

Action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people



Introduction

In recent years, many reforms have been implemented that have contributed to increasing openness in society and to strengthening the equal rights of LGBTIQ people. However, challenges still remain in regard to the situation of LGBTIQ people, especially in relation to the situation of transgender people, and knowledge about the situation of people with intersex variations is very low.

Threats, hatred and discrimination against LGBTIQ people still exist. Same-sex couples might face challenges when they become parents because of legislation that is not in line with the needs of rainbow families. LGBTIQ people are more likely to suffer from mental health issues than the general population, with the situation for transgender people being particularly worrying. Efforts to ensure equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people must therefore continue. Sweden should be a country where everyone can live their life in freedom and safety, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The COVID-19 outbreak has affected everyone at both the individual and the societal level. The consequences of the pandemic, such as increased isolation and restrictions on the ability to physically meet other people, could lead to an increase in the incidence of mental health issues, substance

abuse, violence, control, and honour-based violence and oppression. Certain groups are particularly vulnerable, including the elderly, women who are victims of violence, children and young people, and LGBTIQ people. This needs to be considered in initiatives that are to be implemented.

Since 2014, the Government's work to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people is based on the strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This strategy sets the foundation for long-term work in the focus areas of violence, discrimination and other abuses, young LGBTIQ people, health, healthcare and social services, private and family life, culture, and civil society. For some of the focus areas, strategic authorities have also been appointed to serve as a unifying force for increased understanding and equal treatment.

This action plan aims to further strengthen the work to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people. The action plan complements and consolidates the existing strategy but also adds further concrete measures for the period 2020–2023. The strategy and action plan together form the basis for continued work in the area.



Terminology

The action plan uses the terms sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and intersex variations. Sexual orientation includes heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual orientation. The terms gender identity and gender expression are used here the same way as in the strategy, i.e. they apply to all people, regardless of how their gender identity or gender expression relates to the norm.

LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. Transgender is an umbrella term for people who do not perceive themselves as cisgender. Cisgender is usually defined as people whose legal gender and biological sex are and have always been the same as their gender identity and gender expression.

Queer is a multifaceted term that, in short, refers to a norm-critical approach of categorising people based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Including queer in the action plan and initiatives can contribute to expose and counteract norms that are often underlying factors behind the vulnerability experienced by many LGBTIQ people, and also means that the initiatives are not limited by identity.

Intersex is a term that is used to explain conditions where physical development is not clear-cut in terms of gender. The term intersex encompasses a wide range of physical conditions. An intersex variation can be a difference in the external anatomy, but it can also be a hormonal or genetic difference. The intersex variation may be evident from birth when it is not clear from the genitals of the newborn whether it is a girl or a boy. It can also relate to a lack of certain sex hormones that goes unnoticed until reproductive age, when it sometimes becomes clear that the internal reproductive organs are partially or completely missing. So, it does not have to be something that is visible on the outside of the body, nor is it always linked to identity.

In healthcare, the umbrella term “Disorders of Sex Development” (DSD) or “Differences in Sex Development” is used to cover some twenty congenital conditions where the sex development in terms of chromosomes, gonads or genitals is not unambiguously related to gender.

Sometimes measures can be coordinated for the whole LGBTIQ community but there may also be specific needs for just one group within the community, or a common need for a couple of the groups. Below is a more detailed explanation of why people with intersex variations now are included in the action plan.

However, when referring to adopted initiatives or reports that do not include people with intersex variation or queer people, the terms LGBTQ people and/or LGBT people are used.

Inclusion of people with intersex variations in the action plan

It is not a given that all people with intersex variations will feel included in, or even have any desire to be included in, the concept of LGBTIQ people. Some people born with intersex variation may see it as a medical issue and possibly organise themselves as a patient group. At the same time, there are common issues that affect life chances, such as the two-gender norm and norms about what women’s and men’s bodies should look like. The right to bodily integrity and sexual and reproductive health and rights are also common issues.

The UN, the EU and the Council of Europe are now increasingly including work for intersex people in their work promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ people. The term often used to describe this inclusion is “sex characteristics”.

In the Discrimination Act, the ground of discrimination called transgender identity or expression refers to someone who does not identify as a woman or a man or who, through their dress or in some other way, expresses that they belong to a different gender. The preparatory work on the Discrimination Act states that the intention is for people with intersex variations to be able to invoke this ground of discrimination (Govt Bill 2007/08:95 p. 117). This means that people with intersex variations are in some respects already included in the Government’s work promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. However, this action plan makes this explicit.

Gender equality perspective and intersectionality in the work promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people

Sex-disaggregated statistics and various types of gender equality analyses based on the groups women and men are a basic prerequisite for making inequality visible. In work promoting equal rights for LGBTIQ people, it is important to make gender differences visible where this contributes to the highlighting of unequal life chances, in some respects the diverging opportunities of homosexual and bisexual women and men for example. At the same time, a binary view of gender can be problematic from both a transgender and a gender equality perspective. This is because a binary understanding of gender could potentially perpetuate and reproduce gender norms and patterns since people who do not identify according to the gender division woman/man are excluded, and because alternate ways of identifying oneself may be perceived as deviant. The work to change stereotypes about gender and gender norms, including stereotypical or destructive norms about femininity and masculinity, remains an important part of gender equality work, but is also a key issue in promoting the rights and opportunities of transgender people in society.

In addition to gender differences, when implementing initiatives there may be a need to pay attention to other differences that affect the different life conditions of LGBTIQ people, such as vulnerability. For example, LGBTIQ people with disabilities or foreign backgrounds may have particular experiences of vulnerability. There is a significant lack of knowledge about the life chances of LGBTIQ people whose identity or background puts them at risk of multiple discrimination. The LGBTIQ umbrella concept encompasses a wide range of heterogeneity and different ways of identifying with and relating to societal norms. The promotion of equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people must therefore include different perspectives such as queer, intersex, non-binary and intersectional perspectives, while continuously taking into account the development of new ways

of self-identification and relating to norms linked to gender and sexuality.

The action plan also has a lifecycle perspective, covering the rights and opportunities of LGBTIQ people at different stages of their lives.

2030 Agenda – leave no one behind

The Government's work promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people contributes to the implementation of the UN's 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals. The 2030 Agenda is imbued with a rights perspective that safeguards the civil and political rights of all individuals, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. This is reflected in the central principle "leave no one behind". This action plan contributes to strengthening human rights and several of the Agenda's goals, such as Goal 3 on good health and well-being, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 10 on an equal society and Goal 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies.

Timetable and budget

The 2020 Budget added SEK 14 million per year to the work to strengthen the rights of LGBTIQ people from 2020 onwards. A temporary bolster of an additional SEK 10 million per year is expected for the years 2021 and 2022. This is the largest investment ever made by any government in the area that forms the basis of this action plan.

