

Employers warming to four-day week if workers compromise on home working

More Northern Ireland employers are warming to the idea of a four-day week if workers compromise on home working.

That is the finding of a new report from recruitment company Hays which surveyed 464 employers and employees throughout Northern Ireland, unveiling overwhelming support from the latter for a four-day week.

Over 70% of workers said they would rather work a four-day week – with all four days in the office – over a five-day hybrid working pattern. The draw is such that the majority said they would be tempted to move to an organisation if they were to offer a shortened week.

Encouragingly for those workers, 43% of Northern Ireland employers said they would consider offering a four-day week if all four days were spent in the office, a figure which is higher than the overall UK figure at 34%.

The survey comes after the conclusion of the official four-day week trial across the UK which saw 56 of the 61 companies which took part announce their intention to implement the shortened week.

However, while Northern Ireland bosses are warming to the idea of a shortened week, few have followed through on implementing one, said John Moore, managing director of Hays in Northern Ireland.

“It’s clear from our research that the appetite for a four-day working week has increased from both professionals and employers, however in reality only 5% of respondents to our

survey are working for an organisation where this is actually happening,” he said. “Organisations were quick to adopt hybrid working as a result of the pandemic, however the four-day week is a much bigger cultural and operational shift for many organisations.”

He said employees appear willing to trade home working for the promise of a four-day week and, with still high demand for labour, it is a deal employers should consider.

“What our research does point to is the importance of flexibility as professionals would be willing to travel into an office more often if there was better flexibility from employers on their working days. Whilst the four-day working week is an attractive offering for workers, there are lots of ways for employers to stand out from the crowd by allowing staff flexibility in the form of hybrid working, flexible hours and more.

“There are still over 1.1million unfilled job vacancies across the UK so employers need to be aware of the differing ways to attract professionals to their organisation.”