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Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

Division for Social Services and Disability Policy

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Contribution of older persons to sustainable development

All public power in Sweden proceeds from the people and the Riksdag is the foremost representative of the people. This is stated in the Instrument of Government – the fundamental law setting out the basic principles of democracy. The Instrument of Government describes how the country is to be governed, democratic rights, and how public power is to be divided. The fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens are central to the Instrument of Government.

The Instrument of Government starts by setting out the foundations of democratic society and establishes that all public power in Sweden proceeds from the people. This means that the citizens exercise an influence through the politicians that are voted to represent them in the Riksdag, municipalities and regions. This is known as representative democracy.

The Discrimination Act (2008:567) prohibits discrimination based on age regarding different areas of society, for example working life, starting or running a business, housing, and social insurance.

The Discrimination Act states that compliance with the act is supervised by the Equality Ombudsman. The Equality Ombudsman is a government agency that works to promote equal rights and opportunities and to combat discrimination. The Ombudsman shall among other things inform, educate, discuss and have other contacts with government agencies, enterprises, individuals and organizations. If a person is discriminated against based on age, they can lodge complaints and seek redress via the Equality Ombudsman, who can bring a court action and make an application for a financial penalty with the Board against Discrimination.

Collaboration with civil society is a central part of policy for civil society and in the implementation of Sweden's international undertakings in the area of human rights. As long ago as 1991 the Government established a national pensioner committee that now consists of six pensioner organisations that meets the responsible minister four times per year. The Government and national agencies also collaborate on a continuing basis with pensioner organisations in other matters. At a municipal review conducted by the Agency for Participation in spring 2021, almost 250 municipalities had some form of council for older people/pensioners, or a welfare services council that included older people issues.