In addition to the resources specifically allocated to the work in strengthening equal rights for LGBTIQ people, some of the measures in the action plan are financed in whole or in part with funds from other expenditure areas. This is a result of the fact that work on equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people is being carried out in a cross-sectoral manner in several different policy areas.

An improved structure for coordinating and monitoring the work

Focus areas

The existing strategy contains a number of focus areas that have been identified as being of particular importance for the promotion of equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. These are:

- Violence, discrimination and other abuses
- Young LGBT people (now young LGBTIQ people)
- Health, healthcare and social services
- Private and family life
- Culture
- Civil society

The existing focus areas remain central to the equal rights of LGBTIQ people, but the previously stated ambitions, referred to below as objectives, need to be updated for some of the focus areas. Furthermore, the long-term work within the framework of the strategy should be supplemented with two additional focus areas, namely:

- Working life
- Older LGBTIQ people

Efforts in the focus areas need to be carried out in a concerted, structured and long-term manner. For each focus area, there is an explicit objective that is based on the objectives already decided by the Government and Swedish Parliament for each policy area. The fact that the objectives are based on the existing objectives of the various policy areas shows that the aim is to integrate work promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression within each policy area.

Strategic authorities

In 2014, the existing strategy designated the Swedish Equality Ombudsman, the Public Health Agency of Sweden, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society and the Swedish Arts Council as strategic authorities for equal rights and opportunities for LGBT people. In 2018, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish National Agency for Education were appointed as LGBTIQ strategic authorities. As part of the work to develop this action plan, the Government appointed the Swedish Police Authority and the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden as new strategic authorities in 2020. The Government also intends to designate the Family Law and Parental Support Authority as a strategic authority (see section Private and family life).

Being appointed a strategic authority means that the authority must promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in its activities. This means, among other things, that an LGBTIQ perspective must be integrated and made visible in the authority's activities.

In the action plan, the strategic authorities are listed under the focus areas where their activities are considered to have the greatest impact on the achievement of the objectives. However, this should not be taken to mean that each authority is responsible for all the issues grouped under a focus area or that their role as a strategic authority is limited to a specific focus area. Several of the authorities carry out activities that touch on several of the focus areas, and all of them thus represent a collective force for the implementation of the strategy.

One authority responsible for coordination and follow-up

Coordination of the strategic authorities' work has thus far been achieved through an annually rotating responsibility for convening the other strategic authorities.

When the strategy was evaluated by Statskontoret (the Swedish Agency for Public Management) in 2016, it suggested that one authority should instead be given specific coordinating responsibility. This was primarily to strengthen the continuity of the work, but also to promote more uniform follow-up of the authorities' work. It was proposed that the coordinating authority be tasked with developing monitoring procedures, in collaboration with relevant actors, as well as compiling and presenting information and knowledge in the area.

The appointed commission of inquiry published the report "Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor" (Transgender people in Sweden – Proposals for an improved position and better living conditions) (SOU 2017:92) which proposes that the Swedish Gender Equality Agency should be responsible for coordination, monitoring and support within the framework of a new action plan. The Inquiry argues that an authority needs to be assigned overall coordination responsibility so that the action plan can be implemented as effectively as possible. An alternative, or a complement, would be to set up a knowledge centre on the living conditions of LGBTIQ people. Such a centre could, for example, be linked to a university in the same way as the National Centre for Knowledge on Men's Violence against Women is linked to Uppsala University.

Since Statskontoret and the Inquiry submitted their proposals, the number of LGBTIQ strategic authorities has doubled, and the number of focus areas is now also increasing. Furthermore, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency had not yet been established when the Inquiry submitted its proposal.

The Government therefore finds that there is reason to obtain additional information on the issue of coordination, monitoring and support within the framework of the Government's work to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people. The Government is therefore today commissioning Statskontoret to analyse and propose an appropriate organisation for coordination and monitoring within the framework of the Government's strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, and the action plan for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people.

Statskontoret shall also analyse what support the LGBTIQ strategic authorities need in their work to integrate an LGBTIQ perspective into their activities. The aim is to create a more efficient and effective model for coordination, monitoring and support in the area. The commission includes making proposals for a long-term sustainable organisation for coordination and monitoring in the area. This also includes making proposals on how a support function could be organised and the appropriate actor for the task. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 30 September 2021.





Focus areas and measures

This action plan serves to supplement the existing strategy. The focus areas are supplemented, the objectives are updated, and new strategic authorities are appointed.

In this action plan, the Government makes it clear that work promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression includes queer and intersex people. The strategy and the strategic authorities should therefore henceforth be referred to as the LGBTIQ strategy and the LGBTIQ strategic authorities.

As the focus areas are based on different policy areas with different designs and conditions, the form and content of this action plan also differ. However, all focus areas are considered key and developments in the different focus areas need to be considered in the long-term work to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people.

The commissions presented in the action plan have been or will be given in the authorities' appropriation directions or as special commissions.

Violence, discrimination and other abuses

The Government's objective is to end LGBTIQ people's vulnerability to violence, discrimination and other abuses. No one should have to endure violence, discrimination and other abuses regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. This applies to everyone living in Sweden, including those seeking asylum or a residence permit in Sweden. Everyone seeking asylum or a residence permit in Sweden must receive a legally certain and uniform examination and safe and equal treatment. All of Sweden should be a safe country to live in, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Strategic authorities: Swedish Equality Ombudsman, Swedish Gender Equality Agency, Swedish Police Authority and Swedish Migration Agency.

Despite EU surveys such as Eurobarometer (2019) showing a high degree of openness and low levels of intolerance for homosexual and bisexual people in Sweden compared to most European countries, LGBTIQ people are subjected to prejudice, discrimination and violence due to negative perceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Transgender people are particularly vulnerable, and attitudes also reflect that openness does not fully extend to transgender people or transgender-related issues. LGBTIQ people are also at risk of honour-based violence and oppression, as an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression may be seen as a threat to the honour of the family. Understanding of the vulnerability of intersex people to violence is almost non-existent.

According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden's report on the government commission regarding the development of health and health determinants among LGBT people (2014, 2015), one out of every two transgender people has experienced abuse in the past three months.

One out of every two transgender people has also avoided various everyday activities due to fear of discrimination in the past year. Many feel unsafe in everyday life and are afraid to go out alone.

One in five transgender people have experienced violence because of their trans identity. Homosexuals and bisexuals are also significantly more likely to have experienced threats of violence and physical violence compared to heterosexuals. This is particularly true for bisexual women and especially for young bisexual women. LGBTIQ people report experiencing discrimination and serious human rights abuses in all areas of life – at work, at school, in shops, in contact with authorities, in healthcare, and in social services. Exposure to prejudice, discrimination and violence due to negative perceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity by others can be linked to the poorer health and suicide risk of LGBTIQ people.

