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Chancellery

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Government strategy to tackle homelessness 2022-2026

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Introduction

The aim of a national homelessness strategy

The purpose of a national homelessness strategy is to clarify the direction of the Government's efforts to reduce the number of adults and children experiencing homelessness and to prevent people from becoming homeless. This is done through several measures to combat homelessness and exclusion from the housing market, such as prevention and outreach work, measures against acute homelessness and an investment in the Housing First method.

The strategy also includes strengthening the social perspective in community planning. This can be done by increasing the involvement and participation of the social services in planning for housing supply and thus giving the social committee's knowledge of living conditions in the municipality greater scope. It should be possible to implement the measures in the strategy regardless of how the housing market develops during the period and they do not require any legislative changes.

The Government is allocating SEK 40,000,000 for initiatives within the framework of the strategy in 2022 and estimates that SEK 40,000,000 per year will be needed for the remainder of the strategy period 2023-2026, provided that the Riksdag allocates funds to the appropriation.

Homelessness and exclusion from the housing market

The strategy is based on the report on combating and preventing homelessness (Preventing and combating homelessness, analyses and proposals for continued work within the social services in 2021, National Board of Health and Welfare), which the National Board of Health and Welfare presented to the Government in September 2021. The National Board of Health and Welfare's assignment (S2020/08834) was to submit analyses and proposals for measures within the social services' area of responsibility to combat and prevent homelessness. One conclusion of the National Board of Health and Welfare's report is that the work to combat and prevent homelessness requires a long-term approach and needs to be conducted at several levels and within several policy areas.

Since 2006, Sweden's population has grown faster than housing construction. The accumulated housing deficit increased until 2017 and is expected to amount to just over 180,000 homes in 2022. However, the deficit has decreased as a result of the high rate of construction in recent years. According to the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, 63,400 homes need to be added annually between 2022 and 2030 to meet population growth. The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning's estimates of the housing shortage show that 56,000 households are overcrowded while having strained housing finances and thus little opportunity to demand a home that better meets their needs. As a result of both increased income inequality and rising house prices in the 2000s, the number of households for whom it is difficult to save up for an owner-occupied home has also increased. As a result, the proportion of households seeking a rented home has increased, while the proportion of rented homes in the country's housing stock has decreased (Preventing and combating homelessness, National Board of Health and Welfare report 2021).

The Government has taken several measures to strengthen the position of vulnerable households in the housing market. The Government has submitted for consultation the report *Sänk tröskelen till en god bostad* (SOU 2022:14) and the report *Träffsäkert - Införelsen av månadsuppgifter i bostadsbidraget och underhållsstödet* (SOU 2021:101).

Both of these inquiries aimed to ease the situation in various ways for households that find it difficult to demand a home on the ordinary housing market. The Riksdag has also decided to adopt the Government's proposals in the bill *Better basis for measures in the housing market* (Bill

No.

2021/22:95, bet. 2021/22:CU17, rskr. 2021/22:259), which means, among other things, that municipalities must analyse which housing needs are not being met in the local housing market and that the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning must provide the municipalities with data for this analysis.

The causes of homelessness can be described at different levels, but the need for housing and possible support measures remains. Homelessness and insecure housing conditions create insecurity, social problems and ill health for groups and individuals, not least for children and young people. The causes of homelessness are varied and different forms of intervention are needed to combat it. Both individually focused social interventions and interventions at a structural level, e.g. interventions in the housing market, are required to combat homelessness. Work on homelessness is often carried out at the intersection of social policy and housing policy, but other policy areas such as education and labour market policy also affect the conditions for obtaining and maintaining housing. The housing shortage and, in particular, the low availability of rented accommodation for people with no or low incomes has led to more people turning to social services for help with their housing situation. The measures set out in this strategy aim to tackle homelessness, whatever its causes.

Definition of homelessness

Being homeless is not a static situation and people experiencing homelessness are a heterogeneous group with different types of challenges. The National Board of Health and Welfare defines homelessness based on four different housing situations. What people experiencing homelessness have in common is that they live in more or less precarious housing conditions and lack their own home, i.e. owned or rented by the individual or a family member.

