

Summary

The situation of young people in the labour market has changed in recent decades. The age at which young people become established has increased, unemployment is higher and the labour market more unstable. It is not uncommon for young people to be engaged in short-term and temporary employment. The requirements concerning education have increased. This means that young people today have a harder time entering the labour market. Seen as a group, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) have a particularly difficult time becoming established in the labour market. In 2012, approximately eight per cent of the young people aged 15–24 years were in such a situation. Strong and stable support is required to help these young people find their way back to education, or to enter the labour market. For many of these young people it can be a long and difficult path back to education, or to gain a foothold in the labour market. Young people who have upper secondary education cope fairly well in the labour market. However, those who drop out of or never start upper secondary education have great difficulties. Other factors as well, such as the young person's socio-economic situation, affect the risk of neither working nor studying. Having been in this kind of situation can also have longer-term consequences for labour market establishment.

Under its terms of reference, the Inquiry is to analyse various statistical sources that can be used to identify the group comprising young people not in employment, education or training and, based on the analysis, propose quality-assured statistical indicators. The remit also includes analysing how broad collaboration can be achieved. The Inquiry is also to analyse the contributing factors to groups of young people not being in employment, education or training, and in particular examine whether there are structural factors contributing to a large proportion of these young people

being in social exclusion for extended periods. Finally, the Inquiry is also to identify and analyse the preventive efforts, including cooperative projects, and specific measures aimed at young people not in employment, education or training, seen as a group.

Diversity of measures, but lack of coordination

The Swedish Public Employment Service, municipalities, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and others offer measures aimed at the Inquiry's target group. Young people not in employment, education or training are often a priority group for measures, both in regular activities and projects. There is, however, an overlap of both measures and target groups between various actors. The level of ambition varies, as does the actual content. Knowledge of results and impacts is also limited. It is therefore unclear how well the measures suit the young people whose needs are greatest. Young people with extensive needs meet a variety of different actors in different types of contexts. The measures are not always coordinated between the actors. A young person can take part in municipal activities for a while, and shortly thereafter begin a central government activity with similar content. In addition to these activities, the young person may be in contact with the Swedish Social Insurance Agency or other government agencies. Often, no one has a comprehensive view and an overall responsibility to ensure that the young person receives individually adapted support. Furthermore, the Inquiry notes that there are a variety of different requirements that necessitate cooperation between public authorities regarding different groups of vulnerable young people. However, there is no general structure for national collaboration. It is organised in different ways. It may work well in certain municipalities while others may need to develop collaboration further.

Follow-up of young people and knowledge about measures must be developed

Today, unemployment is not a sufficient indicator for analysing young people's difficulties in the labour market. To better be able to meet young people's need for support and assistance in the transition between school and working life, knowledge must be developed. A

better knowledge base is needed that can help us to understand how many young people have difficulties and what the needs are regarding support measures. Such knowledge is lacking at present, both nationally and locally. This lack of knowledge means there is a risk of political initiatives in the area not being designed in an optimal manner. Accordingly, regular statistics on the Inquiry's target group are needed as well as deeper knowledge of different groups of young people who find it difficult to gain a foothold in the labour market.

Knowledge of how measures aimed at young people not in employment, education or training help individuals find jobs or enter educational programmes must also be developed. At present, however, it is not possible to offer measures adapted to the needs of a young person. Providing such measures requires a better knowledge base on the content and results of the measures.

The Inquiry's proposals

Young people not in employment, education or training – proposals regarding indicators and follow-up

Publish an indicator annually to calculate the number of young people not in employment, education or training

Unemployment is the indicator usually used to describe young people's difficulties in the labour market. However, in recent decades the situation of young people in the labour market has changed in a number of respects. Comprehensive statistical data is therefore needed to describe the group of young people who are not in employment, education or training. Statistics Sweden will therefore be instructed to report annually on the number of young people not in employment, education or training, based on the Labour Force Survey. Along with this new measure, a new indicator will be introduced in Swedish reports to describe the labour market status of young people.

Carry out in-depth analyses of young people's transition between school and working life

To be able to meet young people's need for support and assistance in the transition between school and working life, knowledge must be improved. For example, more knowledge is needed on how the labour market establishment process has changed over time for different groups of young people, and on regional and local variations regarding young people not in employment, education or training. The Inquiry therefore proposes that every third year, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs is to report on how young people's transition between school and working life has developed. The analyses are to focus on the groups identified as having a particularly hard time gaining a foothold in the labour market.

