

Working in an IW Enterprise

How does this affect me?



The idea behind the concept “Inclusive Workplace” (IW) is to make room for everyone who wants to and is able to work. Everyone must pull their weight, and you are an important contributor as an employee in an IW enterprise.

On the following pages, you can read more about what is expected of an IW Enterprise, and the rights, obligations and opportunities for those who work there.

WHAT IS IW?

IW is an abbreviation for “Inclusive Workplace”, a concept that originates from the Cooperation Agreement on a More Inclusive Workplace. The idea behind this agreement is to turn a trend that has led to an increasing number of people leaving the workforce and taking up long-term social insurance benefits.

The Norwegian Government and the major labour market partners signed the initial agreement for a more inclusive working life initially in the autumn of 2001. A new agreement was signed in the autumn of 2005 and will be in effect until the end of 2009.

The agreement is to contribute to:

- a more inclusive workplace to the benefit of the individual employees, the workplace and society
- reducing sick leave and the number of people on disability pensions
- the individual person’s resources and capacity for work being developed and used in active work

An “IW enterprise” is an enterprise that has signed a cooperation agreement with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), and thereby committed itself to work for the fulfilment of the agreement.

WHAT’S EXPECTED OF YOU?

If the workplace is to take care of the employees’ resources and possibilities in the best possible way, your participation is necessary. What’s most important is what goes on in the workplace between you, your leader and your colleagues. You are the main contributors.

Your responsibilities as an employee in an IW Enterprise are to:

- Contribute as far as possible to a good and healthy work environment
- Suggest changes in order to improve the situation
- Look for alternative solutions to sick leave, in case you are or may become unable to work
- Inform your leader whether your sick leave is connected to your work situation
- Discuss with your leader what you are capable of doing, so that your employer can make the necessary adjustments to your situation at work

The responsibilities of the employer in an IW Enterprise, are to:

- Put IW on the enterprise’s agenda, and establish specific goals for the IW work in the enterprise
- Work systematically to improve the work environment
- Initiate a good and open dialogue at the workplace
- Develop good procedures for following up sick leave in cooperation with worker’s representatives
- Make necessary adjustments at the workplace as far as possible when an employee becomes sick or no longer masters his or her normal job tasks
- Make a follow-up plan in collaboration with the employee

WORK ACTIVITY AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

Both employer and employee are obliged to cooperate in finding good solutions in the workplace. These obligations are laid down in the Working Environment Act (Arbeidsmiljøloven, 1977), and the National Insurance Act (Folketrygdloven 1967, revised 1997). You and your employer are obliged to look for solutions that will bring you back to work as soon as possible - part-time or full-time - taking your health problems into account. Passive sick leave should be avoided as far as possible. Your doctor shall participate by stating whether your medical condition allows you to work and advise you on what considerations should be taken, if any.

All parties should look for ways of bringing you back to work as soon as possible. Dialogue meetings after twelve weeks of sick leave at the latest, was introduced 1 March 2007. This implies that you and your employer have a meeting, and, if you wish, your doctor. The aim is to look for solutions as early on as possible in order to be at work full-time or part-time. If the sick leave lasts for as long as six months, NAV will convene a dialogue meeting. You can read more about this on our website nav.no.

SUPPORT, HELP AND ADVICE

The ideal situation is that you and your leader find good solutions together, but sometimes the advice and support of others is needed.

At work, this could mean involving a workers' representative, a safety delegate or the occupational health service, who are all active contributors to the IW effort.

- Your regular doctor also has an important role to play. In addition to providing medical treatment, the doctor will also consider your ability to work full-time or part-time, given your medical condition.
- NAV has established one IW centre in each county. These centres assist each IW enterprise through advice, guidance and various measures. NAV Local Services and NAV Centre for Assisted Technology are also part of NAV's IW network.
- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet) works to prevent illness, injuries and exclusion from working life by offering advice and enforcing the Working Environment Act.

COOPERATION WITH NAV

Any Norwegian company can become an IW enterprise by signing an agreement with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). The agreement is signed by the company's CEO, workers' representative(s) and the head of the IW centre. The company and NAV will each appoint a contact with a special responsibility for the IW activities of that particular enterprise. The contact from the NAV IW centre gives advice on IW activities and also makes sure that supportive economic measures in individual cases are provided swiftly and efficiently.

NAV'S IW MEASURES

IW enterprises have access to special measures from NAV in order to support the IW effort. We have already mentioned the contact from the IW centre, who helps enterprises work in a more goal- and result-orientated way towards a more inclusive workplace.

Other measures:

- Extended use of self-reporting (egenmelding) in case of sickness. This means the employee can report sick up to eight calendar days per incidence of sick leave. The upper limit is a total of 24 days within a 12 month period.
- The enterprise may initiate an "active sick-leave" without NAV's prior consent. Active sick leave should be goal-oriented and is restricted to a limited period of time.
- The enterprise may receive a special fee if their occupational health service has made efforts to bring people on sick leave and/or people with reduced functional capacity back to work
- IW enterprises can apply for facilitation subsidy (tilretteleggingstilskudd) for tryouts, training or adjustment purposes.

NAV also offers a number of other relevant measures, such as IW places, which make it possible to work at a different work place for a period of time.

For more information, contact NAV Local Services or the NAV IW centre in your county.

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