National Board of Health and Welfare definition of homelessness

- 1 **Acute homelessness** - people sleeping in public places, outdoors or in stairwells, or in emergency shelters, hostels, crisis centres, shelters, hostels or similar
- 2 **Institutionalisation and supported housing** - institutionalised or supported housing residents who are homeless prior to planned departure
- 3 **Long-term housing solutions** - accommodation organised by social services
- 4 **Own organised short-term accommodation** - staying with friends/relatives/family or subletting without a contract or with a temporary contract.

The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) uses a similar definition, the ETHOS

Typology on Homelessness and Housing

Exclusion. Since 2005, the National Board of Health and Welfare's definition has been based on FEANTSA's coordinated definitions of homelessness.

Homelessness work in the EU

At a high-level conference in Lisbon organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 21 June 2021, the Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform to End Homelessness was signed. The participants committed to cooperate within the framework of the Platform and to implement actions within their respective competences. They agreed on the following objectives:

- no one should sleep rough due to lack of available, safe and suitable emergency accommodation,
- no one should live in emergency or transitional accommodation for longer than is necessary for a transition to a permanent housing solution,
- no one should be discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care centre) without an offer of suitable accommodation,
- evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one should be evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution if needed,
- no one should be discriminated against because of their homelessness situation.

A programme for the work of the platform was then approved at a high-level conference organised by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 28 February 2022. Sweden, together with all EU Member States, has committed to work according to this programme.

Overall situation of individuals experiencing homelessness

The National Board of Health and Welfare's latest homelessness survey from 2017 showed that around 33,000 people were living in some form of homelessness during the week in question.¹ Of these, 62 per cent were men and 38 per cent were women.

Foreign-born people made up 43 per cent of the homeless. A higher proportion of women than men were born abroad, 48 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. Financial assistance is the single most common source of income for people experiencing homelessness. Less than 10 per cent had wages from regular or temporary work. In 2017, there were slightly fewer people with substance abuse and mental health problems than in previous surveys. It was mainly men who

¹ The survey is conducted as a national survey during a measurement week in week 14, 2017, the National Board of Health and Welfare's definition of homelessness consists of four homelessness situations. The survey covers people with Swedish citizenship and people with temporary or permanent residence permits during the measurement week. Not included are children in care, people living in housing with special services according to SoL or LSS, people born abroad without a residence permit, unaccompanied refugee children under the age of 18, EU citizens who are not anchored.

were reported to be in need of, and had received, support and treatment for substance abuse and dependence in the year preceding the survey. More than 20 per cent of the people in the survey were not reported to have any other needs that required support, intervention or treatment, in addition to housing. For almost 20 per cent, a contributing factor to their homelessness situation was reported to be eviction from their home.

Of the total homeless population, those experiencing acute homelessness (Situation 1) accounted for 18 per cent, of which 41 per cent were women and 59 per cent men. The mapping showed that in the case of women who are experiencing acute homelessness, one third of them were in this situation as a result of domestic violence.

In the survey, around 11,400 people in the entire homeless population were parents of one or more children (53 per cent women and 47 per cent men). Women experiencing homelessness are more likely than men to live with their children on a permanent or alternating basis. The most common factor contributing to parental homelessness, regardless of gender, is that they have not been accepted as tenants by landlords in the mainstream housing market. The majority of homeless parents living with their children during the week of the survey were in long-term accommodation (Situation 3). The majority of them were women. About a third of parents who were homeless and living with their children stated that they had no other support needs besides housing.

Children living in homelessness and insecure housing are particularly vulnerable. Not having a home as a child is the ultimate consequence of a life of economic vulnerability (Homeless children's everyday life in Malmö, R&D report 2019:4, Malmö University and the City of Malmö). In its survey, the National Board of Health and Welfare estimates that there were 24,000 children in Sweden during the week of the survey who had one or both of their parents in some form of homelessness (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2017). In its 2022 annual report, the Ombudsman for Children emphasises children's right to safe housing. The European Child Guarantee initiative contains recommendations on ensuring children's access to adequate housing, and Sweden's action plan will monitor developments in this area through a number of indicators (National action plan to implement the European Child Guarantee, 2022).

