



Article from [Ministry of Health and Social Affairs](#)

# About the COVID-19 virus, 6 April

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Sweden is still in an extraordinary situation. Read more about the recommendations and decisions in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs' policy areas of public health, medical care, social care and social insurance. The date in the title indicates when the article was written.

## Proposal to extend the COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink

The Government sees a need to strengthen long-term preparedness for the continued potentially serious spread of infection in autumn 2021. Therefore, on 6 April, a memorandum was circulated for consultation proposing extending the temporary COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink. It is proposed that both Acts continue to remain in force until the end of January 2022.

## Major budget investments to combat the transmission of COVID-19 and manage the effects of the pandemic

On 6 April, the Government announced it was proposing a number of measures to continue to combat the transmission of COVID-19 and manage its effects.

- Extra funding will be allocated to municipalities and regions for healthcare measures, including vaccinations, testing and contact tracing, patient transport and compensation for deferred healthcare and healthcare related to COVID-19.
- The National Board of Health and Welfare, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) will also be given greater resources to tackle the pandemic.
- Funding will also be allocated to monitor compliance with the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink.
- During the pandemic, many children and young people have been deprived of activities and social interaction with people their own age. Holiday activities can help to alleviate this situation and improve their lives. The Government therefore proposes a targeted government grant of SEK 200 million to municipalities for this purpose. The grant can support holiday activities that are free of charge and COVID-safe for children and young people aged 6 to 15 in 2021.

## The Government proposes extending social insurance measures introduced due to COVID-19

On 6 April, the Government proposed extending social insurance measures introduced due to COVID-19.

The measures are intended to help people with COVID-19 to stay at home, thereby limiting transmission. The measures currently apply until 30 April 2021, and it is now proposed that they be extended from 1 May to 30 June 2021 in a forthcoming supplementary amending budget.

## **Benefits to vulnerable groups extended**

The Government intends to extend the opportunity for certain vulnerable groups and certain family members of vulnerable groups to receive benefits. This is to ensure that people at risk will be able to return to work safely following vaccination. The Government also intends to extend the opportunity to receive benefits for parents of children who have recently been seriously ill and for parents when schools or preschools are closed. The periods will be extended such that there is no gap in benefit payments.

The measures to be extended are:

- Certain preventive sickness benefits to certain at-risk groups
- Certain disease carrier allowances to certain close relatives of people in at-risk group
- Certain preventive temporary parental allowances for parents of children who have recently been seriously ill
- Certain temporary parental allowances when schools or preschools are closed

## **No doctor's certificate required until day 15**

The Government intends to extend the abolition of the requirement to produce a doctor's certificate during the first 14 days of illness for all those on sick leave. This reduces the burden on the healthcare services and reduces the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

## **Exemptions in the health insurance system to be extended in the event of cancellation of treatment or rehabilitation**

The Government intends to extend the provision that enables exemptions to be granted from the assessment against an individual's normal work on day 180 and day 365 in the sickness allowance system when treatment or rehabilitation is cancelled.

The provision previously applied until 30 June 2021 and the Government now intends to extend it until 31 December 2021 in line with the proposal in a forthcoming spring amending budget.

## The Government proposes extending grants to employers for sick pay

On 1 April, the Government proposed extending compensation to employers for the proportion of sick pay costs that exceeds the normal rate. The proposal will be submitted in a forthcoming amending budget to the Riksdag.

The Government intends to extend compensation to employers for the proportion of sick pay costs that exceeds normal levels. This measure due to COVID-19 seeks to provide financial support to employers and businesses.

## The Government proposes extending support to air ambulance services

On 2 April, the Government proposed earmarking SEK 12 million to extend the temporary government grant to services transporting patients by air ambulance. The purpose of the government grant is to ensure that the healthcare service has sufficient access to air ambulances around the clock during the outbreak of COVID-19.

The government grant was introduced for the period 1 January – 30 June 2021, and the Government proposes that this period be extended until 15 August 2021.

## The Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions have agreed an amending agreement on vaccination against COVID-19

On 1 April, the Government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) presented an amending agreement on vaccination against COVID-19 due to changed circumstances regarding the delivery of vaccines.

The aim is for all people resident in Sweden aged 18 or over, and people under the age of 18 who, following an individual medical assessment, should be vaccinated, to be offered a first dose of vaccine against COVID-19 as soon as possible, and, for the vaccines that require two doses, a subsequent second dose in line with the vaccination interval recommended by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

As previously, when this target can be attained is dependent on deliveries from vaccine manufacturers.

## Continued work on vaccination certificates

The agreement makes the division of responsibility for work on vaccination certificates clear. The State's undertakings involve developing the technical services required, funding the above undertakings and issuing vaccination certificates to all inhabitants who order such a certificate once the system is operational.

Since 1 January 2021, the regions have had to register all vaccinations against COVID-19 in the national vaccination register (NVR) kept by the Public Health Agency of Sweden.

Exactly when the vaccination certificate system can be brought into use will depend on the progress of overarching European cooperation, but the ambition is for the system to be in place in June.