The appointment of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish Police Authority as new strategic authorities has strengthened the conditions for achieving the objectives in the focus area. However, it should be mentioned that the mandates of the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and the Swedish Equality Ombudsman are not limited to this focus area alone (see page 6 for general information on strategic authorities).



Strengthening support to crime victims and work to combat hate crime

The Inquiry report “Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor” (SOU 2017:92) states that many transgender people have little trust in social institutions within the legal system, healthcare, education and social services. According to the report, a low level of trust in the police could impact the propensity to report crimes, potentially resulting in crimes going unreported and uninvestigated. The Inquiry therefore proposed that the Swedish Police Authority should be tasked with strengthening its expertise in combating crimes such as domestic violence, honour-based crimes and hate crimes involving transgender people. The report also highlighted that the conditions for increased trust would be strengthened if the Swedish Police Authority was appointed as one of the strategic authorities. The report also suggested that questions about transgender experience should be included in the Swedish Crime Survey in order to increase knowledge about transgender people’s vulnerability to crime, safety, and trust in the criminal justice system.

In 2018, the Government commissioned the Swedish Police Authority to report on the measures it has taken to combat hate crime, with a particular focus on transgender people and how the authority works to ensure that transgender people, particularly transgender people who are victims of hate crime, are well treated. The report shows that the authority conducts active and ongoing equality work with a focus on LGBTIQ, norms and power, gender stereotypes, etc. The work also includes regular training of staff in LGBTIQ competency.

Criminal law protection for transgender people has been expanded and clarified through legislative changes that came into force in 2018 and 2019. The ground “transgender identity or expression” has been added to the provisions on incitement to hatred and unlawful discrimination, as well as to the criminal offence of insult. It is now also explicitly stated that it is deemed an aggravating circumstance if a motive for a crime was to violate a person or a group of people on the ground of

transgender identity or expression. The provisions on unlawful discrimination and the prosecution rule also cover cases where the offender has made a mistake about a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity or discriminates against someone because of the circumstances of another person, for example when a child is insulted because of their parent’s sexual orientation.

Measures

- Since 2020, the Swedish Police Authority has been a strategic authority tasked with promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people.
- The Government intends to commission the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention to investigate the possibilities of supplementing the background information in the Swedish Crime Survey in order to obtain data on LGBTIQ people’s vulnerability to crime, their safety, and their trust in the criminal justice system.
- The Government continues to commission the National Board of Health and Welfare to allocate funds to support organisations working to develop measures for the victims of crime aimed at LGBTIQ people who have been victims of domestic violence, including honour-based violence and oppression.

Honour based violence and oppression

Honour based violence and oppression is characterised by a strong collectivist element, often within a family and kinship relationship, which includes the interests and actions of the individual being considered subordinate to the interests of the family, and the individual’s sexuality and intimate relationships being a matter for the whole family which can affect the family’s reputation. Honour based violence and oppression is linked to honour norms based on strong patriarchal and heteronormative beliefs. Honour norms are based on a notion of honour that is not shared by the rest of society and that is contrary to the principle of the equal value of all human beings and the freedom and dignity of the individual. Heteronormative

beliefs mean that the sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression of LGBTQ people is seen as a threat to the honour of the family. LGBTQ people can be subjected to the same kind of honour-based violence and oppression as others. Young LGBTIQ people in particular are at risk of honour-based violence and oppression, including so-called conversion attempts. This means that family members or relatives try to get people to “become” heterosexual in various ways, for example by finding a suitable partner and forcing them to marry.

The Government’s work to combat honour-based violence and oppression is based on the national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women. The strategy also encompasses LGBTQ people’s vulnerability to domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency, which was appointed as a strategic authority in 2018, has been tasked with, among other things, making visible and combating honour-based violence and oppression, and promoting the development of preventive measures against men’s violence against women, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking for all purposes, and violence in same-sex relationships. This commission also includes the vulnerability of LGBTQ people.

Criminal justice work has developed in terms of measures to combat honour-based violence and oppression, but further efforts are needed. This includes improving the conditions for investigating honour-based crimes such as child and forced marriages and female genital mutilation, and bringing those responsible to justice. It is also important to monitor developments in the ability of the judicial system to respond to online threats and abuse, and to take measures to reduce the vulnerability of LGBTIQ people. Gender differences, for example between the vulnerability of homosexual and bisexual women and men, need to be made visible.

Measures

- The Government intends to present a comprehensive action programme for the continued implementation of the national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women and honour-based violence and oppression for the period 2021–2023. The action programme will include LGBTIQ people’s vulnerability to all types of violence covered by the strategy.
- The Government intends to make the national expert team against honour-based violence and oppression that exists at the Östergötland County Administrative Board a permanent fixture in the form of a national centre of expertise. The vulnerability of LGBTIQ individuals is included in the work against honour-based violence and oppression.
- The Government intends to allocate funds throughout the electoral period to increase knowledge and expertise in relation to honour-based violence and oppression. Increased expertise on violence includes both support measures for victims and preventive measures to counter honour-based violence and oppression.
- Legislation on honour-based violence and oppression has been made stricter. On 1 July 2020, a new special ground for more severe penalties was introduced, which means that when assessing the penalty value, it must be considered an aggravating circumstance if honour was a motive when committing the offence. A special child marriage offence and travel ban were introduced to protect children at risk of being taken out of Sweden in order to subject them to child marriage or female genital mutilation.
- On 7 October 2020, the Honour Crime Inquiry submitted its report, which proposes, among other things, the introduction of a special honour offence. The report is now out for consultation, and the consultation period ends on 19 January 2021.

- The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society has been tasked with mapping how conversion therapy takes place in Sweden. The issue of conversion therapy aimed at young LGBTQ people has attracted the attention of civil society actors and others. There is no uniform definition of the concept of conversion therapy and it is therefore something that needs to be addressed within the framework of the commission, as does the link to honour-based violence and oppression. A report on the commission shall be submitted on 1 March 2022.

Discrimination

A number of surveys on experiences of discrimination show that a large number of LGBTQ people experience discrimination and abusive treatment related to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression (Public Health Agency of Sweden 2014, 2015). However, according to the Swedish Equality Ombudsman, few people report it. The reports that the Ombudsman receives indicate that there are links to beliefs and norms about gender and sexual orientation that are reflected in the reports. Although knowledge about the discrimination experienced by homosexual, bisexual and transgender people is limited, there is even less knowledge when it comes to people with intersex variations. In order to effectively promote the rights of LGBTIQ people, we need more knowledge about the situation of intersex people and the prevalence of discrimination.

Measures

- The Government has commissioned the Swedish Equality Ombudsman to draw up a status report of the situation for intersex people from a discrimination perspective. The status report shall be drawn up in dialogue with civil society organisations and relevant authorities, and will include an international perspective. A report on the commission shall be submitted on 6 September 2021.
- The Government continues to commission the Living History Forum to develop and implement skills development initiatives for public employees on equal treatment regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender

expression. In carrying out the commission, knowledge and experience will be gathered from relevant authorities as necessary, such as those designated as strategic authorities for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ people and the authorities involved in the work on the national plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes. An interim report on the commission is to be presented by 1 March 2021, and the final report by 1 March 2022.