Responsibility for people experiencing homelessness

According to Chapter 2, Section 1 of the Social Services Act (2001:453), the municipality has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that people living in the municipality receive the help and support they need.

According to Chapter 4, Section 1 of the Social Services Act, anyone who is unable to meet their own needs or have them met in some other way may be entitled to assistance from the Social Welfare Board. The individual must be assured a reasonable standard of living through the assistance and the support must be designed to strengthen the individual's ability to live an independent life. The municipality's responsibility may involve assisting with various forms of emergency and longer-term housing solutions based on individual needs and following an assessment of the need for assistance.

The Act (2000:1383) on Municipalities' Responsibility for Housing Supply contains provisions on municipalities' responsibility for housing supply. Each municipality must plan for housing supply using guidelines. The purpose of planning for housing supply is to create the conditions for everyone in the municipality to live in good housing and to promote the preparation and implementation of appropriate measures for housing supply. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) emphasises in Article 27 the right of the child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, moral and social development, of which the right to housing is an essential foundation.

A municipality is obliged to receive a newly arrived immigrant for settlement in the municipality after referral in accordance with the Act (2016:38) on the Reception of Certain Newly Arrived Immigrants for Settlement (Settlement Act). New arrivals who are referred to a municipality are offered fixed-term rental contracts in some municipalities. The new arrivals are then referred to the regular housing market (Boverket's housing market survey 2022). New arrivals are one of several groups that have particular difficulty establishing themselves in the housing market.

Government objectives

The government's objectives for tackling homelessness are

- **Objective 1. Homelessness will be prevented**
- **Goal 2. No one should live or work on the streets**

- **Objective 3: Housing First should be implemented nationally**
- **Objective 4. Strengthen the social perspective in urban planning**

Objective 1. Homelessness will be prevented

Description of the situation

The individual reasons behind homelessness vary. They can range from unemployment or not being accepted as a tenant to substance abuse and addiction or mental health problems. Not being accepted as a tenant is often because landlords consider the income to be too low or not all incomes are accepted, such as income support or settlement allowance. Rent arrears or non-payment records are also common reasons for refusing a tenancy. For many women experiencing homelessness, domestic violence has contributed to their situation (Preventing and combating homelessness, National Board of Health and Welfare report 2021).

Evictions often lead to acute homelessness and long-term exclusion from the housing market. Around half of those experiencing acute homelessness in the week of the 2017 survey reported that their previous accommodation was on the mainstream housing market. Moreover, the number of evictions has increased in recent years and has involved more children than in previous years. Successful efforts to prevent and mitigate evictions are therefore an effective way to prevent more people from being at risk of precarious housing or homelessness. The most common reasons why a tenancy right is considered to be forfeited are that the tenant has not paid their rent on time, that the tenant disturbs those living in the neighbourhood or that the tenant has sublet their apartment unauthorisedly (Support for social services in the work to prevent evictions, National Board of Health and Welfare 2022). People who have once been evicted also often find it very difficult to re-enter the housing market (Flyghed; J Nilsson A Tryggare kan ingen vara? Eviction of families with children: Incidence, causes and consequences).

Eviction prevention needed to tackle homelessness

The Government considers that the work to prevent evictions needs to be strengthened. Social services have an important and obvious role to play in efforts to prevent evictions. Collaboration between social services and landlords is a success factor in preventing evictions (Support for social services in preventing evictions, 2022, National Board of Health and Welfare).

In order to work actively to prevent evictions, it is therefore important that social services staff have knowledge of how the eviction process works, the deadlines that apply and the possibilities for taking action. Staff from

housing organisations and other

The actors involved need to have relevant knowledge about this and about the different roles and powers of the actors. In 2022, the National Board of Health and Welfare updated its support for social services in preventing evictions.

The aim of the support is to provide knowledge of the eviction process and of the social services' opportunities to act to avoid the need for eviction (Stöd för socialtjänsten i arbetet med att förebygga avhysningar, Socialstyrelsen 2022). There is already method support at home, which is the result of a collaborative effort between the Swedish Enforcement Authority and the county administrative boards in Norrbotten, Västerbotten and Västernorrland counties. The Home method support has one main purpose - to enable more people to remain in their homes. The method support contains knowledge, inspiration and tools for starting or further developing local collaboration to reduce the number of people being evicted. The child perspective is central to the method support, and children's right to their home must be safeguarded. In the Ombudsman for Children's annual report 2022 Does it make a difference, it is emphasised that it is also important to take note of children and young people's experiences of homelessness before developing support and initiatives.

