

## **KH B/L FILE 7 WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

**‘Miserable staff don't make money’: the firms that have switched to a four-day week**  
**[Coco Khan, The Guardian, Mon 5 Nov 2018](#)**

## **FICHE DE TRAVAIL**

### **1. READ the article published in The Guardian online about work-life balance**

#### **Lexical notes :**

1. **staff** : employees ; personnel (d'une entreprise)

2. **to tout** ; brag about, show off ; se vanter

3. **gig economy** : a labour market characterized by the prevalence of **short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs**. Oxford Dictionary

Economie du partage/économie de « projets »/économie à la demande (type 'Uber')

### **2. COMPREHENSION/ answer the following questions :**

1) What are the advantages of a four-day week ? (180 words +/- 10%)

2) What are the drawbacks of a shorter work week ? (100 words +/- 10%)

3) Why should a four-day week become universal ? (100 words +/- 10%)

### **3. ESSAY (200 words +/- 10%)**

According to Mark Price who served as trade and investment minister under David Cameron : “work-life balance implies that life is not work”. How far do you agree with such a statement ?

### **4. TRANSLATION (Line 7 to 22)**

I meet Rich Leigh for a coffee in Gloucester on a Friday, his day off. In fact, his entire company has the day off, because Radioactive PR, the firm led by Leigh, 30, has adopted a four-day week. It is one of a handful of UK businesses that now operate like this: staff still get paid their previous five-day salary, but they work a day less. The company began with a six-week trial and found that they achieved just as much – and there were even signs of growth. The key to the scheme's success, Leigh says, is how happy his employees now are. “There are two ways to make money in my line of work,” he says, “retain clients and get new ones. Miserable, tired staff<sup>1</sup> can't do either.” The four-day working week is being touted<sup>2</sup> by some as the answer to Britain's “productivity problem”. British people work some of the longest hours in Europe : the average British worker takes only a 34-minute lunch break and works 10 hours overtime each week (more often than not, this is unpaid). Yet UK productivity lags seriously behind our European neighbours, who tend to work fewer hours. France recently made it [illegal to expect workers to answer emails out of hours](#), and the average French worker produces more by the end of Thursday than their UK counterparts do in a full week.

British working practices have taken their toll on the nation's health and happiness. More than half a million workers in the UK were signed off with work-related stress or anxiety last year. [...] The EU working time directive sets a limit of 48 working hours a week. Britain is the only EU member that allows workers to opt out of this and work longer hours, a practice that trade unions have argued has been subject to “widespread abuse”. [...]