government authorities (see further below). Data regarding child abuse is covered by the official statistics, albeit to a limited extent.<sup>1166</sup></p> <p>The government has appointed 29 government agencies as responsible for official statistics within their respective areas. Thus, no authority is solely responsible for all statistics concerning child protection. Instead, statistics relevant to child protection are divided between several different government authorities, subject areas and statistical areas.</p> <p>Statistics Sweden (<i>Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB</i>) is responsible for coordinating the system for the official statistics.<sup>1167</sup> The coordination system includes, among others, the 29 authorities responsible for statistics and the Council for Official Statistics (<i>Rådet för den officiella statistiken</i>). The official statistics and what is needed to produce and publish the statistics are also included in the system, for example production systems and databases.<sup>1168</sup></p> <p>The responsible authorities form a network. Each authority, including Statistics Sweden, publishes its statistics on its own website. All official statistics on the various websites can also be accessed via links from Statistics Sweden's website. The responsible authorities' network enables easy access to statistics regardless of which authority's website is visited.<sup>1169</sup></p> <p>SAM-forum (<i>Statistikansvariga myndigheter, SAM</i>) is one of the tools used for cooperation. It contains, among other things: information about the authorities responsible for statistics; the regulations governing statistical activities; various support and templates; documents and minutes from meetings of the Council for Official Statistics and its working groups; and information about international cooperation.<sup>1170</sup></p>
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<sup>1165</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Official Statistics of Sweden](#)', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1166</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 628.

<sup>1167</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for Statistics Sweden (*Förordning [2016:822] med instruktion för Statistiska centralbyrån*), 22 June 2016.

<sup>1168</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Samordning av Sveriges officiella statistik](#)', official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1169</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Samordning av Sveriges officiella statistik](#)', official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1170</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Samordning av Sveriges officiella statistik](#)', official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<p>5.1.7. Is there a single authority responsible for monitoring data collection and centralised coordination and data sharing at national level?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, Is there a national database (a joint database for monitoring and tracking children) for collecting data in the child protection area at the national, regional, or local level?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>As mentioned in the section above, Statistics Sweden is responsible for coordinating the system for the official statistics.<sup>1171</sup></p> <p>Statistic Sweden's statistical database contains official statistics from Statistics Sweden and 14 other government agencies.<sup>1172</sup> However, it lacks national information on the incidence of violence against children.<sup>1173</sup> Information on the publication of official statistics is available on Statistics Sweden's publishing calendar, which includes all statistics that are produced by Statistics Sweden and all official statistics from other government agencies responsible for official statistics.<sup>1174</sup></p> <p>Statistics relevant to child protection include, among other:</p> <p><u>National Board of Health and Welfare</u> This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to <i>health and medical care</i> (causes of death, health and disease, health-care and medical services) and <i>social services</i> (care of individuals and families, care of persons with disabilities, persons with certain functional impairments - measures specified by the LSS).<sup>1175</sup> Among other things, the authority's statistics database includes information about the number of children admitted to hospital due to violence and abuse.<sup>1176</sup> Furthermore, the authority collects data on children and young persons who receive services and support from the social services. In general, the data is disaggregated by gender and different age-groups (depending on the support and/or service).<sup>1177</sup></p> <p><u>National Council for Crime Prevention</u> This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to the <i>judicial system</i> (courts of law, the correctional care system, persons found guilty of criminal offences and recidivism).<sup>1178</sup> The authority is responsible for official crime statistics, which, among other things, include data of the number of reported offences of assault against children.<sup>1179</sup> The authority collects data in areas such as</p>
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<sup>1171</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for Statistics Sweden ([Förordning \[2016:822\] med instruktion för Statistiska centralbyrån](#)), 22 June 2016.

<sup>1172</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Get started with the Statistical Database](#)', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1173</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 649- 654.

<sup>1174</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) '[Publishing calendar](#)', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1175</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1176</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1177</sup> See for example, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), Statistics on social service interventions for children and young people (*Statistik om socialtjänstinsatser till barn och unga*), official website, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1178</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1179</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021, page 16.



		<p>lethal violence disaggregated by age and gender;<sup>1180</sup> reported crimes, including crimes against children disaggregated by age and gender, depending on the crime;<sup>1181</sup> and persons found guilty of criminal offences disaggregated by age and gender.<sup>1182</sup> The authority also conducts the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS) annually. The survey measures reported exposure to crime, experiences of anxiety and insecurity concerning crime, trust in the justice system and crime victims' experiences of contact with the justice system. The sample includes children from 16 years and older. The authority also carries out the School Survey on Crime (SSC), which measures reported exposure to and involvement in crime among year 9 students.<sup>1183</sup></p> <p><u>Statistics Sweden</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to <i>population</i> (immigration and asylum-seekers), <i>household finances</i> (household expenditures, income and income distribution), <i>living conditions</i> (gender statistics, living conditions), <i>education and research</i> (education of the population).<sup>1184</sup> In respect of living conditions, the authority's children and family statistics are about children's families, separations between parents, joint and sole custody, geographical distance between children and parents, children with Swedish/foreign backgrounds, and adoptions. There is also information on children's accommodation, parents' employments, and financial conditions.<sup>1185</sup> The authority has investigated the living conditions of children aged 12–18 since 2001. This is a source for monitoring financial family policy and child rights policy, and for research into children's living conditions. The survey asks questions about issues such as children's physical and mental health, economic circumstances, housing, social relationships and leisure activities.<sup>1186</sup> The data is disaggregated by gender, age and disability. The answers to the questions can also be linked to information about their parents, for example, the parents' occupation, education and how the family lives.<sup>1187</sup></p>
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<sup>1180</sup> Sweden, National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brottsförebyggande rådet*) Cases of lethal violence ([Konstaterade fall av dödligt våld](#)), official website, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1181</sup> Sweden, National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brottsförebyggande rådet*) Reported crimes ([Anmällda brott](#)), official website, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1182</sup> Sweden, National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brottsförebyggande rådet*) About the statistics ([Om statistiken](#)), official website, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1183</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1184</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1185</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistikmyndigheten*) Children and family statistics ([Barn- och familjestatistik](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1186</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1187</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistikmyndigheten*) Investigations of children's living conditions ([Undersökningarna av barns levnadsförhållanden](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 April 2023



		<p><u>Family Law and Parental Support Authority.</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to <i>social services, family counselling and family law</i>.<sup>1188</sup> Within family law, statistics include, for example the number of children involved in paternity inquiries; joint custody in connection with confirmation of paternity; mediation talks, information inquiries, custody inquiries, and residence inquiries; and access inquiries and consent inquiries.<sup>1189</sup> Within family counselling the statistics include, for example, the number of children involved in municipal family counselling.<sup>1190</sup> The statistics are collected from Sweden's municipalities and consist of quantitative data. The statistics are primarily used as a basis for national follow-up and evaluation, for comparisons between different municipalities and for purposes of general information.</p> <p><u>National Courts Administration</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to the <i>judicial system</i> (courts of law).<sup>1191</sup> The statistics include, for example, the number of family law cases (these might involve divorce proceedings, custody of children, child maintenance and paternity) and cases falling under the Care of Young Persons Act, where the court examines whether children or young persons up to eighteen years of age, and in certain cases up to twenty years of age, can be made subject to a compulsory care and protection order outside their parental home.<sup>1192</sup></p> <p><u>Public Health Agency of Sweden</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to <i>public health</i> (the development of public health).<sup>1193</sup> Among other things, the authority conducts the national public health survey on health, lifestyles and living conditions, including children from 16 years old and upwards. The data is disaggregated by gender, age-groups (16-29), country of birth, income and region.<sup>1194</sup></p> <p><u>Swedish National Agency for Education</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to education and research (school system and childcare).<sup>1195</sup> Every year the Agency collects new data about children,</p>
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<sup>1188</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1189</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd), Family law ([Familjerätt](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 April 2023

<sup>1190</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd), Family counselling ([Familjerådgivning](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 April 2023

<sup>1191</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1192</sup> Sweden, National Courts Administration (Sveriges Domstolar), Official statistics of the courts ([Officiell domstolsstatistik](#)), official website, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1193</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1194</sup> Sweden, Public Health Agency (Folkhälsomyndigheten) (2022) '[Syfte och bakgrund till frågorna i nationella folkhälsoenkäten \(Hälsa på lika villkor 2022\)](#)', 16 November 2022.