In several municipalities in the country, the social services cooperate with local landlords with the aim of reaching tenants even before the notice of cancellation is received by the social services. Such work requires regular communication between the various actors. The website kunskapsguiden.se contains accessible information on eviction prevention work produced by the National Board of Health and Welfare.

The focus of the work

Authority assignment on eviction prevention work in progress

In 2022, the Government tasked the county administrative boards (Fi2022/00421) with supporting municipalities in their efforts to prevent and counteract evictions. The assignment is based on the National Board of Health and Welfare's report Counteracting and preventing homelessness (2021-9-7582).

In 2022, the Swedish Enforcement Authority has been tasked with working to establish eviction prevention cooperation with social services and landlords in all municipalities (Fi2022/00714). This work is to focus in particular on preventing evictions involving children. The work, with a description of the results of the preventive efforts, must be reported in the

annual reports for 2022 and 2023 and finalised in the annual report for 2024.

Actor: County administrative boards and the Swedish Enforcement Authority

Time period: County Administrative Boards 2022 and Enforcement Authority 2022-2023

A socially sustainable housing supply to prevent homelessness and evictions

The Government has tasked the county administrative boards with supporting the municipalities in their work to combat homelessness. The assignment will contribute to the objectives of the strategy. The county administrative boards have good knowledge of the municipalities' work on housing supply and on preventing evictions.

The county administrative boards have been working for several years to support municipalities in counteracting and preventing evictions (Fi2019/04079, Fi2020/00609, Fi2020/02647, Fi2022/0062). The county administrative boards also have good knowledge of the social services' working methods and the application of the Social Services Act at local level, e.g. through the authority's assignment to counteract active participation in settlement in another municipality, so-called social dumping (Fi2020/04520/ Fi2021/01884). The assignment aimed to initiate collaboration between municipalities to counteract active participation in settlement in another municipality and was reported on 15 December 2021 (Fi2021/03996). An inquiry into counteracting social dumping was appointed by the Government on 22 June 2022 (Dir. 2022:56) and the assignment must be reported by 31 October 2023. Under section 9 of the Ordinance (2016:1363) on the tasks of county administrative boards regarding initiatives for asylum seekers and certain newly arrived immigrants, county administrative boards must ensure that municipalities are prepared and have the capacity to receive persons covered by the Settlement Act and have good knowledge of municipalities' work on settling newly arrived immigrants.

The Government considers that the municipalities need continued guidance and support to ensure that their work contributes to the strategy's objectives. The Government therefore considers that county administrative boards at regional level can strengthen support for municipalities in their work to combat homelessness and prevent evictions.

The county administrative boards will provide support to municipalities by

- Support the development of knowledge and methods in

municipalities and promote the exchange of experience on effective methods and good practices to prevent evictions and combat homelessness.

- Support collaboration at local and regional level, e.g. by disseminating good examples of how municipalities, housing companies, different authorities and civil society work together.
- Provide support to municipalities in their efforts to identify and support groups that have difficulty entering the housing market, e.g. in analysing and reporting on the state of the housing market in the county and in supporting municipalities in drawing up guidelines for housing supply.

Actor: County administrative boards

Time period: 2022-2026

Estimated cost: SEK 4 000 000 per year

Goal 2. No one should live or work on the streets

Description of the situation

The 2017 national homelessness survey reported that just over 5,900 people were experiencing acute homelessness. They accounted for around 18 per cent of all people experiencing some form of homelessness during the survey week.

The share of women in emergency homelessness was 42 per cent and the share of foreign-born people in emergency homelessness was 60 per cent. Of those who were acutely homeless, most were reported to have some form of emergency accommodation, while 647 people slept outdoors or in public spaces and 343 in tents, cars, caravans or camping cabins. The most common forms of emergency accommodation were hostels and hotels, involving just over 1,900 people, followed by 1,325 people in emergency accommodation or short-term accommodation, 1,229 people in shelters or emergency accommodation and 464 in shelters or women's shelters. The survey showed that one third of women experiencing acute homelessness had ended up in this situation as a result of domestic violence.

