

Gender equality from an employer perspective



Swedish Association
of Local Authorities
and Regions



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Introduction

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and the Employer Policy Division have been working to develop a gender equality strategy for some considerable time. There are still clear structural differences between men and women on the Swedish labour market. Municipalities, county councils and regions are major players in the labour market. Therefore, SALAR and its members have a significant responsibility to identify and attempt to tackle all labour market-related inequality.

Our aim with this report is to present a gender equality programme from an employer perspective, which is sustainable in the long term, integrated with various employer policy objectives, and provides clear and uniform answers to gender equality questions both now and in the future. A coherent, well-formulated and well-supported programme enables SALAR, as a key employer organisation, to provide its members with more straightforward support in efforts to achieve gender equality. Something that hopefully contributes to enhanced benefits for members and to a more gender-equal labour market in Sweden.

There is, of course, a great deal of other gender equality work going on alongside this at SALAR, looking at how the activities of municipalities, county councils and regions can achieve greater gender equality from the perspective of citizens and users.

Charlotta Undén, Johanna Heden and Christin N. Granberg have been the project managers for this report.

Stockholm, March 2017

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Clear difference between men and women on the Swedish labour market

The Swedish labour market is characterised by the fact that men and women tend to have different occupations and work in different sectors and industries. For instance, 80 per cent of employees in the care sector, schools and nursing are women. The tendency for male- and female-dominated occupations is called horizontal segregation. Gender segregation on the Swedish labour market has long been above the EU average. At the same time, however, Sweden comes at the top in terms of rate of female employment. Comparisons with the rest of the world reveal that this co-variation is not unique to Sweden. Countries with a high level of female employment also tend to have a highly gender-segregated labour market.

Unequal distribution of power

On the Swedish labour market men and women have different opportunities to exert power and influence. Two-thirds of the total number of managers are men. And the higher the managerial level, the lower the proportion of women. The tendency for there to be a greater proportion of men than women high up in the hierarchy is called vertical segregation. Within female-dominated sectors, it is also more common for activities to have a “flat” organisation with relatively few management positions. One consequence of this is that women have fewer career paths than men.



Persistent and significant wage difference

Men earn more than women. The raw-wage gap – a comparison between male and female average hourly wages – indicates that the gender pay gap on the Swedish labour market is currently 13 per cent. Although the raw-wage gap narrowed considerably from the 1960s to the early 1980s, the pace has since slowed markedly.



Women's lower rate of presence at work

Women are present at work to a lesser extent than men. Thirty per cent of women work part-time, compared with only 10 per cent of men. Women take considerably more parental leave than men, on average 13 months, compared with 3.5 months for men. Women also take off a clear majority, 65 per cent, of VAB days¹.

Moreover, the rate of sickness absence is far higher for women. A clear pattern can be discerned here. Until the first child is born, sick leave among men and women is fairly equal; however, two years after the child's birth, women take twice as many sick days as men – a difference that then persists. Women assuming greater family responsibility and having weaker ties to working life are two factors that have an impact on sickness absences².

Note. 1. VAB stands for "vård av sjukt barn" (care of a sick child).

Note. 2. Source: IFAU 2013.



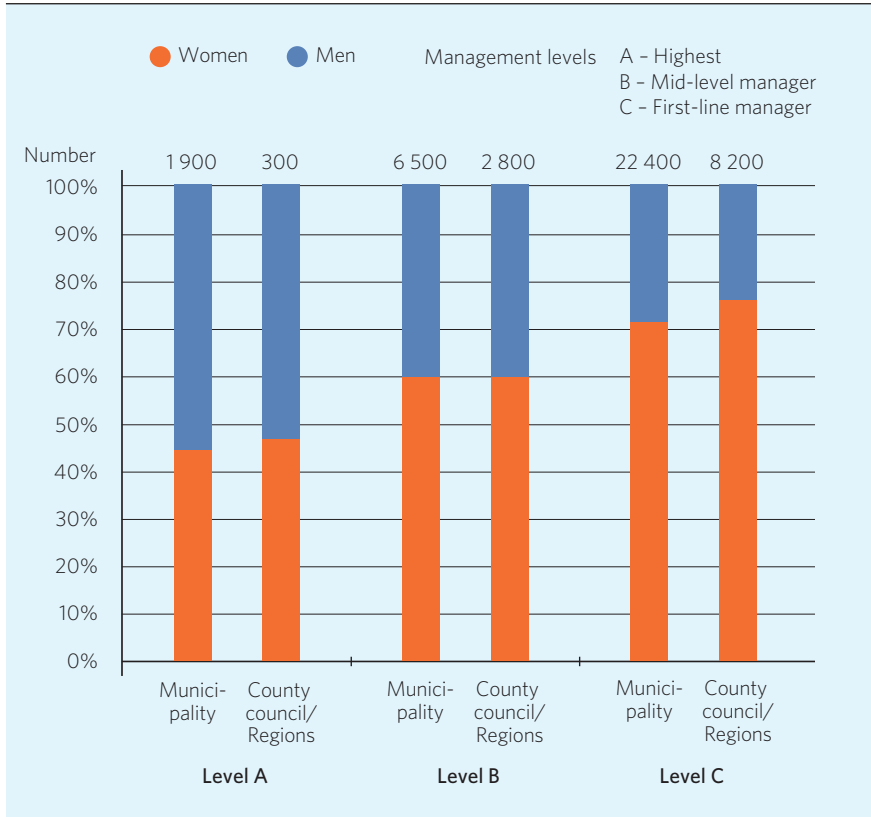
Structural differences at municipalities, county councils and regions

At municipalities, county councils and regions, four out of five employees are women, which is a situation that has remained unchanged for some considerable time. Around 40 per cent of the country's gainfully employed women work for municipalities, county councils and regions. The corresponding figure for men is 10 per cent. The proportion of women and men is roughly the same in the care sector, schools and nursing, irrespective of whether the provider is private or public.

