

Unlawful influence

– a concern for the state

Lars Sundström 24 april 2009

Hot på jobbet

Trygghet, rättssäkerhet
och god arbetsmiljö

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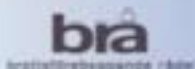
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Hot på jobbet



Hot på jobbet är en hemsida som vänder sig till tjänstemän inom staten. De kan vara chefer, medarbetare, fackliga representanter eller specialister inom personal- eller säkerhetsfunktioner.

Här finns information om det som kallas oönskad påverkan, det vill säga trakasserier, hot, våld och korruption, som utförs av personer utanför myndigheten och som är riktat mot anställda eller myndigheten som sådan. Hemsidan ger råd och tips om hur man kan hantera och motverka sådan påverkan.

Syftet med hemsidan är att på lättillgängligt sätt

- tillhandahålla verktyg för utvecklingsarbete
- sprida kunskaper om möjligheter att motverka oönskad påverkan
- inspirera de lokala parterna till insatser
- utgöra en portal inom ämnet med länkar och hänvisningar i relevanta publikationer.

Partsrådet/Satsa friskt och Brottsförebyggande rådet (Brå) har i samarbete utvecklat denna webbplats och en handbok mot oönskad påverkan. Brå ger ut handboken (se publikationer ovan) och Partsrådet ansvarar för webbplatsen.

Inom de olika avsnitten på hemsidan finns det länkar till motsvarande avsnitt i handboken, som ger fördjupningsmöjligheter för den intresserade.



Partsrådet

The Central Government Social Partners' Council, the council for joint support in the public sector, is a non-profit association whose members

are the Swedish Agency for Government Employers, OFR/S,P,O, Saco-S and SEKO. Its focus is on supporting local branches to handle shared issues that are decided by the central branches by collective agreement. There is more information about the Social Partners' Council at www.partsradet.se.

Unlawful influence – a concern for the state

– A collaboration between The Central Government Social Partners' Council (Partsrådet) and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ)

'I'm going to kill you, you bastard!'

The man is furious. He jumps over the reception desk at the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and tears down everything within reach. Henrik runs for his life.

.....

One day, Berit's telephone rings at her desk at the Swedish Migration Board. A man threatens to commit suicide if he doesn't get a residence permit. If that happens, it will be Berit's fault. A few months ago, something similar happened. That time, the person concerned came to the Migration Board offices and slit his wrists. Berit knows that this man's case, which she is processing, is likely to end in a rejection of his request for a residence permit. She goes home from work with a pounding headache.

These are two examples of incidents at ordinary, government authority workplaces. They illustrate the reality behind this project to counteract threats and violence.

Threats and violence at work are a working environment issue and a social issue

In a twelve-month period, 490,000 people were exposed to threats and violence in the course of their official duties. This figure has been estimated by Statistics Sweden on the basis of the Investigation of circumstances (ULF) survey 2006-2007.

That is 30,000 more than the number of people affected by threats and violence on the streets during the same period. In other words, every year, every tenth employee risks facing threats or violence at work.

The risks vary between different professions. In government and local authority positions, those who are particularly at risk include police officers, healthcare personnel, social workers, welfare officers, enforcement officers and personnel at various kinds of institutions and custodial facilities. Even employees of the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the Swedish Public Employment Service are increasingly affected by this problem. In the private sector, those who are most at risk include security officers and cashiers in shops and petrol stations.

Around sixty-five percent of those affected are women, and around ninety percent of the perpetrators are men (ULF).

High risk at many government authorities

Within the public sector, which is the area in which The Central Government Social Partners' Council (1) works, the highest risk groups are employees of the Enforcement Service (47 percent), the Migration Board (37 percent) and the Labour Market Administration (23 percent). This was shown by a survey carried out by ST, the Union of Civil Servants, in the early 2000s. Around 14 percent of those who responded to the survey had been exposed to some kind of threats or violence.

At the time the survey was carried out, Social Insurance Agency employees were not members of ST, so they were not included in the survey. However, an article published in City newspaper on 19 January 2009 stated that the number of threatening and violent incidents reported had increased from 25 to 245 in the period from 2001 to 2008. In one personnel survey, 670 employees stated that they had been threatened at some point.

