



A flexible future for Britain?

Flexible working is now an everyday part of life in Britain. 8 million people work part time¹ (30 hours a week or less) and around 4 million usually work from home². For the first time, Timewise can reveal that an additional **8.7 million UK-based full time workers want to work flexibly right now** (whether part time or more remotely), accounting for **two in every five**³

But what hope do those searching for new jobs have of securing flexible work, right at this moment in time? How fluid and accessible is the market for work if you **cannot** work traditional hours or purely from the office?

Previous research conducted by Timewise found that two in five people who need flexibility **'worry about when to ask'** about alternative working structures in the recruitment process (42 per cent), with more than half feeling **'nervous or very nervous'** about doing so (52 per cent)⁴.

This year, Timewise has conducted **brand new research amongst employers**, to clarify how receptive they are to job applications from candidates who need flexibility.

In May 2014 **500 UK-based managers were interviewed**, all responsible for the key hiring decisions made within their teams⁵.

The research found that while the vast majority (9 in 10) say they welcome questions about flexible working – candidates still face **significant barriers** when it comes to finding a brand new flexible job...

Flexible working – definition

Any pattern of work, other than going into an office for 5 full days a week. Including: part time hours, job shares, job splits, nine day fortnights and working from home, whether for some or all of the time

Who currently works flexibly in the UK?

8.2m people work part time



accounting for 1 in 4 UK workers

4m people

are estimated to usually work from home

Women account for 6m part time workers and 1.4m home workers.



Men account for 2.2m part time workers and 2.6m home workers

...read on to find out more

Managers & the missed opportunity

In May 2014 **500 UK-based managers** were interviewed from a range of industries and business sizes, from all across the UK. All held either significant or ultimate decision-making powers for their teams, and hired an average of 14 members of staff in the past 12 months.



Key findings

↘ **7 in 10 managers** believe would-be flexible workers are 'underused as a pool of talent'

↘ The vast majority, 91 per cent say they are **open to discussing flexible working options** within the recruitment process itself

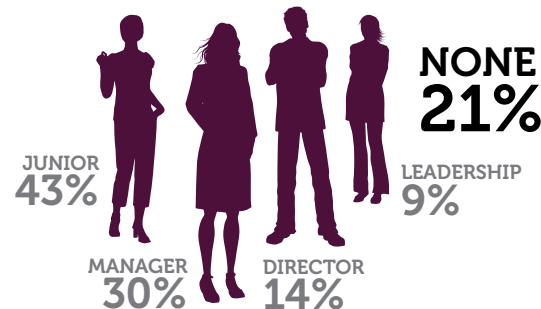
↘ Most (**57 per cent**) say that when conversations about flexible working do occur, they tend to happen **mid-process**, at interview stage

↘ Though most managers feel confident in how to deal with queries about flexible working in the recruitment process, **three quarters** (75 per cent) say they had 'never have had any training' on how to handle such enquiries

↘ When candidates call to enquire about flexible working options for vacancies advertised as 'full time only' – most managers say they feel 'pleased' to hear from them, though just under a third (30 per cent) feel 'annoyed' and 1 in 10 feel their time is being wasted

↘ Managers indicated that at their workplaces, the **higher** your level of skill and experience, the **harder** it becomes for a prospective candidate to find a flexible job. Less than a third (30 per cent) of respondents said that their organisation was 'open' to the idea of offering flexible working possibilities in **managerial-level** job vacancies, just **14 per cent** said the same for **director-level** roles and 9 per cent for leadership roles (see graphic)

What kind of roles are your company open to advertising with flexible working options?



↘ Managers only stated if flexible working options were a possibility up front within **1 in 4** of the roles they advertised in the past 12 months... yet said they believed nearly half of the roles they recruited (48 per cent) 'could have been filled by a talented flexible worker'

↘ While managers believe that flexible workers are often skilled and experienced, more than two thirds (69 per cent) believe flexible workers are '**less ambitious**' than full time workers

↘ When asked what deciding factors prevents a role from being offered with flexible working possibilities, the most common answer was "flexible working does not tend to be offered for roles with **key responsibilities** within my organisation" (chosen by 25 per cent)

1 in 5 respondents said: "No roles are open to flexibility within my organisation, at the point of advertising."

I feel that if a job is advertised as 'full time' then that is what it is and the candidate shouldn't even have the audacity to ask at interview stage for flexible hours.

58-YEAR-OLD FEMALE MANAGER, WORKING FOR A MANUFACTURING FIRM

I think the owners of my company need to realise that flexible working would be beneficial to them rather than holding people back from asking for it and turning down job offers to people who request it.

29-YEAR-OLD FEMALE MANAGER AT A PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

Case studies



From the candidate's view:

I almost didn't apply...

Deborah Jones is the Director of Competition at the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the body that regulates the financial services industry in the UK. Deborah works three days a week, and job shares her role with Mary Starks. They were both recruited in August 2013, for what was then a brand new post.

Deborah very nearly missed out on the job entirely. She says: "Last year, I was working for 4 days a week at the Office for Fair Trading, and was very happy in my role. A recruiter called me, out of the blue, about a fantastic looking Competition Director role for the newly formed FCA. I was really excited – it looked like a perfect next step for me – both a fit for my skills and experience, and a step up from what I was doing at the time. I mentioned that I worked part time, and she said: "Oh, I really don't think it's that kind of place" and tried to encourage me to consider the full time option.