More female managers

The majority of managers at municipalities, county councils and regions are women, which sets the sector apart from the rest of the labour market, where the majority of managers are men. The proportion of female managers at municipalities, county councils and regions thus reflects to some extent the fact that the majority of employees there are female. The proportion of female managers has also increased relatively sharply since 2000. However, the majority of the top positions are still held by men.

FIGURE 1. Gender distribution for managers at various levels at municipalities and county councils/regions, 2015



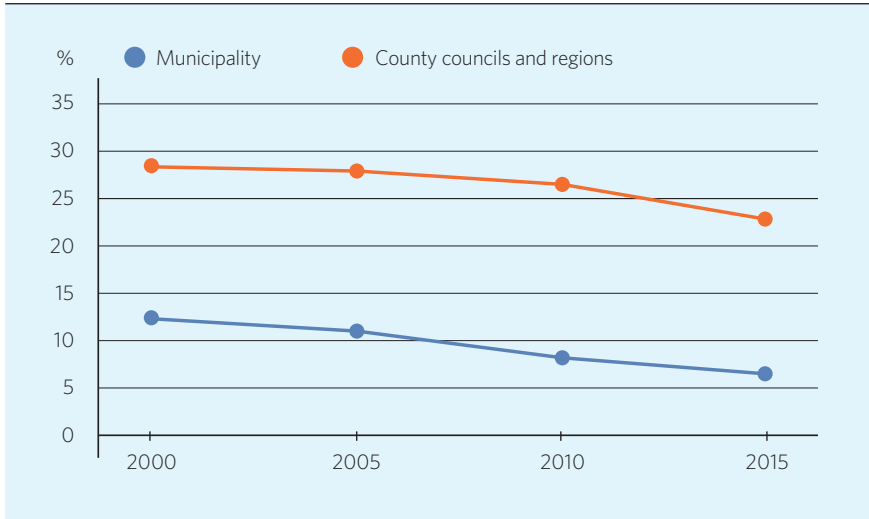
Source: SALAR's HR statistics.

Smallest wage difference at municipalities

The raw-wage gap between men and women is 5 per cent for the municipalities and 22 per cent for the county councils and regions. With a standard weighting, a comparison that also takes into account men's and women's different education, occupations, age and working hours, there is less of a difference: 0.4 per cent for the municipalities and 4 per cent for the county councils and regions. With a standard weighted comparison for the whole of the labour market, the wage difference is 5 per cent³. Thus, there is good reason to assert that the municipalities have Sweden's most equal pay. Over the past 15 years, the raw-wage gap has consistently narrowed at municipalities, county councils and regions.

Note. 3. Source: Swedish National Mediation Office (MI).

FIGURE 2. Gender based raw-wage gap among Swedish municipalities and county councils, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015. A comparison of average hourly wages for women and men.



Source: SALAR's HR statistics.

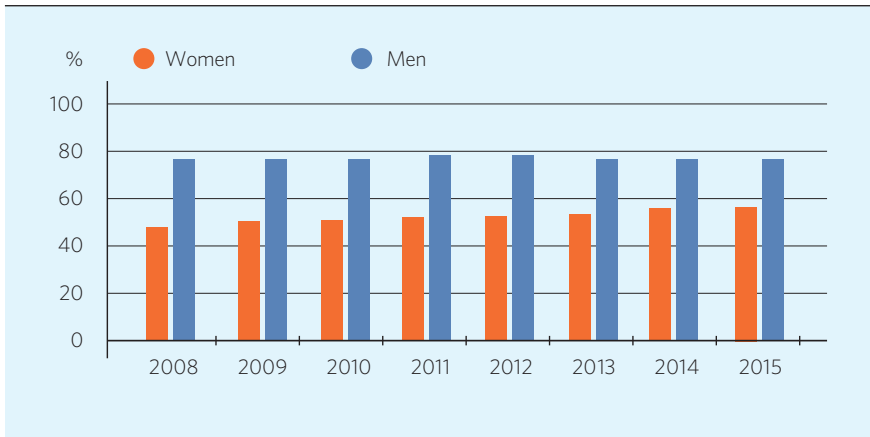
Many women work part-time

The proportion of women who work full-time has increased markedly in recent years, but still a significantly larger proportion of women than men work part-time. Full-time employment cannot however be equated with full-time work. The reasons for a discrepancy vary, but there is very likely a large number of part-time employees who could increase their working hours.

