

# THE TIMEWISE FLEXIBLE JOBS INDEX 2016

An annual index of the proportion of UK jobs advertised with flexible working options

THIS INDEX REPORT IS BROUGHT  
TO YOU IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second year of our nationwide research into the flexible recruitment market. Let's be clear from the start that we're not talking about flexible working for existing employees, we're talking about advertising flexible options at the point of hire.

Timewise is delighted to see an increase this year in the proportion of quality flexible jobs. This suggests that flexible hiring is catching on, and that employers are increasingly aware of the need to reach out to the wider talent pool it attracts.

However, at 8.7% of jobs paid £20k FTE or more, flexible hiring still lags a long way behind workforce need.

Our experience over 10 years of working in this market tells us that the huge gap between the supply of flexible jobs and demand from flexible workers is causing a failure in the talent pipeline. People are getting trapped in their current role, down-skilling to get the flexibility they need, and finding their career progression opportunities limited.

So we hope that this year's increase really is the start of an upward trend, and look forward to seeing more and more businesses opening up to flexibility at the point of hire.

Our ask of employers is: look at your people, and ask yourself how you can design jobs that will use their skills and talents to the full within the time they can offer you. That way lies a modern workplace that works for everyone.

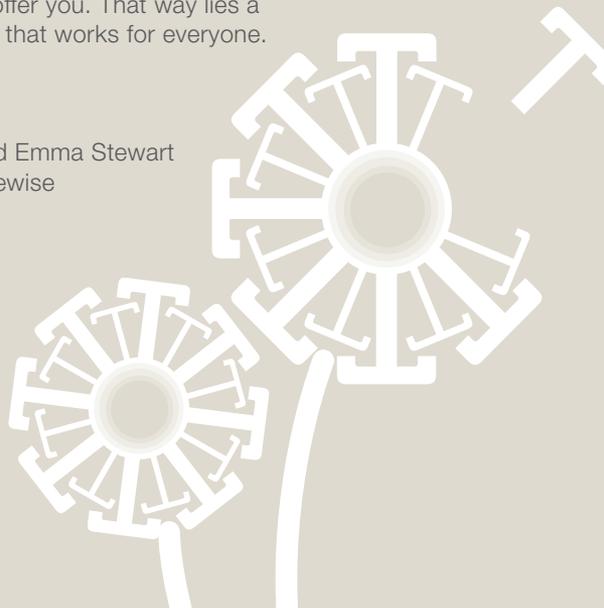
Karen Mattison and Emma Stewart  
Joint CEOs of Timewise

**“Flexible hiring helps employers to keep their options open. It's all about listening to candidates. That way, you'll attract the best.”**

**Karen Mattison,**  
joint CEO, Timewise

## Objectives of the index

- To help fill a knowledge gap in job market statistics by reporting on flexible vacancies
- to track progress in flexible hiring by updating the index annually
- to enable employers to measure how well their recruitment practice keeps pace with the index, or better it.



# HOW MANY JOBS ARE ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE OPTIONS?

## POOR SUPPLY AMONGST JOBS PAID £20K+ FTE



8.7%

Amongst jobs paid £20k FTE or more, 8.7% are advertised with flexible working options. This is up from 6.2%<sup>1</sup> in 2015 – a promising sign that more employers are beginning to extend their flexible working practices to the point of hire.

However, as over half the workforce<sup>2</sup> currently work flexibly, the low proportion of flexible jobs remains a significant barrier for many people.

## HIGHER PROPORTION AMONGST LOWER PAID JOBS



20.2%

This year, we have also analysed jobs paid less than £20k FTE (drawing a bottom line at £14k, which roughly equates to the new national living wage of £7.20 per hour). Availability of flexible jobs is more buoyant here, at 20.2%. This echoes earlier studies<sup>3</sup> that have found a correlation between low-paid jobs and flexibility (in particular part time work).