Supplement upper secondary school follow-ups

Statistics Sweden conducts regular follow-up of youth employment during the period starting with the conclusion of upper secondary education and the three following years. However, the Inquiry notes that there is a complete lack of follow-up information regarding young people who lack or discontinue such education. The Inquiry therefore proposes that Statistics Sweden increase its follow-up to also include young people who lack upper secondary education.

Better knowledge development and measures

Swedish Public Employment Service support to young people who, for special reasons, are very detached from the labour market will be analysed

The Inquiry considers that more young people not in employment, education or training should be given support in the transition between school and working life. In order to provide such support, more people should be in contact with the Swedish Public Employment Service. The Inquiry has noted that far from all concerned are in contact with the Service. The Inquiry considers this a problem and therefore proposes tasking Statskontoret (the Swedish Agency for Public Management) with conducting an in-depth analysis of the Swedish Public Employment Service's activities to assess how

well the Service's measures correspond to the needs and expectations of the target group.

Promote knowledge-based measures

When young people apply for financial assistance due to unemployment, the course of action available to the municipality is not limited to providing income support. The municipality also has the right to either offer or require that the young person participate in a labour market-related measure. Most municipalities conduct different forms of labour market-related measures for young people not in employment, education or training. The organisation and content of these measures vary. The Inquiry notes that there is a lack of knowledge of how these measures affect young people's opportunities for labour market establishment. The Inquiry therefore proposes measures that will benefit developments in the area of knowledge relating to labour market measures for young people receiving financial assistance. It is proposed that the National Board of Health and Welfare be instructed to expand *Kunskapsguiden* (a web-based knowledge guide). The guide will accordingly be expanded in the area of knowledge relating to municipal labour market measures for young people receiving financial assistance. The Board will be tasked with examining the possibilities of conducting a study of young people who have participated in municipal labour market-related measures, with the aim of improving knowledge of which measures are effective in helping participants become self-sufficient. If sufficient data is available, the Board is to conduct a study of this kind. In addition, the Inquiry proposes a financial investment of SEK 25 million annually between 2015 and 2017 within the framework of the *agreement on an evidence-based practice for good quality in social services*. The aim of this investment is, within the framework of the agreement, to stimulate long-term sustainable development as regards labour market measures for young people receiving financial assistance.

Strengthen existing structures for collaboration

Focus on young people within coordination associations (FineCo)

Collaboration on and coordination of measures for the Inquiry's target group can be developed. Central actors such as the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and municipalities can improve efforts to ensure that young people who have the greatest needs receive better support. There are, however, no cooperation structures for the Inquiry's target group that are established throughout the country. The Inquiry considers that activities conducted by coordination associations¹ are an established structure that can be developed and expanded to create better conditions for effective collaboration for young people not in employment, education or training. In addition, the Inquiry notes that young people from the age of 16 who are not in employment, education or training and who are in need of coordinated measures belong to the coordination associations' target group. The Inquiry therefore proposes that young people not in employment, education or training are to be given special focus within coordination associations, and special resources will be allocated for this purpose. The central government's share of the funding will increase by SEK 60 million annually between 2015 and 2017.

Clarification of opportunities to coordinate measures targeting young people under the age of 20 who are outside of upper secondary education

Today, municipal participation in coordination associations usually takes place within the framework of activities carried out by the social services. Young people not in employment, education or training share a great need for education-oriented measures. The Inquiry therefore considers that the education sector's role in the financial coordination of rehabilitation measures should be clarified. This clarification should be linked to the Inquiry's proposal on municipal responsibility to act, presented in its interim report.² The Inquiry

¹ Associations under the Act on Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures (2003:1210) (FineCo).

² SOU 2013:13 *Young people outside of upper secondary school – a clearer responsibility for central government and municipalities.*

proposes that the Education Act be clarified so that, within the framework of its responsibility to act regarding young people under the age of 20 who are outside of upper secondary education, a municipality may reach agreements with the county council, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the Swedish Public Employment Service on collaboration aimed at achieving a more effective use of available resources.