<sup>1195</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

		<p>pupils, school personnel, costs and educational results and makes it available to the general public. Some statistics can be disaggregated by, for example, gender, age groups, pupil's background, parent's educational level, and pupils in need of particular support.<sup>1196</sup></p> <p><u>Swedish Social Insurance Agency</u></p> <p>This body is responsible for official statistics in relation to <i>social insurance</i> (support to families with children, and support in the event of sickness and disability).<sup>1197</sup> Among other things, the Agency provides statistics on parental allowances, maintenance payments and child benefits. The statistics can be disaggregated by, for example, number of children, gender, age, region and municipality.<sup>1198</sup></p>
5.1.8. Are there common indicators in place to monitor the performance of the child protection system?	X	<p>There are several common indicators, though they do not encompass all areas of the child protection system.<sup>1199</sup></p> <p>Among other things, the government uses a number of result indicators and assessment criteria to report and describe the child rights policy.<sup>1200</sup> The following indicators and assessment criteria are used to report and describe the government's child rights policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- children's participation and influence at home; data from the Ombudsman for Children's collected statistics on children's and young people's living conditions;</li> <li>- children's exposure to violence and crime; information from the Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden (<i>Allmänna Barnhuset</i>) and the National Council for Crime Prevention's school survey;</li> <li>- conclusions and recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child;</li> <li>- reports by the Ombudsman for Children, other authorities and children's rights organisations.<sup>1201</sup></li> </ul> <p>Indicators have also been developed at the national level by different government authorities. An example are the indicators within social services and municipal health and medical care, which have been developed to follow developments in activities at the municipal, regional and</p>

<sup>1196</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) Search for statistics ([Sök statistik](#)), official website, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1197</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1198</sup> Sweden, Swedish Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*), Statistics in the area of children and families ([Statistik inom området barn och familj](#)), official website, accessed 26 April 2023.

<sup>1199</sup> See for example, Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) "An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children" ([En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn](#)), government official report, 18 January 2023, page 654.

<sup>1200</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 ([Budgetpropositionen 2022](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021, page 183.

<sup>1201</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Finance (*Finansdepartementet*) (2021) Budget bill 2022 ([Budgetpropositionen 2022](#)), budget bill, 2021/22:1, 20 September 2021, page 183.

		<p>national levels within the framework of the National Board of Health and Welfare's "open comparisons" (<i>öppna jämförelser</i>).<sup>1202</sup> Indicators are developed to, for example, monitor the child and youth social care and support to persons with certain functional impairments.<sup>1203</sup> Furthermore, in collaboration with Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (<i>Sveriges kommuner och regioner, SKR</i>), the National Board of Health and Welfare has developed indicators concerning violence in intimate relationships adapted for open comparisons. In 2021, three new indicators were developed within the framework of the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women; three of the indicators specifically concern children.<sup>1204</sup> These indicators relate to reports submitted to the social services that children might be subject to abuse and neglect, as well as on children granted interventions by social services.<sup>1205</sup> Another example is the Family Law and Parental Support Authority (<i>Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd</i>), which, in consultation with the Ministry of Health Social Affairs, has produced and developed indicators for follow up and long-term development in relation to objectives in the areas of family law, family counselling, international adoptions and parental support.<sup>1206</sup></p> <p>In 2018, the government tasked Statistics Sweden with coordinating the development, production and accessibility of statistics for monitoring Sweden's implementation of Agenda 2030.<sup>1207</sup> Within this framework, a national list of indicators has been published annually.<sup>1208</sup> According to the government, 35 of these indicators relate directly to children.<sup>1209</sup> The Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen, BO</i>) has been part of Statistic Sweden's Agenda 2030 reference group work, with the aim of contributing knowledge about children's and young people's living conditions, and has worked on goal 16.2 to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all</p>
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<sup>1202</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Open comparisons ([Öppna jämförelser](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1203</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Open comparisons ([Öppna jämförelser](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1204</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2021) Indicators for national follow-up ([Indikatorer för nationell uppföljning](#)), November 2021.

<sup>1205</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) (2021) Indicators for national follow-up ([Indikatorer för nationell uppföljning](#)), November 2021.

<sup>1206</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för familjerätt och föräldraskapsstöd*) (2020) Indicators for follow up and long-term development in relation to objectives in the areas of family law, family counselling, international adoptions and parental support ([Indikatorer för uppföljning av föräldraskapsstöd, familjerådgivning, familjerätt och internationella adoptioner](#)), 1 June 2020.

<sup>1207</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) 'Statistics Sweden's work on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1208</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) National list of indicators 2022 ([Nationell indikatorlista 2022](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1209</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

			forms of violence against and torture of children. <sup>1210</sup> However, Statistics Sweden notes that Sweden lacks statistics for indicator 16.2.1 – “The proportion of children (1–17 years) who have been exposed to physical or mental abuse by their guardians” and indicator 16.2.3 – “The proportion of young women and men aged 18–29 who have been exposed to sexual violence before the age of 18”. Furthermore, it appears that indicator 16.2.1(P) – “The proportion of children who at some time have been exposed to any form of physical or psychological abuse, neglect or witnessed domestic violence” is under investigation. <sup>1211</sup>
5.1.9. Are there data protection protocols in place and adhered to?	X		For Statistics Sweden, the legal basis for data collection is set out in the Official Statistics Act <sup>1212</sup> and the Official Statistics Ordinance, <sup>1213</sup> the Statistics Sweden Instructions Ordinance ( <i>Förordning [2016:822] med instruktion för statistiska centralbyrån</i> ), <sup>1214</sup> and other special provisions on the processing of personal data. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is part of Swedish law. Statistics Sweden also has its own data protection policy. <sup>1215</sup>

5.1.10. Are there any gaps in the data collection system related to child protection in the country, which have been identified by relevant child protection authorities/institutions, civil society organisations or other institutions active in the child protection field? Is there a systematic and consistent collection of data related to child protection at national, regional, or local level? Please mention if efforts are made to address these gaps.

The Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*) has on several occasions highlighted shortcomings regarding data collection and statistics for particularly vulnerable groups, including in relation to discrimination. In their supplementary report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Ombudsman stated that certain perspectives in the statistics presented by the government are missing, such as the socio-economic perspective. The Ombudsman further stated that “[o]ther groups of children also remain invisible in the statistics, [such as] statistics linked to racism, LGBTQI and children with disabilities, [as well as] children who reside in the country without an abode and children who have been subjected to abuse”. The Ombudsman encouraged the government to “ensure that sufficient data on the living conditions for vulnerable groups of children is collected on a regular basis”.<sup>1216</sup>

<sup>1210</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1211</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) ([Mål 16 – Fredliga och inkluderande samhällen](#)), official webpage, accessed 24 March 2023.

<sup>1212</sup> Sweden, Official statistics act ([Lag \[2001:99\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001.

<sup>1213</sup> Sweden, Official statistics ordinance ([Förordning \[2001:100\] om den officiella statistiken](#)), 15 March 2001, annex.

<sup>1214</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for Statistics Sweden ([Förordning \[2016:822\] med instruktion för Statistiska centralbyrån](#)), 22 June 2016.

<sup>1215</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) (2021) [Data protection policy](#), 14 September 2021.

<sup>1216</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, page 11.

In their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concerns about the lack of data disaggregated by disability, ethnic origin and socioeconomic and migration background. The Committee recommended Sweden to:

- “[s]trengthen its data collection system regarding both qualitative and quantitative indicators that encompass all areas of the Convention, and [ensure] that the data are disaggregated by age, sex, disability, geographical location, ethnic and national origin, and socioeconomic background, in order to facilitate analysis of the situation of children, in particular those in situations of vulnerability”;
- “[s]trengthen the collection and analysis of data on discrimination against children, children with disabilities, statelessness and children with “an unknown nationality”, socioeconomic situations of children, and violence against children, including abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation”; and
- “[e]nsure the effective coordination and sharing of the data among relevant ministries and entities, professional groups and civil society, and the use of data for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and projects on children’s rights”.<sup>1217</sup>

In relation to data collection on violence against children, a number of shortcomings was identified by an inquiry in its government report, “An upbringing free from violence” (*En uppväxt fri från våld*). The report highlighted that, although there are many sources of statistics relevant to child protection, official statistics on the incidence of violence against children are insufficient. Furthermore, there is inadequate provision for data collection and statistical follow-up via registers. The report also highlighted that existing indicators are not sufficient to measure the results of the work and efforts to counteract violence against children.<sup>1218</sup>

As mentioned in sections 5.1.6. and 5.1.7. above, a systematic and consistent collection of data related to child protection areas is carried out within the framework of Sweden’s Official Statistics by Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) and several other relevant government authorities. As mentioned in section 5.1.7. above, Statistics Sweden is responsible for coordinating the system for official statistics.<sup>1219</sup> The coordination system includes, among others, the 29 authorities responsible for statistics, the Council for Official Statistics (*Rådet för den officiella statistiken*), the production systems and databases.<sup>1220</sup> The SAM forum (*Statistikansvariga myndigheter, SAM*) is one of the tools used for cooperation.<sup>1221</sup> Statistics Sweden has developed several guidelines and handbooks for official statistics, available on their website. Among other things, the authority has developed two handbooks on the quality of official statistics, providing support for facilitating and promoting uniform applications of Statistics Sweden’s regulations.<sup>1222</sup> The authority has also produced several guidelines to facilitate a uniform application of concepts or routines within various parts of the statistical production: guidelines on what constitutes official statistics,<sup>1223</sup> guidelines and procedures for revisions of statistical values;<sup>1224</sup> and guidelines and support in the application of Section 14 of the Official Statistics Ordinance.<sup>1225</sup>

<sup>1217</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 10.

<sup>1218</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023, pages 649- 654.

<sup>1219</sup> Sweden, Ordinance with instructions for Statistics Sweden (*Förordning [2016:822] med instruktion för Statistiska centralbyrån*), 22 June 2016.