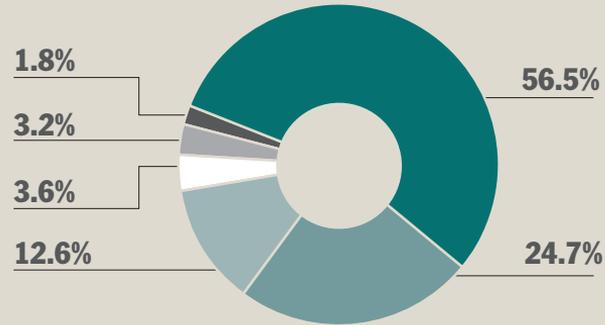
## What do we mean by a 'flexible job'?

Different organisations use different language for 'flexible working' – agile working or smart working for example. But we're all talking about the same thing: working patterns that are different from a rigid 9 to 5 at the employer's premises.

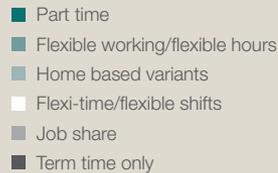
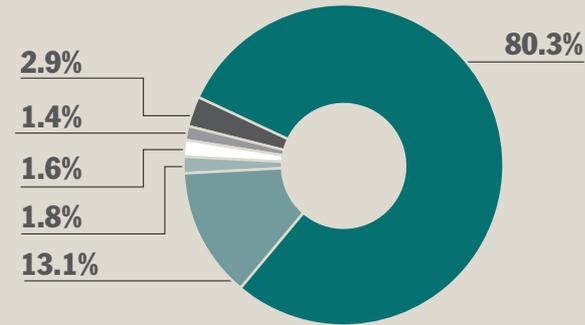
In this report, 'flexible job' means any advertised vacancy that is either part time or, if full time, clearly states that the job is open to flexible working. Different forms of flexible working include: part time, working from home, flexible start and finish times, remote working, term-time, job-share, annualised or compressed hours.

# WHICH TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE MOST COMMON?

## SALARY £20K+ FTE



## SALARY £14K- £19,999 FTE



Amongst flexible jobs advertised at £20k+ FTE, more than half (56.5%) were part time jobs, with a quarter (24.7%) stating openness to unspecified forms of flexible working. Home-based or remote working jobs accounted for a further 12.6% of the job ads.

Amongst lower paid jobs, part time dominates (80.3%). As mentioned previously, there is an entrenched correlation between part time work and low-pay.

### TIMewise VIEW

- The greatest potential for increasing flexible hiring lies with full time jobs being opened up to flexible working options. However, employers who have begun to do this rarely specify which forms of flexible working they will consider. It's a challenging ask of employers – often they may not know the answer until they meet a specific candidate.
- However, the lack of clarity in job ads is unhelpful to candidates. To feel confident about applying, candidates need to know whether the employer will consider the specific type of flexibility they need. In particular, Timewise experience suggests that many candidates are most interested in reduced hours contracts (eg 4 days per week) and are sceptical this will be acceptable for a job that simply states 'flexible working options possible'.
- Greater understanding of job design will enable employers to improve clarity around what types of flexibility are possible for a given role, and this can then be articulated in the job ad.