Higher rate of sickness absence among women than men

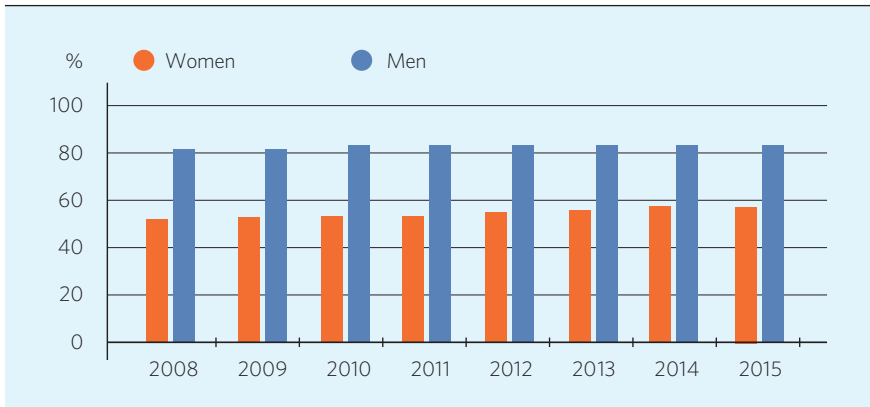
Overall, the rate of sickness absence for women working at municipalities, county councils and regions is almost twice the rate for men. Sickness absences increase with age, but the differences between the genders are greatest in the younger age groups. Women have both more mental health diagnoses and more strain injuries than men.

FIGURE 3. The proportion of full-time employees at the municipalities by gender, 2008–2015



Source: SALAR's HR statistics.

FIGURE 4. The proportion of full-time employees at the county councils/regions by gender, 2008–2015

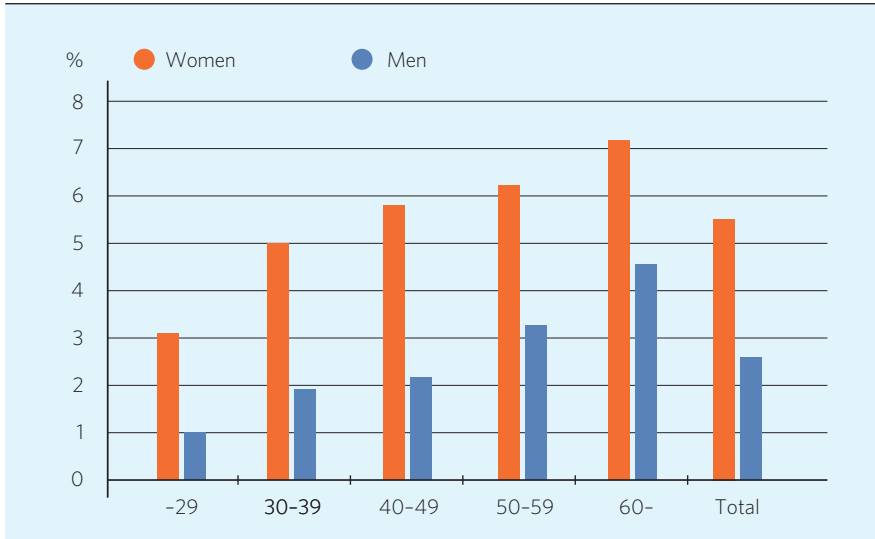


Source: SALAR's HR statistics.

Parental leave and care of a sick child

Men who work in the municipal sector take more parental leave days than men who work in the private sector. Women who work at municipalities, county councils and regions still take, on average, more parental leave days than men in the same sector.

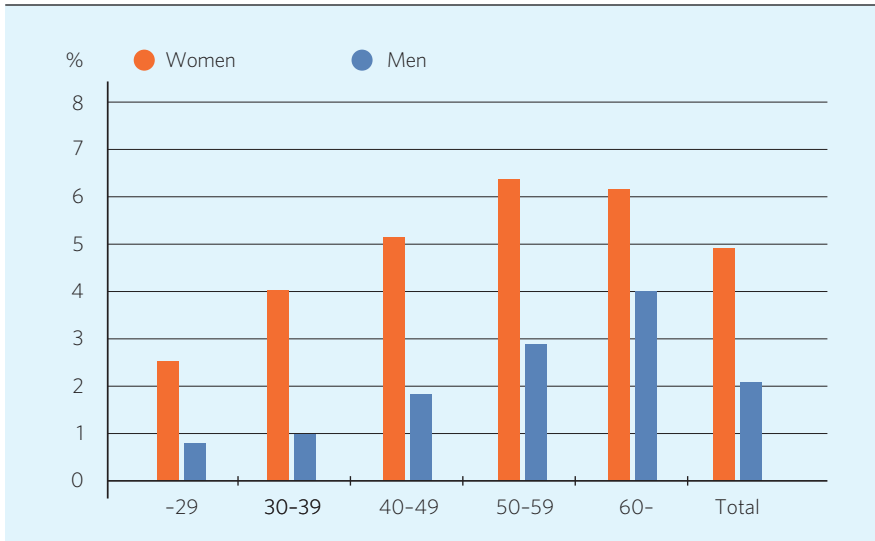
FIGURE 5. Sickness absences by gender and age at the municipalities in 2015



Age structure for sickness absences of at least 30 consecutive days with sickness allowance, 2015, by gender. Proportions in per cent of all employment for each gender and age range.

Source: SALAR's HR statistics.

FIGURE 6. Sickness absences by gender and age at the county councils/regions in 2015



Age structure for sickness absences of at least 30 consecutive days with sickness allowance, 2015, by gender. Proportions in per cent of all employment for each gender and age range.

