

‘Role Check – What does a god man or a förvaltare do?’

provides information about the help available from a god man or förvaltare. It also clarifies the differences between the two roles.

The material addresses how to apply for a god man and what this might cost. At the end there is an FAQ section and a glossary.

The material has been collated in collaboration with people who have, have had or are considering applying for a god man.



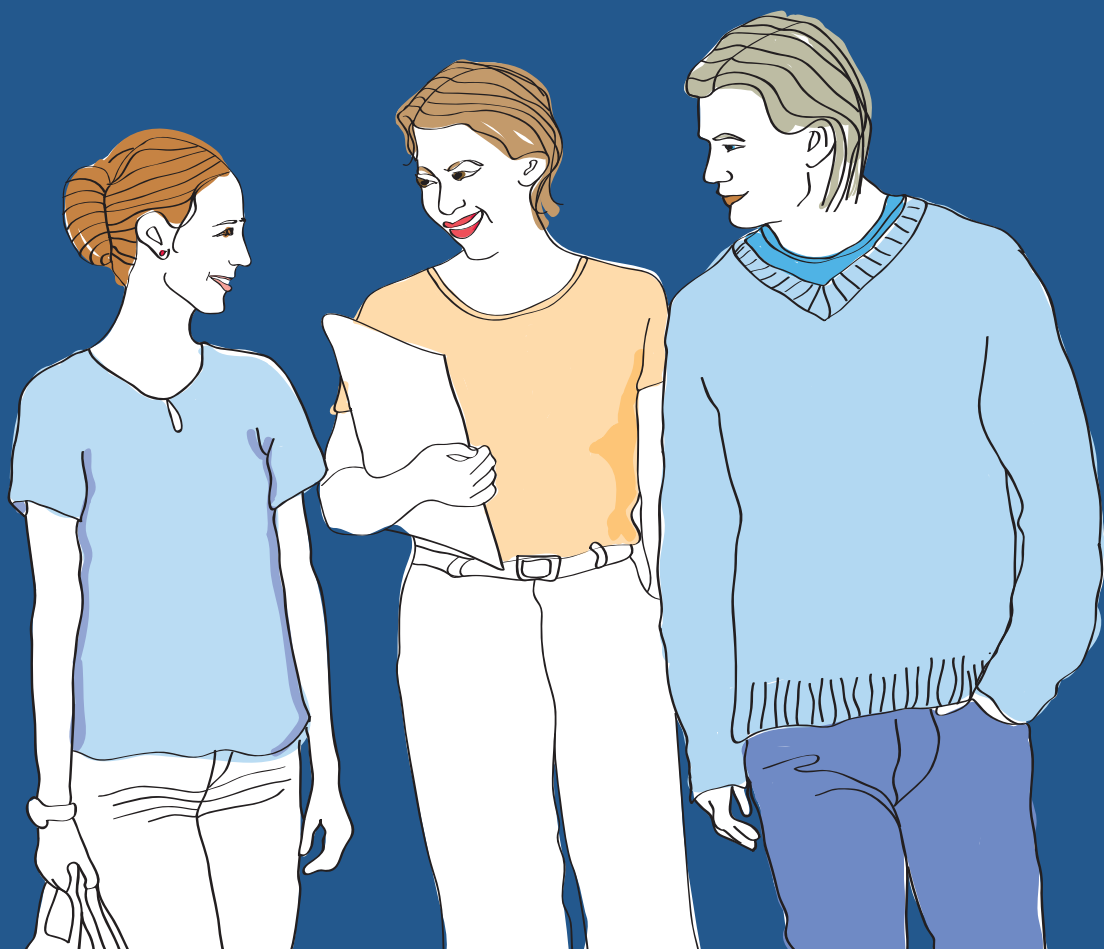
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Material prepared by the
Swedish Association of Voluntary Workers (RFS)
www.rfs.se

Role Check

What does a god man
or a förvaltare do?



Role Check is a project run by the Swedish Association of Voluntary Community Workers (RFS) with support from the Swedish Inheritance Fund. RFS organises people who undertake voluntary tasks subject to statutory regulation such as god man, förvaltare, contact person, contact family, lay supervisor and carer, as well as visitors to prisons and other institutions. Both association secretary, Gunilla Sundblad, and RFS board member, Göran Swärd, have contributed through the project committee. Since 11th May 2015, Thomas Eiserman has been the representative from the board. Linda Fröström is the Role Check project manager.

