

## **ELECTROHYPERSENSITIVITY (EHS) - PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT IN SWEDEN**

Somewhere between 230,000 - 290,000 people in Sweden report a variety of symptoms when in contact with EMF sources. There is a Swedish Association for the electro-sensitive - [www.feb.se](http://www.feb.se)

The letter from Johan Bonander to Alan Meyer 10/11/04 attached in response to Bircham Dyson Bell's email explains. Could we follow this in the UK?

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*Professor Olle Johansson of the Experimental Dermatology Unit at the Karolinska Institute has given me your name and suggested that I write to you seeking information concerning applicable procedures and the way such matters are dealt with in Sweden in Sweden concerning electro-sensitivity.*

*1 I have been advised that in Sweden electro-sensitivity is a medically recognised condition, and that approximately 285,000 people in Sweden are registered as having this handicap or physical impairment condition.*

*2 Unfortunately in the United Kingdom electro-sensitivity or hyper-sensitivity is not medically understood and accordingly the condition is not recognised as a disability for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which I think came about following a United Nations 1993 decision or directive.*

*3 Recently with the arrival of 3G mobile phone masts and base stations and also the Police Emergency TETRA Network, the question of some element of the UK population perhaps being electro-sensitive, and as a result more susceptible to possible RF radiation from the transmitting antennae, is assuming greater importance.*

*4 Professor Johansson has advised me that you would probably be able to provide me with detailed information about how medically, or otherwise, people in Sweden are assisted, and what benefits and protection as a result are available to such electro-sensitive people - some of whom have very difficult lives as a result of electricity and RF radiation affecting their living environments.*

*5 On behalf of Sir William Stewart FRS, it would be helpful to have copies of any information you may have recently provided at the request of the NRPB in England, instructed officially to obtain such information from Sweden by Sir William.*

*The Swedish position follows from the UN General Assembly Resolution 48/96 annex adopted on 20 December 1993, dealing with "the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities".*

*I think our Disability Discrimination Act 1995 arose out of the same UN General Assembly Resolution.*

*Regards*

**Alan Meyer**  
Legal Director Mast Action UK

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**Dear Alan Meyer,**

Thank you very much for your mail. I have not been contacted by the NRPB and therefore consequently not sent them any information.

To your questions: It is correct that we look upon electrohypersensitivity (EHS) as a physical impairment in the community service in Sweden. Thus, in Sweden, EHS is not regarded as a disease. Survey studies show that somewhere between 230 000 - 290 000 Swedish men and women report a variety of symptoms when being in contact with EMF-sources, (EMF= electromagnetic fields).

The electrohypersensitive persons have their own handicap organisation: The Swedish Association for the ElectroSensitive, [www.feb.se](http://www.feb.se) (the website has an English version). This organisation is included in the Swedish Disability Federation (HSO). HSO is the unison voice of the Swedish disability associations towards the government, the parliament and the national authorities and its co-operative body consists today of 43 national disability organisations with all together about 500 000 individual members. You can read more on [www.hso.se](http://www.hso.se) (the site has an English short version).

The municipalities have to follow the UN 22 Standard Rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (about the UN 22 Standard Rules see website: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm>). All persons with disabilities shall be given the assistance and service they have the right to according to the Swedish Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments "LSS-lagen" and the Swedish Social Services Act "Socialtjänstlagen".

People with disabilities thus have many different rights and can get different kinds of support. The purpose of those rights and the support is to give every person the chance to live like everyone else. Everyone who lives in the Stockholm municipality shall be able to lead a normal life and the city must have correct knowledge and be able to reach the people who need support and service. People with disabilities shall be able to get extra support so that they can live, work, study, or do things they enjoy in their free time. The city is responsible for making sure that everyone gets enough support. Everyone shall show respect and remember that people may need different kinds of support.

A person is disabled when the environment contains some sort of impediments. It means that in that moment a man or women in a wheelchair can not come onto the bus, a train, or into a restaurant this person have a disability, is disabled. When the bus, the train or the restaurant are adjusted for a wheelchair, the person do not suffer from his disability and is consequently not disabled. A EHS-person claim to suffer from EMFs when the environment is not properly adapted according to their personal needs. Strategies to enable a person with this disability to attend common rooms such as libraries, churches and so on, is for instance to switch of the high-frequency fluorescent lamps and instead use ordinary light bulbs. Another example is the possibility to switch of - the whole or parts of - the assistive listening systems, (people with EHS are often very sensitive to assistive listening systems).

In the Stockholm municipality - were I work as a project coordinator with the responsibility to investigate comprehensive issues for people with disabilities - people who are sensitive for EMFs have the possibility to get their home sanitized for EMFs. It means for example that ordinary electricity cables are changed to special cables. Furthermore the electric stove can be changed to

*a gas stove and walls, roof and floor can be covered with special wallpaper or paint with a special shelter to stop EMFs from the outside (from neighbours and mobiletelephony base stations). Even the windows can be covered with a thin aluminum foil as an efficient measure to restrain EMFs to get into the room/home. If these alterations turn out not to be optimal they have the possibility to rent small cottages in the countryside that the Stockholm municipality owns. These areas have lower levels of irradiation than other. Stockholm municipality also intend to build a village with houses that are specially designed for people who are electrohypersensitive. This village will be located in a low-level irradiation area.*

*People who are sensitive for EMFs have also a general (legal) right to be supported by their employer so that they can work despite of this disability. For instance, they can get special equipments such as computers that are of low-emission type, have high-frequency fluorescent lamps changed to ordinary light bulbs, no DECT phones in their rooms, and so on.*

*Some hospital in Sweden also have built special rooms with very low EMFs so that people who are hypersensitive can get medical care. Another example is the possibility for people who are electrohypersensitive to get a specially designed car so that the person can transport himself between his/her home and work.*

*Recently, some politicians in the Stockholm municipality even proposed that in the subway in the Stockholm City a part of every trainset should be free from mobile phones; that the people have to switch of the phones in these selected parts to enable people with EHS to travel with the subway, (compare this with persons who have a sensitivity for animal fur whereupon people consequently is prohibited to have e.g. as dogs or cats in selected parts of the trainset). I hope that these summarizing sentences may help you in your forth-coming endeavour.*

*Thank you for your mail!*

*Yours sincerely*

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