# PROPORTION OF FLEXIBLE JOBS PAYING £20K+ FTE, BY FUNCTION

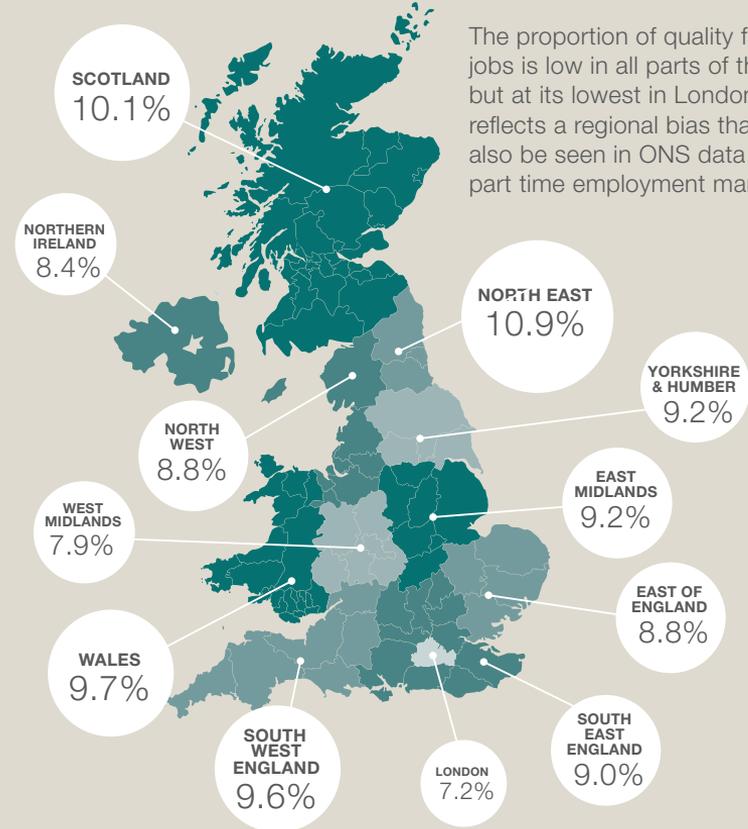
|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Medical/Health          | <b>24.6%</b> |
| Social Services         | <b>20.1%</b> |
| Education/Training      | <b>17.4%</b> |
| Administration/Clerical | <b>10.2%</b> |
| Hospitality/services    | <b>9.7%</b>  |
| Sales/Biz development   | <b>9.7%</b>  |
| Security                | <b>9.6%</b>  |
| Creative Talent         | <b>7.3%</b>  |
| Operations/Logistics    | <b>7.0%</b>  |
| Human Resources         | <b>7.0%</b>  |
| Science/R&D             | <b>6.1%</b>  |
| Legal                   | <b>5.6%</b>  |
| Finance/Accounting      | <b>5.6%</b>  |
| Information Technology  | <b>4.9%</b>  |
| Marketing/PR            | <b>4.8%</b>  |
| Executive Management    | <b>4.2%</b>  |
| Engineering/QA          | <b>3.9%</b>  |
| Maintenance/Repair      | <b>3.8%</b>  |
| Manufacturing/Resources | <b>3.0%</b>  |
| Facilities/Construction | <b>2.6%</b>  |

The proportion of jobs advertised with flexible options varies considerably depending on the type of role. Health, social services and education are significantly ahead of all other categories. It's important to note that these are role types, not industry sectors. The figures reflect the employment patterns of, for example: nurses, care workers, teaching assistants, lecturers.

### TIMESWISE VIEW:

- Health, social services and education are particularly 'feminised' role categories. This coupled with the nature of how work is done (non standardised 9-5 and non desk-based) may have led the more widespread practice of flexible hiring.
- Employers could use flexible hiring to competitive advantage, to attract talent into roles where they have particular problems with skills shortages (eg engineering or IT) and also where there is a driver to increase gender diversity.

# ...AND BY LOCATION



The proportion of quality flexible jobs is low in all parts of the UK, but at its lowest in London. This reflects a regional bias that can also be seen in ONS data on the part time employment market<sup>4</sup>.

# SUMMARY

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- The proportion of 'quality' jobs (those paid at least £20k FTE) which are advertised with flexible working options is only 8.7%, compared with 20.2% amongst lower paid jobs. This reflects a strong correlation between low-pay and part time jobs specifically.
- Amongst 'quality' jobs, there has been an increase in flexible hiring over the last year (8.7% of job ads, compared to 6.2% in the previous year). However, the proportion of flexible jobs remains low in comparison to very high demand (54% of employees currently work flexibly<sup>2</sup>).
- The supply of quality flexible jobs is at its lowest in London (7.2%) and for several 'senior' or 'hard to fill' roles (for example, 4.2% for Executive Management, 4.9% for IT roles, 3.9% for engineering).
- Amongst quality flexible jobs, more than half are part time roles. A further quarter offer unspecified flexibility.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Missing out on candidates:** Employers are cutting themselves off from a proportion of the candidate market, by not stating their openness to flexibility in their recruitment advertising. These 'lost' candidates include some of the very best available talent, and represent not just women with caring responsibilities but also older workers, millennials and those simply seeking to work differently.
- **Understanding job design:** Employers who take a more proactive approach to understanding job design in terms of when, where and in how much time a job can be done, will be better placed to attract the best and widest possible talent through flexible hiring. Learning to manage by outputs can also drive efficiencies and performance.
- **Building flexible career pathways:** The gap between flexible working and flexible hiring continues to cause

a talent bottleneck, particularly for women. Without a flexible jobs market they can go to, employees will be getting 'stuck' in their current flexible jobs, trading down to get the flexibility they need, or even abandoning their careers. Employers need to consider how they advertise jobs internally, to motivate and support flexible workers at all levels to progress their careers.

