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Civil servants seek four-day week

PCS members at Defra call on employer to implement pilot scheme

Civil servants working for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are campaigning to become the first central UK government department to trial a four-day working week.

Backed by the 4 Day Week Campaign, members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union have called for a pilot scheme across more than 21,000 employees at Defra to assess the benefits to their wellbeing and productivity.

The union is proposing a 20% reduction in working hours with no loss of wages - [a practice growing rapidly across the private and public sectors](#).

PCS is today delivering a petition to Defra asking department bosses to agree to a trial. [The move comes after the results of an interim survey of PCS members across all government departments show 40% of them were considering quitting if they were forced to return to the office three days a week.](#)

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "Evidence suggests a four-day week would lead to a better work-life balance for staff and could improve productivity for the employer.

"Previous trials have led to a reduction in sick leave and improvements to staff retention and satisfaction. If Defra wants to seriously address the issues of employee burnout, stress and poor wellbeing they will listen to our members and implement this pilot."

4 Day Week Campaign director Joe Ryle said: "A four-day working week with no loss of pay improves both productivity and the wellbeing of workers.

"It's been tested time and time again with great success in the private sector so it's only right and fair to see if these benefits can apply to public sector workers.

"We're long overdue a reduction in working hours and we're proud to be supporting PCS members in their campaign."

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