<sup>1220</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) ‘*Samordning av Sveriges officiella statistik*’, official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1221</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) ‘*Samordning av Sveriges officiella statistik*’, official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1222</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*) ‘*Riktlinjer och handböcker för officiell statistik*’, official webpage, accessed 19 April 2023.

<sup>1223</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) (2018) guidelines on what constitutes official statistics (*Riktlinjer för vad som är officiell statistik*), A2019/0896, 7 March 2018.

<sup>1224</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) (2018) guidelines and procedures for revisions of statistical values (*Riktlinjer för revideringar av statistikvärden*), 2018/870, 19 June 2018.

<sup>1225</sup> Sweden, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) (2019) Guidelines and support in the application of Section 14 of the Official statistics ordinance (*Riktlinjer och stöd vid tillämpningen av 14 § statistikförordningen*), A2019/0896, 30 April 2019.

Certain government authorities also conduct recurring national surveys on children and young persons. As mentioned in section 5.1.5. above, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*) conducts recurring surveys and analyses on young persons' living conditions.<sup>1226</sup> Furthermore, since 2006 the National Council for Crime Prevention (*Brotsförebyggande rådet, Brå*) has conducted the Swedish Crime Survey (SCS) annually. The survey measures reported exposure to crime, experiences of anxiety and insecurity concerning crime, distrust in the justice system, and crime victims' experiences of contact with the justice system. The authority also carries out the School Survey on Crime (SSC), which measures reported exposure to and involvement in crime among year 9 students.<sup>1227</sup> Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån, SCB*) conducts surveys of children's living conditions (Barn-ULF), and since 2001 it has regularly interviewed children aged 10–18 (since 2015, 12–18) about their living conditions in the areas of finance, leisure, health, helping at home, relationships, school and safety. The survey is conducted within the framework of the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC).<sup>1228</sup> According to the government, the data is used for monitoring economic family policy and child rights policy, and for research into children's living conditions. A review of the study is currently being carried out to improve surveys for children and to find out more about children in particularly vulnerable situations, such as children with single parents, children from foreign backgrounds and children with disabilities.<sup>1229</sup>

As stated in several chapters and sections above, the Ombudsman for Children must also gather knowledge and compile statistics on the living conditions of children and young people within its sphere of activity. This includes an annual follow-up consisting of monitoring and analysing the development of indicators and other statistics within one or more focus areas.<sup>1230</sup>

## 5.2. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of child protection accountability in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

As indicated in several parts above, the establishment of the Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) is an important step in relation to child protection accountability and monitoring.

According to the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*), the costs of the Ombudsman's office have in recent years increased due to several government decisions. These government decisions concerns how authorities should source their administrative duties and how increased pension provisions shall be financed. To ease the effects, the government has used supplementary funding linked to specific government assignments.<sup>1231</sup> In their supplementary report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Ombudsman expressed concerns regarding current budgetary conditions limiting the Ombudsman's possibilities to, at its own initiative, investigate, make surveys or do in-depth analyses and monitoring where there is a need for efforts to promote or comply with the CRC. The Ombudsman recommended Sweden "to ensure that the Ombudsman has sufficient resources to perform its mission as an independent ombudsman".<sup>1232</sup> Similar concerns were expressed by the Institute for

<sup>1226</sup> See for example Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor, MUCF*) Report series (*Rapportserier*), official webpage, accessed 29 March 2023.

<sup>1227</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1228</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) [National Action Plan to implement the European Child Guarantee](#), S2022/01667, 24 May 2022.

<sup>1229</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1230</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1231</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>1232</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.



Human Rights in its supplementary report to the UN Committee. The Institute highlighted the importance of independence and sufficient resources for monitoring the rights of the child to operate effectively.<sup>1233</sup>

In their latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the rights of the child welcomed the establishment of the Institute for Human Rights, but remained “deeply concerned [...] that the independence of the Ombudsman for Children could be negatively impacted by its reliance on funding linked to specific government assignments.”<sup>1234</sup> Among other things, the Committee recommended Sweden to “[a]llocate sufficient resources to the Ombudsman for Children to monitor the incorporation of the Convention in national legislation”<sup>1235</sup> and “[c]ontinue to take measures to guarantee the independence of the Ombudsman for Children in accordance with the Paris Principles, including by ensuring that all government assignments are agreed through a consultative process.”<sup>1236</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 1.7, both the Ombudsman for Children and the UN Committee on the rights of the child have expressed concern over shortcomings in relation to child-rights impact assessments in Sweden’s preparatory work.<sup>1237</sup> The Ombudsman for Children stressed that “[w]ork on child rights impact assessments in the legislative work needs to be systematised and follow-up mechanisms need to be set up”.<sup>1238</sup> The Committee recommended Sweden to “[e]nsure that child-rights impact assessments are an integral part of inquiries in preparation of new legislation and in the provision of child-friendly avenues for child participation in national and subnational legislation and regulations relevant to the fulfilment of children’s rights.”<sup>1239</sup>

### 5.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection accountability that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

In 2016, a mapping focusing on the incidence of violence against children was carried out by the Children’s Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Stiftelsen allmänna barnhuset*) in cooperation with Karlstad University and funded by the government. The government has granted the Foundation funding to produce a new mapping of violence against children in Sweden during 2020–2023.<sup>1240</sup>

The national knowledge centre on violence and other forms of abuse (*Barnafrid*) established in 2015 is responsible for gathering and disseminating knowledge about violence and other forms of abuse in relation to children.<sup>1241</sup>

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<sup>1233</sup> Sweden, Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) (2022) [Supplementary information to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 6.1.1.-392/2022.

<sup>1234</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 11.

<sup>1235</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 12(a).

<sup>1236</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, pp. 11 and 12.

<sup>1237</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 4(c).

<sup>1238</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022, p. 4(c).

<sup>1239</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), [Concluding observations on Sweden](#), 6 February 2023, p. 6(b).

<sup>1240</sup> Sweden, Children’s Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Stiftelsen allmänna barnhuset*) (2022) National mapping on violence against children 2022 (*Nationell kartläggning om våld mot barn 2022*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1241</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden’s combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.



## 6. General education, promotion, and awareness raising

### 6.1. Education on child rights

6.1.1. Does education on child rights form part of the (national) formal school curricula? If yes, please provide details such as in which types of school and targeting which grade(s) (age group), as part of which school subject and for how many periods in a pupil's school career.

According to the Education Act (*Skollag [2010:800]*), pupils shall learn about democracy and human rights.<sup>1242</sup> Fundamental democratic values and respect for human rights shall also characterise the school's learning environment.<sup>1243</sup> Child rights form part of the national formal school curriculum (*läroplan*).

According to the curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and leisure-time centres, the school must embody (*gestalta*) and convey (*förmedla*) the values and rights expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The education must be based on what is deemed to be the best interests of the child, and the pupils must be made aware of their rights.<sup>1244</sup>

- The education for pupils in pre-school class and leisure centres must, according to the curricula, reflect the values and rights of the child in accordance with the CRC.<sup>1245</sup>
- The compulsory school curricula for history, geography, religion and civics stipulates that education for children in grades 1-3 within the area "To live in the world" (*Att leva i världen*) must include human rights, including all peoples' equal worth and the rights of the child in accordance with the CRC.<sup>1246</sup> In total 200 hours shall be allocated to history, geography, religion and civics in grades 1-3 according to the time plan (*timplan*). The time plan does not specify the time to be allocated to education on human rights specifically.<sup>1247</sup>
- The course curriculum for civics (*samhällskunskap*) stipulates that education for children in grades 4-6 within the area of "Rights and Administration of Justice" (*Rättigheter och rättsskipning*) must include, among other things, human rights and their meaning, including the rights of the child in accordance with the CRC. A minimum of 70 hours shall be allocated to civics in grades 4-6 according to the time plan (*timplan*). The time plan does not specify the time to be allocated to education on human rights specifically.<sup>1248</sup>
- The course curriculum for civics stipulates that education for children in grades 7-9 within the area of "Rights and Administration of Justice" must include, among other things, freedoms, rights and obligations in democratic societies and the legal system in Sweden, and the principles of legal certainty. Child rights are not explicitly mentioned.<sup>1249</sup> A minimum of 75 hours shall be allocated to civics in grades 7-9 according to the time plan (*timplan*). The time plan does not specify the time to be allocated to education on human rights specifically.<sup>1250</sup>

<sup>1242</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag [2010:800]*), 23 June 2010, section 4.

<sup>1243</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag [2010:800]*), 23 June 2010, section 5.

<sup>1244</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and leisure-time centre (*Läroplan för grundskolan samt för förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet*), 2022.

<sup>1245</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and leisure-time centre (*Läroplan för grundskolan samt för förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet*), 2022, chapter 3 and 4.

<sup>1246</sup> See for example; Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Course curriculum - History (*Kursplan – Historia*), 2022.

<sup>1247</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Time plan for compulsory schooling (*Timplan för grundskolan*), official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>1248</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Time plan for compulsory schooling (*Timplan för grundskolan*), official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

<sup>1249</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Course curriculum - Civics (*Kursplan – Samhällskunskap*), 2022.