Read more about RFS at www.rfs.se

This material was prepared in collaboration with members and employees of the National Association Attention, the National Association for Social and Mental Health (RSMH) and the Swedish Schizophrenia Association. Interviews and surveys were conducted among RFS members and the Föreningen Sveriges Överförmyndare (roughly equivalent to the Swedish association of guardianship authorities). The material has been reviewed by our member organisations, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, and the överförmyndare offices in Uppsala and Karlstad.

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THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT THE HELP AVAILABLE FROM A GOD MAN OR FÖRVALTARE. It also clarifies the differences between the two roles, how to apply for a god man and what it costs. At the end there is an FAQ section and a glossary.

God man and förvaltare

In certain situations you may find you need help with your finances, protecting your rights and ensuring your life is working well. If this is the case, you can apply for help from a god man or förvaltare from the överförmyndare in your municipality.

A god man or förvaltare is a person who receives a fee for helping you with paying bills, for example, or with applying for allowances or other social assistance. This person can help ensure that your housing situation, care provision and leisure time function as well as possible. It is your needs that determine what the god man or förvaltare is to do. You may put forward a suggestion as to whom you want as your god man or förvaltare but the person concerned must be approved by the överförmyndare.

The god man or förvaltare shall respect you and any personal information disclosed during the assignment. In relation to having a god man or förvaltare, you will be referred to as the **'principal' (huvudman)**.

A god man or förvaltare can assist in any of the three following areas: **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**, **PROTECTION OF INTERESTS** and **CARE PROVISION**.

AREA OF ASSISTANCE FROM GOD MAN OR FÖRVALTERE	EXAMPLES OF SUCH ASSISTANCE
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	Pay bills, place money in funds, dispense money to the principal.
PROTECTION OF INTERESTS	Grant applications, signing of contracts, sale of property, representation of principal in inheritance issues.
CARE PROVISION	Ensure meaningful leisure time, satisfactory housing conditions and delivery of granted care provision.

It is most usual to receive assistance in all three areas but limiting help to one or two areas is also possible. Your needs for assistance determine which areas are included. You remain responsible for those areas which are not included in the assignment.

The rest of the text concerns the role of god man or förvaltare in relation to all three areas.

Requirements for receiving help from a god man or förvaltare

God man

In order to be able to receive help from a god man, you need to have a disability or illness which is directly related to your need for help. The assistance of a god man, moreover, is only granted when a person is unable to get help from anyone else. A god man is not needed if you can get help from a family member, residential staff, a contact person or personal assistant. Nor is it possible to be granted a god man if you are in a position to sign a power of attorney to anyone else. Note that you should only sign a power of attorney to someone you trust. Signing a power of attorney involves giving another person the task of helping you with certain issues, such as paying bills, for example.

Only when you are unable to get assistance from others is the help of a god man a relevant option. Wanting the help of a god man, however, is voluntary. You have the opportunity to say what you feel about the person who is to become your god man or to put forward a candidate of your own. If you are unable to express your view in this matter, your relatives have the opportunity to say what they think. The court then decides if you are to receive a god man or not.