Source: SALAR's HR statistics.



Structural differences affect employers

A female-dominated sector such as municipalities, county councils and regions is affected in a number of ways by the structural differences that exist between men and women in a number of ways. There is an impact on recruitment, for instance. If women alone apply for advertised positions, this means that the employer only has access to half the population as a recruitment base when new skills are required. This is a particularly urgent matter for the sector, as future recruitment needs are considerable. Municipalities, county councils and regions are also affected by the fact that women work part-time to a greater extent. If more employees work full-time, the need for recruitment declines.

High cost of absenteeism

A higher rate of absence among women has an impact on the employer from a cost perspective, as well as a recruitment perspective. One example is that the cost of loss of production in connection with care of a sick child (VAB) is 26 per cent higher at the municipalities, county councils and regions, compared with the private sector⁴. Sickness absences also affect the employer's costs. Municipalities, county councils and regions engage in activities that need to be manned around the clock, 365 days a year.

Note. 4. SALAR's calculations, data from Försäkringskassan



When ordinary staff are ill, take parental leave or stay at home with a sick child, a substitute generally needs to be found for them. A more equal use of parental insurance would reduce the need for substitutes at the municipalities, county councils and regions, which subsequently results in reduced costs and greater continuity of activities and thus probably also improved quality of service.

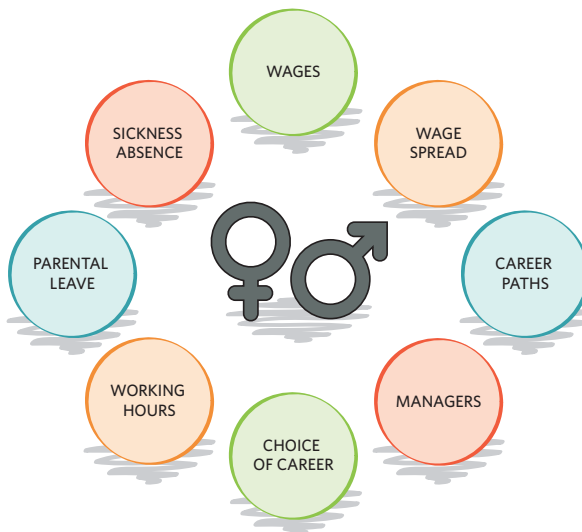
Important having a strategy for gender equality

The structural differences between men and women result in a diminished recruitment base, an increased need for recruitment and higher costs. Altogether, there is a risk that the welfare services provided by municipalities, county councils and regions are not as efficient or of as high a standard as they could be. The future challenges are therefore extensive, but they also provide a clear target to aim for. We are convinced that a more gender-equal labour market would lead to improved welfare. At the same time it is important to establish that SALAR's involvement in the matter is not just about achieving a broader recruitment base and increased cost efficiency. Municipalities, county councils and regions make up approximately 25 per cent of the Swedish labour market. SALAR and its members thus have a significant responsibility to identify all types of labour market-related inequality, and to use their influence to try to tackle these issues. An important element in these efforts is to have a well-thought-out and well-supported strategy. In the following sections we describe the measures and approaches we deem to be most effective in achieving greater gender equality at municipalities, county councils and regions – for the benefit of men, women and children!



SALAR's gender equality programme from an employer perspective

A survey of gender equality reveals that there are clear structural differences between men and women on the labour market. In order to give men and women equal opportunities in terms of career and wage development, we think that active and compelling gender equality work is needed. Taking the gender equality survey as a starting point, SALAR has produced an eight-point programme, which we deem to be the best way to improve gender equality at municipalities, county councils and regions.



1. Wages

Changes in wage structures must be possible

Wage structure offers a picture of what the employer regards as reasonable pay for various employee groups. As municipalities, county councils and regions need to offer wages which sought-after employees regard as suitable, it is important to take an active approach to wage and wage structure work. Using tools such as local wage setting and individual and differentiated pay, it is possible to change wage relations and focus structural efforts on certain professional groups based on each employer's need to increase wages. Thus, the employer creates better conditions for attracting skilled expertise and improving the quality of the activity.

2. Wage spread

The wage spread for female-dominated professions must increase

Generally speaking, female-dominated professional groups have less wage spread than male-dominated ones. For both employees and employers, there are compelling reasons to increase the wage spread. For the individual, an increased wage spread provides greater scope for developing a salary plan and influencing lifetime salary. For the employer, an increased wage spread improves conditions for using pay as a tool to develop operations and also offer the employee an opportunity to influence his or her pay.

A success factor in any successful wage setting process is that it is closely linked to budget and operational targets and not regarded as a separate issue. The employer has considerable responsibility for ensuring a high standard in terms of salary criteria, salary reviews and the wage setting process. Here, evaluation and training are important tools.

“We identify the unjustified wage differences”



Kicki Krane, an HR manager with Skellefteå Municipality, works to promote equal pay, a greater wage spread, and more career paths.

How are you working to ensure that men and women receive equal pay for equal work?

– We have declared that we must have equal pay and with that value base in mind we conduct an annual survey of all employee pay. Our administrations are

thus tasked with examining whether there are any unjustified wage differences between men and women and taking action in cases where there are. Fortunately, most aspects of our activities are doing well in this respect. However, during the most recent survey we discovered that a number of female upper secondary school teachers were receiving less pay than their male colleagues for no valid reason. We also noted some unexplained wage differences in preschools, but there it was the men who were being paid less.