Emergency housing solutions are available in the form of night shelters, emergency accommodation, hostels and in some cases hotels, women's shelters and shelters, emergency accommodation, etc.

Emergency housing solutions can be offered as a transitional solution and the aim is to offer people longer-term solutions within the social services or

find accommodation on their own as quickly as possible. The

Despite this objective, there is a risk that people will have to move around among different short-term accommodation for a long time.

There is also a group of homeless people who distrust the authorities and do not seek social support themselves, who sleep outdoors or in public spaces and do not use the housing solutions available. For these people, outreach activities and other field work can play a particularly important role in motivating them and acting as a link to needs-oriented interventions within social services and health care.

Outreach work needs to be strengthened to combat homelessness

The Government considers that outreach work needs to be strengthened in order to achieve the goal of no one living on the streets. In its above-mentioned report, the National Board of Health and Welfare also states that the municipalities need support and guidance to develop working methods and approaches to prevention and outreach activities.

Social services outreach activities can include everything from information dissemination to active outreach work aimed at different groups and activities based on local needs and conditions. Outreach work aimed specifically at people experiencing acute homelessness is mainly conducted in the country's larger cities. Outreach work often includes tasks such as providing information about the help available, motivating people to accept support and help, and acting as a link to needs-orientated interventions. The work can also involve mapping and informing the social services about the situation in the municipality regarding people with insecure housing (Preventing and combating homelessness, analysis and proposals for continued work in the social services (National Board of Health and Welfare 2021).

Many non-profit organisations are active and important partners in the municipalities' efforts to combat homelessness and conduct outreach activities themselves. In some cases, the organisations meet people experiencing homelessness who are not in contact with the social services, such as people with alcohol or drug addiction or mental illness, vulnerable EU citizens, third-country nationals and people residing in Sweden without the necessary permits.

Focus of the work

Guidance and support in outreach work

The Government considers that outreach work focussing on homeless adults who lack effective contact with the social support system needs to be developed. This is in light of the National Board of Health and Welfare's assessment that outreach work is partly de-prioritised in the municipalities, particularly that aimed at adults with extensive problems.

Better knowledge of municipal emergency housing solutions

All persons in need of shelter should be offered an emergency accommodation solution if necessary. Placements in emergency accommodation solutions such as shelters, emergency accommodation, hotels and hostels should only be used to resolve an emergency situation. Long-term and recurrent placements in accommodation designed for emergency situations can lead to lock-in effects, in particular for people with complex social problems, which risks worsening their situation. When long-term accommodation is available, social services can instead focus on providing individualised support and assistance.

People who have been forced to leave their homes because they are victims of domestic violence are acutely homeless as defined by the National Board of Health and Welfare. Temporary accommodation for victims of violence is offered by women's shelters, which can be approached on their own initiative and by social services through placements in shelters.

The situation of these people is often complex and if there are children in the family, the children also need a safe housing solution. In its 2022 annual report, the Ombudsman for Children emphasises that each municipality should also develop child-friendly emergency accommodation and that children should never stay in emergency accommodation for more than 14 days.

Mandate to the National Board of Health and Welfare

The Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to map and analyse how municipalities use emergency housing solutions. More knowledge is needed at national level in order to be able to propose measures and support to municipalities to avoid emergency housing solutions becoming long-term and recurring, instead of temporary solutions, and to ensure that the goal of no-one living on the streets is met. The National Board of Health and Welfare will therefore monitor the

development of the municipalities' emergency housing placements. This means mapping how long the placements last and, if necessary, proposing measures to develop forms for them and to feed the knowledge back to the municipalities. The analysis will take place within the framework of

for the National Board of Health and Welfare's task of promoting coordinated work towards the goals of the Government's national homelessness strategy.

