Gothenburg City Council initiated a 6-hour workday trial in 2014. The aim of the trial is to find out how a 6-hour workday impacts the health and life quality of assistant nurses, as well as to study socioeconomic factor benefits and the impact on job creation. The trial included interactive research in order to analyze its effects.

The trial is conducted at “Svartedalen” elderly care centre with approximately 80 assistant nurses. The first report “6 months with 6 hours” indicates a drop in sick leaves, improved continuity and less stressed employees. Even the elderly residents feel they receive better care and get more time with the employees.

1 BACKGROUND

Gothenburg City Council decided in 2014 to launch a 6-hour workday trial including interactive research. The trial was planned for one year, from 2 February 2015 until 31 January 2016. In June 2015 Gothenburg City Council decided to extend the trial over the whole of 2016.

The idea came from the Left Party who has been supporting shorter working hours for a long time. They argue that a 6-hour workday, while maintaining the same wage, is a strategic reform to reduce unemployment and to achieve a more equal distribution between work and capital. It is also a feminist reform; shorter working hours free time for all working people, which creates the conditions for a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work. A shorter workday also means that part-time jobs will be translated into full-time jobs.

Together with the Social Democrats and the Green Party, it was decided to run a trial to show that it is possible to reduce working hours with good results and to share best practices.

2 THE TRIAL DESIGN

The 6-hour workday trial is conducted by the City District Council “Västra Hisingen”. The trial is organized by a management group, a project group (of managers, administrators/experts and union leaders) and a group of assistant nurses to ensure they have a voice in the trial. A team of administrators/experts collaborates with representatives of the authorities for the Swedish Insurance Agency, the Unemployment Insurance Found, the Swedish Employment Agency and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

The trial is conducted at “Svartedalen” elderly care centre. “Solängen” elderly care centre is the reference. Both centres have apartments with approximately 70 residents each. The inter-
The aim of the trial is to find out how a 6-hour workday impacts the health and life quality of assistant nurses. The trial also demonstrates the potential for job opportunities and the economic effect on other authorities. Another aim is to examine how the reduced working day impacts the quality of daily care for the residents. The interactive research evaluates the trial, including the resulting change in working conditions of assistant nurses.

In the trial, the assistant nurses who worked full-time before had their workday reduced to 6 hours with full pay. Within the trial, assistant nurses with part-time contracts were given the choice to work a 6-hour workday with a full salary, in order to realise a new general 6-hour schedule. To compensate for the loss of working hours, 14 assistant nurses were recruited. A collective agreement was signed between the City of Gothenburg and the “Kommunal” Union.

Most employees are female assistant nurses. Assistant nurses are the largest professional group in Sweden. Therefore, this trail is particularly significant.

The setup of the interactive research, theory and methods is comprehensive. The interactive research uses the Best Practice theory and method. The focus of the trial is the employees who previously worked full-time, whose contracts were reduced to a 6-hour workday during the trial. All studies are divided into three age groups.

3 PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The first report, “6 months with 6 hours”, was presented by researcher Bengt Lorentzon. It describes the aims and highlights the first and preliminary indications. Due to the early stage in the trial, there is not yet enough evidence to draw conclusions about final trial results. The trial and study will be conducted over two years, which is necessary to ensure a high quality of results.

The study aims to answer two key questions. Firstly, how and whether a shorter workday impacts activities at the elderly care home, and how a reduction of working hours improves the employees’ leisure time and life in general; however, our main focus here is to ascertain how it affects work-related issues. The second question is about the shorter workday’s impact on productivity. Productivity is usually a way of describing how many units of a product can be produced with a certain time and cost input. In this case, with elderly care not being a product, productivity is a measurement based on how well care meets the goals that have been established by national laws and locally decided regulations. Their main concerns are the elderly’s rights of integrity, quality of life and safe and high-quality care.

The study includes interviews with the residents. There are few studies that measure productivity in the eyes of the residents; in general, only the employees’ work and experience are measured. For example the elderly answer questions about how pleased they are with the employees’ work and what activities they have been doing. The employees’ experiences are measured in a survey conducted before, during, and after the trial. After six weeks with a six-hour workday, the employees answered questions about how they experienced the shorter