

Newcastle digital agency Venture Stream to trial four- day working week

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A Newcastle company is to trial moving its staff to a four-day week as part of plans to give employees a better work-life balance.

Digital marketing agency Venture Stream will trial the plan for three months as it moves its team from a 40-hour week to 32 hours.

It says there will be no loss of pay or benefits from the move, which will be trialled until January and made permanent if it brings the hoped-for benefits in employee wellbeing and efficiency.

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The change comes after the company introduced remote working and flexible hours throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It said the new ways of working had in better work-life balance for staff, which in turn increased overall productivity and improved its service for clients.

Vic Morgan, chief executive officer at Venture Stream, said: "We take mental health very seriously at Venture Stream and

have listened to our team. A four day work week offers a better work-life balance.

“The pandemic has shown us that a more flexible approach to working leads to a more content and productive team, and we’ve already introduced flexible hours and the option to work remotely, so a shorter working week seems like a natural next step in a people-first approach to delivering outstanding service.”

Venture Stream – a full-service agency specialising in digital marketing and ecommerce – will continue to be open five days a week during the experiment, with staff on a rota to have a different ‘day off’.

The company operates particularly in the retail, hotel management, fashion, ethical trading sectors, with a client portfolio that includes Yogamatters, Barbour and Standout. It says it has a client retention rate of 90%.

The company is among a number of businesses trialling a four-day week in a move to boost employee well-being and increase productivity. The trend has been accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic, which has highlighted the benefits of more flexible working to many firms.

Unions and other campaigners last week called for Scotland to move to a four-day working week, saying the Scottish Government should introduce a national subsidy for companies which switch to a 32-hour working week with no loss of pay.

They pointed to a pilot scheme in Spain where similar proposals have been backed by €50m of government funding.

Labour’s shadow employment rights secretary Andy McDonald has said that the party is also considering policies on changes to the five-day working week.

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