Förvaltare

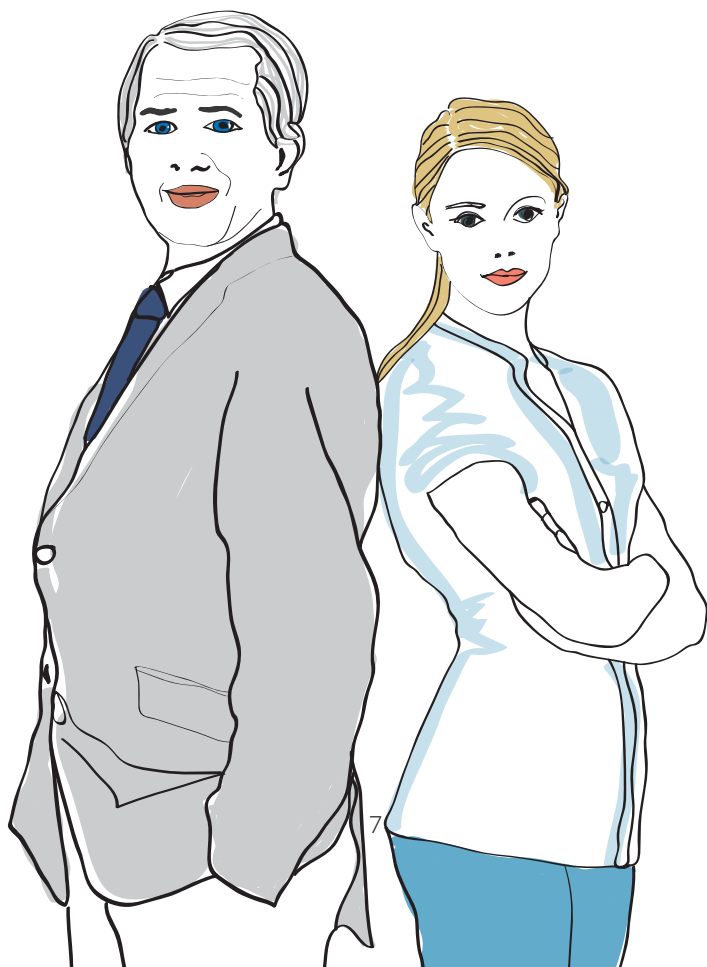
The same requirements apply for receiving a förvaltare as for a god man. The difference depends on your needs. You can only receive the assistance of a förvaltare if a god man cannot provide you with sufficient help.

The court can decide to provide you with a förvaltare against your will. In order to be assigned a förvaltare, there must, for example, be a risk of your not allowing a god man to carry out his/her assignments, or that others are cheating you of your money. A situation needs to have arisen where you have fared badly, running the risk of becoming homeless, for example.

The difference between a god man and a förvaltare

The tasks of a god man and a förvaltare are very similar. What distinguishes them is that if you have a god man, you need to approve that person's decisions. If you are unable to do so owing to severe disability or illness, relatives or residential staff, for example, may be consulted to determine what is in your best interest. The god man will then act accordingly.

A förvaltare may take decisions without your approval. He or she is obliged to find out what you want as far as is possible and must then determine what is best for you on the basis of your needs.



Kalle applies for a god man

Kalle is 22 and moved away from home two years ago. He has a psychological disability which makes it hard for him to keep track of all the bills that need paying. This has resulted in his winding up in the hands of the Enforcement Authority. Helped by a friend, Kalle tried applying for grants from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan). The agency, however, did not approve Kalle's application since he did not fill in all the forms correctly. Kalle soon risks eviction from his flat. Not feeling well, Kalle finally contacts the social services, where he gets an appointment with an assistance case manager called Sofia.

Kalle has no contact with his family and no friends that he feels comfortable asking for help. Sofia therefore suggests that he apply for a god man. Sofia prints out the forms from the överförmyndare's website. They fill in the application together. They write down the type of disability that Kalle has and what he needs help with, his current life situation and the risk he faces if he does not get help. They also write that there is no one else who is able to help him. Kalle then signs the application.

Sofia helps Kalle contact the district health care centre so they can write out the medical certificate that needs to be attached to the application.



After the meeting, Sofia writes an assessment describing the help that Kalle needs.

