

The 4 day work week: A new way of working for the the UK?

The Scandinavian style of working has hit the UK

HULL, UNITED KINGDOM, December 16, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A number of businesses have been piloting a [4 day work week](#) scheme after successful trial runs by several other countries such as Iceland and New Zealand where [productivity](#) increased despite a 20% reduction in working time. The scheme has been initiated by the 4 Day Week campaign, in collaboration with researchers from Cambridge, Oxford University, and Boston College, as well as the think tank Autonomy.



The 4 day work week. An experiment in wellbeing and productivity.

The researchers will measure employee productivity across the 4 day work week and compare this to previous rates during the 5 day work week, to see whether employees can be more

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Jack Latus, CEO, Latus Health

productive in less time without cutting pay. But perhaps this calls for a deeper dive into the reasons why reducing the working week by a day can improve productivity. There is something fundamentally wrong if a person can produce more work in 4 days than 5, and this needs looking at in terms of how people are working and motivated to deliver. With more employees than ever dissatisfied with their work-life balance and mental health due to work-related stressors, exploring options that make the workplace better for employees is definitely worth it. Whether that's offering flexible, remote, or hybrid working, or even adapting to a 4 day work week.

"Navigating this issue can be extremely tricky in light of it being an employee-led movement

towards a desire for greater flexibility and ownership of their working time, and is another clear reminder that the modern workforce wants to be judged on output, not time at their desk."- Jack Latus, CEO, [Latus Health](#)

What many companies have time and time again failed to realise, is that time spent on a project doesn't necessarily mean it is of the highest quality. If any hours were spent distracted or moving between separate tasks, the final quality of the piece probably wouldn't measure up to one that was produced through a couple of hours of sustained effort and focus. According to Parkinson's Law, work will expand to fill the time allotted for its completion, so it would make sense that if you give an employee just 4 days to complete a job that previously took 5 days, they will be able to complete it in the new timeframe. And there are obvious benefits to this, including potential better work-life balance, less likelihood of burnout, greater longevity in roles, and a lower carbon footprint for UK PLC.

Businesses which struggle to adapt to this measure are likely to be left behind in the employment market. Never has a business's employee value proposition (EVP) been more important than now, with candidates having more choice than ever and getting to choose jobs that suit their needs, including flexibility of working times, working location, the mission of the business, employer-provided wellness packages and much more. It's vital that we find a balance between maximising productivity for the benefit of businesses and the economy and employee health. Burnout can be reduced within the workplace by ensuring that there is an end goal in sight for employees and by breaking down projects into manageable and attainable chunks. It's not just workload that has to be considered, but the overall culture of the work environment and the way in which projects are managed.

Furthermore, not all industries will be able to participate in the four-day week trial due to the way they work and how processes are set up. Because of this, there is also the potential to widen existing inequalities, as those working in manual industries are assessed based on time spent at work. This means that those working in manual jobs will continue to be assessed in this way rather than output due to the constraints of manual labour, for example, a bus driver can only be paid based on the time spent working. The bus routes take a certain amount of time to complete and they work in shifts, their productivity is not measured by how much they produce. The key is to conduct research across a variety of sectors and test which systems improve employee productivity and performance the most, without forgetting that the employee is in fact human and can sometimes be affected by external factors.

Ultimately, the 4 day work week pilot is an experiment. Businesses should do what is best for their business on a financial level whilst also considering their employees. Within some industries, implementing the scheme has been found to be less profitable as employees couldn't meet the demands at work within the time constraints. In this case, other opportunities to give employees more flexibility could perhaps be explored. There are always opportunities to be more productive at work, whether that's eliminating small talk and use of phones in the morning to allow employees to do deep work in flow state, or shortening meetings to the absolute

essentials, there isn't a one size fits all approach.

Article compiled by Latus Health, Hull. Latus Health offers a full spectrum of occupational health services and its key mission is to improve health and wellbeing for companies and their employees.

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