

Still not underway with the AMU work?

A law change coming into effect at the beginning of the new year requires companies with more than 30 employees to establish a working environment committee (AMU). Haven't you gotten started yet? Here, Avonova, Norway's largest provider of occupational health services, shares some advice on how to get started easily.

"The law change is a response to the major shortcomings in the previous system, and an acknowledgement that many employees have missed out on the participation rights that the AMU system is supposed to guarantee," says Tor Erik Danielsen, head of occupational medicine at Avonova.

Until now, the AMU requirement applied to companies with 50 or more employees. With the law change, the threshold is reduced to 30 employees. In the AMU, both employer and employee representatives must be equally represented to balance the power dynamics. In addition, as many different groups within the organization as possible should be represented.

"The AMU gives employees a platform to share their perspectives and concerns, and it provides an opportunity to submit formal proposals for improving the work environment. This not only leads to a safer workplace but also results in a more productive and positive environment on the job," adds Danielsen.

Getting Started

Establishing an AMU should not be complicated. Here are Avonova's tips:

1. Ensure that the establishment of the AMU is anchored in management and among employees.
2. Put in place simple procedures for electing employee representatives.
3. Conduct elections (employee-driven).
4. Identify an employer representative, and preferably an AMU secretary.
5. Ensure that all participants receive an introduction to the purpose and role of the AMU. (Occupational health services can assist here.)

Conducting the first meeting

1. Choose a leader.
2. Agree on guidelines for the work regarding confidentiality (it might also be helpful to have some discussions on the manner and tone for the committee without codifying these into formal rules).
3. Review the purpose of the AMU and clarify which tasks should be addressed. The occupational health service can help clarify the mandate and tasks.
4. Establish some simple guidelines for how issues should be submitted to the committee, how they should be handled, how decisions may be taken, and how minutes are recorded.

5. A quarterly meeting can serve as a benchmark consider setting meeting dates for the year. The AMU leader, or alternatively the secretary, is responsible for convening the meetings.
6. Set a fixed agenda for the meetings and distribute written decision-making material in advance to foster professional discussions and processes.

Remember that the occupational health service can be used as a guide and sparring partner as needed.

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About Avonova

Avonova is Nordic's leading provider of occupational health services and is the only Nordic occupational health services provider with a fully integrated hybrid digital/physical delivery model.

Avonova offers a comprehensive range of services to promote well-being and reduce absences, among employees of companies and institutions of all sizes and in all industries. It is leading in preventive evidence based occupational health services in highest impact areas, such as presenteeism, vaccination, and drug testing and rehab.

Avonova has its main offices in Larvik, Norway and Stockholm, Sweden and delivers its services digitally and from 166 locations in Norway and Sweden, by about 1 100 employees – mainly physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and workplace engineers. For more information, visit www.avonova.se/no/fi.