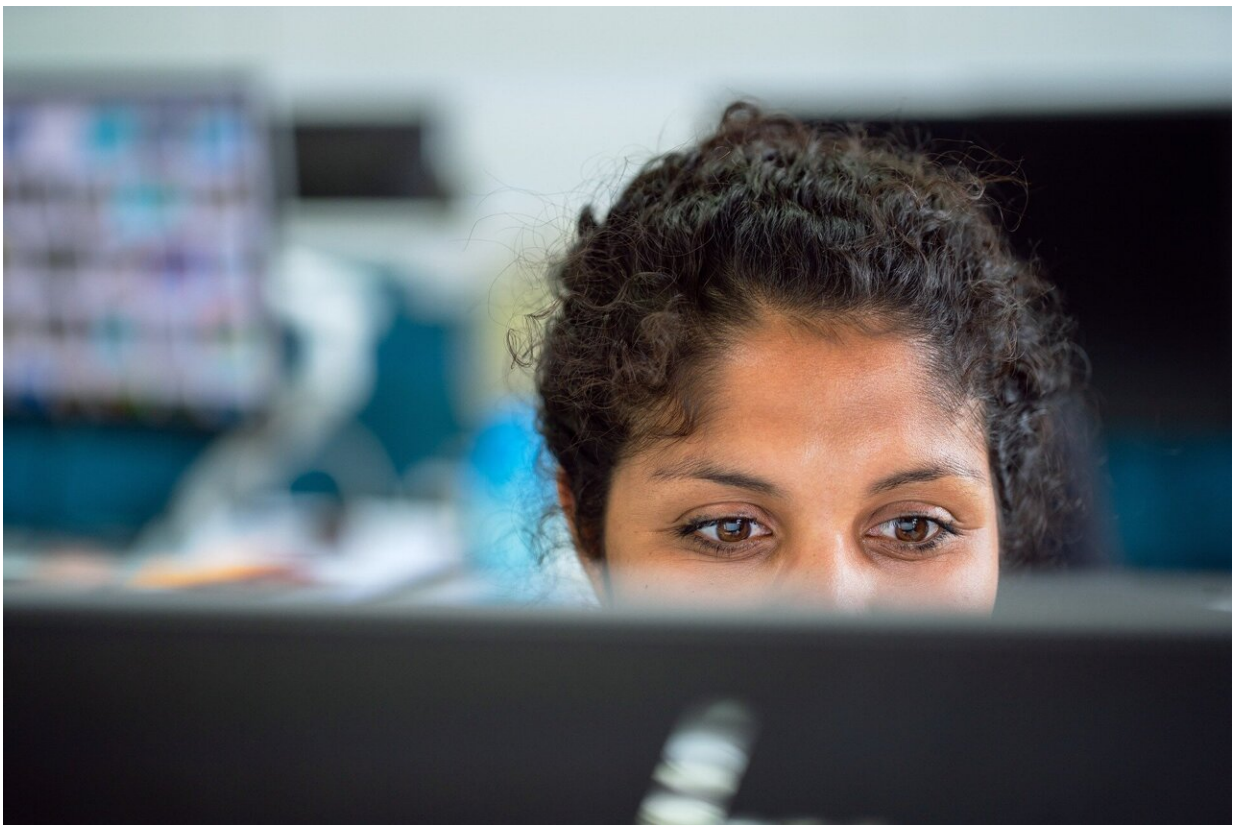


# Four-day week may lead to greater satisfaction but workers will face trade-off, expert says

September 3 2024, by Hamish Armstrong

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Under new government plans to encourage flexible working arrangements, employees could be given increased powers to request a

four-day working week.

The plans would see greater powers given to full-time workers over their hours, and follows a raft of measures including Labor's pledges to repeal anti-union laws and restrict zero-hours contracts.

Professor André Spicer, Dean and Professor of Organizational Behavior at Bayes Business School (formerly Cass) explained that [flexible working](#) could have [psychological benefits](#).

"A four-day week will have some [positive outcomes](#). It will help to shrink people's carbon footprint because they will reduce commuting for work," he said.

"Four-day weeks also make employees more satisfied with their work. The impact on productivity is mixed, with studies suggesting employees in office jobs are able to produce as much in four days as they can in five.

"There is also historical precedent. When Britain moved from a 54-hour working week to a 48-hour week in 1919 there was no impact on productivity or competitiveness."

While outlining the benefits, Professor Spicer also warned of the trade-off that workers faced if they were in favor of the new working arrangements.

"While productivity and satisfaction may improve, new conditions would see longer working hours on the four days of work. It can also mean employees cut out work such as networking with colleagues which may not produce short-term results but lead to long-term benefits.

"It is magical thinking to assume employees can get a 20% [productivity](#)

boost by simply moving to a four-day week. If employees want a four-day week and the same level of income, they may have to accept longer working days as a trade-off.

"Four-day weeks work for some industries that allow flexibility like administration but are unlikely to work in others which require constant presence like care and service work."

Provided by City University London

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