- **Articulating what kind of flexibility is on offer:** This year's index highlights for the first time that a quarter of jobs advertised with flexible working options are not specific about the type of flexibility that might be available. Offering flexibility at all is a great step forward, and often a difficult one for employers to take. However, there is a question mark over how confident candidates feel when applying for these jobs. The more specific an employer can be when explaining the types of flexibility that may be available, the more likely they are to attract extra candidates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

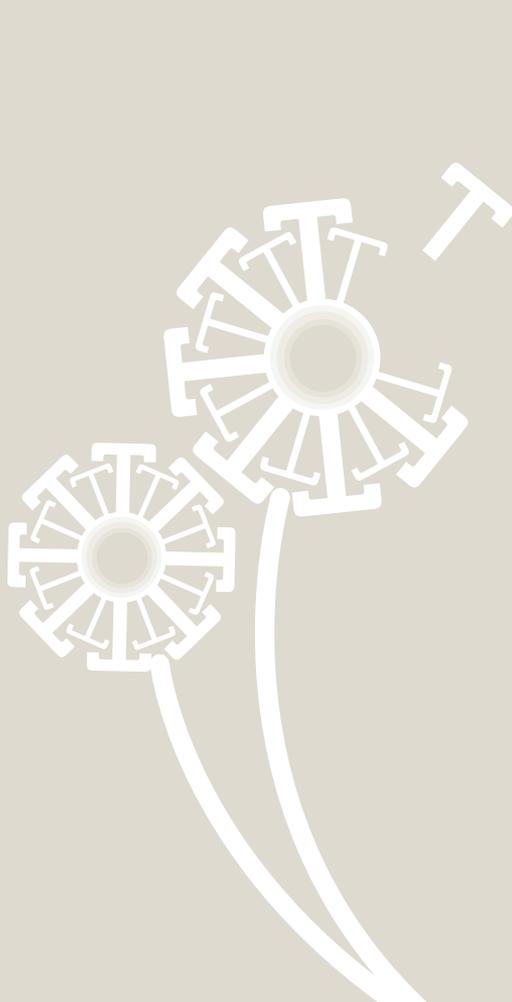
- To adapt to flexible hiring, employers simply have to ask themselves: 'For the best candidate, will I consider flexible working for this role?' Then, if the answer is 'yes', say so in their recruitment advertising. This doesn't commit an employer to making the role flexible, it just means being open to discussion for the right candidate.
- When writing the job ad, employers should be as specific as possible about the types of flexibility that may be considered for that role.

## METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2016 is based on analysis of over 5m job ads from over 80 UK job boards in the period September to December 2015. The data source was CEB TalentNeuron, and jobs were filtered using 18 keywords relating to different forms of flexible working. The following job types were excluded from the analysis: temping, self-employed, commission only, freelance, franchise opportunities.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Although the research methodology remains the same as in the Flexible Index 2015, the data source has changed this year. It is possible that the growth in flexible hiring found in 2016 is partially due to this change of source.
2. 54% of the UK workforce work flexibly. Source: Employee Outlook, Focus Commuting and Flexible Working, CIPD, 2016
3. Sources: Low Pay Britain 2015, the Resolution Foundation; Building a sustainable quality part-time recruitment market, JRF, 2012
4. Source: ONS Regional Labour Statistics, April 2015, 23% of employees in London work part-time, the lowest proportion of any UK region (average proportion for the UK as a whole was 27%).



Timewise is a multi-award winning social business and leading change agent for the flexible recruitment market in the UK. Led by founders Karen Mattison MBE and Emma Stewart MBE, Timewise undertakes a range of activities to articulate the business benefits of quality part time and flexible work and provides a range of advisory and recruitment services for employers.

**CONTACT US ON 0207 633 4559**  
**[WWW.TIMWISE.CO.UK](http://WWW.TIMWISE.CO.UK)**

Timewise is a division of Timewise Foundation C.I.C., a limited company registered in England and Wales  
Company number: 5274371