

Follow-up of sick leave

It is often possible for sick employees to work full or part-time if the workplace is adapted. Generally, the earlier follow-up starts, the faster the employee can return to work.

The employer has primary responsibility for making the necessary adaptations and for following up employees on sick leave who return to the workplace, while employees have a duty to cooperate in finding ways to avoid unnecessarily long sick leave.

The doctor or health personnel who issue the sickness certificate and NAV also have roles in the follow-up work.

Important milestones

Within 4 weeks of sick leave, the employer must prepare a follow-up plan in cooperation with the employee, except in cases where this is clearly unnecessary.

Within 7 weeks, the employer must convene an initial dialogue meeting with the employee on sick leave, unless this is clearly unnecessary. If the employee has been on graded sick leave, the meeting must be held if the employer, employee or sick-leave certifier finds this appropriate. If required, the occupational health service (OHS), NAV and/or employee representatives/safety delegates may attend the meeting. The employee must give his consent to the sick-leave certifier being summoned to the meeting.

Within 8 weeks: In order for the employee to still be entitled to sickness benefits while on 100 percent sick leave, the sick-leave certifier must document that

there are compelling medical reasons why the employee cannot be in work-related activity.

Within 26 weeks, the local NAV office must summon the employee and employer to a second dialogue meeting. The meeting is mandatory for both the employee and the employer, and the sick-leave certifier must also attend if NAV deems this necessary. Work-related measures must be considered. All parties may request that the second dialogue meeting is held at an earlier date.

When required, all parties may request that NAV convenes a third dialogue meeting.

Within 1 year, which is the maximum period for sick leave with sickness benefit, the NAV office will reassess the situation and the need for work-related measures.

Are you an IW enterprise?

Then you have access to the following:

Your own contact person at NAV Workplace Centre

This person can help you get started with the systematic work on Inclusive Workplace (IW) issues, assist with complex individual cases and help ensure that financial instruments are triggered quickly and efficiently. This is a free assistance on the systematic sick leave work the enterprise has a statutory obligation to have.

Free courses

There are a number of free courses arranged by NAV Workplace Centre that are available to the IW enterprises. For more information, visit www.nav.no

Financial grants for prevention and facilitation

IW enterprises may apply for prevention and facilitation grants to cover expenses in connection with measures to prevent sickness absence or to adapt the workplace in case of illness.

Extended use of self-certification

Employees in IW enterprises have the possibility to use up to 24 days self-certification per 12-month period with an upper limit of 8 days per absence. The purpose of this is to increase awareness that sickness absence is based on an assumption of trust between the employee and employer, and to reduce visits to and sickness certificates from the doctor when this is clearly unnecessary.

The IW efforts can contribute to:

- **Improve the working environment and reduce sickness absence**

Systematic IW work involves close collaboration and good dialogue with the employee representatives, with strong focus on prevention and good follow-up of employees on sick leave. This usually also contributes to an improved working environment and reduced sickness absence.

- **Better reputation**

Being an IW enterprise and having a good working environment is important to a company's reputation, especially in connection with recruitment.

Not an IW enterprise yet?

Contact your regional NAV Workplace Centre or NAV's employer phone: 55 55 33 36

Follow-up plan

A follow-up plan is for benefit of the employee and employer, but will also function as an information channel for the sick-leave certifier, NAV and any other sources of support involved in the follow-up work.

The follow-up plan will include:

- Assessment of the employee's duties and ability to work
- Relevant adaptation or measures by the employer, if necessary with assistance from NAV
- Plan for further follow-up

The employer will communicate the follow-up plan to the sick-leave certifier and it must be sent to NAV if requested or if assistance from NAV is required.

The work on the plan must be dynamic, and it must be updated regularly with information during the course of the employee's absence.

Exceptions from the follow-up plan

The employer must prepare a follow-up plan together with the employer, unless this is clearly unnecessary. The most obvious situations where a plan will not serve any purpose is when it is clear that the employee will not be returning to work, or when it is clear that the employee will be returning to work, regardless of any adaptation measures. A plan may also be "clearly unnecessary" when the employee is on graded sick leave and may already be in a dialogue regarding follow-up and adaptation of the workplace.

Dialogue meetings

Dialogue meetings are meetings attended by the employee, employer and if necessary the sick-leave certifier and eventually also NAV. The occupational health service and employee representatives/safety delegates may also attend dialogue meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss what can be done to prevent the sick leave from being unnecessarily long. Together, they discuss possibilities and limitations. The follow-up plan is updated at the dialogue meeting. If there is not sufficient time, or if long distances make it difficult to meet in the same room, it is possible to conduct the dialogue meetings via video link. The number of dialogue meetings depends on what is appropriate and the length of the sickness leave.

Dialogue Meeting 1 is the employer's responsibility and must be held within 7 weeks of sick leave. Dialogue Meeting 1 is basically a meeting between the employee and the employer, but other sources may be summoned if this is appropriate. At the dialogue meeting participants will discuss the contents of the follow-up plan and clarify if any measures in the workplace are required. There is no requirement to hold dialogue meetings if an employee is on graded sick leave, unless the employee, employer or sick-leave certifier believes this is necessary.

