

ISF Report 2013:12

To speak a universal language

A common structure in the assessment
of childcare allowance

Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate

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Summary

The Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate (Inspektionen för socialförsäkringen, ISF) is an independent supervisory agency for the Swedish social insurance system. The objectives of the agency are to strengthen compliance with legislation and other statutes, and to improve the efficiency of the social insurance system through system supervision and efficiency analysis and evaluation.

The ISF's work is mainly conducted on a project basis and is commissioned by the Government or initiated autonomously by the agency. This report has been initiated by the agency.

The aim of this study is to examine whether structure and language can, with reference to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, Children and Youth version (ICF-CY), be used in the administration of childcare allowance in order to make assessments and decisions clearer and more consistent and thereby improving legal certainty. ICF-CY has been developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and offers a universal common language to facilitate documentation and identification of the child's functional capacity and health in their environment.

Having a child with a disability or an illness can mean extra expenses and work. For this reason, childcare allowance, which was introduced in 1964, is available to provide parents with financial assistance. To be entitled to a childcare allowance, the child must require special supervision and care for at least six months. It is also possible to obtain a childcare allowance if the parents have large additional expenses due to the child's disability or illness.

The register analysis in this report shows differences in the extent of the childcare allowance related to regions, genders and the recipients' socioeconomic affiliations. Unfortunately, one cannot say whether these differences are factual or non-factual, or whether the differences observed may be explained by the child's assessed needs for special

supervision and care, since this information is not available in the register in the same way as, for example, an individual's diagnosis.

In this study, information on 264 cases involving first-time applications for childcare allowance has been translated into the structure and language of the ICF-CY. The results suggest that the application of the structure and language of the ICF-CY in the management of childcare allowance could increase the stringency and transparency - and thus the legal accuracy (?) - of the decision-making process. Documenting a child's functional capacity and health according to the structure and language of ICF-CY would also make it possible to document the assessment of an individual's functional capacity in the data register. This would allow for more accurately analysis of what may be factual and non-factual differences in the extent of childcare allowance between regions and various recipients of care allowance.