

Man gets sick benefits for heavy metal addiction

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A Swedish [heavy metal](#) fan has had his musical preferences officially classified as a disability. The results of a psychological analysis enable the metal lover to supplement his income with state benefits.

Roger Tullgren, 42, from [Hässleholm](#) in southern Sweden has just started working part time as a dishwasher at a local restaurant.

Because heavy metal dominates so many aspects of his life, the Employment Service has agreed to pay part of Tullgren's salary. His new boss meanwhile has given him a special dispensation to play loud music at work.

"I have been trying for ten years to get this classified as a handicap," Tullgren told The Local.

"I spoke to three psychologists and they finally agreed that I needed this to avoid being discriminated against."

Roger Tullgren first developed an interest in heavy metal when his older brother came home with a Black Sabbath album in 1971.

Since then little else has mattered for the 42-year-old, who has long black hair, a collection of tattoos and wears skull and crossbones jewelry.

The ageing rocker claims to have attended almost three hundred shows last year, often skipping work in the process.

Eventually his last employer tired of his absences and Tullgren was left jobless and reliant on welfare handouts.

But his sessions with the occupational psychologists led to a solution of sorts: Tullgren signed a piece of paper on which his heavy metal lifestyle

was classified as a disability, an assessment that entitles him to a wage supplement from the job centre.

"I signed a form saying: 'Roger feels compelled to show his heavy metal style. This puts him in a difficult situation on the labour market. Therefore he needs extra financial help'. So now I can turn up at a job interview dressed in my normal clothes and just hand the interviewers this piece of paper," he said.

The manager at his new workplace allows him to go to concerts as long as he makes up for lost time at a later point. He is also allowed to dress as he likes and listen to heavy metal while washing up.

"But not too loud when there are guests," he said.

The Local spoke to an occupational psychologist in Stockholm, who admitted to being baffled by the decision.

"I think it's extremely strange. Unless there is an underlying diagnosis it is absolutely unbelievable that the job centre would pay pay out.

"If somebody has a gambling addiction, we don't send them down to the racetrack. We try to cure the addiction, not encourage it," he said.

Henrietta Stein, deputy employment director for the [Skåne](#) region, is also puzzled by the move; "an interest in music" is not usually sufficient to qualify for wage benefits.

"Certain cases are confidential but in general there is always a medical reason that is well-documented," she said.

Tullgren currently plays bass and guitar in two rock bands and says that he tends to get a lot of positive reactions for daring to be himself.

"Some might say that I should grow up and learn to listen to other types of music but I can't. Heavy metal is my lifestyle," he said.

TT/The Local (news@thelocal.se/08 656 6518)

Jalopnik blogger has these comments about it



We were listening to Sweden's own Hellacopters earlier, who aren't really a *heavy metal* act *per se*, but their founder, Nicke, was the drummer for death-metal act Entombed, whose second record is really the only example of the genre that we ever got particularly into. However, this Swedish metalhead's dedication to non-false metal has gone much, much farther beyond a common rock 'n' roll addiction. In fact, he has been given government disability insurance, allowed a flexible schedule to get his metal on, and now this: Roger Tullgren of Hässelholm, Sweden, you win Jalopnik's Heavy Metal (Volvo) Amazon award. We hope the Swedish government sees fit to honor our request to outfit you with a gloss-black, choptop vintage Volvo with the Venom logo airbrushed carefully onto the hood and license plate frame reading "Vaya Con Satan." – DAVEY G. JOHNSON

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