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Quality and cost-effectiveness in long-term care and dependency prevention



POLICY SUMMARY: SWEDEN

Supporting Carers

Lennarth Johansson and Pär Schön

Aging Research Center, Karolinska Institutet & Stockholm University &
Stockholm Gerontology Research Center

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Policy theme	To provide support to carers of sick, older and dependent people
Design and implementation level	National legislation, local obligation
Policy objective	To provide support to carers
Start date – End date	1 July 2009

Aims

The Social Services Act is a frame law legislation, with no definition of informal care/carers. When announcing the 2009 amendment, the government website used the phrase "legal rights to support for

carers". This gave an image, that the amendment was an entitlement to support. But, the amendment gives carers the right to an assessment of their needs, no more no less.

Implementation

To provide support carers is a legal obligation for the municipalities the Carers Act.

Target group

Anyone who identifies themselves as being "a person who cares for next of kin" may apply, and there are no regulations regarding the amount of help a caregiver must provide to qualify.

Also, the law doesn't specify the content or quality of the support that the municipalities are obligated to provide.

Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria to support is decided by the municipality – no national regulations exist.

Resources

Initially, SEK 450 million of state grants was allocated to the municipalities to stimulate the implementation of the new law.

The funding of the services provided on the basis of the legislation is municipal responsibility.

Performance assessment and monitoring

The legislation was evaluated by the National Board of health and welfare, 2009–2014. The assessment of the effects and performance, is the availability of adequate data, for monitoring and research purposes, of caring and carers. In Sweden, this does not exist today, so there is an urgent need for regular

and representative statistics, and a robust monitoring- or evaluation system in place, to be able to answer questions about, targeting, efficiency and quality of the provided support. In other words, the effects and the consequences of the legislation for carers cannot be shown.

Evidence of success (outcomes, quality, satisfaction, awareness)	<p>Given the difficulties to present data of the effects of the legislation, one could still argue for that it has resulted in a raised awareness of informal caregiving and carers need for support. This development could be attributed to many different actors, but carers organisations have meant a lot.</p> <p>There are increasing insights, about the diversity of carers, i.e. there are many more carers, apart from those caring for older people, and they are also in need for recognition and support.</p>	<p>Also, an increasing awareness that a sick family member, affect everybody in the family. The whole family is affected, and whether you are the prime carer or not, other family members – especially children – also needs information, advice and support, accessible for their needs.</p> <p>Increased knowledge that recognition and support for carers must include not only social services, but also health care, schools, other public authorities. And, finally, that workplaces must be “carer-friendly”.</p>
Transferability/Uniqueness.	<p>Also in this respect, there are too few examples (documented) of effect of the legislation, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about transferability, at least at this stage.</p>	
Is this an emergent practice? (degree of innovation)	<p>The legislation has consolidated recent 10–15 years’ developments of an infrastructure of support to carers in many municipalities, by appointing a carer’ counsellor.</p>	<p>The carers’ counsellor is the “one- stop-shop” of support, offering information, advice, counselling and respite services.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The is a part of the Social Services Act and thereby expected to be self-sustaining. In the present situation in the Social Service</p>	<p>Sector in Sweden, other urgent needs and groups of needy people tend to be prioritized over support to carers.</p>
Academic literature on this action	<p>Johansson, L. Long, H., Parker, MG. (2011). Informal caregiving of elderly people in Sweden: An analysis of current policy developments. <i>Journal of Aging and Social Policy</i>, 23: 335–353.</p>	
Documents		