In 2005, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) was tasked by seven judicial authorities with documenting the incidence of serious unlawful influence, including harassment, threats, violence and corruption. Particularly at risk were enforcement officers (20 percent), public prosecutors (almost 15 percent), coastguards (14.5 percent), customs officers (just over 13 percent) and police officers (just over 12 percent). Note that this investigation focused on serious unlawful influence, so the threshold was set higher than in the other surveys.

Individual authorities have also documented the incidence of threats and violence. A survey carried out by Östergötland County Administrative Board in 2005 showed a frequency of threats and violence of around 19 percent. At the driver division of the Swedish Road Administration (driving test centre), around 17 percent of employees had been exposed to threats and violence in 2007.

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's statistics on reported incidents of threats against civil servants show different levels. A total of around 5500 cases were reported in 2005, compared with 2200 in 1990. It seems, therefore, that only 10 percent of the total number of cases of threats and violence are reported to the police. In general terms, it is likely that these incidents are underreported in the official systems, compared with surveys that target individual civil servants.

The Social Partners' Council, Satsa Friskt, and Threats and Violence priority area

Satsa Friskt ('invest in health') is a health programme run by the Social Partners' Council that seeks to support government authorities in activities that improve the working environment, reduce absence due to ill health, and improve cooperation between local branches. The programme was launched in 2003 and will run until 2010. Satsa Friskt has contributed about SEK

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160 million to around 200 projects at around 50 authorities. The programme covers six priority areas, under which authorities can apply for funding. One of these areas is Threats and Violence.

Unlawful influence in the form of harassment, threats, violence and even corruption is not just a working environment problem. It also has an effect on how the authorities function, and as a result, it is an issue of democracy. Tackling unlawful influence also strengthens civil servants' ability to exercise their public authority.

In 2005, a considerable number of applications for project funding were submitted under the Threats and Violence priority area. Many authorities had similar problems. Around sixty of these took a particularly in-depth approach to the risk for threats and violence – much more in-depth than Satsa Friskt was able to support. As a result, there was a suggestion for a development project in collaboration with several authorities. The idea was to make use of experience in this area and to find methods that could stimulate and support other authorities in their development work.

The Social Partners' Council/Satsa Friskt took the initiative of launching an informal collaboration with BRÅ and seven authorities that had been tasked with documenting the incidence of threats and violence.

Documentation in judicial authorities

BRÅ's documentation of unlawful influence in judicial authorities was carried out in 2005. The survey was based on 4500 survey responses from civil servants in the Swedish Coast Guard, the Swedish Customs, and the Swedish Tax Agency as well as police officers, public prosecutors, judges, jurors, and civil servants from the Swedish Enforcement Service's collection service.

The question was to what extent, and in what way, civil servants were exposed to unlawful influence in the form of harassment, threats, violence and attempted corruption, where the intention was to influence the exercise of public authority. The focus here was a more serious form of influence than simply the type of influence that police officers meet in their daily work. Twelve percent of the civil servants had been exposed to unlawful influence at some point during the one-and-a-half year period to which the survey referred.

BRÅ's assessment of the survey was that 'the unlawful influence situation is serious, but at the same time it shouldn't be exaggerated'. However, unlawful influence is a problem that should be given higher priority by the authorities. BRÅ also felt a responsibility to manage and process the knowledge acquired via surveys and interviews of civil servants, which illustrated a reality that affected many more people. With this in mind, it seemed natural for BRÅ to start thinking along the lines of a handbook.

The need for a development in this area was also felt within the Satsa Friskt initiative. So BRÅ and Satsa Friskt began discussions on how to collaborate on a joint project.

Collaboration between BRÅ and the Social Partners' Council

One important lesson from the BRÅ surveys was the difficulty in separating the democracy aspect of unlawful influence from the working environment aspect. Unlawful influence has an effect on the working environment, not only for the person targeted but also for those around that person. It was shown that particular types of harassment from perpetrators with access to resources could have an almost paralysing effect on an entire working group.

