

Firms with four-day working week 'more productive, profitable and happier'

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[businesses](#) that have adopted a four-day working week for all staff have said they are more productive and profitable, and hailed a healthier and happier workforce.

It comes as the world's biggest trial of a four-day working week was deemed a success by researchers, as the vast majority of companies involved said they will continue to adopt a shorter week after the pilot ended.

Some 61 companies took part in the pilot scheme, ranging from charities and financial services firms to retailers and a fish and chip shop.

All the firms had to make sure there was no reduction in salary for their employees.

Our productivity is up, our profitability is up, our sales are up, our output is up, in less time. So why would you go back to dragging it out into another day?

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5 [Squirrels](#), a Brighton-based skincare company that took part in the trial, said its four-day working week had “worked across the board” and significantly increased productivity across the team.

Gary Conroy, the firm’s chief executive, told the PA news agency: “We’re trying to run a profitable, productive company and we believe that one of the ways of doing that is by having higher employee engagement and happier members of staff who are not burnt out the whole time and have a good quality of life outside work.

“We can get a lot more done in less time, meaning that we are then free to have more time off.”

Mr Conroy said the company introduced “deep work” time to help with productivity, where staff dedicate two-hour periods to work without emails or messages to distract them.

It also cut meetings back to a bare minimum, and ensured any that do get scheduled were limited to 30 minutes and at certain time periods.

“What we found actually was that projects didn’t take nearly as long as we thought they would, because it was the disruption and distraction that was stretching out the length of time the project would take,” he told PA.

Mr Conroy said 5 Squirrels, which has a total of 15 employees, would be keeping to its four-day working week going forward.

He said: “Our productivity is up, our profitability is up, our sales are up, our output is up, you know, in less time.

“So why would you go back to dragging it out into another day? It’s really counterintuitive.”

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workforce, but also a welcome rise in applications for roles at Atom

Digital bank Atom moved all staff to a four-day working week back in November 2021, with no change in salary.

The lender, which has a team of more than 470 people, became the largest UK business and the first UK bank to do so.

It said it has been an “overwhelmingly positive” experience for employees, resulting in increased productivity and job satisfaction and a surge in applications for jobs at the bank.

Anne-Marie Lister, head of people at Atom bank, said: “As an early adopter of the four-day week, it is wonderful to see the number of businesses who have now chosen to make the shift permanent, with pressure clearly growing on the [Government](#) to challenge the traditional working structure.

“Since moving to the new working structure in November 2021, we have not only seen a happier, healthier, more productive workforce, but also a welcome rise in applications for roles at Atom, whilst also hitting record high customer service metrics and significant business milestones.”

The firm said last year it had seen a reduction in sick days since introducing the new working structure and that employees were more motivated to work.

Ms Lister said the traditional five-day week is, in many cases, “outdated”.

The findings of the pilot scheme will be presented to [MPs](#) on Tuesday as campaigners urge lawmakers to give every British worker a 32-hour working week.