<sup>1250</sup> Sweden, Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Time plan for compulsory schooling (*Timplan för grundskolan*), official webpage, accessed 18 April 2023.

6.1.2. Please provide an overview of the most important national and/or sub-national implemented programmes and activities aiming at educating children, parents, teachers, and/or society at large about child rights and/or child protection at national or sub-national level. By which actors were those commissioned, funded, and implemented?

Between 2015-2018, the government tasked the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*) with conducting knowledge-raising initiatives for children and young people about their rights according to the CRC, and what these rights mean in practice in schooling and in other areas. These knowledge-raising efforts covered preschools and preschool class, compulsory school and corresponding school forms, leisure centres (*fritidshem*), upper secondary school and upper secondary special needs school. The assignment included an instruction to create a web-portal with information for children, lesson plans and teacher's guidance to facilitate the school's teaching about children's rights.<sup>1251</sup> This resulted in the portal "My rights" (*Mina rättigheter*). The portal is aimed at children and young people, who can learn about their rights, read texts, watch videos or make their voices heard in the Ombudsman's different polls.<sup>1252</sup> The portal for children and young people is divided into four different age groups (2-5, 6-9, 10-13 and 14-18), and its information and language is tailored to each age group. The portal for age group 2-5 is available in visual and sign language and contains animations. The remaining portals include a read-speaking function. None of the portals are available in the minority languages. The portal also includes knowledge support and material about children's rights for professionals working in preschools or schools.<sup>1253</sup> In 2020, the Ombudsman was tasked with strengthening the democracy perspective on the website.<sup>1254</sup> Existing content has been supplemented with knowledge and guidance on how children and young people can exercise their democratic rights. The new content on the website includes methodological support for school personnel, student unions, children and young people. The assignment was reported to the government in 2022.<sup>1255</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 3.3. above, in 2017 the government launched an initiative to boost knowledge about children's rights (*Kunskapslyft för barnets rättigheter*), which is still ongoing. The aim of the initiative is to improve the competence of professionals working with children or taking decisions affecting children in government agencies, municipalities and regions. The Ombudsman for Children has had a central role within the initiative to support these actors in their work with the application of children's rights in their operations during 2017-2019<sup>1256</sup> and was given a continued assignment to support the government authorities in the work of ensuring the application of the child's rights in 2020-2022.<sup>1257</sup> Since 2017, a total of 27 governmental

<sup>1251</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2015) Assignment to conduct knowledge-raising initiatives for children and young people about their rights ([Uppdrag att vidta kunskapshöjande insatser för barn och unga om sina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 October 2015.

<sup>1252</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) 'My rights' ([Mina rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1253</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) 'For educators - My rights' ([För pedagoger - Mina rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1254</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2020) Assignment to the Ombudsman for Children to strengthen and develop the democracy perspective on the web-portal My rights ([Uppdrag till Barnombudsmannen att stärka och utveckla demokratiperspektivet på webbplatsen Mina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 March 2020.

<sup>1255</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) (2022) Reporting of the assignment to strengthen and develop the democracy perspective on the web-portal My rights ([Redovisning av uppdrag att stärka och utveckla demokratiperspektivet på webbplatsen Mina rättigheter](#)). 3 March 2022.

<sup>1256</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Assignment to support the work of ensuring the application of children's rights in municipal and county council activities ([Uppdrag att stödja arbetet med att säkerställa tillämpningen av barnets rättigheter i kommuners och landstings verksamheter](#)), government assignment, 22 December 2016; and Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2016) Assignment to support the work of ensuring the application of children's rights in government agencies activities ([Uppdrag att stödja arbetet med att säkerställa tillämpningen av barnets rättigheter i statliga myndigheters verksamhet](#)), government assignment, 22 December 2016.

<sup>1257</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2019) Appropriations Directions for the budget year 2020 regarding the Ombudsman for Children ([Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2020 avseende Barnombudsmannen](#)), 19 December 2019; and Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) Appropriations Directions for the budget year 2020 regarding regarding grant 5:2 The rights of the child ([Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2021 avseende anslag 5:2 Barnets rättigheter](#)), 22 December 2020.

agencies have participated in this initiative, among others the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) and the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*).

The Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för Familjerätt och Föräldraskapsstöd*, MföF) is the expert authority for, among other things, parental support (*föräldraskapsstöd*).<sup>1258</sup> The authority has, among other things, supported the implementation of the government's national strategy for stronger parental support and an action plan for crime-prevention parenting support, as mentioned in chapter 1 above.<sup>1259</sup> The overall objective of the national strategy is that all parents should be offered parental support throughout the child's upbringing. The authority has compiled knowledge support (methods and programs) for professionals and decision-makers working with parental support.<sup>1260</sup> Today parental support is primarily provided at the sub-national level, by the municipalities and regions. Parental support can be offered in different places and by different actors, including the health-care system, social services, the school system and civil society.<sup>1261</sup> In order to strengthen access to parental support throughout the country, the government has allocated SEK 400 million in 2023 in the form of state subsidies. The Family Law and Parental Support Authority has been tasked by the government with developing criteria for the distribution of state subsidies to municipalities, regions and other relevant actors. The aim of the investment is for parents to gain increased and equal access to societal parental support. The government highlights that the aim is to focus on parental support that strengthens parental skills, for example, knowledge of the rights of the child and children's health.<sup>1262</sup>

## 6.2. Promotion and awareness raising

6.2.1. Please provide information on awareness raising and/or promotion campaigns or relevant activities on child rights (possibly including on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) and/or protection issues targeting the general public or children in general at national or sub-national level. Please provide information on the most recent and representative awareness raising campaigns, including information on the target groups, the thematic areas covered, the actors involved, funding, the method of dissemination chosen and the impact of the campaign, if assessed.

No awareness-raising initiatives on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the area of children's rights have been identified.

Information and awareness-raising on child rights has, as mentioned under section 6.1.2. above, been part of the Ombudsman for Children's (*Barnombudsmannen*, BO) assignment in relation to the web-portal "My rights" (*Mina rättigheter*). Within this assignment, the Ombudsman has developed and disseminated material on child rights and its implementation in practice.<sup>1263</sup> The assignment has been funded through the state budget, within

<sup>1258</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för Familjerätt och Föräldraskapsstöd*) Parental Support (*Föräldraskapsstöd*), official webpage, accessed 27 april 2023.

<sup>1259</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2018) National strategy for stronger parental support (*En nationell strategi för ett stärkt föräldraskapsstöd*), 2018.

<sup>1260</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för Familjerätt och Föräldraskapsstöd*) Programs and Methods for Parental Support (*Program och Metoder för Föräldraskapsstöd*), official webpage, accessed 27 april 2023.

<sup>1261</sup> Sweden, Family Law and Parental Support Authority (*Myndigheten för Familjerätt och Föräldraskapsstöd*) Areas of Parental Support (*Arenor för Föräldraskapsstöd*), official webpage, accessed 27 april 2023.

<sup>1262</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Strengthened access to parental support throughout the country (*Stärkt tillgång till föräldraskapsstöd i hela landet*), press release, 22 December 2022.

<sup>1263</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2015) Assignment to conduct knowledge-raising initiatives for children and young people about their rights (*Uppdrag att vidta kunskapshöjande insatser för barn och unga om sina rättigheter*), government assignment, 9 October 2015.

budget area 9, “Health, medical and social care”.<sup>1264</sup> Within the framework of the latest assignment in connection to the website, the Ombudsman was assigned to carry out dissemination activities and offer methodological support, e.g. through teacher meetings or networks and webinars for school staff, student unions, children and young people, as well as carrying out continued editorial work on the web-portal.<sup>1265</sup> Within this assignment, the Ombudsman for Children was instructed to spend a maximum of SEK 800,000 of their grant from the government for the implementation of the assignment in 2020.<sup>1266</sup> The same amount was granted for the implementation of the assignment in 2021.<sup>1267</sup> After the completion of the government assignments (3 in total), the administration of the website is financed within the framework of the authority’s grant from the government.<sup>1268</sup>

As mentioned in section 4.2.4. above, in February 2023 the National Board of Health and Welfare carried out an information campaign in social media targeting children between 12 and 16 years old. The aim of the campaign was to promote the website “Check on soc” (*Koll på soc*) about the social services that are aimed at children and young persons.<sup>1269</sup> The campaign consists of ads on the social media platforms Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok.<sup>1270</sup> The website is a support for children who are already in contact with or might want to contact the social services or simply want to know more about it.<sup>1271</sup> The website is written in a child-friendly language and contains information about, among other things, where children can turn if they are dissatisfied with a placement. The website also includes information on the municipality’s social services and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO*).<sup>1272</sup>

In 2022, the government agency, Living History Forum (*Forum för Levande Historia*), initiated an exhibition called “Children have rights too!” (*Barn har också rättigheter!*). An associated workshop is designed for children in grades 4-6 but is also suitable for other school forms and professional groups. The exhibition and the workshop focus on the CRC and aim to strengthen children’s awareness of their rights, based on a personal and historical perspective.<sup>1273</sup> The exhibition is being developed together with children between 9 and 13 years old and is produced by the Living History Forum together with the Ombudsman for Children, Save the Children and UNICEF. During 2023, the exhibition is shown in the Forum for Living History’s premises in Stockholm, and thereafter it will be touring around Sweden.<sup>1274</sup>

In 2022, the government tasked the Equality Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*) with making special information efforts and producing easily accessible information material to students and guardians on

<sup>1264</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2015) Assignment to conduct knowledge-raising initiatives for children and young people about their rights ([Uppdrag att vidta kunskapshöjande insatser för barn och unga om sina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 October 2015.

