



[ONS group executive committee](#)

22 November 2023

The four day week: campaigning for a better work life balance

PCS has a long held aspiration to shorten the working week for our members. It is a key feature of all our pay claims to all employers that we deal with. At a time of ever improving technology, it is also eminently deliverable.

As part of the concessions won during our national campaign, the Cabinet Office has agreed to talks on what the future world of work might look like within the UK civil service and its related areas. This will include talks on working hours and ways of working. Talks are also underway in the Scottish Government Sector on the potential for a shorter working week.

All of our negotiators across the union are being encouraged to press the employer on this issue. Here, the ONS group talk about their campaign work around the issue.

At the Office for National Statistics (ONS) we are campaigning for a better work life balance so everyone can live happier and more fulfilling lives.

We say a four-day working week will bring a whole host of benefits tackling health and wellbeing, gender inequality, and the climate crisis. As a result of having to work fewer days, we will have more time to recuperate before returning to work, and have more time to spend with families and friends according to The 4 Day Week Campaign.

The five-day week has been part of UK working life for more than a century, so an alteration would be considered a radical shift. However it is a change that has

been suggested more regularly in recent years. The ONS allows us to work compressed hours, a form of flexible working that allows people to work full-time hours in fewer days. While we have welcomed more flexibility through hybrid working, compressing a normal five-day week into four days is not the answer to tackling burn-out, stress and overwork. The four-day working week would see a 20% reduction in working hours without loss of pay.

Our dedicated team of union reps are leading a campaign to trial the four-day working week. We asked our members to complete an anonymous online survey to understand people's thoughts. The survey aimed to raise awareness, measure the appetite, and uncover any concerns or opportunities ONS staff predict with implementing a four-day week.

We asked our members to share the survey with colleagues and friends, increasing the conversation about the future of our work. Within days we were amazed with the response to our survey: to date 31% of our organisation have contributed their feedback. To give the campaign the loudest possible voice we welcomed opportunities for volunteers to join our working groups and in addition asked people who wanted to be kept up to date with the campaign progress.

We are excited to be working with our members and across departments: we teamed up with DEFRA London South East branch recently, who are running the same campaign, to collaborate and share ideas.

Please get in touch if your branch is campaigning for a four-day working week as we would love to connect and work with you, together we are stronger. Email us at PCSUnion@ons.gov.uk