What is your approach to wage spread?

– We are convinced that there is a great deal of value in focusing on wage spread, but we have had a tough time reaching a consensus on the model for discussions with the trade unions. All the same, it now seems that we are beginning to develop a model that is acceptable to everyone. The important thing is that managers and employees in dialogue can agree on the applicable wage criteria, and consequently what sort of performances we value. The employees must understand the rules and what the employer means by a “good” performance compared with “outstanding” performance, and what impact this can have on wage differences. If wage spread is to be meaningful, you also have to work with decent amounts. There’s never any way to justify why one employee is worth SEK 50 more than another pay-wise.

How are you working to create more career paths?

– This is one area of development where we have not made much headway yet. However, we think that it’s right to take a wide-ranging

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approach to career paths. Having the opportunity, as an employee, to move up to a supervisory position with more responsibility is incredibly important, but we also have to be open to other types of career paths. For example, switching career and taking up a new job might be another option. Or switching to duties that you think could lead to greater development or offer more freedom. Becoming a manager does not have to be the only alternative. Not all assistant nurses might become managers, but all assistant nurses have to have the opportunity to develop and pursue a career.

3. Career paths

More career paths must be created within female dominated professions

Of course, women must be able to forge careers on equal terms with men. However, there are unfortunately still obstacles in the way. One obstacle is that female-dominated professions have fewer career paths. Municipalities, county councils and regions have a significant responsibility to both clarify existing career paths and create new ones. A vital first step is to examine what conditions exist for men and women wanting to pursue a career in different professions.

For the employer, there are more reasons for improving women's opportunities to pursue a career than just the desire to achieve gender equality. More career paths are also important for attracting and retaining skilled employees. The opportunity to have a career instills commitment among employees and enables the employer to use the skills at their disposal in the right way.

4. Managers

There must be gender equality at the very top

In Sweden women are still underrepresented in the top positions in working life. The higher the position of power, the greater the proportion of men, irrespective of sector. The benefits of equality at the topmost level are clear. Positions that are of interest to both men and women should attract more candidates with the the right skills create workplaces where skilled employees want to remain and can develop.

In order to achieve the goal of equality at the very top, there needs to be more than just role models, clear career paths and equal use of parental insurance. There also needs to be knowledge and awareness of the unofficial obstacles and conditions giving men and women different access to power and influence in the workplace.

”We value potential over experience”



Birgitta Nilsson is an HR manager with Luleå Municipality, which has an equal distribution of men and women in its top management tier.

How have you gone about achieving equal gender distribution at the top?

– When Anne Karlenius took over as Municipal CEO in 2009, we were facing a generational change in the managerial team. Anne, at that point, introduced

an approach where greater consideration was given to competence and managerial qualities than experience. If you value experience most, then women with leadership potential easily end up in a vicious circle, as the majority of managers are men and so consequently fewer women have the advantage of managerial experience. One very important thing that Anne did was that she also actively encouraged women who she thought would make good managers to apply for jobs. Efforts like this were necessary because, generally speaking, men are better at speaking up for themselves and women perhaps don't push themselves forward as much despite having a higher level of education in many cases.

What results have you seen?

– One clear result is that the distribution of men and women at the very top is far more equal than it was. Today, 12 of the 23 top managers are women.

Is there any impact on activities from a greater proportion of top managers being women?

– Naturally it is difficult to say and an interesting question for researchers to look at. But in recent years we have made clear progress in terms of cross-border cooperation, for example, between different administrations. I can't say whether the increased ability and willingness to cooperate and to look beyond one's own field can be linked to the change in gender distribution, or to a new generation of managers. In any case, we regard the gender distribution at the top as a way of demonstrating that we are serious about our gender equality work.

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How important are role models?

- Extremely important. If women see that there are other women occupying top managerial roles within the organisation, then it's a much shorter step to applying for managerial posts.



5. Choice of career

Gender perceptions must not limit someone's study or career choices

Gender must not be an obstacle to choosing study subjects or a career. Less gender-stereotyped study and career choices would give the employer access to a broader recruitment base and a wider range of skills. For the student and the employee more equal gender distribution would improve conditions for being judged on ambition and skills, instead of gender stereotypes.

The challenge is to encourage the entire population, both men and women, to look at and reflect on the careers and opportunities that exist within welfare. An important element in this work is to challenge and change stereotypical gender roles and highlight differences in conditions in life. Here, education providers and employers play an important role in breaking down the norms and structures that limit the opportunities of men and women. Study and career choices based on knowledge pave the way for more conscious career choices based on interests and suitability.

”Men are needed in preschools”



Inga Sandström is an HR specialist with City of Malmö's preschools department, which is working towards the goal of at least 10 per cent of employees being men by 2020.

Why do you want there to be more men in preschools?

– There are two main reasons. The first is that there is a need to recruit more staff in the preschool sector, and that we currently almost exclusively recruit from half the population, i.e. women.

Focusing on men is one way to broaden our recruitment base. The second reason has to do with gender equality and diversity. We believe that it is a positive experience for preschool children to be able to meet a mixed team of staff that reflects society as a whole.

What action are you taking?