<sup>1265</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2020) Assignment to the Ombudsman for Children to strengthen and develop the democracy perspective on the web-portal My rights ([Uppdrag till Barnombudsmannen att stärka och utveckla demokratiperspektivet på webbplatsen Mina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 March 2020.

<sup>1266</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2020) Assignment to the Ombudsman for Children to strengthen and develop the democracy perspective on the web-portal My rights ([Uppdrag till Barnombudsmannen att stärka och utveckla demokratiperspektivet på webbplatsen Mina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 March 2020.

<sup>1267</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2021) Appropriation directions for the fiscal year 2021 regarding grant 6:1 within budget area 1 ([Regleringsbrev för budgetåret 2021 avseende anslag 6:1 inom utgiftsområde 1](#)), 17 June 2021.

<sup>1268</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*), 2 May 2023.

<sup>1269</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Check on soc’ ([Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1270</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Koll på soc should give more children and young people knowledge about social services’ ([Koll på soc ska ge fler barn och unga kunskap om socialtjänsten](#)), official webpage, accessed 8 May 2023.

<sup>1271</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘About the social services for children and young persons – Check on soc’ ([Om socialtjänsten för barn och unga – Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1272</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Check on soc’ ([Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1273</sup> Sweden, Living history forum (*Forum för Levande Historia*) Children have rights too!” ([Barn har också rättigheter!](#)) official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1274</sup> Sweden, Living history forum (*Forum för Levande Historia*) Children have rights too!” ([Barn har också rättigheter!](#)) official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

protection against discrimination and abusive treatment. The assignment reports to the government on 1 November 2023.<sup>1275</sup>

In 2022, the government assigned the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) to initiate and coordinate information efforts targeting the general public about family homes (*familjehem*), contact persons (*kontaktperson*), contact families (*kontaktfamilj*), guardians for unaccompanied children (*god man för ensamkommande barn*), and specially appointed custodians (*särskilt förordnad vårdnadshavare*). Guardians for unaccompanied children are for unaccompanied children within the asylum process. Specially appointed custodians are for children with a residence permit and Swedish citizens. The aim is to raise awareness and increase knowledge of what the assignments entail and to enable municipalities to recruit and secure access to these services.<sup>1276</sup> Within the framework of the assignment, the National Board of Health and Welfare was instructed to spend SEK 2,000,000 in 2022. The costs must be reported under budget area 9 “Health, medical and social care”.<sup>1277</sup>

In 2022, the government decided to grant the Children’s Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Allmänna Barnhuset*) funds with which to spread information about efforts to strengthen children in family homes. The Foundation will use the funds to disseminate information to municipalities with regard to two different methods to strengthen the schooling of children placed outside their family home and increase their chances of leaving primary school with pass grades. The two methods are called “Skolfam” and “Letterbox”.<sup>1278</sup>

Due to the invasion of Ukraine, in 2022 the government tasked the Ombudsman for Children to enter into dialogue with civil-society representatives in order to exchange knowledge about the situation of Ukrainian children and young people and to reach out with accurate and child-friendly information. The child-friendly information is aimed for both children in Sweden and children who have recently arrived in Sweden. The information should be based on the rights of children in different parts of society. The assignment was reported to the government in March 2023.<sup>1279</sup> Within the framework of the assignment, the Ombudsman for Children have been instructed to spend a maximum of SEK 1,000,000 in 2022. The costs must be reported under budget area 9 “Health, medical and social care”, under “child rights”.<sup>1280</sup>

In 2021, the government assigned the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*, MUCF) to produce and disseminate a knowledge base with a focus on honour-related violence and oppression and on violence-prevention work aimed at youth and leisure leaders and other professionals who work with young people’s leisure activities outside the school system.<sup>1281</sup> A sub-report on

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<sup>1275</sup> Sweden, the Equality Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*) (2022) Assignment on information initiatives on student protection against discrimination and abusive treatment ([Uppdrag om informationsinsatser om elevers skydd mot diskriminering respektive kränkande behandling](#)), government assignment, 5 June 2022.

<sup>1276</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about family homes, etc. for children and young people ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government assignment, 14 April 2022.

<sup>1277</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to initiate and coordinate information efforts about family homes, etc. for children and young people ([Uppdrag att initiera och samordna informationsinsatser om familjehem m.m. för barn och unga](#)), government assignment, 14 April 2022.

<sup>1278</sup> Sweden, Children’s Welfare Foundation Sweden (*Allmänna Barnhuset*) Children’s Welfare Foundation Sweden receives funding for information campaigns ([Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset får medel för informationsinsatser](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1279</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to, in connection with the invasion of Ukraine, maintain ongoing dialogue with civil society and offer support to affected actors ([Uppdrag att, med anledning av invasionen av Ukraina, föra löpande dialog med civilsamhället och erbjuda stöd till berörda aktörer](#)), government assignment, 4 April 2022.

<sup>1280</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Assignment to, in connection with the invasion of Ukraine, maintain ongoing dialogue with civil society and offer support to affected actors ([Uppdrag att, med anledning av invasionen av Ukraina, föra löpande dialog med civilsamhället och erbjuda stöd till berörda aktörer](#)), government assignment, 4 April 2022.

<sup>1281</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) Assignment to produce and disseminate a knowledge base with focus on honor-related violence and oppression and on violence prevention work ([Uppdrag att ta fram och sprida kunskapsunderlag med fokus på hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck och på våldsförebyggande arbete](#)), government assignment, 3 July 2021.



the assignment was submitted by the Agency in 2022.<sup>1282</sup> Within the framework of the assignment, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society was instructed to spend SEK 5,000,000 in 2021 within budget area 13 "Equality and the establishment of newly arrived persons".<sup>1283</sup>

6.2.2. Are there any awareness raising activities regarding complaint mechanisms at national or sub-national level, e.g. for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on a communications procedure<sup>1284</sup>? Please briefly describe.

There are no specific awareness-raising activities regarding complaint mechanisms.

However, at their own initiative, in 2016 the Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen, BO*) conducted a survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their cases heard when their rights are violated.<sup>1285</sup> According to the Ombudsman for Children, the bodies that are able to address and pursue rights violations on behalf of children are usually not adapted to children and are unknown to the children who could benefit from them.<sup>1286</sup>

In 2019, several civil-society organisations, among others Save the Children, Unicef, Ecpat and Children's Right in Society, published a report on why Sweden must accede to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure.<sup>1287</sup>

In 2022, the newly established Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) submitted a supplementary report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child prior to the consideration of Sweden's sixth and seventh periodic reports. Sweden's adherence to the third Optional Protocol and the Independence of the Swedish Ombudsman for Children were two areas covered in the report.<sup>1288</sup> As mentioned in chapter 2.1.1. above, the Institute for Human Rights is a national agency established in accordance with the Swedish Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*).<sup>1289</sup> Within the limits of its mandate and responsibilities, the Institute decides on its own organisation and on the details and focus of its work. In this way, the Institute has, in comparison to other government authorities, a more independent role.<sup>1290</sup>

In 2022, the government appointed a special inquirer on children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the CRC. The inquirer will examine whether Sweden should ratify the third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure. The inquirer will analyse the consequences of a possible ratification

<sup>1282</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) (2022) Knowledge base aimed at youth and leisure leaders and other professionals about honour-related violence and oppression and on violence prevention work (*Kunskapsunderlag till fritidsledare och andra yrkesverksamma om hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck och våldsförebyggande arbete*), 31 March 2022.

<sup>1283</sup> Sweden, Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (*Myndigheten för ungdoms- och civilsamhällesfrågor*) (2022) Knowledge base aimed at youth and leisure leaders and other professionals about honour-related violence and oppression and on violence prevention work (*Kunskapsunderlag till fritidsledare och andra yrkesverksamma om hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck och våldsförebyggande arbete*), 31 March 2022.

<sup>1284</sup> URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-rights-child-communications> [12/12/2022]

<sup>1285</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Children and young persons' opportunities to complain – Ombudsman for Children's survey of children's and young people's opportunities to submit complaints and have their case heard when their rights are violated (*Barns och ungas klagomöjligheter, Barnombudsmannens kartläggning av barns och ungas möjlighet att framföra klagomål och få sin sak prövad när deras rättigheter kränks*), 2016.

<sup>1286</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Children and young persons' opportunities to complain (*Barnets rätt att klaga och få upprättelse*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1287</sup> Sweden, Save the Children, Unicef, Ecpat and Children's Right in Society et. al., (2019) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on an individual communications procedure for children (*Barnkonventionens tredje tilläggsprotokoll, en individuell klagomekanism för barn*), 2019.

<sup>1288</sup> Sweden, Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) (2022) [Supplementary information to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 6.1.1.-392/2022.

<sup>1289</sup> Sweden, Act on the Institute for Human Rights (*Lag [2021:642] om Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*), 22 June 2021.

