

# Young Swedish men's debts often crime-related

*Debt among young people in Sweden is rising, and for men aged 18 to 25, crime-related debts make up a significant portion.*

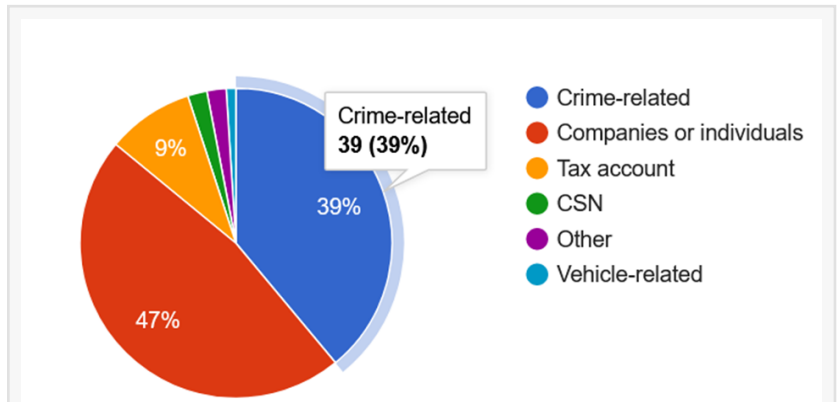
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, August 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Debt among young people in Sweden is a growing problem, and for young men between the ages of 18 and 25, crime-related debts such as damages or fines make up a significant portion of their debt. This article explores the various factors contributing to this worrying trend and how it differs from the debt situation among young women.

## Crime-related debts dominate among young men

For young men between 18 and 25 years old, crime-related debts, such as compensation to crime victims, constitute 39 percent of the total debt amount. This is a marked difference compared to young women in the same age group, where the corresponding figure is only 8 percent. Crime-related debts can include fines, damages, or other financial consequences of criminal actions.

## The Impact of Gang Crime on Indebtedness

An investigation by SVT Nyheter Stockholm shows that over 200 gang criminals in Stockholm County collectively owe 56 million kronor to the Swedish Enforcement Authority. Of these, the ten most indebted are leaders and high-ranking members within the criminal networks, with a combined debt of 25 million kronor. This highlights an alarming connection between gang crime and indebtedness.



39% of all young Swedish men's debts is crime-related



### The Alarming Debt Statistics

- For young men between the ages of 18 and 25, crime-related debts, such as compensation to victims, make up 39 percent of their total debt.
- For young women in the same age group, the corresponding figure is only 8 percent.
- In Stockholm County, 200 gang members have a combined debt of 56 million SEK with the Swedish Enforcement Authority.
- Of these gang members, 70 percent have reported zero income to the Swedish Tax Agency.
- Young women's debts have increased by 106 percent over the past ten years.
- During the same period, young men's debts have increased by 36 percent.
- The total debt in compensation cases was measured at 10.2 billion SEK by the end of 2023.
- According to a survey by the Swedish Enforcement Authority, seven out of ten young people do not know what the effective interest rate is, and more than six out of ten are unfamiliar with what debt collection entails.

Source: Swedish Enforcement Authority and SVT (2024).

Statistics (Click image to open)

The investigation covered 500 convicted gang criminals belonging to 40 criminal networks in Stockholm County. Of these, just over 200 gang members have debts with the Enforcement Authority. Despite these individuals owing significant amounts, 70 percent have reported zero income to the Tax Agency, with total incomes amounting to only 6.6 million kronor for 2021.

The most indebted individual is a 36-year-old financial fraudster from the Gamla Östberga network, who was sentenced in the major Casino case in 2020 to 7.5 years in prison for aggravated fraud. He now has debts exceeding seven million kronor after defrauding individuals of 28 million kronor. This case illustrates the extreme economic consequences that can arise from gang crime and demonstrates the need for effective measures to manage both debt collection and crime prevention.

#### A comparison with young women

While young men's debts are often linked to crime, we see a different picture among young women. The median debt of young women has increased significantly over the past ten years and is now approaching the levels of young men. A significant portion of these debts is linked to consumption, reflecting changes in consumption patterns where more young women choose to shop on credit.

According to the Swedish Enforcement Authority's statistics, young women's debts have increased by 106 percent over the past ten years, while young men's debts have increased by 36 percent over the same period. This indicates a much faster rate of increase in indebtedness among young women.

#### Indebtedness among young men often linked to criminal activity

In 2023, the Enforcement Authority collected 370 million kronor in compensation cases for crime victims, a significant increase of 60 million from the previous year. This increase reflects a trend where indebtedness, especially among young men, is often linked to criminal activity. According to a new analysis from the Enforcement Authority, many debtors owe compensation to multiple crime victims, further complicating the situation.

#### The scope of compensation cases

Crime victims entitled to compensation can turn to the Enforcement Authority for help in collecting the damages. In 2023, nearly 25,000 new compensation cases were received by the Enforcement Authority, an increase of 2,000 cases compared to the previous year. Despite two regulatory changes that have made collection more efficient, only one-third of the debts are fully paid within a year. By the end of 2023, there were over 130,000 active compensation cases, more than 60 percent of which had been ongoing for over five years.

#### Men's debt problems

The analysis from the Enforcement Authority shows clear differences between different groups regarding compensation debts. The majority of those liable for damages are men, and half of

these are between 26 and 44 years old. Men's median debt is twice as high as women's, indicating a deeply rooted problem among young men.

Among the youngest debtors, those up to 25 years old, compensation debts are common. In this group, 15 percent have debts in compensation cases, compared to only five percent among those over 65 years old. This highlights an important societal issue where young men are overrepresented among those liable for damages.

#### The scope and complexity of debts

A large portion of those liable for damages has debts in multiple compensation cases. One in three people owes in between three and ten cases, and four percent owe in more than ten cases. This indicates that a small group of individuals is responsible for a large number of compensation cases, making the collection process even more complex and time-consuming.

Pernilla Tollin, an analyst at the Enforcement Authority, emphasizes that many of those liable for damages have no known assets that the Authority can seize. This results in crime victims often not receiving the compensation they are entitled to. The total debt in compensation cases was measured at 10.2 billion kronor at the end of 2023.

#### The importance of spreading knowledge

It is important to spread knowledge about the opportunities for crime victims to apply for help from the Enforcement Authority to collect damages. Despite this service being free, many find the process complicated and cumbersome. Anna Wadman, project manager at the Enforcement Authority, highlights that the Authority works together with other societal actors to make it as smooth as possible for crime victims to receive their compensation.

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