



# GUIDE TO THE TIMEWISE COUNCIL PROGRAMME

The Timewise Council programme and network is run by flexibility experts Timewise, a multi award-winning social business that provides consultancy and recruitment services to many of the UK's leading employers across both public and private sectors. Timewise delivers the programme in partnership with the Local Government Association.

## **THIS GUIDE COVERS:**

- **What is the Timewise Council programme?**
- **What is the Timewise Council offer?**
- **How does it work?**
- **How is it delivered?**



## WHAT IS THE TIMEWISE COUNCIL PROGRAMME?

In a time of unprecedented pressure on budgets and services, councils need to find ways to ensure that talent is used in the right way at the right time for maximum performance and organisational value. Recruiting, developing and retaining staff who can thrive in this culture is a priority, and embracing flexible working and flexible hiring is key to making this work.

The Timewise Council accreditation programme supports councils to develop an improvement plan to drive cultural change and best practice on flexible working. The programme, run over a four to six month period and involving between six and ten days of management time, includes a flexibility audit, a series of workshops to build insight into best practice, and advisory support to shape an improvement plan designed to refresh your approach to flexibility.

Understanding flexibility can also help councils to shape the market for services that they commission rather than provide directly, to ensure best value. Flexible working can shape markets, support inclusive economic growth and reduce inequality within the local labour market by unlocking more quality flexible jobs for residents who need them, thereby improving living standards.

## WHAT IS THE TIMEWISE COUNCIL OFFER?

You will get access to the latest thinking and good practice on driving agile and flexible working from Timewise and LGA associates, to support you to develop practical plans and make change happen. This could include producing new guidance for managers on how to maximise performance through remote and flexible working, adapting your recruitment processes to attract the best talent, or developing new insight on flexibility to support your economic regeneration and welfare reform strategies. The programme includes a seminar for senior leadership to understand the benefits of an organisation-wide approach to flexible working as a tool to develop a lean and agile organisation.

Organisations that undertake the programme are awarded Timewise Council status and become part of the wider Timewise Partner network of local authorities taking a leadership role on flexible and agile working. To facilitate knowledge-sharing and peer support, we run a national programme of events, and can arrange opportunities for buddying and mentoring if helpful. Accreditation includes annual membership of this network, as well as postings on our jobsite [www.timewisejobs.co.uk](http://www.timewisejobs.co.uk), and is renewed each year. Throughout the year we are available to support you and can offer up to four consultancy sessions to help you move your programme forward.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The programme has been designed as a suite of tools and services to help councils develop approaches that fit with their strategic objectives and priorities. It is designed to be delivered within four to six months. At the end of the programme, councils will have a structured improvement plan with clear actions across the following four areas:

- **Flexible Working:** actions to maximise performance for their organisation, managers and people and build a more engaged workforce
- **Flexible Hiring:** actions to attract and retain the best talent using flexible working as a tool, particularly for harder to fill roles
- **Flexible Labour Market:** actions to influence employers to stimulate flexibility in the local jobs market as an aid to growth, tackling worklessness and raising family living standards
- **Flexible Commissioning Market:** actions to use flexibility to enhance service delivery and enhance productivity and performance.

Councils participating in the programme will designate a lead representative to work with Timewise associates on each of these work-streams.

## HOW IS IT DELIVERED?

There are four phases to the programme:

1. **Orientation and audit phase (weeks 1 to 4)** You will start by completing the Timewise Flexibility Audit, which we will review and analyse. We will then run a **two hour workshop** to work through the business case for flexibility, your current situation and the process for achieving Timewise Council status. We will support you to work through an initial self-diagnostic on the council's current approach to flexible working. The workshop will include a detailed debrief of findings, to develop a baseline to compare future progress against. We will support you to agree internally where you aspire to be in 3-5 years' time, and help you identify appropriate actions to take to achieve these aspirations.
2. **Planning phase (weeks 5 to 12)** This phase focuses on developing your improvement plan, setting out how flexible working fits within your overall strategy across all the workstreams, with support from your consultant and the Timewise team.



3. There is the option for a further workshop session for designated project leads if helpful, and we will offer extensive phone support throughout. We can also provide further guidance, templates and materials to support the development of specific actions.
4. **Submission and leadership workshop (weeks 12 to 16)** Timewise will provide a **two hour leadership workshop** to support the council to position its approach to flexible working and hiring internally. When ready, you will submit your improvement plan together with supporting evidence. We will review your submission and may request additional clarification or corrective actions. The award of Timewise Council status will normally be made within two weeks of receipt of a submission.

**Renewal of Timewise Council status** can be undertaken on an annual basis and is secured by submitting a progress report against the council's Year One improvement plan and explanation of variances, accompanied by an updated plan for the following year. This should be accompanied by the report of the Timewise Stakeholder Advisory Body.

## **FURTHER DETAILS**

Please contact [emma.stewart@timewisefoundation.org.uk](mailto:emma.stewart@timewisefoundation.org.uk)