– A lot of it has to do with highlighting in various ways what preschool means today. We are still dealing with the legacy of “daycare centres” and the idea that the job “only” involves looking after children and changing nappies. When we visit job fairs and upper secondary schools, we talk about preschool as a stimulating pedagogic activity that lays the foundation for lifelong learning and where care, play, upbringing and learning are all equally important.

Do you also work with measures that specifically target men?

– Yes, for instance, we have introduced special routines for men studying to become preschool teachers at Malmö University. As we have seen a higher dropout rate among men, and many men say that they would prefer to work at preschools where there are other men, we ensure as far as possible that they can do their work placements at preschools where there are already male staff.

What attitudes do you encounter regarding ambitions to have more men in preschools?

– It is an issue that encourages debate and most people have a positive attitude to our work. Sometimes you encounter the notion that men in

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preschool is a good thing because it gives the children someone to play football and do woodwork with, but here at the preschools department we want to raise awareness of the issue by adopting a norm-critical approach. We value employees because of their skills, experience and ability, not because of their gender.

6. Working hours

Full-time must be the norm

The difference in lifetime income between men and women in Sweden is still SEK 3.6 million. A notable contributory factor is that a much greater proportion of women work part-time. Working part-time means a lower income, a lower pension and fewer opportunities to be financially independent and in control of your own life. For the employer it is therefore important to pursue the full-time issue – that full-time must be the norm – for gender equality reasons. More full-time employees at municipalities, county councils and regions would contribute to a more gender-equal labour market and a more gender-equal society.

The full-time issue is also important because municipalities, county councils and regions have significant recruitment needs. Demand for welfare services is currently increasing, as is the number of employees retiring. In order to have access to more personnel, the employer needs to replace part-time positions with full-time ones. However, a full-time position does not actually have to mean working full-time. Full-time contracts often include a right to work part-time for anyone wishing to do so. If employees are to improve their income, sickness allowance and pension, and employers are to overcome the recruitment challenge, then more people have to work more hours. Thus it is crucial that employees employed on a full-time basis also work full-time.

”Full-time work attracts men to the care sector”



An interview with Sven Fernlund Skagerud, who has been the project manager for full-time projects in Avesta, Hofors and Falun and is currently working on a full-time project for Hedemora Municipality.

You have been working for the right to full-time employment for over 15 years. How is it going?

– I have been motivated by gender equality right from the start. Within the municipal sector there are countless

women who entered employment as part-time workers but then never had the chance to go full-time. I am convinced that this has helped to perpetuate gender roles in society. It is easy for women who work part-time to end up in the traditional female role, taking care of most of the household chores.

In Falun you succeeded in increasing the proportion of full-time employees by 20 per cent, the highest in Sweden. How did you manage that?

– To start with, we had a stable foundation to build on in the form of a policy decision that all employees and anyone with a temporary position lasting more than three months should have full-time employment. We also worked in collaboration with the trade unions, which resulted in the municipality concluding full-time agreements with six different unions. But most of the work involved getting out into the operation and discussing how the transition to full-time employment could be implemented in practice. A key issue for us was fairness. We spent a great deal of time encouraging full-time employees to feel a sense of solidarity with the part-timers and to accept that new working models and schedules would affect everyone.

How do you think the projects have benefited gender equality?

– A clear impact of the chance to work full-time is that we now have more men wanting to work in the care sector. For many men it goes without saying that they will work full-time, and when the care sector offers them full-time employment, then the situation becomes a great deal more attractive.

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Have you discussed gender equality with the employees who have been involved in the full-time projects?

– Yes, and it has been one of the most exciting aspects. In Hofors, everyone took part in gender equality discussions. We also organised a special photography exhibition, with the images leading to some revealing discussions. Deeply personal and highly charged stories just came tumbling out of people. It reinforced my belief in the importance of working to achieve greater gender equality.

7. Parental leave

Leadership is crucial to achieving equal take-up of parental insurance

More equal use of parental insurance would have long-term and overwhelmingly positive consequences for both men and women. If men took more responsibility for the home and children, women's resources and skills could be employed to a greater extent on the labour market. More women could also work full-time. In female-dominated sectors, like municipalities, county councils and regions, more equal take-up of parental insurance would help to increase the continuity and quality of activities, because the need for substitutes would be reduced. Studies also show that more equal use of insurance has other positive effects in terms of gender equality. Parents who take equal amounts of parental leave also tend to split household chores and caring for sick children more equally between them. At the same time, the gap in lifetime salary between men and women also narrows.

The management is an important communicator of the values that govern an organisation. What managers say and do must reflect the content of steering documents and policies. Managers should also initiate discussions with employees, both men and women, about parental leave and encourage other managers, particularly men, to take more parental leave. Equally important is managers being able to take an equal share of leave. This creates role models which show that it is possible to combine work and a career with parenthood and a family.

”Everyone wins with gender-equal parental leave”



Kajsa Svaleryd is a gender equality strategist who works to ensure, among other things, that employees at Gävle Municipality are able to combine employment and parenthood.

Why is gender-equal parental leave an important issue for municipalities?