Dialogue Meeting 2 must be held within 26 weeks sick absences and it is NAV's responsibility to convene the meeting. If any of the parties wish to hold the meeting at an earlier date, this is entirely possible.

Dialogue Meeting 3 may be organised by NAV if one of the parties so wishes.

Exceptions from dialogue meeting 1

It is not absolutely necessary to hold Dialogue Meeting 1 if this is clearly unnecessary. Examples of situations where the meeting may be clearly unnecessary are:

- Cases of serious illness where it can be determined that the employee in question will not be able to return to work.
- Cases where it is obvious that the employee will return to full-time employment within a short time without adaptation measures.
- Cases where successful facilitation measures have already been implemented in the workplace and it is clear that the employee will be returning to full-time employment within a short time.
- Serious illness where the cause of the sickness certificate is of such a nature that the meeting cannot be conducted in an appropriate manner. (In such cases, it is assumed that the meeting will be held later, if possible.)
- If the employee is on graded sick leave, the meeting must be held when the employer, employee or sick-leave certifier deems this appropriate.

Failure to meet the obligations

The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority must supervise the enterprises' systematic health, environment and safety efforts and how they work to reduce sickness absence through follow-up and making the necessary adaptations and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave. If the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority uncovers breaches of these obligations, it may impose its ordinary sanctions.

The Norwegian Board of Health ensures compliance with the provisions in the Health Personnel Act, and therefore will be able to apply the Act's general sanctions against doctors and other sick-leave certifiers who do not contribute as the law requires.

NAV may stop the employee's sickness benefits if the employee does not cooperate in accordance with the law.

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Updated July 2014

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The workplace is the most important arena for prevention and follow-up of sick leave. The Working Environment Act and the National Insurance Act set forth obligations, meeting places and deadlines for the follow-up work. The aim is to avoid unnecessarily long periods of sick leave. From 1 July 2014 the regulations have been amended to make follow-up of sick leave easier and more targeted.

Deadlines, roles and tasks	Self-Certification 1-3 days For IA enterprises: 1-8 days	Sickness certificate > 4 weeks	Sickness certificate > 7 weeks	Sickness certificate > 8 weeks	Sickness certificate > 26 weeks	Sickness certificate > 1 year
Employer Shall as soon as possible make arrangements to enable an employee on sick leave to be in work-related activity at the workplace. Must be able to document the follow-up work. The enterprise must store the documentation.	Have self-certification forms. Contact the employee when he or she has been absent for several days.	Prepare a follow-up plan in cooperation with the employee, unless this is clearly unnecessary. Ensure that the follow-up plan is communicated to the sick-leave certifier within 4 weeks. The plan must be sent to NAV when assistance from them is required.	In case of 100 % sick leave, a Dialogue Meeting 1 is to be agreed upon with the employee, unless this is clearly unnecessary. If the employee is on graded sick leave, the meeting is only held if this is appropriate. If required, the occupational health service, sick-leave certifier, Employee representative/safety delegate may attend the meeting. The employee must give consent if the sick-leave certifier is summoned to the meeting.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 2 organised by NAV. You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date. Submit a revised follow-up plan to NAV no later than 1 week before the meeting.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3. Before the end of the sickness benefit period (52 weeks), you and your sick-leave certifier should consider whether assistance from NAV is required. It may also be necessary to apply for work assessment allowance.
Employee Shall cooperate and contribute actively to find solutions in order to return to work as quickly as possible.	Notify the employer of sickness absence. Indicate a time-frame.	Participate in preparation and implementation of a follow-up plan. Help find solutions that contribute to you returning to work, if this is possible.	Attend a dialogue meeting in the workplace, unless a medical condition prevents this. Inform your employer if you want the sick-leave certifier and/or other support to attend the meeting.	Attend the dialogue meeting, unless a medical condition prevents this. You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date. Help find solutions that contribute to you returning to work as quickly as possible.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3. Before the end of the sickness benefit period (52 weeks), you and your sick-leave certifier should consider whether assistance from NAV is required. It may also be necessary to apply for work assessment allowance.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3. Assess whether the employee is still not fit for work and requires other benefits from NAV.
Sick-leave certifier Shall motivate the employee to work full or part-time, when it's medically advisable.	If a longer period of sick leave after the self-certification period is required, a sickness certificate must be issued. Graded sick leave must be assessed on an ongoing basis.	Continuously assess graded (partial) sick leave. Receive follow-up plan.	Attend the dialogue meeting if you are summoned. Notify if there are any extraordinary circumstances in your work situation, which mean that you cannot attend the meeting.	Attend the dialogue meeting, if you are summoned. You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3. Assess whether the employee is still not fit for work and requires other benefits from NAV.	Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3. Assess whether the employee is still not fit for work and requires other benefits from NAV.
NAV Provides support in the follow-up work. Pays sickness benefits. Have various work-related instruments. Will propose relevant instruments that may contribute to work-related activity. Inclusive workplace Enterprises (IW Enterprises) receive special assistance from NAV Workplace Centre.	NAV sends an information letter to all persons on sick leave.	Assesses whether the activity criteria has been met so that the employee is still entitled to sickness benefits. Assesses whether work-related follow-up by NAV is required.	Holds a dialogue meeting within 26 weeks, unless this is clearly unnecessary. Assess whether the sick-leave certifier should attend. Summon to an early dialogue meeting 2, if the respective parties so request or NAV believes this is appropriate.	Holds a dialogue meeting within 26 weeks, unless this is clearly unnecessary. Assess whether the sick-leave certifier should attend. Summon to an early dialogue meeting 2, if the respective parties so request or NAV believes this is appropriate.	Holds a dialogue meeting within 26 weeks, unless this is clearly unnecessary. Assess whether the sick-leave certifier should attend. Prepare the meeting so that measures/ progress may be implemented.	Holds a dialogue meeting within 26 weeks, unless this is clearly unnecessary. Assess whether the sick-leave certifier should attend. Prepare the meeting so that measures/ progress may be implemented.
Employee representatives / Safety Delegates	Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.	Work preventively and may be involved in the follow-up work. Attend the dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.	Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.	Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.	Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.	Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.
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The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.	Provide guidance and ensure that enterprises initiate measures to prevent illness or injury and that they have a follow-up plan and make the necessary adaptation and arrangements for employees on long-term sick leave, including the employer's responsibility for the follow-up plan and dialogue meetings.