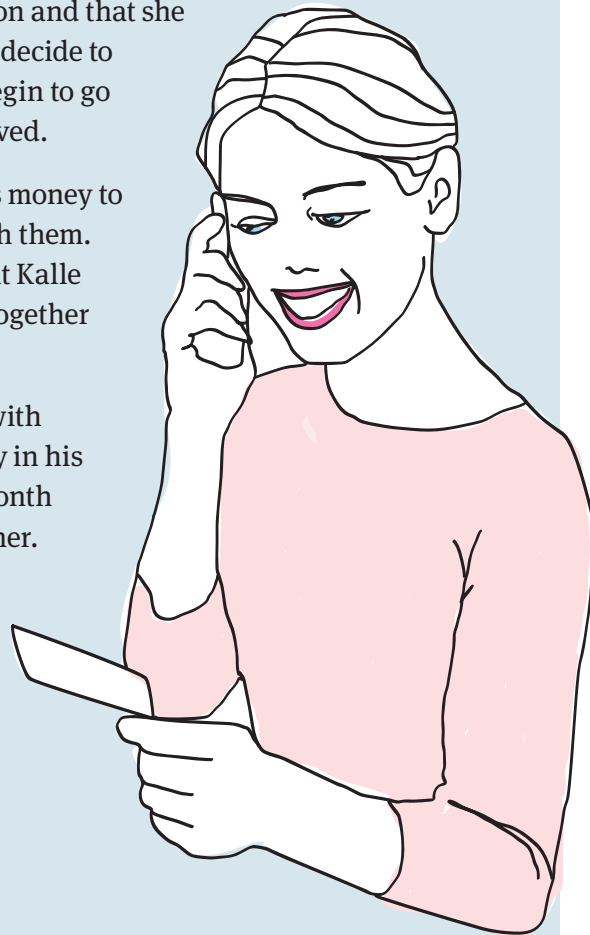
When Kalle has obtained the medical certificate, Sofia sends it along with the application and her assessment to the District Court (Tingsrätt).

A few weeks later, Sofia calls Kalle to tell him that a person wanting to become his god man has contacted her in order to meet him. Her name is Siv. When they meet, Siv explains she has been god man for others for a number of years. She describes herself and how she can help Kalle. Kalle gets a good impression and writes that he would like Siv to be his god man.

About four weeks later, Siv calls Kalle to say that the court has approved his application and that she can now start helping him. They decide to meet at Kalle's flat so they can begin to go through all the mail he has received.

Siv contacts everyone Kalle owes money to and arranges payment plans with them. She also applies for grants so that Kalle can begin paying off his debts. Together they make a budget.

Since Siv sorted everything out with Kalle's landlord, he is able to stay in his flat. Kalle's bills are paid each month and he feels much better altogether.



How does the application process work?

- What is most important is that you consent to the application. Then you have the chance to get help with the rest.
- Use the application forms, if available.
- A medical certificate filled out on a special form from the National Board of Health and Welfare. The doctors will know which form to use when you ask them for help.
- A statement supporting your need of help from an assistance case manager, counsellor or other person in the social services.
- Any suggestion as to whom you want as your god man must be written in the application. If this person is to become your god man, the överförmyndare needs to ensure the person is suitable for the task.
- It is a good idea to give contact details of your relatives.
- In some municipalities you also need to provide proof of identity.

Yes, an assistance case manager from the social services or a psychiatric counsellor, for example. If you have any questions concerning the application, you can contact the överförmyndare.

2. Can anyone help me with the application?

3. Where do I apply?

The application is sent to the District Court of the municipality where you live.

1. Who can apply for a god man or förvaltare?

- You, if you are 18 or over
- A close relative
- The överförmyndare
- Anyone can report to the social services or överförmyndare if they feel someone may need a god man or förvaltare



4.
What documents
are needed for
the application?

5.
What should
the application
include?

It should include:

- The reason you need a god man.
- What disability or illness you have that requires you to get help.
- What you want the god man to help you with.
- A statement that there is no other way in which you can get help, and explain why.
- A statement saying that you have tried to solve your problem in other ways and that you have not succeeded.

6.
What happens
if I am unable to
consent to getting
a god man?

The medical certificate needs to state that you are unable to consent. In that case your next of kin will have a say in the matter.

7.
Who decides
if I am to receive
a god man or
förvaltare?

- The District Court decides if a god man or förvaltare is to be granted or not.
- The överförmyndare provides a statement as to whether or not they feel a god man or förvaltare is necessary.

8.
How long does
it take before I can
receive a god man
or förvaltare?

This depends on how quickly a person wishing to be a god man can be found. It also depends on whether your application needs to be supplemented and how long the District Court needs to arrive at a decision. An approximate time frame would be about three months. An urgent application may go more quickly.



What do I have the right to do if I have a god man or förvaltare?

If you have a god man

Having a god man does not restrict you in any way. You can take out money from the bank, sign contracts or apply for help from the community. For your god man to be able to help you as well as possible, it is important that you keep to what you and your god man have agreed. This may be that you need to keep within a budget that you have worked out together, for example, or that you are not to sign subscriptions for mobile telephony or TV services without discussing it with your god man first.