## Sweden supports the UN's Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

On 26 March, a Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines was presented at the United Nations in New York. The Declaration received the support of more than 170 countries, including Sweden. This is an important step in equitable and effective management of the pandemic. COVID-19 vaccination has begun in more than 140 countries, but access remains patchy and major challenges remain to ensure that everyone is able to access a vaccine as soon as possible.

It is in everyone's interest that not only the rich countries are able to vaccinate their populations but that vaccination is rolled out across the world. This is a question of solidarity and of putting an end to the pandemic and its serious indirect effects as quickly as possible. Sweden has taken an active role in work to ensure global access to vaccines, partly by supporting the global vaccine initiative COVAX.

## The National Board of Health and Welfare is to analyse the healthcare backlog

The Government has tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with analysing the backlog of healthcare needs that has arisen as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The backlog of healthcare needs will be summarised and reported in a national status report.

## Extended restrictions due to COVID-19

There is a risk of yet another peak in cases in Sweden in spring 2021. Therefore, on 18 March the county administrative boards and the Public Health Agency of Sweden were tasked with developing forms for existing regional and local cooperation in the face of a potential rise in transmission.

The Government has also decided to task the county administrative boards with expanding their reporting on supervision of implementation of the temporary COVID-19 Act, and also of how the county administrative boards are adapting their supervision efforts to changes in the spread of COVID-19. This is to ensure that the rules are enforced in order to reduce crowding in the establishments concerned and ultimately reduce the risk of increased transmission.

As a result of the serious and uncertain situation, the Government will continue to urge municipalities and regions to keep closed non-essential services to which the public has access where these are not regulated under the Restrictions Ordinance. Municipal gyms and sporting facilities, swimming pools, museums and art galleries are not covered by this mandate, as these are covered by the Restrictions Ordinance.

As before, sporting, leisure and cultural activities for children and young people are exempt, provided that the regulations and general recommendations can be complied with. This also applies to activities for young people of upper secondary school age. However, it is still not yet the time to arrange competitions or matches. This mandate will be extended until 1 April and may be extended further.

## Mandate regarding potential surplus PPE

On 11 March, the Government tasked the National Board of Health and Welfare with assessing Sweden's opportunities to sell or donate potential surplus PPE and healthcare materials needed in treating the disease

COVID-19. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency is to assist in this assessment and be responsible for operational management. This mandate applies until 31 December 2021.

## The Government seeks to increase the borrowing limit for vaccines

On 10 March, the Government proposed that the Public Health Agency of Sweden's borrowing limit for purchasing vaccines and other emergency investments be raised from SEK 4.5 billion to SEK 11 billion for 2021. The aim is to create greater scope for signing agreements with manufacturers of vaccines against COVID-19 and thereby safeguard Sweden's needs in the long term.

## Mandate to keep a list of regulations issued under the COVID-19 Act and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink

On 4 March, the Government tasked the Public Health Agency of Sweden with compiling a list of regulations issued by administrative agencies or municipalities pursuant to authorisations in the Act on special restrictions to prevent the transmission of the disease COVID-19 (the COVID-19 Act) and the Act on temporary communicable disease control measures at venues serving food and drink.

## Remit to continuously evaluate and spread awareness of the scientific backing regarding long-term effects of the disease COVID-19



On 4 March, the Government decided to task the Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) with continuously evaluating and spreading awareness of the scientific backing regarding the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects from the disease COVID-19.

## Compensation for personal injury caused by the COVID-19 vaccine

On 4 March, the Government submitted for consultation a draft of a new Act on state compensation for injury that may arise as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccines used in Sweden have been tested and approved. If, nevertheless, personal injury were to arise as a consequence of a vaccine, it will be possible to apply for compensation from the Swedish Pharmaceutical Insurance. Currently all approved vaccines used in Sweden are covered by this insurance.

## Review of long-term effects of COVID-19

On 4 March, the Government tasked SBU with continuously evaluating and spreading awareness of the scientific backing regarding the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects from the disease COVID-19.

This remit includes developing a method for continuously publishing the scientific data on treatment and rehabilitation of patients with long-term effects. SBU is to particularly pay attention to the effects of COVID-19 on children.

Furthermore, SBU is continuously to identify areas where there is a need for research on treatment and rehabilitation for long-term effects of COVID-19. SBU is also to monitor and evaluate the work of other international actors on this issue.

## Extending the reimbursement period for PPE for personal assistants

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, personal assistants have incurred additional costs. Therefore, on 4 March, the Government decided to further extend the period in which private providers of personal assistance can apply for reimbursement of the costs of personal protective equipment (PPE).

## Pregnancy allowance for pregnant women with risks in their working environment

A pregnant woman may be entitled to pregnancy allowance if her work is physically demanding or if there are risks in the work environment and the employer is unable to reassign her to other duties. The employer is responsible for the working environment and for deciding whether a pregnant woman should not remain at work due to risks in the working environment.

On 26 February 2021, the National Board of Health and Welfare announced that COVID-19 poses a particular risk to pregnant women in weeks 20–36 of pregnancy. This risk factor is therefore included in assessing entitlement to pregnancy allowance.

### Shortcuts

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