Actor: National Board of Health and Welfare

Objective 3. Housing First should be introduced nationally

Description of the situation

A home of one's own is of central importance to all people and in many ways a prerequisite for well-being and participation in society. Sweden's municipalities have developed various solutions to meet the need for housing for people who do not have the right to occupy a flat themselves or who need support to be able to live in their own home. The group of homeless people includes people with often complex problems and with a great need for various care and support measures in addition to housing. Developed methods and approaches are needed to help them.

The National Board of Health and Welfare's 2017 homelessness survey showed that the number of people with substance abuse and mental health problems is slightly lower than in the 2011 survey. However, the group reported to have substance abuse and addiction problems and mental health problems was still large. It was mainly men experiencing homelessness who were reported to be in need of support and treatment for substance abuse and dependence. Of the 3,097 men living in situation 1, acute homelessness, just over 40 per cent needed support and treatment for their substance abuse and 30 per cent for their mental illness. Mental illness was also relatively common among the 2,063 women experiencing acute homelessness, with 23 per cent of the women surveyed reporting that they suffered from it. Of those living in situation 2, institutional or supported accommodation, almost half of people (4,531 people) reported needing support and treatment for substance abuse or addiction. Over 50 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men in institutional or supported housing had a need for psychiatric care or treatment for mental health problems. Of the men in situation 3, long-term housing solutions, just over 30 per cent (a total of 6,884 men) needed support and treatment for their substance abuse and a quarter of them also needed treatment for their mental health problems. Almost a quarter of women in this situation (a total of 5,220 women) were reported to have a need for support and treatment for their mental health problems. In situation 4, own organised short-term accommodation, about 30 per cent of a total of 4,985 people had a need for support and treatment for substance abuse and 30 per cent

for mental illness.

Housing First - a proven approach

Housing First is a proven approach to tackling homelessness for people with social problems. It is based on the premise that people need safe housing in order to address their other problems. The method means that people experiencing acute homelessness are offered accommodation on the same terms as other tenants. This is then combined with voluntary and individually tailored assistance.

Housing First is used in many European countries, including Finland, and is part of the national homelessness strategy. The approach was introduced in the early 1990s in the United States and is based on eight core principles:

- housing is a human right,
- the right to choice and self-determination,
- housing and treatment should be separated from each other,
- support is directed towards recovery,
- support is based on damage reduction,
- active engagement without coercion and education,
- participatory support based on the individual's strengths, needs and own goals,
- flexible support for as long as the person wants and needs it.

The Swedish National Board for Health and Welfare (SBU) has commented on a systematic review of interventions to reduce homelessness for people with substance abuse, addiction and mental health problems.² The review suggests that Housing First may be more effective than usual care in reducing homelessness and is likely to be more effective than usual care in increasing housing stability. The National Board of Health and Welfare recommends Housing First in the national guidelines for addiction treatment and as part of psychosocial interventions for schizophrenia and homelessness. Despite this, only around a fifth of Sweden's municipalities used the Housing First approach in 2021. The proportion has remained roughly the same for several years (Individual and Family - Situation Report 2022, National Board of Health and Welfare).

The National Board of Health and Welfare's analytical report describes a number of obstacles to the dissemination of the method. Among the obstacles mentioned is the lack of political support and sufficient resources to be able to work with the model fully. Lack of interest from landlords and housing companies in the method, lack of knowledge about

² The report commented on was Munthe-Kaas H, Berg RC, Blaasvær N. Effectiveness of interventions to reduce homelessness. A systematic review. Norwegian Institute of Public Health. The intervention is also recommended in the National Board of Health and Welfare's national guidelines for care and support for substance abuse and addiction 2019 and national guidelines for care and support for schizophrenia and schizophrenia-like 2018

methodology within social services, and attitudes and beliefs where the approach may clash with the established structures of social services. Another reason why the Housing First approach is not widely used is said to be the limited availability of housing at a rent level that is manageable for the target group.

Focus of the work

Government grants for the start-up and strengthening of the Housing First programme

To strengthen municipalities' efforts to combat homelessness, the Government is directing a multi-year government grant to municipalities during the strategy period 2022-2026 to strengthen or implement the Housing First method.