Finally, it should be mentioned that activities within the framework of the national plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crimes shall also contribute to the objectives of the focus area and vice versa.

Legal certainty and equal treatment in reception and the asylum process

LGBTIQ people in a migration situation can be a vulnerable group in many respects, not least as asylum seekers. This can pose particular challenges in ensuring that LGBTIQ people seeking asylum or residence permits on any other basis in Sweden receive safe and equal treatment. Moreover, ensuring that decision-makers and others who interact with LGBTIQ people during the asylum process have sufficient knowledge is an important issue of legal certainty.

The objective of a legally certain and uniform examination ties in with that part of the objective for migration policy set by the Swedish Parliament that aims to ensure a migration policy that has long-term stability and safeguards the right to asylum. Swedish migration policy and legislation are also based on Sweden's international commitments. Under the Aliens Act, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of gender, sexual orientation or other membership of a particular social group is covered by the definition of refugee, and such persecution may thus constitute grounds for asylum. For the Government, it is important that there is compliance with EU law, that Sweden's human rights commitments are respected, and that the right to seek asylum and an individual examination of the grounds for asylum are upheld.

The human rights of refugees and asylum seekers must be respected, and LGBTIQ people seeking asylum in Sweden must, just like everyone else, receive a legally certain examination and good and equal treatment.

In many parts of the world, LGBTIQ people continue to be subjected to violence and discrimination. Homosexuality is still forbidden in many countries – some countries even apply the death penalty for same-sex sexual relations. Even where this type of prohibitive legislation is rarely applied, the social climate is affected by the legitimisation of discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ people or people perceived to be LGBTIQ.

Stigma and vulnerability in the country of origin may make it difficult to invoke all the circumstances relevant to the asylum claim. It is therefore essential that the Swedish Migration Agency's staff can identify asylum seekers who are particularly vulnerable. The right knowledge and skills on the part of the authority's staff, along with safe and equal treatment on reception, combat the vulnerability of LGBTIQ asylum seekers and make it easier for the applicants to present their case. It is of great importance that the staff involved in the examination of asylum applications involving LGBTIQ issues have good knowledge of the regulations, case law and the Swedish Migration Agency's own guidelines in this area. All asylum seekers should receive an individual and legally certain examination.

For a number of years, the Swedish Migration Agency has carried out a number of initiatives to ensure good quality in the examination of asylum applications where LGBTIQ grounds are invoked and to utilise and increase LGBTIQ expertise within the authority. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are a prerequisite for high legal quality and to identify the need for any measures. As a result of the Swedish Migration Agency's designation as an LGBTIQ strategic authority in 2018, development needs were identified regarding the quality of investigation and decision-making in asylum cases, safety in accommodation and good treatment in all case categories.

The authority has therefore continued to report on measures aimed at meeting these development needs, for example through the development of new knowledge support, an increased number of instructors, and new training on vulnerable groups for reception staff. There is also a shift underway from the involvement of LGBTIQ specialists in asylum examination to making all staff working in the examination process responsible for the quality of LGBTIQ cases. The Swedish Migration Agency also has a regular dialogue with RFSL (Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Rights) and RFSL Ungdom (Swedish Youth Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights) in order to gather knowledge and provide information about the authority's work.

Overall, the Swedish Migration Agency has carried out several important measures to ensure that LGBTIQ people receive a legally certain and uniform examination that is of high quality, as well as safe and equal treatment. The Government finds that this work should be continued in order to ensure that the conditions are in place for long-term work to ensure legally certain and uniform examination and safe and equal treatment.

Working Life

The Government's objective is good working conditions and opportunities for development at work, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

This is a new focus area. Working life is an area of particular importance for the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people. Employment and economic security play a major role in good and equal health. For most people, work is the most important source of livelihood and also has a major impact on the individual's ability to participate in and influence society. There is a close link between work and an individual's health and well-being.

The objective of good working conditions and opportunities for development at work regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is linked to the objective set by the Swedish Parliament for working life policy, which is good working conditions and opportunities for development at work for both women and men.

Several authorities have commissions related to the focus area "working life", such as the Swedish Equality Ombudsman, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, and the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise. The Government has not yet appointed a strategic authority for this focus area.

All employers have a responsibility to prevent discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities in accordance with the Discrimination Act's requirements for active measures. This means carrying out preventive and promotional work within an organisation to combat discrimination and otherwise promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, gender identity or gender expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age.

On 1 January 2017, the provisions were extended to cover all seven grounds of discrimination (only gender, ethnicity and religion were covered previously).

The labour market parties have an important role and huge responsibility in regulating the conditions in the Swedish labour market. Effective cooperation between employers and employees is of great importance for the functioning of workplace work environment management, including work promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people in working life. Health and safety officers play a very important role in work environment management.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations on the organisational and social work environment (AFS 2015:4) contain specific rules on discriminatory treatment, which mean that the employer must make it clear that discriminatory treatment is not accepted in the organisation and take measures to combat conditions in the work environment that may give rise to discriminatory treatment.

In 2019, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) conducted a survey focused on LGBTIQ people in EU countries. Of the more than 140,000 respondents, about 2,500 were from Sweden. Of these, 14 percent (but 21 percent at the EU level) said they had experienced discrimination at their workplace in the past twelve months because of being LGBTIQ. For transgender people, however, the figure was 35 percent (although this figure is not broken down by member state).

The Inquiry report “Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor” (SOU 2017:92) states that the knowledge base regarding the situation of transgender people in the labour market is severely lacking. There are certain factors that make the situation of transgender people in the labour market different from that of cisgender people.

These include access to toilets and changing rooms. There is also a fear of coming out at the workplace and of being discriminated against. The report notes that many employers want to do more to combat discrimination, but there is a lack of knowledge. The Inquiry therefore proposes that the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise be tasked with developing a knowledge base for work environment issues with an LGBTQ perspective, with a particular focus on the situation of transgender people.

In the 2010 report by the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs (now the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society) entitled “Hon Hen Han” (She They He), the workplace is described as a heteronormative arena. Heteronormativity affects the interaction between colleagues and the perception of social interaction in the workplace. In December 2002, the former Swedish Institute for Working Life was commissioned to carry out a study on working conditions among homosexual and bisexual people. In 2004, the commission was presented in a report entitled “Redovisning av regeringsuppdraget om homo- och bisexuellas arbetsvillkor” (Report on the government commission on working conditions among homosexual and bisexual people). The report states that discrimination based on sexual orientation is a real work environment risk that must be taken seriously. A 2011 study by the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy found that homosexuals face discrimination in the labour market and that they face the greatest difficulties in occupations traditionally associated with their gender.