– Essentially, it’s a legal requirement for us. It is the employer’s obligation to make it easy for men and women to combine gainful employment with parenthood and to implement so-called active measures for both men and women. This is also an area where there is a great deal of work

still to do. When the Swedish Parental Leave Act was first introduced, men had a lot of motivation for taking more parental leave days, but the difference in use between men and women is still considerable and it shows no signs of changing. One reason is the gender norms that exist in our society and how these affect parenting. At an individual level, the difference means that opportunities for combining a professional life and parenthood differ for men and women. From a child’s perspective, gender-equal parental leave is about the right to spend time with both parents – a right under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

How is Gävle Municipality tackling this issue?

– We cannot control how an individual uses his or her days. Instead, what matters most is highlighting the issue and being clear about our position regarding gender equality work. Gender equality has a lot to do with culture having become structure, and as employers we have a great responsibility to try to change prevailing norms. We write about gender-equal parenting in our HR policy, we have produced a guide for manager/employee discussions in the event of parental leave, and we arrange training for our managers. However, modifying a culture is a demanding and long-term process, particularly as knowledge about gender equality is generally pretty low. The notion that “mum is a definite and dad is a possibility” is still deeply rooted in our society.

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What objectives have you worked on and what results are you seeing?

– In our annual employee survey 80 per cent answered yes to the question about whether it is possible to combine parenthood and employment in a good way. The objective is for that figure to rise to 100. One result which I think is apparent within the organisation is that it is beginning to be obvious that there is a gender equality perspective in connection with parental leave. The managers know that their work involves having discussions with employees before and after parental leave and that they need to support both men and women in making the decision to be with their children.

8. Sickness absences

The manager has a key role to play in preventing sickness absences

A good work environment is an important foundation for a low sickness absence rate. The employer's objective should therefore be to create workplaces that promote good health, with leadership that is present and supportive and which gives all employees scope for development, inclusion and influence.

A particularly important factor in this work is to prevent, by a variety of means, sick leave and the need for rehabilitation. Preventive efforts include strategies and methods for early identification of signs that an employee is unwell. The employer must be alert to signs of sexual harassment in the workplace, domestic violence or other types of abuse. Structured preventive work is necessary from a human perspective, and it also has positive consequences for the quality of activities.

”Involved employees are rarely ill”



Anne-Marie Eriksson is the head of Värmland County Council's cleaning service unit for the Karlstad area, which has seen a dramatic drop in its sickness absence rate.

What are the fundamental ideas behind Värmland County Council's approach to ensuring a work environment that promotes work?

– The most important thing is the belief that we are improving the quality of activities and reducing the risk of sick leave by increasing employee wellbeing

and involvement. It has a lot to do with inclusion. The employees must feel that they are important, that we are listening to them, and that they can influence their own working life.

In what way are you promoting good health in your activities?

– When I started there were a number of people who were frequently off sick for long periods and we had workplace meetings where no one said anything. It was clear that the employees felt invisible and undervalued. So I decided to go out and accompany them on their shifts. This provided me with knowledge about their actual work situation and also I developed a relationship with each employee, which has meant a lot in subsequent work. When you work with people, you always need a foundation of trust and respect.

What have been the most important changes?

– We focused massively on boosting the self-esteem of employees. Getting them to realise how valuable their work is to the operation as a whole. Getting them to stand up for themselves in front of managers and colleagues. Through dialogue, we identify the solution that works best for the person in question. One concrete development that I've pursued to increase involvement is putting on a computer course. Several of our older employees didn't know how the internet or the county council's intranet worked. Situations like that often result in people feeling excluded.

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What impact do you think the work has had?

– Sickness absences are down to a very low level and that feels really good. The atmosphere at our workplace meetings is completely different too. Now there are lively discussions and people are much more confident about giving and receiving constructive criticism.

Värmland County Council is working to develop health and work environment activities that promote good health. One objective is for the whole of Värmland County Council to be certified as a health-promoting workplace by 2021.

What you can do as an employer

Below are suggestions for activities that employers can actively pursue based on SALAR's gender equality programme.

1. Wages

Changes in wage structures must be possible

- Further develop wage setting by focusing on wage structure issues.
- Use wage setting to facilitate changes in wage relations and to be able to prioritize between groups.
- Organise networking meetings and training on pay and equal pay.
- Highlight the structural inequalities using statistics broken down by gender.

2. Wage spread

The wage spread for female-dominated professions must increase

- Identify effective models for wage spread.
- Work with individual and differentiated pay, which enables employees to influence their wage development throughout their working life.
- Engage in dialogue with employees and clarify how performance affects pay.
- Organise networking meetings and training looking at the value of wage spread in female-dominated professions.

3. Career paths

More career paths must be created within female-dominated professions

- Investigate what career paths are like for men and women in different professions.
- Develop career paths in order to improve the quality of activities.
- Organise workshops and get employees involved in concept work about making the most of their knowledge and potential career paths.
- Take a wide-ranging approach and emphasise that there is plenty of scope for using skills besides becoming a manager, for example, switching roles or changing profession.

4. Managers

There must be gender equality at the very top

- Ensure an approach where competence and managerial qualities are given scope, not just experience.
- Encourage women who would make good managers to apply for managerial positions and put them forward for roles.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of unofficial obstacles and conditions giving men and women different access to power and influence in the workplace.

