



# Four-day week for Howards Accountants with support from IRIS Software Group



HOWARDS  
CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS

Customer Story





**A proactive Stafford-based firm of accountants offers employees a four-day week, with the support of IRIS Software Group.**

After being impressed by the results of a nationwide pilot, Howards Chartered Certified Accountants decided to implement the scheme themselves, and several months in are finding fantastic results, including staff feeling more energised, and an improved work-life balance.

Founded in 2005, Howards have been IRIS customers 'forever', using the accountancy software to help build fantastic relationships with their clients and to support them to grow organically over the years.



*I've been with the business about 10 years and with a young team, we're always keen to evolve and make Howards a great place to work," says Ryan Hudson, Director. "We like the IRIS product, and we have a fantastic relationship with our account manager, who works with us in our mission to work efficiently. To implement a four-day week, we needed to make sure the team's time was being used on higher-value work, and IRIS Outsourcing has been a key player in making that happen."*








## Fighting against the staff retention crisis

Since the pandemic, the team at Howards has adjusted to working from home but found that in order to remain attractive to a young and competitive marketplace, they needed to offer something a bit different.

Ryan tells us, *“We have good IT in place and because we were using IRIS software we were able to work from home, but with a young team who want to develop, we’ve found being in the office is an incentive for them and actually, what benefits them is a shorter working week, and a longer weekend, which is why we decided to trial the 4-day working week.”*

*Attracting and retaining good people is important in any industry, but with there being a recruitment and retention crisis in the accountancy sector, we wanted to listen to what people wanted and have made changes to make that happen. Our recruiters have certainly noticed a difference and the happiness of our staff has improved too.”*





## Independent accountants - you're not alone

Having the support of IRIS has been a huge comfort for independent firm, Howards, who say their relationship is very much a partnership. Ryan tells us, *"Our account manager knows that working efficiently is important to us, and that became more critical when we began thinking about how we could move into a 4-day working week."*

*"As a practice, we've gone almost completely paperless - we were a very traditional firm with paper and files all over the office, so we've worked hard to modernise and become an attractive firm for accountants to join."*







*Our account manager from IRIS suggested IRIS Outsourcing and we trialed it back in Autumn to help us with a tax return deadline. We're now looking to increase our outsourcing as it worked so well. Any way we can work more efficiently is a win for us, and IRIS Outsourcing has helped us do that. It's been a fantastic commercial solution for us.*

*The turnaround and quality of the work we've outsourced have been beyond what we expected, so that's been a very positive experience.*


*We're really impressed. Tax returns were even done over the festive period, I could see it happening from my phone and they were just flying through. The quality of the work has genuinely been really high."*



Karen Williams, Interim Managing Director for Accountancy, adds, *"We're thrilled to hear that our team and software are helping support thriving businesses like Howards to make positive changes to their practice. Our dedicated accountancy specialists are here to help increase the capacity of your practice by performing core accounting and payroll processes, leaving your teams to focus on added-value activities. We want to be seen as a reliable resource for firms like Howards to turn to, and I'm proud of our fantastic teams here in the UK and India who make us the no. 1 trusted choice for UK accountants."*







Now fully in the swing of a four-day working week, Howards are looking forward to continuing their partnership with IRIS, with plans to move to the Cloud. Ryan tells us, *“We really like the partnership we have with IRIS and the relationship we’ve built with our account manager. As a young independent business, it’s nice to know we have the support of a larger organisation like IRIS on side. With IRIS Outsourcing, it gives us the flexibility to be able to take on more work and continue to give our clients a fantastic service. We’d highly recommend it.”*



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