Naturally, when the working environment is affected in this way, it also has an impact on the authority's way of working. The authority's ability and stamina in upholding legislation is affected.

Passiveness itself can pose a threat to democracy. On the other hand, employers who make a great effort to maintain a good working environment and an open atmosphere should be well placed to resist unlawful influence. One feature of a good working environment is that employees can discuss problems with superiors who are good at listening and who are prepared to take action. No individuals or working groups should be left alone in a crisis situation. In this way, authorities are in a better position to be able to carry out their duties and counteract unlawful influence.

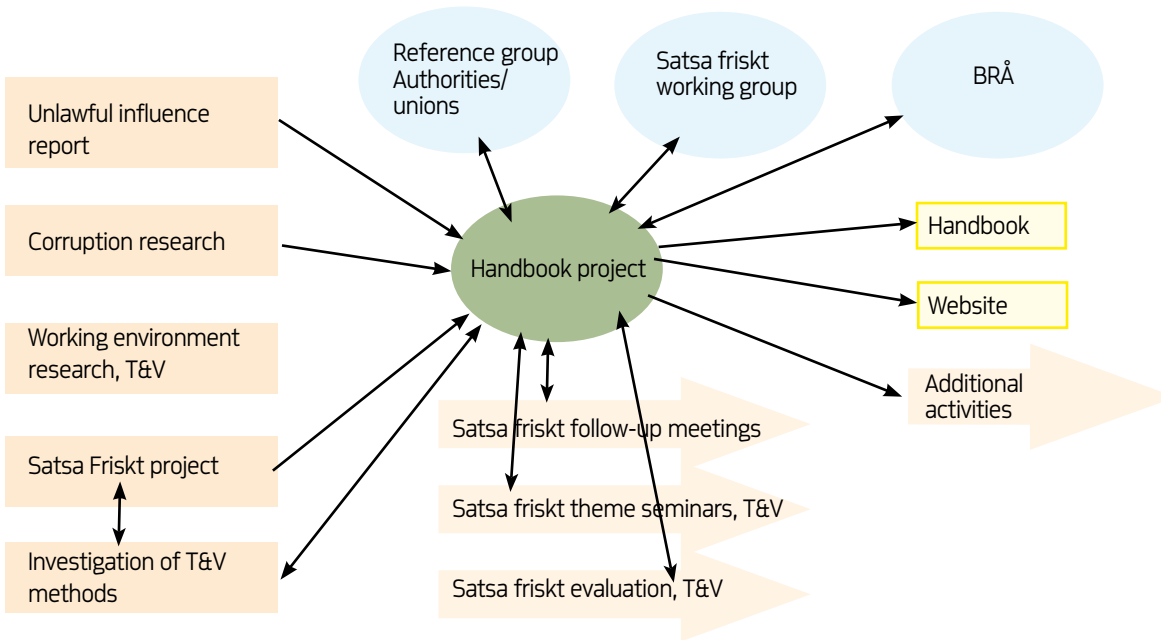
In this way, fostering a good working environment is a key element of protecting democracy. The collaboration between BRÅ and the Partners' Council is based on this holistic approach.

Three products have been developed to support the authorities' work to combat unlawful influence:

- A handbook produced primarily by BRÅ
- A website, www.hotpajobbet.se, produced primarily by the Social Partners' Council
- Additional activities (seminars), primarily run by the Social Partners' Council

This development work is based on proven experience and scientific documentation. The website is designed to provide tools and stimulating examples that are useful and updated regularly. The handbook too is designed to be practical and pedagogic, while also including a more in-depth, theoretical perspective.