5. Choice of career

Gender perceptions must not limit someone's study or career choices

- Heightened awareness and knowledge about how gender norms can limit the professional activities of men and women.
- Market and refine the image of working in welfare. Reflect diversity among employees and illustrate the breadth of content of professions, for example, in job adverts, at fairs, on your website or in other sources of information.
- Create more opportunities for young people to develop knowledge and experience of welfare work, as well as those who need to change career. BAL is a useful tool in this work.
- Plant an idea with young people by promoting the 90 000 or so holiday jobs that municipalities, county councils and regions offer each year. Ensure that girls and boys get work experience that challenges gender norms.
- How you view and treat employees should be based on their skills. Ensure that men who are in the minority in female-dominated workplaces are able to demonstrate their professional knowledge and are not reduced to male role models.

6. Working hours

Full-time must be the norm

- Encourage people in full-time employment to actually work full-time.
- Follow up on the reasons for part-time work and encourage full-time work during performance reviews.
- Make a clear political decision setting out what must be achieved and when it must be done.
- Organise the work so that the workload is distributed as evenly as possible. This makes introducing a full-time organisation easier.

7. Parental leave

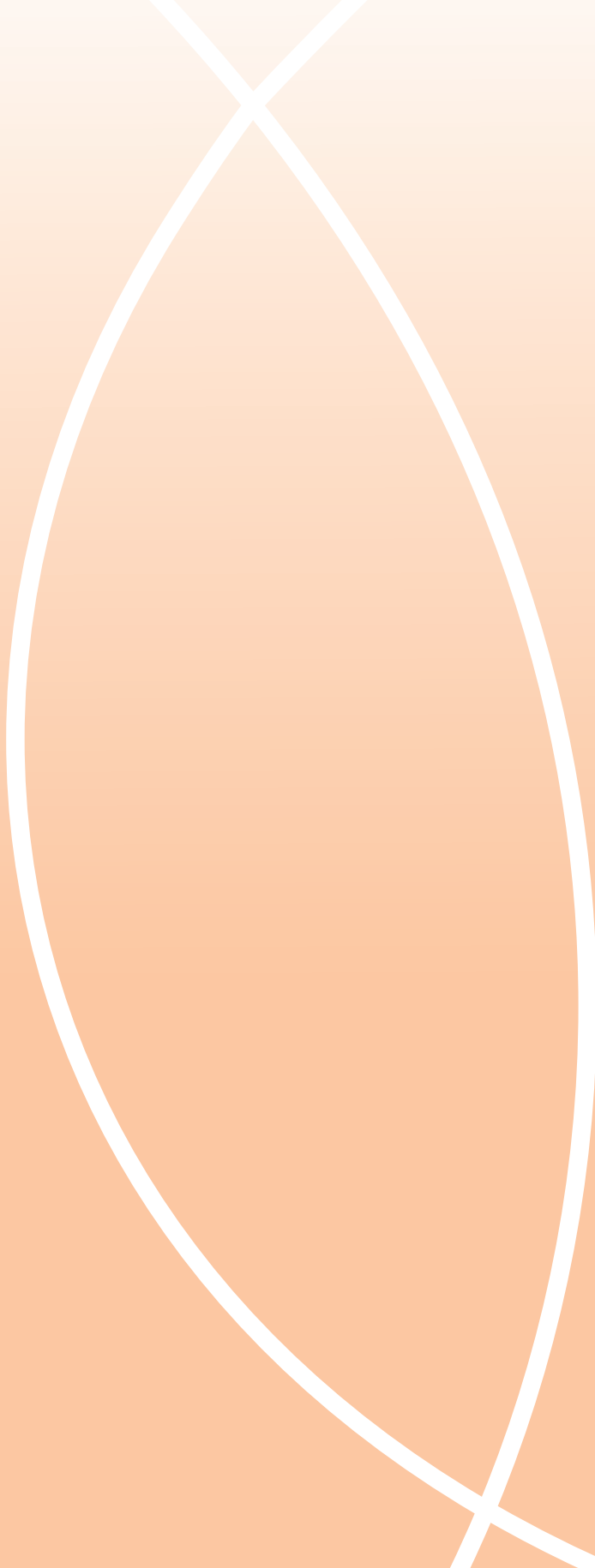
Leadership is crucial to achieving equal use of parental insurance

- Make it clear that the organisation values employees who want to be there for their children and that it is possible to combine parenthood and employment.
- Encourage both men and women to make use of parental insurance.
- Secure support for the aim of gender-equal parental leave among all managers.
- Introduce the process of managers having discussions with employees before and after parental leave.
- Encourage managers to adopt more equal take-up of parental insurance themselves.
- Make people aware of the consequences of unequal use of parental insurance and days off to care for a sick child on factors such as lifetime salary and pensions.

8. Sickness absences

The manager has a key role to play in preventing sickness absences

- Prevent physical and psychosocial risks using systematic work environment management.
- Take a preventive approach to work by promoting involvement and commitment among employees.
- Develop strategies and methods for identifying early warning signs of ill health.
- Look out in particular for indications of victimisation in the workplace.
- Ensure that first-line managers receive work environment training.



Gender equality from an employer perspective

There are clear structural differences between men and women on the labour market. In order to give men and women equal opportunities in terms of career and wage development, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) thinks that active and compelling gender equality work is needed.

Our aim with this report is to present SALAR's gender equality programme from an employer perspective. The programme includes, among other things, eight points that together can increase gender equality at municipalities, county councils and regions.

We hope that this report Gender Equality from an Employer Perspective will support welfare employers in their gender equality work.

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