If you have a förvaltare

If you have a förvaltare, you cannot sign contracts, take out money from the bank or sign applications. Your förvaltare determines how much of your money you are allowed to use. If you receive a wage, you usually get to decide over that yourself. A number of issues remain yours to decide whether or not you have a förvaltare. Examples include the healthcare you wish to receive, which party you wish to vote for at elections and if you want to get married.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS:	Can I do this with a god man?	Can I do this with a förvaltare?
Withdraw money	Yes	No, you can only use the money the förvaltare gives you
Sign telephone subscriptions	Yes	No
Apply for grants/aid	Yes	No
Vote in General Elections	Yes	Yes
Get married	Yes	Yes
Apply for work	Yes	Yes

Things a god man or förvaltare cannot help you with

Neither a god man nor a förvaltare should help you with practical chores. They shouldn't clean, do the shopping or go to the cinema with you. Nor should they give you lifts to various meetings. A god man or förvaltare has no right to decide what you want where healthcare is concerned. If you are unable to express your will regarding healthcare, your next of kin should be the first to be consulted.

A god man or förvaltare is an assistant for you alone. This means that he or she cannot help your family members. If you have children, for example, your god man or förvaltare should not attend parent-teacher meetings at school.

If your god man or förvaltare cannot help, who can?

EXAMPLE OF TASK:		WHO CAN HELP?
Cleaning, watering flowers, hanging up curtains and similar tasks	▶▶	Relatives, residential staff, personal assistant
Go for a walk, go to the cinema, participate in organisational activities	▶▶	Relatives, contact person, personal assistant
Remind you about meetings, motivate you to seek employment	▶▶	Relatives, contact person, personal assistant
Accompany you to doctor's appointments	▶▶	Relatives, residential staff, escort, personal assistant
Do the shopping	▶▶	Relatives, residential staff, personal assistant
Help you dress, eat and take care of personal hygiene	▶▶	Relatives, residential staff, personal assistant

Cost of a god man or förvaltare

The principal rule is that if you have a god man or förvaltare, you pay for the help received yourself.

How much it costs is determined by the överförmyndare in each municipality. The cost depends on how much the god man or förvaltare helps you.

If your god man helps you in all three areas (i.e. **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, PROTECTION OF INTERESTS, CARE PROVISION**), the normal cost would be around SEK 9,000 – 13,000 a year.

Sometimes it is possible to get help from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency towards paying the fee. It is possible to apply for disability benefits from the age of 19 until you turn 65. In order to receive such benefits, the total costs resulting from your disability or illness must be over SEK 12,700 a year. A god man or förvaltare can help you apply for disability benefits.

In some cases you can receive help with paying the fee from the municipality. If your annual income is below SEK 118,000 a year and your total assets amount to less than SEK 89,000, the municipality will pay on your behalf.

Överförmyndare

The authority responsible for controlling the work of a god man or förvaltare is called the överförmyndare or överförmyndarnämnd. There is often a staffed överförmyndare's office.

The Överförmyndare ensures that a god man or förvaltare performs his/her duties. They also look for people who wish to become a god man or förvaltare. If you have any questions concerning a god man or förvaltare, you can contact the överförmyndare in your municipality.

Frequently asked questions about god man and förvaltare

How long can I receive help from a god man or förvaltare?

You can receive help from a god man as long as you need it. Your needs are the determining factor. You may need help for a short period only or for a number of years. You can apply to terminate the services of a god man or förvaltare yourself. Such an application is decided upon by the District Court.

A förvaltare will help you as long as you need it. Each year, the överförmyndare will review if you still need a förvaltare. You can yourself apply to the District Court if you wish them to decide whether or not you need förvaltare.

How much contact should I have with a god man or förvaltare?

How much contact is needed is determined by your needs. You are likely to see each other more often at the beginning of an assignment than after it has gone on for a few months.

You might start by meeting once a month and later maintain contact by telephone or email whenever the need arises. The amount of contact is adjustable to suit both your needs.

Can a god man or förvaltare take all my money out of the bank?