Studies on the situation of LGBTQ people in the labour market indicate that LGBTQ people have worse working conditions than heterosexual cisgender people. However, the studies that have been carried out in recent years have been limited, and it has been more than fifteen years since any major knowledge gathering has been carried out in this area.

Measures

- Since May 2020, the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise has been commissioned by the Government to collect and compile knowledge on the organisational and social work environment of LGBTQ people, with a particular focus on the organisational and social work environment of transgender people. The knowledge compilation is to be disseminated so that it can be used in practice and can provide support for employers, health and safety officers and other elected representatives in workplaces. A final report on the commission shall be submitted on 30 June 2022.
- The Government intends to develop a new work environment strategy as the current one (Govt Comm. 2015/16:80) expires at the end of the year. The strategy will address the issue of sustainable working life as a matter of equality and gender equality, which includes, among other things, the situation of LGBTIQ people in working life.

Young LGBTIQ people

The Government's objective is for all young people, including young LGBTIQ people, to be respected and have good living conditions and the power to shape their lives and influence societal development without being limited by stereotypical gender roles, coercion or oppression that reduce an individual's scope for action.

Strategic authorities: Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF), Swedish National Agency for Education, and Ombudsman for Children in Sweden.

This focus area is named in the strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression as “Young LGBT people”. As this action plan also includes queer and intersex people, the focus area will hereafter be referred to as “Young LGBTIQ people”. Many of the studies and commissions described in this section are aimed at young people, i.e., children and youth between the ages of 13 and 25. However, children younger than 13 can also be included in the focus area.

Young LGBTIQ people have poorer health and a higher risk of suicide compared to young people in the population as a whole. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the vast majority of young LGBTIQ people are doing well. Earlier reports from MUCF and the Public Health Agency of Sweden show that it is mainly so-called minority stress, i.e. being exposed to negative treatment or having to be on guard and prepared to be exposed or questioned, that can lead to psychosocial stress and young LGBTIQ people not experiencing good health.

It is important that young LGBTIQ people receive the support and reassurance they need in their identity development. There is a need for up-to-date knowledge about their living conditions and vulnerability, as well as for knowledge about the initiatives that promote and strengthen young LGBTIQ people's mental health and access to equal rights and opportunities.

The report “Olika verkligheter – Unga hbtq-personer om sina levnadsvillkor” (Different realities – Young LGBTQ people on their living conditions), which was published by MUCF in 2019, shows that young LGBTQ people's perception of their living situation differs greatly from that of other young people. The results show worrying patterns. Almost three out of ten young LGBTQ people have been bullied or ostracised in the past six months, which is almost twice as many as among other young people. Young LGBTQ people are three times more likely to have experienced sexual violence or abuse in the past six months than other young people. Furthermore, young LGBTQ people are consistently more likely to experience limitations and restrictions on their living conditions. This means that young LGBTQ people are more likely than other young people to report experiencing insecurity, restrictions on leisure time, symptoms of mental health issues, and less access to social safety nets. The report also shows that young LGBTQ people are less likely to feel they can talk to important adults around them, are less likely to feel safe in their families, and are more likely to lack financial support from them if they need it.

Schools are important for the development of children and young people and should be a safe environment for all pupils. Many young LGBTQ people face discrimination, violence and harassment, and schools are the place in society where young people are most vulnerable.

Many young LGBTQ people are afraid or unable to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, which can lead to mental health issues. Norms related to gender and sexuality make some young people more visible and affirmed than others, and it is the responsibility of adults to broaden these norms so that everyone is included.

Schools have great potential to influence norms in children and young people at an early age, and to promote equal treatment regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. The Swedish National Agency for Education was named an LGBTQ strategic authority in 2018. The authority plays an important role in promoting access to education in a safe environment for all children and pupils, with education characterised by openness and respect for people's differences and active promotion of equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Schools also have a responsibility to shine a spotlight on and counteract gender patterns that limit pupils' learning, choices and development.

For several years, MUCF has been implementing measures to create a more open and inclusive environment in schools and leisure activities for young LGBTQ people. As part of its commission, MUCF developed the support material "Öppna skolan!" (Open schools!) in cooperation with the Swedish National Agency for Education with the aim of giving school staff knowledge and tools for norm-critical equality work. The support material aims to help all school staff to better understand and manage the practical and strategic work required to put issues of equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ people on the school agenda.

MUCF is also tasked with strengthening the conditions for meeting places for young LGBTQ people. MUCF has identified that there is a continued need for support for this type of targeted activity to create safe environments in which young LGBTQ people can spend their leisure time. In partnership with RFSL and RSFL Ungdom, MUCF has also created a brochure on the rights of LGBTQ people.

The brochure is intended for young newly arrived immigrants to Sweden and is available in seven languages.

The studies referred to above have not included people with intersex variations. As part of the process of gathering knowledge about this group as well, the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been tasked with gathering experiences from children and young people in issues related to gender identity and intersex variations (see below under Measures).

Updated knowledge is required to create the conditions for the long-term promotion of equal rights and opportunities for young LGBTIQ people. An important starting point in the work is for a child rights and youth perspective to be applied throughout, and for knowledge to not only be about young people, but also ensure that children and young people are allowed to exercise their right to influence and participate in issues that affect them.

Since January 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has become Swedish law, making it clear that the commitments under the Convention must be ensured at all levels of public activity and that a child rights-based approach must permeate all activities that affect children and young people.

The report "Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor" (SOU 2017:92) proposes that the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden be appointed a new strategic authority. The report also contains several proposals concerning the living conditions of transgender children and young people. Among other things, it proposes that the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden be mandated to talk to children and young people about issues related to gender identity and intersex variations. It also proposes that the Swedish Schools Inspectorate be tasked with investigating the situation of transgender people as pupils in compulsory school and upper-secondary school.

Measures

- Since 2020, the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been a strategic authority tasked with promoting equal rights and opportunities for LGBTQ people.
- The Government commissions the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden to investigate the development needs and initiatives required to make schools a safer and more inclusive place for young transgender and non-binary people. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 March 2022.
- The Government commissions MUCF to continue strengthening the work to implement initiatives for a more inclusive school environment for young LGBTIQ people. The aim of the commission is to meet the continued great need for initiatives to make the school environment more inclusive for LGBTIQ people and a continuous demand for educational initiatives. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 22 February 2022.
- The Government continues to commission MUCF to strengthen the conditions for creating meeting places for young LGBTIQ people. An interim report on the commission is to be presented by 1 March 2021 and the final report by 1 March 2022.
- The Government intends to draw up a regulation on government grants to non-profit organisations whose activities contribute to meeting places for young LGBTIQ people.
- MUCF has been commissioned to survey and compile knowledge on the living conditions of young LGBTQ people. The commission involves an update of the 2010 report “Hon Hen Han” (She They He), which at the time was the most comprehensive study of the living conditions of young LGBTQ people in Sweden. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 June 2022.
- The Ombudsman for Children in Sweden has been tasked with gathering the experiences of children and young people about issues related to gender identity and intersex variations. The experiences shall be gathered and disseminated so they can provide support for relatives and for children and young people with transgender experiences. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 March 2021.