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with announcing government grants to municipalities to start, expand or improve activities according to the Housing First method (S2022/02526). The allocation of the government grant will be reviewed by the National Board of Health and Welfare in accordance with the Ordinance (2022:1220) on government grants to municipalities to strengthen efforts to combat homelessness. The National Board of Health and Welfare must annually follow up and describe the content of the municipalities' initiatives and report the use of the funds to the Government. The final report on the funds must be submitted by 31 May 2027.

Actor: National Board of Health and Welfare

Timeframe: 2022-2026

Estimated cost: SEK 30 000 000 per year, of which administrative costs may not exceed SEK 1 500 000.

National methodological support, training and follow-up

In order for Housing First activities to work and lead to housing retention, they need planning, knowledge of the method, collaboration and long-term work, and sharing of experiences. Housing First is aimed at people with complex support needs. Training and continuous skills development for those working with the method is important, not least to ensure that the basic principles of the model are maintained, which has proved to be a success factor according to the evaluations that the National Board of Health

and Welfare has taken note of. In 2020, the Riksdag decided to recognise that the Government should appoint an expert group to support municipalities in implementing Housing First (bet. 2019/20: SoU9 paragraph 22, rskr. 2019/20:309).

The Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare (S2022/02526) to provide national support for the implementation of the Housing First method. The National Board of Health and Welfare's work to provide support to municipalities includes collaborating and continuously gathering knowledge and experience from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), relevant parts of the research community, civil society, the Swedish Public Utility Association and relevant authorities. Appropriate methodological support for the municipalities could include further development of working methods, training in the method and the dissemination of good examples of local agreements between housing companies and social services, health services and psychiatry. Within the framework of the assignment, the National Board of Health and Welfare will cooperate with civil society organisations and also act as a national network for the exchange of information and experience.

Actor: National Board of Health and Welfare

Time period: 2022-2026

Estimated cost: SEK 645,000 in 2022, estimated annual cost between 2023 and 2026, SEK 1,290,000 per year.

Objective 4 Strengthen the social perspective in urban planning

Description of the situation

The Social Welfare Board's participation in community planning shall be based on the Board's social experience and aim in particular to influence the design of new and older residential areas in the municipality. The Social Welfare Board must also otherwise take the initiative and ensure that measures are taken to create a good social environment and favourable conditions for children and young people, the elderly and other groups in need of special social support (Chapter 3, Section 2 of the Social Services Act).

In its report (Preventing and combating homelessness, 2021), the National Board of Health and Welfare notes that the existing methods and approaches for increasing the involvement of social services in community planning are not sufficient. The National Board of Health and Welfare also considers that the involvement of social services in community planning is generally an area for development. Both social welfare boards and community planning committees are looking for

concrete support on what social services should contribute locally to prevent and combat homelessness. Social aspects can mean different things in different contexts and differ between municipalities. It can mean considering both the causes and consequences of social problems. Examples of social aspects mentioned are safety, segregation,

crime, substance abuse and dependency problems, overcrowding and lack of housing, and knowledge of the extent and nature of homelessness.

The Riksdag has adopted the Government's proposal for an amendment to section 2 of the Municipalities' Housing Supply Responsibility Act (2000:1383), which means, among other things, that municipalities must analyse which housing needs are not being met in the local housing market (Bill 2021/22:95, debate 2021/22:CU17, rskr. 2021/22:259). The amendment will enter into force on 1 October 2022. The Government has decided to amend section 4 of the Ordinance (2011:1160) on regional housing market analyses and municipalities' responsibility for housing supply, which means that the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning will provide the municipalities with a basis for this analysis. The Government has also appointed two inquiries that have produced proposals for measures to improve the functioning of the housing market in various ways, whose reports have subsequently been submitted for consultation. These are Start-up loans for first-time buyers of housing (SOU 2022:12) and Lowering the threshold to a good housing market (SOU 2022:14).

Better understanding of the extent and nature of homelessness

In order to be able to actively participate in community planning, the social welfare board needs up-to-date knowledge about the extent and nature of homelessness. The National Board of Health and Welfare has had the task of mapping people experiencing homelessness at national level since 1993. Both the method of mapping and the definition of homelessness have evolved over the years. Maintaining the current definition of homelessness situations makes it easier to follow developments over time.