Swedish Public Employment Service must prioritise collaboration concerning young people

In many cases, young people who are very detached from the labour market are in need of support from more than one public authority. The Swedish Public Employment Service is a central actor regarding this support to young people. The Service is to work actively with this group from their very first day of unemployment and early measures are to be directed towards young people who have a substantial need for support. The Inquiry considers it of great importance that the Swedish Public Employment Service develops collaboration with other actors as regards young people who are very detached from the labour market and in need of coordinated measures. The Inquiry therefore proposes that the Swedish Public Employment Service highlight this group in work within coordination associations, in accordance with the Act on Financial Coordination of Rehabilitation Measures (2003:1210). In addition, the Inquiry proposes that the Service be instructed to develop support for young people who, for special reasons, are very detached from the labour market and in need of coordinated measures through deepened collaboration with municipalities and other relevant authorities. Collaboration should be developed within the framework of coordination association activities or, where this is not possible, directly with relevant municipal and other authorities.

Appoint a national coordinator to promote cooperation concerning young people

The Inquiry has noted that a variety of different measures are being conducted which are aimed at the target group, and that many different types of requirements are placed on local and national

authorities regarding cooperation on different segments of the target group. However, there is no authority or organisation that has a holistic perspective and that drives the issues forward at national and local level. Nor is there a national superstructure that drives development of youth issues in coordination association activities. The Inquiry therefore considers that there is a need for an actor that promotes a development in which more young people with complex needs receive coordinated support. In light of this, the Inquiry proposes appointing a national coordinator between 2015 and 2017 to stimulate and support coordination association measures aimed at young people.

Right to education for young people not in the target group for upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities

Introduce a right to upper secondary adult education

Being erroneously placed in education for pupils with learning disabilities can have major consequences on a young person's opportunities for labour market establishment. Several legislative amendments have been introduced in recent years aimed at ensuring that children and young people are not erroneously placed in schools for pupils with learning disabilities. Despite these amendments, children and young people are sometimes erroneously placed in education for pupils with learning disabilities, and these erroneous placements are not detected and corrected. There are therefore children who complete their studies in upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities even though they do not belong to the target group for that school type. At present, this group does not have the right to education at upper secondary level.

The Inquiry therefore proposes that a right to upper secondary adult education be introduced for students for whom, after completing studies at upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities, it is established do not belong to that school type's target group. The home municipality is to be obliged to promptly examine whether, at the time a request for an examination is made, a previous student belongs to the target group for upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. It will be possible to appeal decisions taken by the home municipality in this issue to the Board of Appeal for Education.

Obligation to report and re-examine is to apply to all pupils in education for pupils with learning disabilities

On 1 July 2013, a stronger obligation was introduced to report and re-examine placements in education for pupils with learning disabilities when grounds exist for believing that a pupil no longer belongs to the target group for compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities or upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. The new provisions are to be applied to educational programmes begun after 30 June 2013.³ It is the Inquiry's assessment that the new regulations on the obligation to report and re-examine are only to apply to pupils who begin their educational programme after that date. Strong grounds of legal security support also including pupils who began their educational programmes before 1 July 2013 within the scope of the new regulations.

The Inquiry therefore proposes that the transitional provisions be amended so that the regulations on the obligation to report and re-examine suspected erroneous placements in education for pupils with learning disabilities are to apply to all pupils in compulsory or upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities from 1 July 2013. This means that all pupils attending compulsory or upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities are covered by the obligation to report and re-examine.

Financial consequences of the proposals

The Inquiry's proposals will primarily entail a temporary increase of costs for the central government and some permanent increase of costs for the municipal sector. The proposals may entail increased costs for the central government amounting to some SEK 100 million annually between 2015 and 2017. This is primarily due to increased costs for an enhanced focus on young people in coordination association activities. For the municipal sector the proposals entail increased costs of some SEK 2 million annually due to the proposed obligation concerning the right to education for young people who, after completing studies, do not belong to the target group for upper secondary education for pupils with learning disabilities. The

³ Point 1, transitional provisions to SFS (2012:109).

Inquiry proposes that the increased costs be financed by appropriations.

Entry into force and transitional provisions

It is proposed that the Inquiry's proposed legislative amendments enter into force on 1 January 2015. Transitional provisions are not deemed necessary.