

Joint report from Sweden 2020-03-27

Vårdförbundet, Kommunal, Akademikerförbundet SSR and Vision

Situation as of March 27

3046 infected, approximately 300 in intensive care. 92 deaths, particularly difficult in the Stockholm area; updated chart: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/09f821667ce64bf7be6f9f87457ed9aa>

Government labour market interventions

Communicable disease control measures First of February, the Government decided that the Public Health Agency of Sweden/County Medical Officer can decide on certain extraordinary communicable disease control measures, followed by some supportive measures for employees such as annulment of non-pay the first day of absence from work (karensdag/withdrawal date) and the requirement for physicians document after 5 days of sick leave.

Postponed collective agreements The negotiations for new collective agreements was been agreed to be postponed and current agreements prolonged.

Further interventions and steps if situation aggravates Until now staffing is based on standard collective agreements. If the situation gets worse *emergency overtime* can be introduced and the emergency agreement could be activated.

A crisis agreement is being negotiated, with the purpose to give more flexibility regarding work duty, working time and other terms. This would include raised remunerations/salaries.

<https://skr.se/tjanster/merfranskr/cirkular/cirkular/2019/overenskommelseomkrislagesavtal.28688.html>

National coordination with social partners Regular frequent meetings with social partners with the government's different ministries started, characterized by *a high level of trust and openness*.

Social distancing - some examples: Swedish universities and upper secondary schools are closed and students are required to study at home, often under the guidance of their teachers via digital connections. For students in education where no education is given, it has been decided that they are not liable for reimbursement for study funding for that period.

The government has passed legislation enabling closure of schools and preschools. Preparative planning is done in order to keep childcare and schools open for children of workers belonging to particularly important professions in case of further lockdown.

The government has therefor identified 12 sectors as particularly important. Energy supply, Financial services, Trade and industry, Healthcare and care, Information and communication, Municipal Technical Supply, Food, Military Defense, Public Administration, Protection and Security, Social Security and Transports.

Workers within the public sector, and in some of the private sector, who may work from home are encouraged to do so without the risk of losing income. If anyone feel some symptoms of illness, yet are still able to work, they are also encouraged to do it from home, also without risking any loss of income.

All gatherings involving more than 50 people prohibited. Stockholmers who can work from home should do so, cancel all non-essential travel to all countries. 70+ elderly to stay at home, restaurants only to serve at the table with strict physical distance etc

Please see further initiatives and decrees including financial decisions on supporting Swedish SME:s and businesses <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/regeringens-arbete-med-anledning-av-nya-coronaviruset/regeringens-beslut-och-initiativ-med-anledning-av-nya-coronaviruset/>

Meeting between Minister of labour and Social Partners on the corona virus

<https://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2020/03/mote-om-arbetsmiljon-inom-halso--och-sjukvarden-med-anledning-av-coronaviruset/>

Former president of metal workers union appointed by the government to coordinate the industry

<https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/03/regeringen-tillsatter-samordnare-med-anledning-av-coronavirusets-effekter-pa-naringslivet/>

Situation in healthcare

Intensive care Sweden has relatively few intensive care beds(half of Italy's related to nr of inhabitants) and upscales now the nr of beds by putting other planned care on hold and building emergency field hospitals with help of the military, biggest one outside Stockholm. We are also replacing staff, putting in fast training and remaking wards to serve the acute need for emergency. At the moment nr of beds are tripled.

Health care workers Long time situation of understaffing and the acute need for health educated staff has resulted in shifting workplaces for healthcare staff, call for reactivating students, pensioners, staff from other sectors with a health care education to join in. This is a tough challenge for both staff and patient safety with updating skills and knowledge.

Health situation for staff Many reports of long shifts, tiredness and exhaustion. Trade unions threatens to close wards if not safe for staff or patients. The overtime rate is increasing rapidly for registered and practical nurses. The workforce is not enough and those who are in service are put under an extreme work load.

Kommunal now requires that all non-permanent employees in the care system get permanent employment in the care sector.

There is also a need for mental health support and guidance. Fear is a factor that keeps staff from work, fear of infection, ethical stress and not having PPE nor training on how to use them.

Emergency services There are discussions about reducing the minimum staffing of some employers. When staff goes on IVPA alarm (while waiting for an ambulance) they should have the same protective equipment as the staff in ambulance use, if it is a Covid-19 case. There is already a high sick leave in some places and a risk that this will increase. Support for municipal rescue services regarding Covid-19 from the authority for community protection and preparedness <https://www.msb.se/sv/amnesomraden/skydd-mot-olyckor-och-farliga-amnen/raddningstjanst-och-raddningsinsatser/stod-till-kommunal-raddningstjanst-gallande-corona/>

Social services homecare/service Kommunal get reports from their safety representatives that protective equipment is missing. That is unacceptable and hand sanitizer and other protective equipment should be provided when needed. Kommunal also requires that workers should not wear private clothes in home care/service. The employers should provide them with clothes that are washed in the employers premises. It is extremely provocative that there is still employers who do not take full responsibility for this.

