

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

GOING PUBLIC: ICELAND'S JOURNEY TO A SHORTER WORKING WEEK

June 2021



Autonomy



Iceland: key stats



Population (1 January, 2019): 356,991

Land area: 102,775 km²

Official language: Icelandic

Working population (Q4 2019): 196,700

Workforce participation (15–64 year olds): 87% —highest within OECD

Unemployment: 3.4% —6th lowest within OECD

Total GDP (2018): 2.8 trillion ISK / 17.6 billion GBP / 22.7 billion USD

GDP per person (2017): 46,981 USD —6th highest of OECD countries, higher than other Nordic countries

GDP per hour worked (2017): 55.4 USD —14th of OECD countries, lower than other Nordic countries

Hours worked per week per full-time working person (2018): 44.4 —3rd highest of Eurostat countries

Full-time workers (Q4 2019): 74.7%

Duration of working life (Expected; 2017): 47 years —the longest in Europe

Workers by industry (% of working population, 2014): Services 77%, Industry 18.3%, Agriculture and Fishing 4.7%

Note: GDP per person/hour is in 2010 PPPs.

Based on: Eurostat (22 November 2019, 24 November 2019), Statistics Iceland (7 February 2019), Statistics Iceland (2015, p. 95), Statistics Iceland (24 November 2019a, 24 November 2019b), OECD (24 November 2019, 26 November 2019, 27 November 2019).

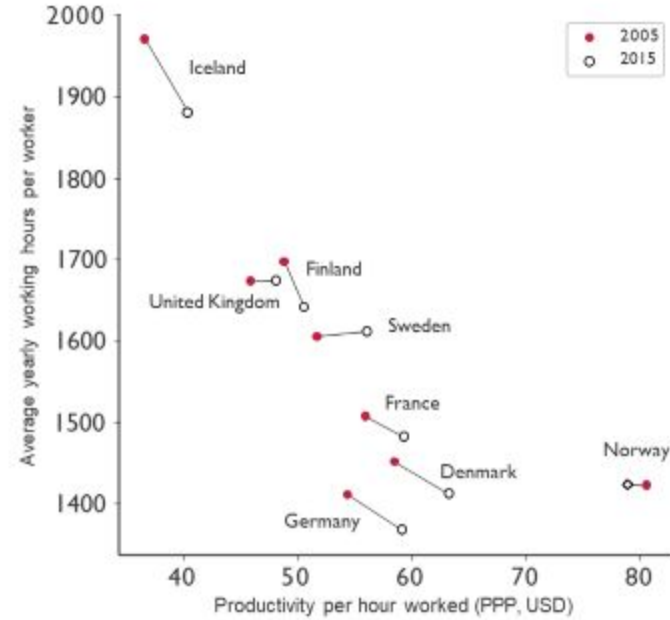
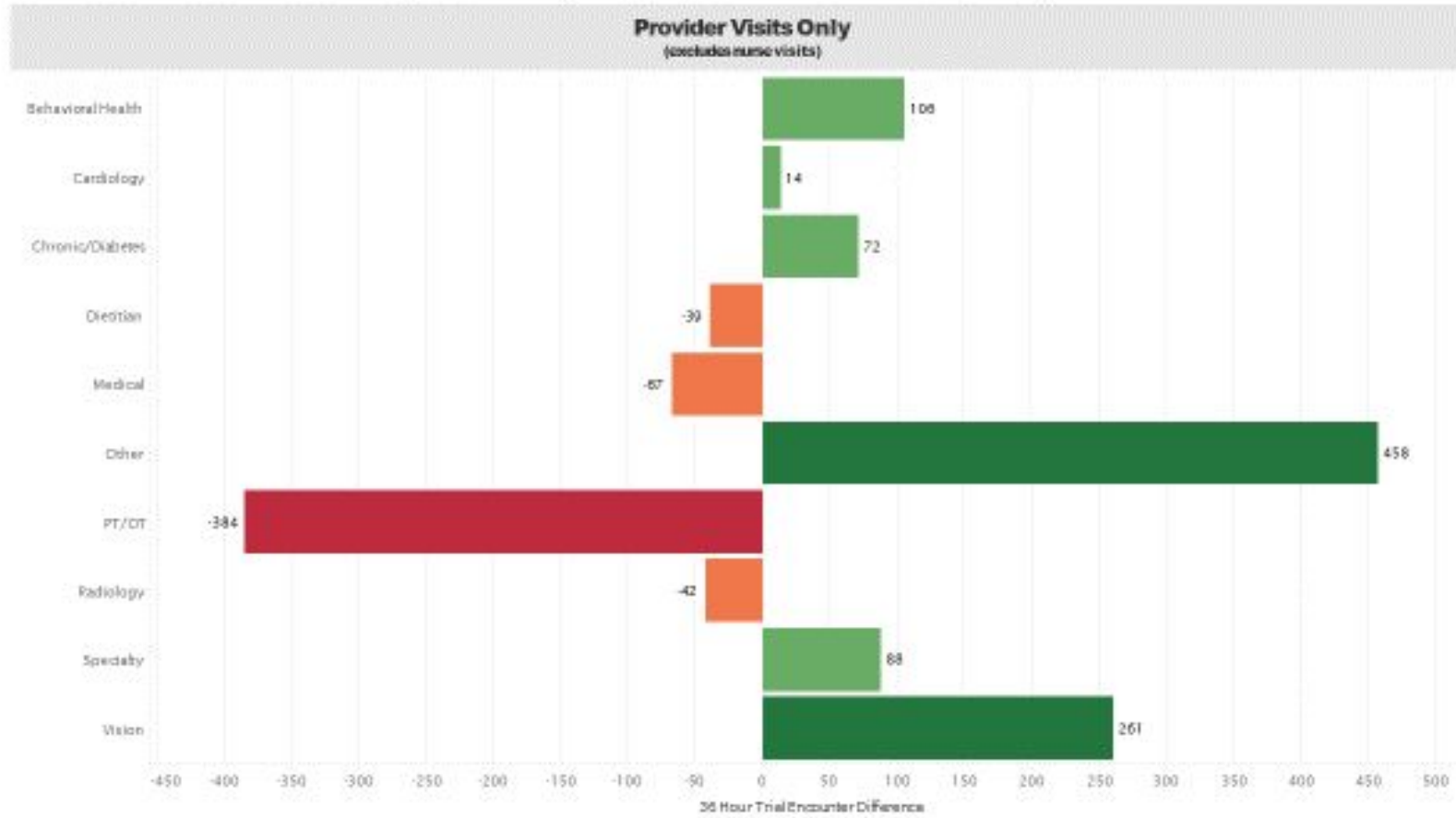


Figure 1. Per hour productivity and average yearly hours across different countries. There is a strong correlation between shorter working hours and increased productivity amongst wealthy nations. Source: OECD (December 2017c, 2017d).

Likewise, a range of studies performed in workplaces show that where working time has been reduced and working patterns reorganised, productivity has concurrently increased. In their research into working time reduction in the last few decades of the 20th century, for instance, Bosch and Lehndorff (2001) note how a number of workplaces have indicated that successful reductions in working hours have been closely tied to changes in the organisation of work — whether through workers gaining greater autonomy over work processes, or changes in operating times and shift patterns. Such reorganisations have clearly had a positive impact on productivity.

Financial Grouping Encounter Count Difference for 36 Hour Work Week Trial-Jan 12, 2026 - Present

Jan 12 2026 through today, compared to same time frame from previous year.



Medical Provider Face to Face Visit Counts by Month

Current Year
Previous Year