I nearly gave up then and there. With two young boys at home, my part time hours were a deal-

breaker for me. The extra time at home motivates me and since starting to work part-time I have enjoyed delivering challenging work in a more concentrated form. But the role had grabbed my interest. Eventually, I decided to submit my CV, explaining my working pattern within the covering letter. I felt it was a real long shot – and didn't expect to hear back.

By coincidence, unbeknownst to me, a colleague of mine also decided to apply for the role. She also worked part time, and happened to know Chris Woolard, the Director of the FCA's Policy, Risk and Research division, who the role would report directly to. She asked him directly if the FCA would be open to talent who needed flexibility. His response was instant: "well of course we would – whatever gave you the impression we might not be?". He encouraged her to apply.

That colleague was Mary Starks, and in August 2013 we were jointly recruited on a job share basis. Mary has an economics specialism, and I am a lawyer, so

we bring two complementary skill sets to the role. And it's every bit as brilliant as I hoped it would be. Our department is experiencing rapid growth – we began with 4 staff, have recruited a further 21, and anticipate having a team of 50 by the end of the year. The work is challenging but thrilling. Together, we conduct year-long investigations into a variety of financial services to ensure firms are competing effectively to meet the needs of consumers. We're not alone in working flexibly – there are many part time and working-from-home arrangements in the FCA. I feel I have the best of both worlds – a stimulating role that allows me to work to the peak of my abilities, within the hours I have to give. And I get the balance at home with the children. From the FCA's perspective, they get two brains for the price of one, two sets of skills, and two sets of experience. I'm so happy to have found this fantastic role – and to think, I could have missed it completely, because of the mistaken assumption of the recruiter."

Driving change from the top



Lynn Rattigan is the Deputy Chief Operating Officer of EY in the UK & Ireland and is one of the 20 partners who sit on the Firm's UK and Ireland Leadership Team. She is responsible for revenues in excess of £950m, over 400 partners and 6,000 members of staff.

Lynn has been a partner at EY for 13 years and worked four days a week for the past five, choosing to spend a day a week at home with her young twin daughters Lauren and Hannah.

She leads on the development and implementation of EY's flexible working policy, which seeks to be equitable for all partners whilst being fit for purpose in a competitive, commercial environment. This covers practical arrangements like how to apply for reduced hours, sets out a governance model for partners on flexible working arrangements - and crucially ensures EY is open to talented individuals who need to work flexibly, at the point of advertising a new role, as often as possible.

Lynn says: "At EY, reduced hours never means reduced commitment. Every partner and employee gives their all. But in order to do that, they don't necessarily need to work five days a week for us. I believe that the best businesses need to embrace flexible working, not only to keep attracting the best and brightest talent, but genuinely because that's where we're heading as a working society. By being open about my own working patterns and through building the EY Flexible Working policy, I hope to create a path that allows others to do the same."

Conclusions

- ↘ 8.7 million more people want to find a more flexible way to work. But knowing 'when's best' to ask for flexibility once in the recruitment process, is confusing for candidates
- ↘ While 9 in 10 employers are open to the idea of hiring a talented flexible worker, managers do not communicate this **strongly enough, soon enough** and in particular **miss a key opportunity** at the point when a role is advertised
- ↘ For candidates, the market for such jobs feels 'hidden'. Recruiters can add to the confusion in the process
- ↘ Many managers still assume that flexible workers cannot be ambitious or hold posts with key responsibilities
- ↘ Timewise recommends that:
 - 1) **A more transparent process** is needed in recruitment, particularly at the point of advertising new vacancies, so they better reflect the possibilities of how a role can be worked.
 - 2) Successful examples of flexible working in practice should be made **more visible**

The Timewise

POWER PART TIME TOP 50

Building the next Power Part Time List

Off the back of this research, Timewise is building the UK's third annual Power Part Time List: a roll call of 50 men and women, who work at the top of their professions on less than 5 full days a week, 'busting the myth' that meaningful roles cannot work on a part time basis, even at the most senior levels. These leaders make their own patterns of work 'work' and in doing so, trailblaze a path for others.

Make your nomination

You can showcase your organisation's positive approach to flexible working, by nominating senior level employees for next list, to be published in the national UK media in December 2014.

For more information:
Visit [www.timewise.co.uk/
power-part-time](http://www.timewise.co.uk/power-part-time)

Call **020 7633 4553**

Or email [powerparttime@
timewise.co.uk](mailto:powerparttime@timewise.co.uk)

About Timewise

Timewise aims to help organisations unlock the business potential of flexible working. Experts in flexibility, with 10 years of experience, Timewise is led by founders Karen Mattison and Emma Stewart, entrepreneurs who have been made MBEs and won multiple awards for their work.

We work with employers who want to understand more about what flexibility can deliver for business, sharing market insights and delivering training and consultancy.

Our work has been **recognised by thought leaders, policy makers and the business community**. Those who have endorsed our approach include the Resolution Foundation, the Confederation of British Industry, the Greater London Authority, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Cabinet Office, the Recruitment Employment Confederation, the Chartered Institute for Professional Development and the British Chamber of Commerce.

Our expertise has been built through running dedicated recruitment services for the 58,000 talented people registered with us. All want work that fits with their lives - and their skill and experience. These include **Timewise Jobs** the UK's first jobsite exclusively for roles which are part time or open to flexibility and **Timewise Recruitment**, a boutique recruitment agency specialising in finance, marketing and PR, and office roles.

Our parent group is the Timewise Foundation, a social business.

www.timewise.co.uk