<sup>1290</sup> Sweden, Swedish Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) (2022) Annual report 2022 (*Årsrapport 2022*), 25 March 2022, page 8.

and, if ratification is proposed, submit any constitutional amendments that are needed in order for Sweden to fulfil its commitments according to the protocol. The special inquirer must also review certain other issues in relation to children's right to complain and to claim their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>1291</sup> The Swedish Institute for Human Rights,<sup>1292</sup> the Ombudsman for Children and a number of civil-society organisations, among others the Children's Rights in Society (*Barnens rätt i samhället, Bris*), have welcomed the inquiry.<sup>1293</sup> However, the Ombudsman for Children noted that the government omitted the issue of whether an authority should be empowered to pursue individual cases in the inquiry's terms of reference.<sup>1294</sup>

### 6.2.3. Are there any awareness raising or training activities at national or sub-national level on digital literacy, privacy and online safety for children, parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals?

The Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) is a government agency with several assignments from the government. Most of them aim at increasing children's and young people's digital literacy, privacy and online safety.<sup>1295</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1.3.3., the Swedish Media Council, the Ombudsman for Children and the Swedish Authority for Data Protection (*Integritetsskyddsmyndigheten*) has developed guidelines on the rights of children and young people on digital platforms. The aim of the guide is to provide general support on the right to personal integrity based on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and a child-rights perspective based on the CRC. The guide also contains advice on the protection of children from harmful media influence.<sup>1296</sup> The guidance is primarily aimed at actors who create and are responsible for various digital environments and is therefore not available in child-friendly language. Nor is it available in minority languages. However, the authority recently launched a child- and youth-friendly brochure about children's rights online, originally produced by the British organisation 5Rights Foundation.<sup>1297</sup> The brochure is available in Swedish, but not in any minority language.

The Swedish Media Council also develops material for schools and libraries, as well as texts aimed at parents and guardians, on its website. Among other things, the Council, together with Children's Rights in Society and ECPAT, runs the knowledge centre "Safer Internet Centre Sweden".<sup>1298</sup> The Centre is partly funded by the European Commission and is a multi-country project. The Safer Internet Centre consists of three parts: a knowledge centre producing and disseminating information on issues related to the online safety of children; a support line where children and young people can turn to for information and support; and a reporting function (hotline) to report illegal content concerning children online.<sup>1299</sup> The Council also gathers and disseminates knowledge about media and information literacy (*media och informationskunnighet, MIK*) for children, parents, teachers and librarians through a special knowledge bank.<sup>1300</sup>

<sup>1291</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1292</sup> Sweden, Institute for Human Rights (*Institutet för mänskliga rättigheter*) (2022) [Supplementary information to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 6.1.1.-392/2022.

<sup>1293</sup> Sweden, Child's rights in society (*Barns rätt i samhället*), Bris welcomes inquiry on children's opportunities to complain ([Bris välkomnar utredning om barns klagarätt](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1294</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022.

<sup>1295</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) The Swedish Media Council has several tasks concerning children and young people ([Statens medieråd har flera uppdrag som rör barn och unga](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1296</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) (2020) The rights of children and young people on digital platforms ([Barns och ungas rättigheter på digitala plattformar](#)), 12 October 2020.

<sup>1297</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) Brochure about children's rights online ([Broschyr om barns rättigheter på nätet](#)), information material, 3 mars 2023.

<sup>1298</sup> Safer Internet-centren are partly financed by the European Commission and are available in. The centers collaborate through the Insafe-INHOPE network of Safer Internet Centers in Europe and the [Better Internet for Kids platform](#).

<sup>1299</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) 'Safer Internet Centre', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1300</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) MIK Sweden knowledge portal ([MIK Sveriges kunskapsbank](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.



The Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) has a number of different items of information and methods for teachers in relation to digital literacy, privacy and the online safety of children. Among other things the authority has translated a number of student guides developed by the European portal “Better internet for Kids” that can be used in lectures and discussion forums and has compiled a number of discussion questions for students and teachers on online safety.<sup>1301</sup> The student guides are available in child-friendly language, but not in minority languages. The authority has also developed a training course for teachers, school librarians and student health personnel in primary and secondary schools on online safety.<sup>1302</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, the government tasked the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) with developing a national digitisation strategy for 2023-2027. The strategy has been drafted and is now being considered by the government. The strategy’s overall goal is a focus on children’s and students’ digital competence and on the use of the possibilities of digitisation in teaching and learning. One of the sub-goals focuses on children’s ability to act safely, respectfully and responsibly in digital environments.<sup>1303</sup>

### 6.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child rights and/or child protection outreach activities/measure targeting relevant groups of society or society at large that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

The National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) has developed a website on the social services aimed at children and young persons called “Check on soc” (*Koll på soc*).<sup>1304</sup> The website provides support for children who are already in contact with or might want to contact the social services, or simply want to know more about it.<sup>1305</sup> Professionals working with children can also use the website to disseminate information about social services.

As described in section 6.1.2. above, the Ombudsman for Children’s web-portal “My rights” (*Mina rättigheter*) is aimed at both children and young people, so they can learn about their rights, read texts, watch videos or make their voices heard,<sup>1306</sup> and professionals working in preschools or schools.<sup>1307</sup> The portal for children and young people is divided into four different age groups (2-5, 6-9, 10-13 and 14-18) and includes information in several areas, such as all children’s equal worth, violence and harassment, family, schooling, and ways to influence decision-making.<sup>1308</sup> The development of the portal is ongoing.<sup>1309</sup>

As described under section 6.2.1. above, the Living History Forum’s (*Forum för Levande Historia*) exhibition “Children have rights too!” (*Barn har också rättigheter!*) and the associated workshop aim to strengthen children’s

<sup>1301</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), Security online ([Säkerhet på nätet](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1302</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*), Learning portal ([Lärportalen](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1303</sup> Sweden, National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) (2022) Proposal on a national digitisation strategy for 2023-2027 ([Förslag på en nationell digitaliseringsstrategi för skolväsendet 2023–2027](#)), 2022.

<sup>1304</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘Check on soc’ ([Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1305</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) ‘About the social services for children and young persons – Check on soc’ ([Om socialtjänsten för barn och unga - Koll på soc](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1306</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) ‘My rights’ ([Mina rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1307</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) ‘For educators - My rights’ ([För pedagoger - Mina rättigheter](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1308</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) ‘Children and young persons 10-13 years’ ([Barn och unga 10-13 år](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1309</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) (2020) Assignment to the Ombudsman for Children to strengthen and develop the democracy perspective on the web-portal My rights ([Uppdrag till Barnombudsmannen att stärka och utveckla demokratiperspektivet på webbplatsen Mina rättigheter](#)), government assignment, 9 March 2020.

awareness of their rights, based on a personal and historical perspective.<sup>1310</sup> The exhibition is being developed together with children between 9 and 13 years old and is produced by the Living History Forum together with the Ombudsman for Children, Save the Children and UNICEF. During 2023, the exhibition is being shown at the Forum for Living History's premises in Stockholm, and thereafter it will be touring around Sweden.<sup>1311</sup>

The Swedish Media knowledge centre, "Safer Internet Centre Sweden",<sup>1312</sup> is partly funded by the European Commission and is a multi-country project. As described under section 6.2.3. above, the Safer Internet Centre consists of three parts: a knowledge centre producing and disseminating information on issues related to online safety for children; a support line to which children and young people can turn for information and support; and a reporting function (hotline) to report illegal content concerning children online.<sup>1313</sup>

The government assignment to the Equality Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringsombudsmannen*) to carry out targeted information efforts and produce easily accessible information materials to students and guardians on protection against discrimination and abusive treatment has already been described in section 6.2.1. above.

The government appointed a special inquirer on children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights under the CRC, described in section 6.2.2. above.

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<sup>1310</sup> Sweden, Living history forum (*Forum för Levande Historia*) Children have rights too!" ([Barn har också rättigheter!](#)) official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1311</sup> Sweden, Living history forum (*Forum för Levande Historia*) Children have rights too!" ([Barn har också rättigheter!](#)) official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1312</sup> Safer Internet-centren are partly financed by the European Commission and are available in. The centers collaborate through the Insafe-INHOPE network of Safer Internet Centers in Europe and the [Better Internet for Kids platform](#).

