

Disability Policy

Approved by the Regional Council on 7 May 2002,
§ 126 RSK 132-2002
Region Västra Götaland



Starting-points and assessments

The equal value of all men is fundamental in the shaping of society. Developing society to rule out injustice is a common concern to offer people equal opportunities and invite everyone to take part in social development and activities.

People with disabilities are part of a population's natural variation. To plan and implement Västra Götaland's activities from a perspective that respects people's varying abilities is crucial to the chances of disabled people to participate and live a good life in the region.

It is important to note that handicaps are to a great extent the result of deficiencies in environment and activities. Handicaps can be ruled out through changes in public areas and activities. It is a mutual social responsibility to strive towards the aims of disability policies.

The principle of responsibility and financing is fundamental implying, that public areas and activities should as far as possible be designed and implemented to be open to everyone. Expenses for adaptations are regarded as a normal part of the total cost and financed in the same way as other activities.

The Region's disability policy is based on an overall perspective. Disabled people have a democratic right to participate in social life. The aim is full participation and equality.

Background

As of 1993 Sweden's parliament and government endorse international regulations to ensure disabled people equality and participation. They are known as the United Nations' standard rules and Sweden took active part when they were set up.

There is legislation going back several decades aiming at increased accessibility for disabled people and their opportunities to participate actively in society.

This is exemplified in the Acts concerning planning and building, public transport, library services and the compulsory school curriculum.

As a result of the 1989 disabilities investigation civil rights legislation was introduced in 1994 on support and service to certain groups of disabled people. A change was made in the Social Services Act and the Health and Medical Care Act clarifying the responsibility for habilitation, technical aids and other support. The Personal Assistance Act came into force the same year.

In May 2002 Parliament approved a national action plan for disability policies – from patient to citizen. The action plan makes definite moves towards giving disabled people the right to full participation, a dignified reception and powers to decide on their own lives.

Three areas were given priority:

- the disability perspective should permeate all sectors of society
- a more accessible society should be created
- reception and treatment of people with disabilities should be improved

Aim

The aim is full participation and equality for disabled people. In the same way as others people with disabilities should be able to get an education, find work, take part in cultural activities, use public transport, take part in leisure activities and sports, enjoy financial and social security, social company and personal integrity and exercise their social rights and duties.

Strategies

Region Västra Götaland should act to achieve increased security and accessibility for disabled people through systematic planning. We should observe and oppose all kinds of disregard for people with disabilities.

The Region has two strategies to achieve this. One is to create accessibility in a broad sense and the other is to strengthen the individual.

Creating accessibility in a broad sense implies that:

- activities are designed to make it possible for people with disabilities to take part. A kind treatment is a hallmark
- activities are physically available, e g people with disabilities are able to enter buildings/facilities, find their way and manage a stay in there
- information on activities and services offered are designed for people with varying impairments
- the activity is financially accessible, e g open for participation or use

In addition to creating accessibility in a broad sense, Health and Medical Care has special responsibility to strengthen the individual by offering good habilitation and technical aids. To be disabled often leads to increased needs of health care.

Parliament's decision on priorities in health care is applicable and makes people with disabilities a group of high priority.

Organisation and responsibility

Commitment on all levels of the organisation is required to create accessibility in a broad sense. The disability perspective must be a natural part in the design of the activity and be integrated in planning and follow-up. This is valid for the Region's own activities but also when the Region acts as company owner, founder or client.

Boards and committees responsible for management must see to it that the disability perspective is integrated in their area of operation.

Boards and committees in charge of purchasing should include the disability perspective in every agreement with external and internal providers.

The chief administrative officer has the overall responsibility that legislation and established guidelines are enforced and that implementation, follow-up and reporting of essential information and training takes place.

Special responsibility

The Property management committee and Västfastigheter are specially responsible that their own facilities' physical accessibility meets with approved guidelines and standards. In the case of rented facilities the board/activity in question is responsible, assisted by Västfastigheter.

At procurement of services and goods the community services committee and Westma have special responsibility that demands on accessibility for people with disabilities are expressly stated.

The Disability committee and its secretariat should assist in the process of integrating the disability perspective into the Region's activities and Västra Götaland.

Awareness/knowledge

To implement the Region's disability policy all committees/boards and activities must have certain fundamental knowledge of disabilities and their handicapping consequences, living conditions of disabled people, what kind of reception they meet with. The Region is to provide more knowledge through conferences, seminars and internal training.

Research & Development

More information must be given on ways and means of integrating the disability point of view into all social activities to improve living conditions of people with disabilities. The Region should support disability research by stimulating research projects and contribute to co-ordination and co-operation.

By disability research is meant research and development to solve problems turning disabilities into handicaps, methods to compensate and/or reduce disabilities and optimal use of social resources for people with disabilities.

The concept might include all types of research shedding light on different circumstances for people with disabilities at levels concerning the individual, the group and society. Of interest are fields like medicine, architecture, psychology, law, teaching methods, media, social work, culture, traffic and economics.

Follow-up

Every board/activity must follow-up its measures/purchases from a disability point of view. It is the charge of the Disability Committee to inform of Region Västra Götaland's collective resources for offering people with disabilities participation and equality and provide a time schedule.

Citizens' influence

Disabled citizens should be well informed and have an influence on measures to integrate the disability point of view into the activities of the Region. There should be dialogue and interplay between citizens and the publicly elected, and between citizens and the professions in which the disabled citizen's special knowledge should be used to best advantage.

Co-operation

Co-operation between Region, government authorities, municipalities, universities /university colleges, business life and the non-profit sector should be sought. The aim is that co-operation should favour development of equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

Handikappkommitténs kansli
Regionens Hus
462 80 Vänersborg
Sweden

Phone: +46(0)521-27 52 30
Fax: +46(0)521- 27 52 57
Mail: handikappkommittens.kansli@vgregion.se

Region Västra Götaland: www.vgregion.se

Region Västra Götaland, The Disability Committee:
http://www.vgregion.se/VGRTemplates/SU_start____25021.aspx