In addition to the commissions specifically mentioned in this section, there is also a specific focus on young people in initiatives reported under other focus areas, such as an initiative related to mental health and suicide prevention that is reported under the focus area “Health, healthcare and social services”. Similarly, MUCF has a commission on conversion therapy that is also aimed at young people and is reported under the focus area “Violence, discrimination and other abuses”.

In addition to the commissions specifically aimed at the target group children and young people, it is important to highlight a child rights and youth perspective in all commissions in which children and young people are involved to any extent.

Older LGBTIQ people

The Government's objective is for older LGBTIQ people to be able to live openly and age safely while maintaining their independence, be treated with respect, and be offered equal healthcare.

Strategic authority: National Board of Health and Welfare.

This is a new focus area. The objective of the policy for social services and care for the older is, among other things, that the older are treated with respect and are able to age safely while maintaining their independence. All older people should have access to good healthcare and be offered healthcare that is equal in all respects.

Equal healthcare means that medical care and treatment are offered on equal terms, with everyone treated well. Social services should promote people's financial and social security, equal living conditions and active participation in society. In order for older LGBTIQ people to receive the services to which they are entitled and to be treated well, municipalities and individual service providers working on behalf of the municipality must have knowledge of the living situation and needs of older LGBTIQ people.

The 2021 Budget states that the situation of older LGBTIQ people must be prioritised in future work on equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people. In the consultation forum with civil society conducted as part of the preparation of this action plan, organisations have expressed a need for the action plan to highlight those who are particularly vulnerable, such as older LGBTIQ people.

Living conditions of older LGBTIQ people

The report "Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor" (SOU 2017:92) contains a number of proposals related to older LGBTIQ people. The background to the proposals is that there is little knowledge about the living situation and needs of older LGBTIQ people, particularly with regard to the living situation, living conditions and well-being of older transgender people. The research that has been done on the living conditions of older LGBTIQ people has tended to focus primarily on sexuality and sexual orientation without including gender identity or gender expression, which has resulted in a transgender perspective rarely being included.

In a report from the National Board of Health and Welfare (2013), the authority presents the results of a survey in a selection of municipalities of how the LGBT perspective is taken into account in the municipalities' healthcare for the elderly. In summary, this survey indicates that too few municipalities work systematically to promote equal treatment of older LGBT people.

In light of the report, the National Board of Health and Welfare has developed knowledge support for social services with the aim of raising awareness of the conditions and living conditions of LGBTQ people, and how discrimination can manifest itself in the social services field. It is also possible for municipalities and regions to apply for grants to increase knowledge about the situation of LGBTQ people in order to promote the rights and opportunities of the target group in their contacts with municipalities and regions.

There is a need for knowledge about older LGBTIQ people's living situation and need for initiatives. According to the National Board of Health and Welfare's report, many municipalities have also asked for more knowledge about LGBTQ, treatment and norm criticism.

Measures

- The Government sees a need for up-to-date knowledge about how older LGBTQ people themselves perceive the healthcare they receive, how they perceive the way they are treated, and what factors influence their propensity to seek care when needed. The health and life conditions of older LGBTQ people are also an area where more knowledge is needed. The Government intends to return to this issue in the context of the implementation of this action plan.
- In 2020, the Government allocated SEK 30 million to the municipalities' work to, among other things, find digital solutions for activities for the elderly. The aim is to combat the consequences of isolation among the elderly. This is a need that exists among older LGBTIQ people and others, as the outbreak of COVID-19 has led to increased isolation and loneliness for many in this group.

Health, healthcare and social services

The Government's objective is for all LGBTIQ people to have the same opportunities and conditions as heterosexual and cisgender people to achieve good health and receive equal healthcare.

Strategic authorities: Public Health Agency of Sweden and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

Public health work focuses on the determinants of health, i.e., the life conditions, environments, products and lifestyles that influence health. For example, there is a clear link between negative treatment, prejudice, discrimination and hate crime and the poorer health and suicide risk of LGBTQ people. Efforts to reduce the gap between the health of LGBTQ people and the rest of the population are therefore influenced by all focus areas of the LGBTIQ strategy and this action plan. However, this section focuses on initiatives that are directly linked to public health work, such as those that directly address the mental health and suicide risk of LGBTIQ people.

The differences in health between LGBTQ people and the rest of the population relate in particular to mental health. The fact that mental health is worse among LGBTQ people was already established by the former Swedish National Institute of Public Health's survey back in 2005. In connection with the development of the existing strategy for equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, the Public Health Agency of Sweden was commissioned to conduct a follow-up on the report. The Public Health Agency of Sweden was able to conclude that the development of health and health determinants has not changed significantly for homosexual and bisexual people over the past ten years. There was a clear gender difference between homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual women and men, with young homosexual and bisexual women showing the least trust in other people, the most ill health, the most violence, and the most self-destructive behaviour and suicide attempts of the groups compared.

For transgender people, the trend does not show any improvement over the last ten years, rather the opposite.

The report also shows that the proportion of people who report having poor mental well-being is twice as high among homosexual and bisexual people compared to heterosexual people. Transgender people tend to have even poorer mental well-being. Suicidal ideation is twice as common among homosexual and bisexual people as among heterosexual people. Almost a quarter of respondents who identified as transgender had considered taking their own life in the past year, and among young transgender people aged 15 to 19, over half had considered taking their own life in the past year. Transgender people are five times more likely to have contemplated suicide than the average for the population.

The issue of consent for medical interventions for intersex conditions has been increasingly raised in recent years, both nationally and internationally. It has focused on how to ensure that unnecessary medical interventions are not performed on children and young people with intersex variations before they are old enough to consent themselves. According to the Health and Medical Services Act, medical decisions should be based on medical need in individual cases. Consent must also be given. If there is a need for medical intervention on a child who cannot consent because of their young age, the decision is made by the parent or guardian in accordance with the Health and Medical Services Act, the Patients Act, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The National Board of Health and Welfare has developed knowledge support with recommendations to healthcare professionals regarding care and treatment in intersex conditions. The knowledge support, which was published in March 2020, aims to strengthen the rights of the child and contribute to greater restrictiveness as regards surgical interventions. The National Board of Health and Welfare has also produced information and support materials for patients and families, as well as a legal analysis of the child's right to information about their medical history. The information material includes a brochure with information specifically aimed at children and young people with an intersex condition who are age 10 or older.