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<p>Employer</p> <p>Shall as soon as possible make arrangements to enable an employee on sick leave to be in work-related activity at the workplace.</p> <p>Must be able to document the follow-up work.</p> <p>The enterprise must store the documentation.</p>	<p>Have self-certification forms.</p> <p>Contact the employee when he or she has been absent for several days.</p>	<p>Prepare a follow-up plan in cooperation with the employee, unless this is clearly unnecessary.</p> <p>Ensure that the follow-up plan is communicated to the sick-leave certifier within 4 weeks.</p> <p>The plan must be sent to NAV when assistance from them is required.</p>	<p>In case of 100 % sick leave, a Dialogue Meeting 1 is to be agreed upon with the employee, unless this is clearly unnecessary.</p> <p>If the employee is on graded sick leave, the meeting is only held if this is appropriate.</p> <p>If required, the occupational health service, sick-leave certifier, Employee representative/ safety delegate may attend the meeting.</p> <p>The employee must give consent if the sick-leave certifier is summoned to the meeting.</p>		<p>Participate in Dialogue Meeting 2 organised by NAV. You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date.</p> <p>Submit a revised follow-up plan to NAV no later than 1 week before the meeting.</p>	<p>Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned.</p> <p>You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3.</p>
<p>Employee</p> <p>Shall cooperate and contribute actively to find solutions in order to return to work as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Notify the employer of sickness absence.</p> <p>Indicate a time-frame.</p>	<p>Participate in preparation and implementation of a follow-up plan.</p> <p>Help find solutions that contribute to you returning to work, if this is possible.</p>	<p>Attend a dialogue meeting in the workplace, unless a medical condition prevents this.</p> <p>Inform your employer if you want the sick-leave certifier and/or other support to attend the meeting.</p>	<p>If you are not in work-related activity within eight weeks, an extended medical certificate is required to document that there are compelling medical reasons that prevent activity.</p>	<p>Attend the dialogue meeting, unless a medical condition prevents this. You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date.</p> <p>Help find solutions that contribute to you returning to work as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3.</p> <p>Before the end of the sickness benefit period (52 weeks), you and your sick-leave certifier should consider whether assistance from NAV is required. It may also be necessary to apply for work assessment allowance.</p>
<p>Sick-leave certifier</p> <p>Shall motivate the employee to work full or part-time, when it's medically advisable.</p>	<p>If a longer period of sick leave after the self-certification period is required, a sickness certificate must be issued.</p> <p>Graded sick leave must be assessed on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Continuously assess graded (partial) sick leave.</p> <p>Receive follow-up plan.</p>	<p>Attend the dialogue meeting if you are summoned.</p> <p>Notify if there are any extraordinary circumstances in your work situation, which mean that you cannot attend the meeting.</p>	<p>If compelling medical reasons prevent the employee from being in activity, you must document this in a sickness certificate.</p>	<p>Attend the dialogue meeting, if you are summoned.</p> <p>You may request NAV to hold Dialogue Meeting 2 at an earlier date.</p>	<p>Participate in Dialogue Meeting 3 if you are summoned. You may request NAV for a Dialogue Meeting 3.</p> <p>Assess whether the employee is still not fit for work and requires other benefits from NAV.</p>
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<p>Employee representatives / Safety Delegates</p>	<p>Help make the work on sick leave an integral part of the health, safety and environment work, give advice and guidance to the employee and assist in the dialogue with the employer. May attend dialogue meetings if the employee so desires.</p>					
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