



Drug Price Trends in Sweden

1988–2024, summary

Since 1988, CAN has been collecting information on the development of street prices for a number of different kinds of narcotics. ‘Street price’ refers to the price when purchasing small amounts as a consumer. Since 2010, the prices for transactions with larger batches, i.e., wholesaler prices, are also collected. Data collection is performed twice annually through a web survey aimed at rapporteurs in Sweden’s 27 police districts. In 2024, the non-response rate was higher than usual, but the collected data are judged to have sufficiently high quality all the same.

One conclusion is that the street price of many types of narcotics is currently historically low. For example, amphetamine cost SEK 200 per gram in 2024, which is a fifth of the price at the end of the 1980s, if real (inflation-adjusted) prices are compared (the nominal prices have been halved). The real price for heroin shows a similar decrease, whereas the price of cocaine has been halved during this period. For cannabis (hashish and marijuana), price decreases are also seen, although the downward trend is not as consistent, which is likely related to increases in purity.

Some geographic differences can be seen. Narcotics are generally cheaper in metropolitan regions than in non-metropolitan regions. The street prices are also lower in southern Sweden, especially compared with northern Sweden. During the 2000s, the geographic differences have decreased somewhat, primarily through price decreases in areas where prices have previously been high. One possible explanation for the tendency towards smaller price differences is that the availability of narcotics has increased in general throughout the country in the 2000s.

Since 2020, a number of events have occurred that could potentially have increased street prices. Examples of such events are the pandemic, with associated travel and transport restrictions, surveillance of communication between criminals, generally increased costs resulting from the increased pace of inflation, and the worsened exchange rate for the Swedish krona. In addition, narcotics seizures have been particularly large in recent years and the levels of conflicts between criminal networks have been high. However, when the prices in 2024 are compared with the more unaffected year 2019, it is hard to see any obvious increases in prices. If account is taken of inflation, prices have actually gone down. Thus, the narcotics market appears relatively resilient to the aforementioned events.

Almost all narcotics used in Sweden are imported. Since 2010, the wholesaler prices for hashish, marijuana, amphetamine, cocaine, brown heroin and ecstasy



have been monitored. The retail price is roughly three times higher than the wholesaler price, although this figure varies between different narcotic substances. If account is taken of inflation, wholesaler prices have fallen by a third, on average, since 2019. In addition to the large competition on the Swedish market, the lower wholesaler prices may also have contributed to the decreased retail prices in the last five years.