The project as a whole can be seen as a joint project to combat threats and violence, and has been nominated for the 2009 Götapriset Award. The following diagram describes the project:



Around 60 authorities in the target group

The Social Partners' Council judged that the risk of being subjected to threats and violence while car-

Authorities in target group for particular vulnerability to threats and violence in carrying out official duties Categorisation of authority work, as relevant in the context

Authority	Uniformed work	Institution/ custodial facility	Supervision/ checks	Executive/ decision- making	Solitary work
The Public Employment Service			x	x	
The Work Environment Authority			x	x	
The Equality Ombudsman			x	x	
CSN			x	x	
The National Courts Administration				x	
The Economic Crime Authority			x	x	
The Social Insurance Agency			x	x	
The Board of Agriculture			x	x	
The Prison and Probation Service		x			
The Enforcement Service				x	
The Coast Guard	x				
County Administrative Boards (17)			x	x	x
The National Land Survey			x	x	x
The National Food Administration			x	x	
The Migration Board			x	x	
The National Board of Forensic Medicine				x	
SCB					x
SIS		x			
The Maritime Administration			x	x	
The Tax Agency/The Enforcement Service			x	x	
The National Board of Health and Welfare			x	x	
The Police (20 branches)	x		x		
The Customs	x				
Universities and colleges (35)				x	
The Road Administration			x	x	x
The Prosecution Authority				x	

rying out official duties was greatest at around 60 authorities, depending on their area of work. BRÅ agreed with this assessment. The highest risk authorities are as follows:

The problems of threats and violence probably exist to some degree at a number of other authorities, but the highest incidence is among this group.

Development work

A project group was established in 2006 and completed its work in 2007. The handbook and website were developed on the basis of a shared logical and pedagogical perspective and based on the same material. Eva R Andersson, consultant at Satsa Friskt, and Karolin Wallström, investigator at BRÅ, were responsible for researching and writing the resources. Internal Legal Officer Lars Korsell was the project manager from BRÅ who was responsible for the handbook. The project manager from the

Partners' Council was Lars Sundström, who was responsible for the priority area Threat and Violence, the website, and the additional activities.

The content of the handbook and the website is based on research on unlawful influence and the working environment. The project began by investigating current research relevant to unlawful influence, in BRÅ's focus areas of criminology, rule of law and democracy, and the Social Partners' Council's focus areas of working environment and party cooperation. Experience from the Satsa Friskt priority area of Threats and Violence, as well as its authority projects, was gathered via interviews and systematised. Four themed seminars were organised, targeting participants from several authorities. The aim of these was to raise awareness and knowledge of unlawful influence at authorities, and to give them resources on which to base their development work.

Satsa Friskt had already initiated a network against threats and violence in the Östergötland region. This network was brought in as a reference group for the project, and performed ongoing checks of suggested measures and texts. The group was composed of representatives of the County Administrative Board in E-County, the Social Insurance Agency, the County Labour Board, the Maritime Administration, the Tax Agency and the Migration Board – all with a connection to the Östergötland region. The network coordinator was Jasmina Berberovic from the County Administrative Board.

The Handbook

The handbook Counteract unlawful influence provides support for authorities in their work to develop measures against unlawful influence. The term 'measures against unlawful influence' covers crime prevention, democracy support and working environment initiatives. Measures are recommended on the basis of scientific evidence and proven experience.

The focus is on

- preventing unlawful influence from taking place
- taking immediate action when unlawful influence does happen
- carrying out follow-up work when unlawful influence has occurred.

These measures – before, during and after unlawful influence has taken place – can each be managed on four levels:

- Planning and organisation at the authority (how the authority plans, organises and uses systems and routines that are relevant to unlawful influence).
- People at the authority (how leadership, managers, HR and security personnel, employees and union representatives work to counteract unlawful influence in their professional roles).
- People outside the authority (for example, how corporate healthcare, the police and other authorities work to counteract unlawful influence).

- Societal level (how the government and parliament, the employment market, development bodies in the public sector, and authorities with a supervisory role create conditions that prevent unlawful influence).

These four levels also describe the target groups of the handbook: individual employees, specialist personnel and managers at various levels at authorities who could be subjected to unlawful influence. In addition, there is a description of collaborating authorities and bodies that can support authorities and people who have been subjected to unlawful influence. Lastly, there is a description of affected areas of the government sector and certain social bodies with broad responsibilities.

Since the handbook is designed to function as a practical tool in daily working life, it does not contain any suggested measures at a societal level. Nonetheless, it should be significant as a basis for political decisions that create the conditions for authorities to be able to counteract unlawful influence.