A god man or förvaltare given the task of **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** will have access to one of your accounts so that he/she can pay your bills. If you have other accounts, these will be blocked to the god man or förvaltare. They must seek permission from the överförmyndare to take money out of these accounts and you must also give your approval if you are able.

Each year, your god man or förvaltare must submit a financial report to the överförmyndare. This must show what your money has been used on so the överförmyndare is able to see that your god man or förvaltare has properly performed his/her duties.

Can a relative be a god man or förvaltare?

Yes, if they fulfil the requirements of a god man or förvaltare. This entails sufficient knowledge in relation to the task and society at large and to be otherwise suitable. It is also important that there are no conflicts of interest between you and your god man. The överförmyndare decides if a particular person fulfils these requirements.

What should I bear in mind when meeting a person who wants to become my god man or förvaltare?

If desired, you can ask someone you trust to be with you at the meeting. It is always a good idea to prepare a few questions. Ask the person to tell you a little bit about themselves and what knowledge they have of being a god man or förvaltare. How many assignments have they had? What do they do for a living? What kinds of other assignments have they had and what do they think about the assignment with you? It is also important that the personal chemistry works so that you can work well together in the future.

How can I change a god man or förvaltare that I am not satisfied with?

The best way of changing a god man or förvaltare starts by taking with the person concerned. You can then contact the överförmyndare together to ask them to make the change.

If you have any complaints against the god man or förvaltare, you can contact the överförmyndare yourself. You can also ask someone else to help. The överförmyndare must then investigate the matter.

Will my new god man or förvaltare be aware of my disability/illness?

If you do not know the person who is to become your god man or förvaltare, it is a good idea for you or someone you trust to tell them about your disability/illness at your first meeting. Explain how your disability/illness affects you and about the help you

need. Your god man or förvaltare may not know everything to begin with but they can learn.

What happens if my application for a god man or förvaltare is turned down?

The first thing you can do is appeal the decision to the Court of Appeal. If they also turn down the application, there are other support options you can apply for instead. These include getting a contact person, home assistance or a personal representative.

Conclusion and further information

We hope this text has given you a better understanding of what a god man or förvaltare can help you with. If you want to know more, you can contact the överförmyndare in your municipality or read more at:

www.rfs.se/godmanskap

FURTHER READING:

God man och Förvaltare – en handbok by

Daniel Sjöstedt and Peter Sporrstedt, Studentlitteratur

Gode mannens ABC by Jan Wallgren, Norstedts Juridik

God man & förvaltare – Problem och lösningar by

Tommy Hansson, Björn Lundén Information

God man och förvaltare – En praktiskt vägledning by

Tommy Hansson, Björn Lundén Information

Glossary

Fee:

The money paid to a god man or förvaltare for their assignment.

Probate:

A legal document stipulating who is to inherit what after a person has died.

Home assistance:

A person who can help you at home, do the shopping and contact the authorities.

Housing benefit:

Grants applied for through the Swedish Social Insurance Agency for part of the rent.

Power of attorney:

An agreement allowing one person to undertake certain tasks for another person in given situations, such as paying bills from your account.

Förvaltare:

A person to help protect your interests, administer your property or ensure your care when you are unable to do so yourself owing to disability or illness, and when a god man is insufficient.

The Parental Code:

The part of the law containing the rules concerning god man and förvaltare.

God man:

A person to help protect your interests, administer your property or ensure your care when you are unable to do so yourself owing to disability or illness.

Principal (Huvudman):

The person who is receiving help from a god man or förvaltare.

Contact person:

A person who can help people with disabilities to expand their contact network and to support them in various activities and interests.

Escort:

A person who can accompany people with disabilities when they need help to travel from one place to another.

Proof of identity:

A document giving your personal information. Can be ordered from the Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket).

Personal assistant:

A person who helps people with disabilities in their everyday tasks such as dressing, eating and communicating.

Psychological disability:

A reduced ability to function psychologically or intellectually. Such a disability may be hereditary or occur as the result of illness or accident.

District Court (Tingsrätt):

The court which decides if a person is to receive a god man or förvaltare.

Överförmyndare/överförmyndarnämnd:

The municipal authority that recruits god män and förvaltare and oversees their work.