In preschools there is a great fear among the staff to become infected. There are many among the staff who have to change the workplace when there are fewer children in preschools. Staff from preschools who have education or experience from or experience in care are offered employment in health care instead.

Personal Protective Equipment, PPE A large part of the Swedish public sector has been privatized in recent decades. Now we see the effect. Since before Christmas, the Swedish Pharmacies suffer from a major shortage of essential supplies and medications and the current situation worsens the that.

The Swedish Pharmacy Act was changed 10 years ago, and it is no longer possible to have a stock of emergency supplies, which has proved to be disastrous for hospitals in several regions in Sweden. On behalf of the government, orders for medical equipment and materials for health care have been centralized to central national administration authorities and thereby created the opportunity for target orders to certain Swedish industrial companies. They have then been able to change their production in order to be able to help and support the healthcare sector with products they are lacking from.

Government says it is under control but *not* sustainable for any stocking or even for the coming 3-4 days. In parallel health staff has reported important lack of different kinds of vital PPE. But there is also a critique from TU:s not only about shortage but about incoherent instructions and standards of PPE for different groups and situations.

Illness and lack of supplies are pushing home care/service <https://www.svd.se/sjukdom-och-materialbrist-pessar-hemtjansten>

Testing There is no testing of covid-19 for the total population - but a quick-test is under development that would target health care staff. Special self-testing kits to make it more effective are discussed.

Crisis impact on other group of workers The measures taken to prevent the spread of Coronavirus are uneven and some sectors are being impacted/destroyed very quickly. The large group of workers on zero contract, or short term contracts, without social protection or unemployment insurance funds will very soon be completely without pay and then become in need of financial assistance. That will increase the pressure on social workers and "biståndsbedömare" in the municipalities and demands for increased state support for this (which is a municipal responsibility) are raised

Sunt arbetsliv - joint trade union initiative for a better, evidencebased working environment focus on CORONA:

Joint information from the Social Partners: <https://www.suntarbetsliv.se/artiklar/sam/covid-19-stod-for-att-hantera-det-pa-jobbet/>

Small teams in home care can reduce infection <https://www.suntarbetsliv.se/artiklar/sam/sma-team-i-hemtjansten-kan-minska-smitta/>

Links from Kommunal

Kommunal has signed agreements on short-term leave with several employers organizations

<https://ka.se/2020/03/24/kommunal-har-tecknat-flera-korttidsavtal/>

President of Kommunal, wants employed by hour to get permanent jobs in staffing pools

<https://ka.se/2020/03/24/audin-fastanstall-timvikarier/>

The pandemic could put working time rules out of play: <https://ka.se/2020/03/13/pandemi-kan-satta-arbetstidsregler-ur-spel/>

Tobias Audin President Kommunal - Home care in the frontline to stop the infection.

"It is unacceptable that protective equipment is missing"

<https://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/a/dO9myj/hemtjansten-i-fronten-for-att-stoppa-smittan>
Staff in preschools with nursing education or working experience are e.g. offered to work in health care instead <https://ka.se/2020/03/23/kommunalare-byter-jobb-for-att-starka-omsorgen/>

Links from Akademikerförbundet SSR:

Negotiations for new collective agreement postponed. Present agreement prolonged.

<https://akademssr.se/post/avtalsrorelsen-kommuner-och-regioner-skjuts-upp-0>

Information to all members on the corona virus <https://akademssr.se/nyheter/samlad-information-om-coronaviruset>

Information on the new legislation on short-term-contracts <https://akademssr.se/jobblon/korttidsarbete-korttidspermittering>

Information on the agreement with local authorities on preventing the spread of infection <https://akademssr.se/post/overenskommelse-i-kommunal-sektor-att-forhindra-smittspridning>

Information to self-employed members <https://akademssr.se/post/info-egenforetagare>

Links from Vårdförbundet:

Debate article from Vårdförbundet about the working situation for healthcare staff and the acute need for PPE: <https://www.dn.se/debatt/akuta-insatser-kravs-annars-kan-coronavard-stoppas/>

Working during Coronaepidemic <https://www.vardforbundet.se/rad-och-stod/corona-och-covid-19-information-for-dig-i-ditt-arbete/>