Measures

- The Government intends to commission the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society to work together to survey and compile knowledge about the mental health and ill health experienced by young people. Particular focus will be placed on examining the mental health and ill health experienced by young homosexual, bisexual and transgender people, as young LGBTIQ people are at risk of a higher degree of vulnerability and ill health than other young people. Attention will also be paid to whether and how the mental ill health experienced by young LGBTIQ people differs from that of other young people, which factors seem instrumental and which actors they seek support from.
- The Government is allocating special funds for suicide prevention to civil society organisations that specifically target young LGBTIQ people.
- The Government intends to present a new strategy for work on alcohol, drugs, tobacco, doping and gambling (ANDTS strategy). This strategy will apply from 2021. With the renewed strategy, the Government wants to see a clarification of the focus of the alcohol, drugs, tobacco, doping and gambling policy and at the same time create the conditions for an integrated approach to developments in the area.

In the work to implement the strategy, a number of target groups, such as LGBTIQ people, who are at increased risk of suicide and mental health issues, will be taken into account.

- The Public Health Agency of Sweden has been commissioned to conduct awareness-raising activities to reduce the stigma related to mental illness and suicide, and to propose how a special department can be established within the authority. The role of this department will be to disseminate knowledge about mental health and suicide to the public and to engage in dialogue with the public in this area. LGBTIQ people are an important target group for the work of the department.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare and the Public Health Agency of Sweden have been tasked to work in close cooperation with some 22 other authorities to provide input for a future national strategy in the field of mental health and suicide prevention. This work will pay particular attention to those groups at greatest risk of developing mental health issues or committing suicide, such as LGBTIQ people. A final report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 September 2023.
- The Government is commissioning the National Board of Health and Welfare to disseminate the information material it has produced regarding the conditions in gender development that affect children and young people. This commission is to be carried out in dialogue with the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, taking particular account of the experience of the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden from its commission to gather the experience of children and young people on issues related to gender identity and intersex variations. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 June 2021.

Private and family life

The Government's objective is for the right to a private life to be fully respected. This includes ensuring the right to privacy and family life. This applies regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Strategic authority: Family Law and Parental Support Authority.

The main task of the Family Law and Parental Support Authority is to gather and make available the latest knowledge for decision-makers and professionals working in the field of parenting support, family counselling and family law. The authority is also responsible for ensuring that adoptions of children to Sweden are carried out in accordance with the law and in an ethically acceptable manner.

The Government intends to appoint the Family Law and Parental Support Authority as a new strategic authority with the task of promoting equal rights and opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in its activities.

LGBTIQ people's right to private and family life

Becoming a parent and starting a family is an important part of life for many people. Family law regulations provide the legal framework for family life and are of great importance in ensuring that a child's need for care and security are met. The regulations must be modern and well-functioning.

At the time the Children and Parents Code was created, the traditional nuclear family was the given family constellation. Views on parenthood and the family have changed since then. Families today can take different forms, and there are different ways of becoming parents. It is important that legislation is designed to respond to these developments.

Sweden should be a country where people have the freedom to live their lives as they wish and be who they are. Every child should have a secure family situation and be able to grow up in a society that does not discriminate against people on the basis of gender or sexual orientation or different family constellations. The Government believes that legislation should reflect this view.

A number of measures have been taken to modernise legislation and adapt it to new ways of building families. Both the Marriage Code and the Cohabitees Act (2003:376) have been made gender-neutral. Assisted reproductive treatment is a well-established procedure, and the possibilities of becoming a parent through such treatment have been gradually extended to married couples, cohabiting couples and single women. The conditions for becoming a parent through assisted reproductive treatment have become the same for everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and the requirement for the child to have a genetic link to at least one parent has been removed. In addition, the abolition of the sterilisation requirement for gender reassignment has made it possible for a person who has changed gender to male to give birth or who has changed gender to female to contribute sperm to the conception of a child. In addition, the rules on adoption have been modernised and it is now possible for both married and cohabiting couples as well as single persons to adopt.

The reform work described above has been important and anticipated, but has also made the regulatory framework difficult to access and fragmented. The Swedish legal framework must not only work for different families formed in Sweden, but also be able to deal with families moving here from other countries. It is important that children in Sweden have legal representatives here, and it is usually the child's parent who is also the child's representative. As a rule, it is also reasonable for the person who is the child's legal parent in the country of origin to continue to be regarded as such when the family moves to Sweden.

Respect for a person's private life is an important issue for many LGBTIQ people. This may include the right to change gender and related issues, such as being required to show identification with one's name and personal identity number in various situations.

The report "Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor" (SOU 2017:92) proposes that the Swedish Tax Agency and the National Board of Health and Welfare be tasked with ensuring that information on the administrative consequences of changing one's legal gender identity is easily accessible. There is already information on the Swedish Tax Agency's website about, for example, parenthood when one of the parents has changed gender and information about the determination of a new personal identity number for a person when a decision is made to change gender. Updated and easily accessible information on these issues is important and there may be a need to consider the above proposals once the Gender Recognition Act has been modernised (see below).

The same applies to other possible needs that such a change may generate, such as the issue of handling reference personal identity numbers (i.e., a reference from the old personal identity number to the new one in order to allow updates to be made by other authorities and actors).

Another issue that may have a major impact on individuals is the question of gender markers in various identity and travel documents. This issue is addressed to some extent in the new EU regulation entitled Regulation (EU) 2019/1157 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and of residence documents issued to Union citizens and their family members exercising their right of free movement.

The EU Regulation, which will apply from 2 August 2021, applies in Sweden to, inter alia, the national identity cards that the Swedish Police Authority and certain Swedish embassies and consulates may issue to Swedish citizens. Article 3(2) states that member states may choose whether to indicate gender on national identity cards. Recital 24 of the Regulation states that if a Member State chooses to indicate gender, the specifications "F", "M" or "X" or the equivalent letter in the language of the member state should be used.

The EU Regulation and the need for additional provisions at the national level have been addressed in the memorandum "Ökad säkerhet för vissa identitets- och uppehållshandlingar – anpassning av svensk rätt till en ny EU-förordning" (Increased security for certain identity and residence documents – adaptation of Swedish law to a new EU Regulation) (Ds 2020:22).

Measures

- The Government intends to appoint the Family Law and Parental Support Authority as the new strategic authority for equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people.
- The Government has appointed an Inquiry to review the formulation of the regulations of the Children and Parents Code on parenthood and to otherwise consider certain changes to the family law regulations (dir. 2020:132). The aim of the commission is to achieve – based on the best interests of the child – a more coherent, gender-neutral and egalitarian regulation of parenthood and regulations on parental responsibility that are adapted to different family constellations. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 21 June 2022.
- The Government has appointed an Inquiry to consider extended possibilities to enforce foreign parental rights in Sweden (dir. 2020:19). The aim is to achieve a more appropriate, equal and modern regulation of parenthood in international relationships. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 21 June 2021.
- The Government is continuing to work to present proposals for modern gender recognition legislation. In August 2018, the Government decided to seek the views of the Council on Legislation on proposals for a new law on certain surgical procedures on the genitals and a new law on changing the sex indicated in the population register. The Council on Legislation rejected the Government's proposal and levelled serious criticism. The Government then decided to obtain the necessary preparatory material to draft a revised bill. The Government retains its high ambitions to give transgender people power over their own lives and identity.
- On behalf of the Government, Statistics Sweden has developed support material on how public actors can include binary and non-binary transgender people in questionnaires and surveys. Statistics Sweden has now been tasked with disseminating and managing the knowledge support. The commission also includes providing support to public actors in applying the knowledge support. A report on the commission shall be submitted by 1 March 2021.