Threats at work website

The Social Partners' Council is responsible for the 'Threats at work' website, which is designed for civil servants (www.hotpajobbet.se), including managers, employees, union representatives or HR or security specialists. The website contains an abridged version of the material in the handbook. The various sections include links to the appropriate section of the handbook, which facilitates further study of the subject.

The aim of the website is to do the following in an accessible way:

- raise awareness of how to counteract unlawful influence
- inspire to action at a local level
- provide tools to develop this work
- establish a portal on this subject, with links and references to relevant publications.

Experience and applications from the various authority projects that form part of Satsa Friskt are uploaded to the website and made available after they have been implemented and evaluated, in order to keep the website up to date.

A lot of work has been put into making the website functional and easy to navigate. For example, it should be possible to go in to the website and search for a particular area of interest, without the need for directions.

Additional activities

The publication of the handbook and www.hotpajobbet.se was supplemented in summer 2007 by two seminars on unlawful influence and how to counteract it. The first seminar was carried out in June and the second in September. Since then, Satsa Friskt has organised a further six seminars, aimed at individual authorities and people in the target group.

The Partners' Council/Satsa Friskt report on an ongoing basis from seminars and from the authorities' own projects on unlawful influence, through articles in the magazine utveckla.nu and on the websites www.partsradet.se and www.satsafriskt.nu.

In addition, Satsa Friskt has participated in a number of other seminars and conferences where threats and violence have been discussed, including in the context of managers' responsibility for the working environment.

In November 2007, BRÅ and the Social Partners' Council were invited to a hearing at the Department of Integration and Equality, in which Minister Nyamko Sabuni participated. The aim of the hearing was to investigate knowledge and experience around unlawful influence in society, primarily targeting elected representatives and civil servants. As a result, the government initiated an investigation on measures to combat organised crime, in which BRÅ and the Partners' Council participated.

In spring 2008, Satsa Friskt worked with representatives of the National Police Board and the Prison and Probation Service to organise a workshop with experts from the National Centre for Disaster Psychiatry at Uppsala University and the Swedish Crisis and Disaster Psychology Association. The workshop went through the latest research on crisis management and procedures for this in the Police and the Prison and Probation Service. This work led to some adjustments in www.hot-pajobbet.se, and in the handbook before the second edition went to print. The participating authorities also made some small changes to their procedures.

In March 2009, the Social Partners' Council was invited to a conference on protection of employees in Norrbotten, arranged by the Working Group on Security Issues in Luleå (Luleå Municipality, the County Council, the County Administrative Board, the Police, the Security Service, the Social Insurance Agency, the Luleå courts, the Enforcement Service and the Tax Agency). Satsa Friskt/the Partners' Council organised most of the programme. 180 people attended the conference. An unknown number also followed the conference via a live video link at seven different locations in Norrbotten.

The work to counteract threats and violence via seminars and conferences has reached a total of around 800 people at around 70 government authorities as well

as around a hundred people in the government sector. A second edition of the handbook has also been printed. Authorities can link to www.hotpajobbet.se from their intranet systems, which several of them have done.

One common thread in all of these activities is that they have largely been based on, and shown the possibilities of using, the handbook Counteract unlawful influence and www.hotpajobbet.se. Several of the guest speakers have been from the authorities that have developed these resources to combat unlawful influence, within the framework for the Threats and Violence priority area of Satsa Friskt. One express aim has been to get more representatives of employers and unions to participate in seminars and as guest speakers.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO COUNTERACT THREATS AND VIOLENCE?

Civil servants at government authorities meet people on a daily basis in their work, where there is a risk that unlawful influence may occur. It is not possible to prevent all unlawful influence, to stop it every time it occurs, or to always avoid the negative consequences it brings. But by working systematically, with better knowledge of people and situations where risks arise, the authorities can get a comprehensive grip of the problem. This is a matter of being prepared through analyses and assessments, procedures and action plans, and of acting in crisis situations in order to give support and to document and follow up incidents. This comprehensive approach is the most effective way to counteract unlawful influence.