The results of the surveys provide a comprehensive picture of the extent and nature of homelessness at national level, although not all people experiencing homelessness in the country are included in the survey, e.g. people without a residence permit. The data can be utilised at local, regional and national level in the continued work to prevent and combat homelessness. The data available in the form of surveys and situation reports are important for planning the work. At present, national surveys are carried out every six years and are both costly and labour-intensive for the municipalities. In the most recent survey from 2017, the response rate had deteriorated somewhat, which the municipalities said was due to lack of time. Data collection needs to be developed and simplified to ensure a

high response rate and a reliable basis.

With the help of local mapping, the need for intervention can become clear. The results can be used as a starting point for the social services' further

work and municipal planning for housing supply. Regular surveys give the municipality the opportunity to monitor developments and evaluate implemented measures. 39 per cent of municipalities state that they have surveyed people experiencing homelessness at some point in the past two years (Open comparisons, National Board of Health and Welfare 2020). The Ombudsman for Children has recognised the difficulty of knowing the exact number of children experiencing homelessness, as the population register does not always correspond to reality. The authority calls for a clearer mapping of children in homelessness to get a fair picture of the situation.

The National Board of Health and Welfare's homelessness survey from 2017 shows that the proportion of people born abroad among all homeless people was 43 per cent, which is a large overrepresentation compared with the population. The number has also increased compared to previous surveys, which further justifies monitoring developments.

Focus of the work

Collaboration in spatial planning

The social services board's knowledge of living conditions in the municipality needs to be given more space in the municipalities' community planning. The Social Welfare Board's role as an active player in municipal community planning has been an explicit focus since the 1980 Social Services Act came into force in 1982. The aim is to give the social services board the opportunity to actively prevent and counteract social problems based on its specialised knowledge. This can be done in different ways depending on the conditions of the municipality. Taking social aspects into account requires knowledge of the problems that each municipality has to deal with based on its composition and specific conditions.

The inquiry into municipal planning for housing (N 2017:04) found that no municipality identified in a structured way households whose financial circumstances do not allow them to obtain suitable housing themselves.

National mapping of the extent and nature of homelessness

The Government has commissioned the National Board of Health and Welfare to plan a national survey in 2022 and to carry it out in 2023. The survey must be designed so that it is possible to compare the development of homelessness over time, including any differences between women and men. The extent of homeless families with children must be shown in the survey. The situation of foreign-born people will also be highlighted. The

preparatory work includes developing a plan, in consultation with the relevant authorities, civil society organisations and researchers, for

how the mapping can be done in a simpler way with fewer variables. The work also includes examining how the survey can be carried out within the framework of current legislation on personal data (including the EU Data Protection Regulation). The assignment must be reported to the Government Offices by 1 February 2024.

Actor: National Board of Health and Welfare

Time period: 2022-2023

Estimated cost: planning 500 000 SEK 2022 and mapping 2 000 000 kr 2023.

Implementation of the homelessness strategy

Focus of the work

Coordinated work towards the goals of the government's homelessness strategy

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with promoting coordinated work towards the objectives of the Government's National Homelessness Strategy 2022-2026. Several authorities and organisations can disseminate knowledge about the objectives of the homelessness strategy and about initiatives within its framework, and provide support to actors within their areas of responsibility. According to the task, the National Board of Health and Welfare is to collaborate with other authorities with tasks that can contribute to the objectives of the national homelessness strategy, such as the county administrative boards, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the Swedish Enforcement Authority. The National Board of Health and Welfare must also collaborate with other relevant actors, such as the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and representatives from civil society organisations and the research community.

The assignment involves, among other things, the exchange of experience and dissemination of knowledge of various assignments between actors in the field. The assignment also includes initiating communication initiatives to disseminate current knowledge of methods for preventing and combating homelessness, for example through dialogues, seminars and information initiatives. The National Board of Health and Welfare is to produce a final report on how the work on the homelessness strategy has been carried out and how initiatives within the framework of the strategy

have contributed to achieving the objectives set.

Debriefing

- Each mission under the homelessness strategy is reported individually.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare is instructed to submit a final report on the results of the homelessness strategy on 31 May 2027.

Actor: National Board of Health and Welfare

Time period: 2022-2026

Estimated cost: SEK 645 000 per year 2022-2026.