Culture

The Government's objective is to promote the culture sector's potential to contribute to increased diversity and openness. LGBTIQ people shall be able to take part in and contribute to the development of culture.

Strategic authority: Swedish Arts Council

According to the national cultural policy objectives, culture should be a dynamic, challenging and independent force based on freedom of expression. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate in cultural life. Creativity, diversity and artistic quality should characterise the development of society. The cultural sector is an important arena for discussion, influence and change. Being able to participate and recognise oneself in both culture and history and finding role models in the past are important for identity-building and self-esteem. LGBTIQ people shall be able to take part in and contribute to the development of culture. Diversity is a prerequisite for a vibrant cultural life and an open democracy.

Measures

- The Government intends to establish a new museum to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust. Based on the proposals made in the report "Sveriges museum om Förintelsen" (The Swedish museum on the Holocaust) (SOU 2020:21) and the views expressed by the consultative bodies on the museum's mission, organisational form and requirements for premises, the Government will take a position on how the museum can be set up. The report proposes that the Holocaust should be treated in a broad historical context and that attention should be paid to different groups that fell victim to Nazism.

Civil society

The Government's objective is to strengthen the conditions for civil society organisations to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people.

The principle of autonomy and independence reflects the central importance of civil society for democracy and clarifies the importance of the autonomy of organisations. The Government has therefore not appointed a strategic authority for this focus area. Issues related to the potential of organisations to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people will instead continue to be monitored by the Government Offices.

Civil society is an indispensable part of our democracy and central to the upholding of human rights. Many of the advances that have been made for the equal rights and opportunities of LGBTIQ people would not have been possible without a civil society that constantly raises the societal challenges that need to be addressed.

The Government finds it important to continue to facilitate the ability of civil society organisations to carry out and develop their activities autonomously, thereby contributing to a democratic and sustainable society. This is particularly important in light of the major challenges posed to the work and scope of civil society by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need for action by civil society on behalf of vulnerable groups and has led to a worsening of the fundamentals for that action. A study by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) in May 2020 shows that 59 percent of the organisations have suspended more than half of their activities, and 48 percent have been negatively impacted financially to a large or a very large extent.

Measures

- The Government intends to continue to maintain a continuous dialogue on the work to strengthen the equal rights of LGBTIQ people with organisations representing the equal rights of LGBTIQ people.
- In April 2020, the Government decided to increase the government grant to LGBTIQ organisations to enable them to carry out their work. This decision means that the previous government grant of SEK 9.3 million has been increased to SEK 11.3 million annually. Support is distributed by MUCF under Regulation (2008:349) on government grants to organisations for homosexual, bisexual, and transsexual people or people with transgender identity or expression.
- In May 2020, the Government decided on a regulation on government grants to certain non-profit organisations in connection with the outbreak of COVID-19. In accordance with the regulation, the National Board of Health and Welfare has allocated SEK 100 million to certain non-profit organisations in connection with the outbreak of COVID-19. The grant is intended for organisations working with children in at-risk situations, organisations that work with women, children and LGBTQ people who are victims of violence, and organisations that work to combat domestic violence and honour-based violence and oppression.
- As stated in the section Young LGBTIQ people, the Government intends to draw up a regulation on government grants to non-profit organisations that contribute to meeting places for young LGBTIQ people.

Sports

Sports policy is a specific part of civil society policy and includes activities that promote sport and exercise and contribute to improved public health.

The starting point for the state's sports policy is a free and independent sports movement, a popular movement that involves many people and is an important part of our common welfare. It is important that sports are inclusive and open to everyone, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, belief, disability or social, ethnic and cultural background.

The sports movement is an important arena for social advocacy. Special efforts by the sports movement to promote equal rights and opportunities for LGBTIQ people are therefore needed.

The report “Transpersoner i Sverige – Förslag för stärkt ställning och bättre levnadsvillkor” (SOU 2017:92) states that many transgender people experience discrimination in sports to a greater extent than homosexual and bisexual people do. The leisure time of transgender people is more sedentary than that of the population in general. According to the national public health survey “Hälsa på lika villkor” (Health on equal terms), 66 percent of the population is physically active 30 minutes a day. For transgender people, this figure is only 19 percent. It is common for transgender people to want to exercise more than they do, but to be limited by their transgender experience or to worry about being mistreated because of it. The reports proposes that the Government initiate a dialogue with the Swedish Sports Confederation on the situation of transgender people in sports.

Since 2018, the Government has been engaged in a dialogue with the Swedish Sports Confederation on the situation of LGBTIQ people, and transgender people in particular, in sports with the aim of discussing how sports can combat discrimination and increase the conditions for a more conscious norm-critical approach that identifies, problematises and challenges stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity.

The Swedish Sports Confederation has implemented a number of initiatives in this area in recent years. These include skills development initiatives to ensure that coaches, leaders and trainers have a basic understanding of norms, power and privilege.

The Swedish Sports Confederation is also in the process of reviewing guidelines and recommendations. In September 2020, the board of the Swedish Sports Confederation decided that special sports associations can use gender identity instead of legal gender as a basis for meeting the gender equality requirement in boards and election committees.

Moreover, the Swedish Sports Confederation is in the process of updating instructions for children and youth sports, with the aim of including the transgender perspective in a clearer way than before. The Swedish Sports Confederation has also partnered with RFSL in an ongoing project called “Idrott för alla kroppar” (Sport for all bodies), which aims to improve opportunities for transgender people to take part in sports.

Making sports inclusive is one of the focus areas in sports' major strategic initiative called Strategy 2025. It identifies LGBTQ people as a group that does not always feel welcome in sports environments. Clearer leadership, a review of guidelines and recommendations, and awareness raising are some components identified in breaking down the thresholds that currently exist and ensuring inclusive environments for LGBTQ people.

Ministry of Employment

www.government.se

[Switchboard: +46 8-405 10 00](tel:+4684051000)

[Fax: +46 8-411 36 16](tel:+4684113616)

[Street address: Fredsgatan 8](#)

[Postal address: SE- 103 33 Stockholm](#)

[Email: a.registrator@regeringskansliet.se](mailto:a.registrator@regeringskansliet.se)