

Working in an “IW” enterprise

– How does this affect me?





The purpose of the Inclusive Working Life scheme (IA) is to accommodate everyone who can and wants to work in working life. To achieve this, everyone must play on the same team, and as an employee in an IA enterprise, your contribution is important.

Here you can read more about what is expected of IA enterprises and about the responsibilities, rights and opportunities for the people who work there.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE WORKING LIFE (IW)?

“Inclusive Working Life”, commonly abbreviated as IA in Norway, originates from the Memorandum of Understanding on a more Inclusive Working Life that was signed to attempt to reverse a trend whereby increasing numbers of people were dropping out of working life and living off long-term social security benefits. The goal is to ensure that workplaces can accommodate everyone who can and wants to work.

The first Memorandum of Understanding on a more Inclusive Working Life was signed by the Norwegian government and key employer and employee organisations in autumn 2001. Since then, the agreement has been renewed in autumn 2005 and spring 2010. The current Memorandum of Understanding runs until the end of 2013.



The purpose of the Inclusive Working Life scheme is to:

- prevent and reduce absence due to illness
- increase return to work and improve the working environment
- prevent exclusion and withdrawal from working life

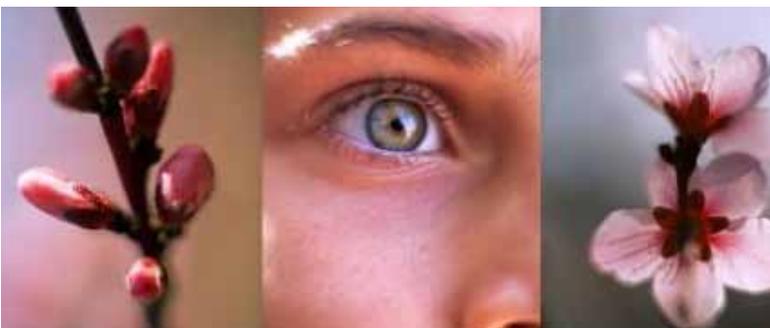
IA enterprises are companies that have entered into a collaboration agreement with the NAV Inclusive Workplace Support Centre and thereby committed themselves to working to ensure fulfilment of the goals defined in the Memorandum of Understanding.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU?

In order for your workplace to be able to take the best possible care of the employees' resources and opportunities, it is essential that you participate actively. The most important thing is what goes on at the workplace – between you, your supervisor and your colleagues. You are the main players.

As an employee, you have a duty to:

- help create a good working environment
- speak up about things that can be changed for the better
- look for alternative solutions to absence if you are sick or are at risk of becoming sick
- tell someone if your absence is related to the



situation at work

- talk to your supervisor about what you are capable of doing, so that your employer can adapt your work accordingly
- inform your employer about the probable time frame as soon as you know anything
- be willing to do other suitable work or adapted work, if this will help you return to work sooner
- be an active participant in the follow-up of your sick leave in accordance with the current legislation, for example, by participating in dialogue meetings and the preparation and implementation of the follow-up plan.

IA employers have a duty to:

- ensure Inclusive Working Life issues are discussed at the workplace and have specific goals for the company's IA work
- work systematically to improve the working environment
- take the initiative to promote open, constructive dialogue at the workplace
- in collaboration with the employees' representatives develop good routines for following up employees on sick leave
- attempt to adapt the workplace when an employee becomes ill or has problems coping with their normal tasks at work
- prepare a follow-up plan in collaboration with the employee
- arrange and hold meetings and send the relevant documentation to the sick employee's doctor and NAV as defined in the current rules.

EARLIEST POSSIBLE RETURN TO ACTIVITY WHEN SICK

The employer's and employee's shared duty to work together to find solutions in the workplace is also enshrined in the Norwegian Working Environment Act and National Insurance Act. Together, you and your supervisor must look for solutions that will enable you to return to work as quickly as possible, full-time or part-time, despite your health problems. The goal is to avoid passive sickness absence as far as is possible. All the parties involved must try to find solutions that will enable you to return to work as soon as possible. Your doctor must actively also contribute to this work by indicating whether you can be active or not and any special considerations that ought to be taken into account.

Your employer must submit the sick leave follow-up plan to the certifier of your sick leave after seven weeks of sick leave. The law now requires that a dialogue meeting be held at the latest after seven weeks' sickness absence. This is a meeting between you and your employer, and the medical professional who certified your sick leave, if you want your doctor there and it is appropriate. In companies that have an occupational health service, representatives of this service shall also attend this meeting. The goal is to start looking for solutions that make it possible for you to work full-time or part-time at the earliest possible opportunity. If the sickness absence lasts as long as six months, NAV will convene a dialogue meeting. There is more information about this on www.nav.no.

HELP FROM MANY QUARTERS

Ideally, you and your supervisor will find good solutions, but in some cases, advice or outside assistance may be needed. People at the workplace that it might be useful to involve include your union representative, the safety delegate and the occupational health service, all of whom are active participants in the Inclusive Working Life scheme.

- Your doctor, or another medical professional who is treating you and who is qualified to issue medical certificates, also plays an important role. In addition to providing medical care, your doctor must decide whether you can work full-time or part-time even though you are not entirely well.
- NAV has established an Inclusive Workplace Support Centre in each county to assist and advise individual IA enterprises on their IA work and the different types of instruments that are available. The NAV office and NAV Centre for Assistive Technology (Hjelpemiddelsentral) are also active players in NAV's focus on Inclusive Working Life (IA).
- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority (Arbeidstilsynet) works to prevent illness, injury and exclusion from working life through guidance work and monitoring compliance with the Working Environment Act.

Contact your local Working Life Centre for more detailed information

COLLABORATION WITH NAV

Any company can become an IA enterprise by entering into a collaborative agreement with NAV. The agreement must be signed by the company's management and employee representative(s), as well as the head of the Working Life Centre. Both the company and NAV must appoint a named contact person who has special responsibility for the Inclusive Working Life efforts in the company. Your company's contact person at the NAV Working Life Centre provides advice and guidance on Inclusive Working Life issues and makes sure that financial instruments are triggered quickly and efficiently in individual cases.

NAV'S IA-INSTRUMENTS

To support the Inclusive Working Life efforts in the workplace, IA enterprises have access to special instruments from NAV. We have already mentioned the fixed contact person, who helps IA companies work in a more purposeful and result-oriented manner on making their workplace more inclusive.

In addition, we also offer:

- extended use of self-certification, i.e. the right to use self-certification for up to eight calendar days per period of sickness absence, with a total upper limit of 24 days per 12-month period
- fees to the occupational health service to assist in efforts to get people on sick leave and people with reduced functional ability back to work
- the opportunity to apply for a special grant for adaptation of the workplace, which can be used to test new solutions, adapt the workplace or to fund training or vocational training
- IA placements, whereby people can try working in a different place

In addition, NAV also has a number of other relevant measures.

Read more on www.nav.no or contact your local Working Life Centre.

Utgitt av: Arbeids- og velferdsdirektoratet
Postboks 5
St.Olavs plass
0130 OSLO

www.nav.no