<sup>1313</sup> Sweden, Swedish Media Council (*Statens medieråd*) 'Safer Internet Centre', official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

## 7. Child participation and community engagement

### 7.1. Complaint procedures

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.1.1. Are there independent child complaints procedures (e.g. an ombuds institution) that are fully compliant with the Paris Principles <sup>1314</sup> in place, with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children?		X	<p>Neither the Ombudsman for Children (<i>Barnombudsmannen</i>) nor the newly established Institute for Human Rights (<i>Institutet för Mänskliga Rättigheter</i>) have the possibility to receive individual complaints from children. The Institute cannot receive complaints from adults either.</p> <p>Generally, a decision by an authority can be corrected or be reviewed by the same authority that announced the decision in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (<i>Förvaltningslag [2017:900]</i>).<sup>1315</sup> The Administrative Procedure Act does not provide for any specific complaint mechanism for children. In order to be able to initiate a process in court in Sweden, anyone submitting a claim must have procedural capacity (<i>processbehörighet</i>), which means that the individual is authorised to bring an action before a court (<i>väcka talan i domstol</i>) on their own behalf and to act within the framework of the process.<sup>1316</sup> As a general rule, individuals under the age of 18 lack procedural capacity.<sup>1317</sup> The lack of procedural capacity means that children lack the opportunity either to bring an action before a court or to appeal against decisions by the authorities. In cases where the child lacks procedural capacity, the child is represented by a litigation guardian (<i>ställföreträdare</i>).<sup>1318</sup> There are, however, exceptions to the general rule which entails procedural capacity for children, even though they have not reached the age of 18. These are described in the section below.</p> <p>As mentioned in chapter 6.2.2. above, the government submitted a committee directive on children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the</p>

<sup>1314</sup>

URL:

[https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20\(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness](https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness) [12/12/2022]

<sup>1315</sup> Sweden, Administrative procedure act (*Förvaltningslag [2017:900]*), sections 36-43.

<sup>1316</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (*Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen*), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1317</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (1942:740) (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 18 July 1942, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>1318</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (1942:740) (*Rättegångsbalk [1942:740]*), 18 July 1942, chapter 11, section 1.

			Child (CRC) in 2022. <sup>1319</sup> The assignment is to be reported to the government no later than August 2023.
7.1.2. Are there specialised Courts and compliant procedures with international standards in place for children in contact with the law and for children to access justice and seek redress and remedies for violations of the child protection rights?		X	<p>There are no specialised courts for children in Sweden. The lack of specialised courts in the area of social justice (<i>socialrättsliga området</i>) differs from other legal areas where there are different types of specialised courts.</p> <p>According to the Swedish National Courts Administration (<i>Domstolsverket</i>), there are currently no premises or hearing rooms adapted for children, except for one "family room" at Södertörn District Court (<i>Södertörns Tingsrätt</i>). The Swedish National Courts Administration has not developed any guidelines or other information regarding the adaptation of its premises for children.<sup>1320</sup> As mentioned in the section above, anyone submitting a claim must have procedural capacity (<i>processbehörighet</i>) in order to be able to initiate a process in a court in Sweden. This means that the individual is authorised to bring an action before a court (<i>väcka talan i domstol</i>) on their own behalf and to act within the framework of the process.<sup>1321</sup> As a general rule, individuals under the age of 18 lack procedural capacity.<sup>1322</sup> There are, however, exceptions to the general rule which entails procedural capacity for children, even though they have not reached the age of 18. Some of these are briefly described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children over 15 years old have reached the age of criminal responsibility, (<i>straffmyndig</i>) which means that they are authorised to act within the framework of a criminal process;<sup>1323</sup></li> <li>• children from the age of 15 have the right to institute a claim in cases under the Social Services Act,<sup>1324</sup> the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act,<sup>1325</sup> and the Compulsory Psychiatric Care Act;<sup>1326</sup> children from the age of 16 have the right to</li> </ul>

<sup>1319</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1320</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish National Courts Administration (*Domstolsverket*), 21 April 2023.

<sup>1321</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1322</sup> Sweden, Code of judicial procedure (1942:740) ([Rättegångsbalk \[1942:740\]](#)), 18 July 1942, chapter 11, section 1.

<sup>1323</sup> Sweden, Criminal code ([Brottsbalk \[1962:700\]](#)), 1 January 1989, chapter 1, section 6.

<sup>1324</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2013, chapter 11, section 10.

<sup>1325</sup> Sweden, Care of young persons (special provisions) act ([Lag \[1990:52\] med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga](#)), 1 January 2013, section 36.

<sup>1326</sup> Sweden, Act on compulsory psychiatric care ([Lag \[1991:1128\] om psykiatrisk tvångsvård](#)), 20 June 1991, section 44.

			<p>institute a claim in cases under the Education Act.<sup>1327</sup> The Supreme Administrative Court (<i>Högsta förvaltningsdomstolen</i>) has also accepted that a child under the age of 15, through his public counsel/litigation guardian, could appeal against a decision on care under the Care of Young Persons (Special Provisions) Act (LVU), despite the litigation guardian's own opinion that the decision on care should stand.<sup>1328</sup></p>
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## 7.2. Feedback mechanisms

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.2.1. Are there government support fora such as children's groups established at local/community level, and is a formal mechanism in place through which national/sub-national/local government receive and respond to the feedback and ideas from children and children's groups who have received child protection services?		X	<p>There are no government support forums at the local/community level. As stated under chapter 2.1.5. above, actors providing social services are obliged to receive and investigate complaints and opinions on the quality of the operations from, among others, children and young care recipients and their relatives.<sup>1329</sup> Regions and municipalities have, through the principle of local self-government, a considerable degree of autonomy in relation to the functioning of certain mechanisms for receiving and responding to the feedback and ideas from children.</p> <p>As mentioned under chapter 2.1.5., children and young persons placed outside their family homes can submit complaints or opinions, without additional adults' approval, directly to the municipalities' Social Welfare Board (<i>socialnämnd</i>), for example through the specially appointed social secretary.<sup>1330</sup> They can also submit complaints through the staff at the municipal residential support (<i>stödboende</i>), residential care homes for young persons (<i>Hem för vård eller boende, HVB-hem</i>), the National Board of Institutional Care (<i>Statens institutionsstyrelse, SiS</i>), or privately operated residential support or residential care homes for young persons.<sup>1331</sup> As mentioned in section 2.1.5. above, the Social Welfare Board must provide the child with contact details to the specially appointed social</p>

<sup>1327</sup> Sweden, Education act ([Skollag 2010:800](#)), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>1328</sup> Sweden, Supreme Administrative Court (*Högsta förvaltningsdomstolen*), case number 7854-13, 16 June 2014.

<sup>1329</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd \(2011:9\) om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), 10 December 2020, chapter 5, section 3.

<sup>1330</sup> Sweden, Social services act ([Socialtjänstlag \[2001:435\]](#)), 1 January 2016, chapter 6, section 7c.

<sup>1331</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on management systems for systematic quality work ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om ledningssystem för systematiskt kvalitetsarbete](#)), SOSFS 2011:9, 10 December 2020, chapter 1.

		<p>secretary. Children must also receive information on how to reach the regulatory authority. Children should also be informed about their rights to submit complaints and views to the Social Welfare Board.<sup>1332</sup></p> <p>Within the health-care and social-care sectors, children and young people can submit complaints to care-givers, to the Patient's Board (<i>Patientnämnden</i>) and to the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>).<sup>1333</sup> The Health and Social Care Inspectorate is responsible for the supervision of health care, health-care personnel, social services and activities according to the LSS. Activities for children and young people covered by the authority's supervision include residential support (<i>stödboende</i>) and residential care homes for young persons (<i>hem för vård och boende</i>), homes with special services for children and young people, and homes run by the National Board of Institutional Care. The Health and Social Care Inspectorate's supervisory task means that the authority must receive and handle complaints from individuals who are dissatisfied with health care or the social services. The authority has a special children's and young people's telephone and chat line, where children and young people who have contact with health-care or social services or who live in a student residence can get in touch with the authority. The authority can provide general information about the child's rights, explain and clarify, give advice, and refer the child to the right authority. The authority can also, in the light of the child's complaint, decide to open a supervisory case (<i>tillsynsärende</i>) against the authority concerned.<sup>1334</sup> According to the Health and Care Inspectorate, all information received through the children's and young people's line is registered in the authority's information management system. This information and data is compiled and forms, on an aggregated level, the basis for the planning and implementation of supervisory efforts. Thus, the authority uses the information in its risk analyses and in the planning and implementation of its supervision. The Health and Care Inspectorate also reports observations received by the children's and young people's line in its annual reporting.<sup>1335</sup></p>
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<sup>1332</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare's regulations and general advice on the Social Welfare Board's responsibility for children and young people in family homes, emergency homes or residential care homes for young persons ([Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om socialnämndens ansvar för barn och unga i familjehem, jourhem, stödboende och hem för vård eller boende](#)), 30 December 2019, chapter 7, section 1.

<sup>1333</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2022) Children's opportunities to complain and claim their rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([Barns möjligheter att klaga och utkräva sina rättigheter enligt barnkonventionen](#)), committee directive, 28 April 2022.

<sup>1334</sup> Sweden, Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*) 'For Children and Young persons' ([För dig som är barn eller ungdom](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1335</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), 9 May 2023.

