

Welsh Future Generations Commissioner calls for Shorter Working Week trial

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The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has called on the Welsh Government to launch a shorter working week trial.

Sophie Howe, whose role is to protect the interests of future generations under Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act, said the Welsh public sector could lead the way with a pioneering trial, with people re-evaluating their life priorities following the pandemic.

A new report by the Commissioner and think-tank, Autonomy, shows major appetite for a working time reduction in Wales, with the move also creating potentially 38,000 jobs in Wales.

It found:

- 76% of the Welsh public would support the sharing out of work so that everyone can have a good work-life balance.
- 62% of the Welsh public would ideally choose to work a four day working week or less.
- 57% of the Welsh public would support the Welsh government piloting a scheme to move towards a four day working week.

The new report, [A Future Fit for Wales: The roadmap to a shorter working week](#), advocates trialling shorter working hours in parts of the public sector, encouraging and supporting private sector firms to transition to shorter hours and collaborating with and empowering trade unions so they can negotiate shorter hours across diverse workplaces.

Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, said: "It's clear that following the pandemic,

people across Wales are re-evaluating their priorities in life and looking for a healthier work-life balance.

“The escalating demands of caring for loved-ones due to an ageing population and an increase in mental health issues exacerbated by working long hours are just some of the factors which make a shorter working week more appealing.

“A shorter working week can result in increased productivity which will be of huge benefit to employers for a happier, healthier workforce. The working week has not changed for more than 100 years, and now seems the perfect opportunity for the Welsh Government to commit to a pioneering trial and build evidence for greater change across Wales.”

Will Stronge, co-director of Autonomy said: “All the evidence suggests that a shorter working week with no loss of pay would be a win-win for both workers and employers in Wales.

“Countries across the world including Scotland and Ireland have already launched four-day week trials and a radical Welsh Government should be leading the way on this too.

“Moving to a four-day week would boost productivity and workers’ well-being, and create tens of thousands of new jobs in the Welsh public sector. The potential benefits are too large to ignore.”

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