



[Dan Durcan](#)

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## When working isn't working

Dan Durcan and his colleagues are leading a campaign at EFRA to trial a four-day week.

A four-day week is not about doing less work. It's about re-imagining what work looks like as well as giving more time back to people to be themselves. Employers look at reports on output. But trying to squeeze every drop of work out of someone is counterproductive.

The civil service workload is both massive and demanding. Workers end up tired, exhausted, less happy, less healthy. Bad work practices have health and productivity impacts which we as taxpayers subsidise every day.

### **How it got started**

The campaign originated from a motion at group conference and has massively taken off. We had a huge launch event in November, one of our best attended meetings ever. We had members coming from all sorts of different jobs: policy wonks, tree surgeons, lab workers, payment administration, marine health scientists...

Everyone is fed up with presenteeism and burnout. They're inspired by the idea of doing something differently and better. As a group, we're raising expectations about what work could look like.

After the November meeting we recruited volunteers to take the message to their teams, to speak to their colleagues and get them involved. 1400 members signed our petition which we handed in to the permanent secretary. They think we're asking for the equivalent of a 25% pay rise and cited that there has to be value for money. We believe this is how to get value for money!

## **It's because we care**

We know an immediate shift could be expensive and disruptive, so we're asking for a trial. It seems that managers know we'll get the data to prove that a four-day week is more productive. It's a purely political move – if they knew the trial wouldn't work, they would run it and close the argument!

We don't go to work to try and clock off as early as possible. We're here to protect the environment, support farmers and help with climate change. We don't want to work four days if this means these goals aren't achieved. But they will be. Colleagues have given us hundreds of ways that a four-day week would benefit their work and their own lives.

There are people with disabilities, people caring for dying parents... this is life we're talking about. Me? I'm relatively lucky but I know for a fact I would be less stressed, enjoy work more and get more work done. I'd see more of my friends and family, do more exercise, and definitely do more trade union work!

## **The difference is you**

We're asking every EFRA member to come to the events on 25 January. We need maximum possible turnout to show the employer that this isn't going away. This campaign came through a member who proposed it to their branch and was adopted at group level.

If you want a change like this, you need to go to your AGM and make that change happen by getting involved. Even if that's just to recruit your colleagues, change your email signature or wear a lanyard. We get these through being active trade unionists. If you want a four-day week, you can work to make it happen.