		<p>Children and students can submit complaints to the school principals in questions related to shortcomings in pre-schooling and schooling and their right to education. Children who have turned 16 years old can submit a report to the Swedish School Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>).<sup>1336</sup> The Child and School Student Representative (<i>Barn och Elevombudet, BEO</i>) is an independent unit of the School Inspectorate to which children can report if they have been subject to discrimination, harassment, bullying or abusive behaviour in school. The representative can also claim damages on behalf of children and school students who have been subjected to abusive behaviour and bullying.<sup>1337</sup> According to the School Inspectorate, the authority has in the past year changed its IT system. Within this system, the authority collects all data received by the authority, including information received by the Child and School Student Representative. Thus, the authority has an opportunity to follow up on this information, but no such follow up has been carried out so far.<sup>1338</sup></p> <p>Children and young people can also submit complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (<i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i>) if they believe that they have been treated wrongly or unjustly by a public authority or an official employed by the civil service or local government. It is not necessary for a person to be a Swedish citizen or to have reached a certain age to be able to make a complaint.<sup>1339</sup> Since 2021, the Swedish School Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>) and the Health and Care Inspectorate has a collaboration agreement.<sup>1340</sup> The authorities have regular meetings at a general level. In individual cases, the authorities may share information.<sup>1341</sup> The collaboration can take place with regard to, for example: planned supervisory efforts, results and other observations from completed inspections as well as quality reviews and other reports or decisions that may affect the other authority; regional cooperation in individual cases where the authorities' supervisory responsibilities overlap, for example, in student health, education for children with reduced mobility and education in</p>
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<sup>1336</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag 2010:800*), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

<sup>1337</sup> Sweden, Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) 'About BEO' (*Om BEO*), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1338</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), 10 May 2023.

<sup>1339</sup> Sweden, Act with instructions on the Parliamentary Ombudsman (*Lag [1986:765] med instruktion för Riksdagens ombudsmän*), 1 September 2014, section 1 and 2.

<sup>1340</sup> Sweden, Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) and Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), Cooperation between the Swedish School Inspectorate and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Samverkan mellan Inspektionen för vård och omsorg och Statens skolinspektion*), 2020:6251 and 6.1.3-23896/2020, 20 April 2021.

<sup>1341</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), 10 May 2023.



			<p>hospitals; and discussions on possible joint projects at regional or national level.<sup>1342</sup></p> <p>Both the School Inspectorate and the Child and School Student Representative consult with social services in complicated cases. The School Inspectorate regularly reports concerns about children at risk of neglect and harm to the social services, in accordance with the Social Services Act.<sup>1343</sup></p>
7.2.2. Are community-based mechanisms functional across the country where necessary and per applicability and per protocols and procedures? Is their effectiveness monitored by independent accountability mechanisms?	X		<p>As described in several sections above, through the principle of local self-government, regions and municipalities have a considerable degree of autonomy in relation to the implementation of services and the functioning of certain mechanisms. According to the government, most municipalities work to give children and young people local influence. There are, however, major differences between municipalities regarding the level of ambition and how many young people are reached by existing initiatives.<sup>1344</sup> The Ombudsman has on several occasions highlighted the differences across the country for children's opportunities to participate and influence decision-making and that most municipalities lack structures or long-term predictable ways of child participation.<sup>1345</sup></p> <p>As mentioned under chapter 2 above, there are several regulatory authorities (<i>tillsynsmyndigheter</i>) whose areas of responsibility concern child protection. These include the Swedish School Inspectorate (<i>Skolinspektionen</i>)<sup>1346</sup> and the school student representative (<i>Barn och Elevombudet, BEO</i>), the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (<i>Inspektionen för vård och omsorg, IVO</i>), the Parliamentary Ombudsman (<i>Justitieombudsmannen, JO</i>) and the Equality Ombudsman (<i>Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, DO</i>).</p>

<sup>1342</sup> Sweden, Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) and Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Inspektionen för vård och omsorg*), Cooperation between the Swedish School Inspectorate and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (*Samverkan mellan Inspektionen för vård och omsorg och Statens skolinspektion*), 2020:6251 and 6.1.3-23896/2020, 20 April 2021.

<sup>1343</sup> Sweden, e-mail correspondence with senior official at the Swedish School Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*), 10 May 2023.

<sup>1344</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2021) [Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#), 15 October 2021.

<sup>1345</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) [The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden](#), 15 August 2022; and Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Annual report 2022 (*Årsrapport 2022*), 31 March 2022.

<sup>1346</sup> Sweden, Education act (*Skollag 2010:800*), 1 July 2020, chapter 29, section 12.

### 7.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child participation and community engagement that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Several actors have expressed concern with regard to child participation. In the report “The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law” (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*) the inquiry noted that the provisions in the legislation on the right of children to express their views and have them taken into account in practice, as well as the meaning given to the provisions in different areas of the law, have not been fully implemented.<sup>1347</sup> In the report, “An upbringing free from violence” (*En uppväxt fri från våld*), the inquiry stressed the lack of child participation in the design, implementation and follow-up of child-protection measures.<sup>1348</sup>

The Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsmannen*) has on several occasions highlighted major shortcomings in terms of children’s right to be heard and to have their opinions considered throughout public administration, from school and social care to the legal system and in connection with the creation of new legislation or general municipal decisions.<sup>1349</sup> In 2022, the Ombudsman conducted a municipal survey regarding children’s ability to receive information and making their voices heard in relation to central municipal decisions. The survey revealed large differences across the country in children’s opportunities to participate in and influence decision-making, showing that most municipalities lacked structures or long-term, predictable ways of child participation.<sup>1350</sup>

In its latest concluding observations on Sweden, the UN Committee on the rights of the child noted that children’s views are not systematically taken into account in decisions affecting them and that most municipalities lack structures for ensuring children’s participation in decision-making. The Committee recommended Sweden to, among other things:

- “[e]nsure that all children can express their opinions and be heard in all decisions affecting them”;
- “[a]dopt relevant legislative amendments to ensure that children’s views are heard and taken into account in such decisions”;
- “[e]nsure that all municipalities establish policies and structures, such as youth councils, for ensuring the participation of children in local decision-making”; and
- “[c]ontinue to strengthen measures to promote the meaningful and empowered participation of all children”.<sup>1351</sup>

The Committee also recommended Sweden to accede to the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure<sup>1352</sup> and expressed concerns about the fact that the Ombudsman for Children still does not have a mandate to receive complaints from children, despite previous recommendations from the Committee. The Committee recommended Sweden to “[e]nsure, as a matter of priority, that the Ombudsman for Children has the mandate to receive, investigate and competently address complaints from children in a child-friendly manner”.<sup>1353</sup>

<sup>1347</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Employment (*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*) (2020) *The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Swedish Law* (*Barnkonventionen och svensk rätt*), government official report, 12 November 2020.

<sup>1348</sup> Sweden, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (*Socialdepartementet*) (2023) “An upbringing free from violence – a national strategy to prevent and combat violence against children” (*En uppväxt fri från våld- en nationell strategi för att förebygga och bekämpa våld mot barn*), government official report, 18 January 2023.

<sup>1349</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) (2022) *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Supplementary Report – Sweden*, 15 August 2022.

<sup>1350</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) Annual report 2022 (*Årsrapport 2022*), 31 March 2022.

<sup>1351</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), *Concluding observations on Sweden*, 6 February 2023, p. 20.

<sup>1352</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), *Concluding observations on Sweden*, 6 February 2023, p. 48.

<sup>1353</sup> United Nations (UN), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (2023), *Concluding observations on Sweden*, 6 February 2023.

As mentioned in several sections above, the Ombudsman for Children provides support on children's rights to central government agencies, including support on children participation. The Ombudsman has developed several knowledge-support materials on children's participation and influence.<sup>1354</sup> Among other things, they have developed a tool called "Young Direct" (*Unga Direkt*), which is a support material for listening to children and young people to enable their participation.<sup>1355</sup>

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR*) provides support to municipalities on children's participation and the right to be heard in social services. Among other things, SALAR develops support materials regarding children's participation and disseminates existing material and promising practices. SALAR has compiled a range of methods and tools for support when talking with children<sup>1356</sup> and developed an online training course on how to talk with children and young people in social services.<sup>1357</sup> Children's participation and right to be heard is also a focus area for SALAR's national development network for children and young people (which is part of SALAR's regional collaboration and support structure). The network has disseminated the so-called "Western Norrland-model" (*Västernorrlandsmodellen*), which is a model for follow-up that aims to consider children's views about their meetings with social services. Based on the children's views, social services can develop and improve their activities.<sup>1358</sup>

As mentioned under chapter 3.4. above, the knowledge guide (*Kunskapsguiden*) is a website that collects knowledge-supporting products from the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), other authorities and actors. This guide offers a range of different materials in relation to the best interests of the child and the child's right to participation. The website mainly focuses on personnel working in social services and the health-care sector. It contains information,<sup>1359</sup> publications<sup>1360</sup> and online training.<sup>1361</sup>

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<sup>1354</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) 'Children's participation and influence' ([Barns delaktighet och inflytande](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1355</sup> Sweden, Ombudsman for Children (*Barnombudsman*) 'Young Direct' ([Unga Direkt](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1356</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) 'Methods and tools' ([Metoder och verktyg](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1357</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) 'Online training – conversations with children' ([Webbutbildning, samtal med barn](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1358</sup> Sweden, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*) 'Conversations with children' ([Samtal med barn](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1359</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) About the best interest of the child and right to participation ([Om barnets bästa och rätt till delaktighet](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1360</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Publications on the best interest of the child and right to participation ([Publikationer om barnets bästa och rätt till delaktighet](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.

<sup>1361</sup> Sweden, National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*) Trainings on the best interest of the child and right to participation ([Utbildningar på temat barnets bästa och rätt till delaktighet](#)), official webpage, accessed 26 March 2023.