



# **TIMEWISE FLEXIBLE JOBS INDEX GREATER MANCHESTER 2017**

A report on the proportion of jobs in Greater Manchester that are advertised with options to work part-time or flexibly from the point of hire

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## INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the first ever report on the state of the flexible recruitment market in Greater Manchester. This research, conducted by Timewise, examines the proportion of jobs in the region which are advertised as open to flexible or part-time working at the point of hire.

7 in 10 UK workers currently work flexibly in some way<sup>1</sup>. But overall, in Greater Manchester, only 11.4% of vacancies for jobs at or above the minimum wage are advertised with some reference to flexible working from the start, either on hours or location. And this limited availability is more concentrated at the lower end of the pay scale; for jobs between £14,000 FTE and £20,000 FTE the figure is 16%, whereas above £20,000 FTE the number of flexible jobs drops significantly.

This huge gap between the supply of flexible jobs and the demand from flexible workers is the reason why so many people – particularly women, older workers and those with health and disability issues – are either locked out of work or stuck in low paid part-time jobs they

are overqualified for, unable to progress their careers. For these groups to benefit from and contribute to economic growth in the Northern Powerhouse, there is a pressing need to drive structural change in the Greater Manchester jobs market.

We hope this new analysis will inspire Manchester policy makers and key anchor institutions to develop plans to champion flexible hiring in the region, as part of wider inclusive growth and social mobility strategies. And we hope it will encourage business leaders to explore what can be done to adapt their recruitment processes to flexible hiring, as a way to attract the best possible and most diverse talent.

With skills shortages a key priority for all employers, this is surely the time to get smarter about flexibility in order to be future-fit, and ultimately improve business performance. And in doing so, ensure that the Greater Manchester economy benefits all.

**Emma Stewart**  
Joint CEO, Timewise

**BY EMBRACING FLEXIBLE  
HIRING, MANCHESTER CAN  
LEAD THE WAY AS A FUTURE-  
FIT REGION WITH A DYNAMIC,  
INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE.  
LET'S GET TO WORK.**

1. 73% of the UK workforce currently work either part-time or full-time with some form of flexible working pattern. Source: Flexible Working: A Talent Imperative, Timewise, 2017

## FOREWORD



Creating a more flexible jobs market in Greater Manchester will help contribute to the city's inclusive growth.

The shape of the jobs market in the UK is changing. The traditional 9 to 5, five days a week arrangement is being challenged in favour of a much more agile way of working. The shift is being driven by the demand from UK workers seeking a better work/life blend and also companies broadening their talent pool to combat any future skills shortages and the anticipation of the potential impact of technology on the labour market.

However, in Greater Manchester, Timewise found that just 11.4% of jobs are advertised with flexible working options at the point of hire – similar to the UK average of 11.7%. This not only represents a mis-match with employee demand, but also a potential opportunity for local businesses.

Employers can challenge their own well-established recruitment processes, putting greater emphasis on

flexible job design – tailoring each role to the actual needs of the business – and advertising their jobs as 'open to flexibility'. In our experience it can help to attract more talented candidates, diversify your workforce and retain existing talent.

At EY, flexible working has become the way we do business – it is part of our culture. Our people at all levels of our organisation work flexibly, including our senior leaders, for a range of reasons. We also advertise all of our roles as 'open to flexibility'.

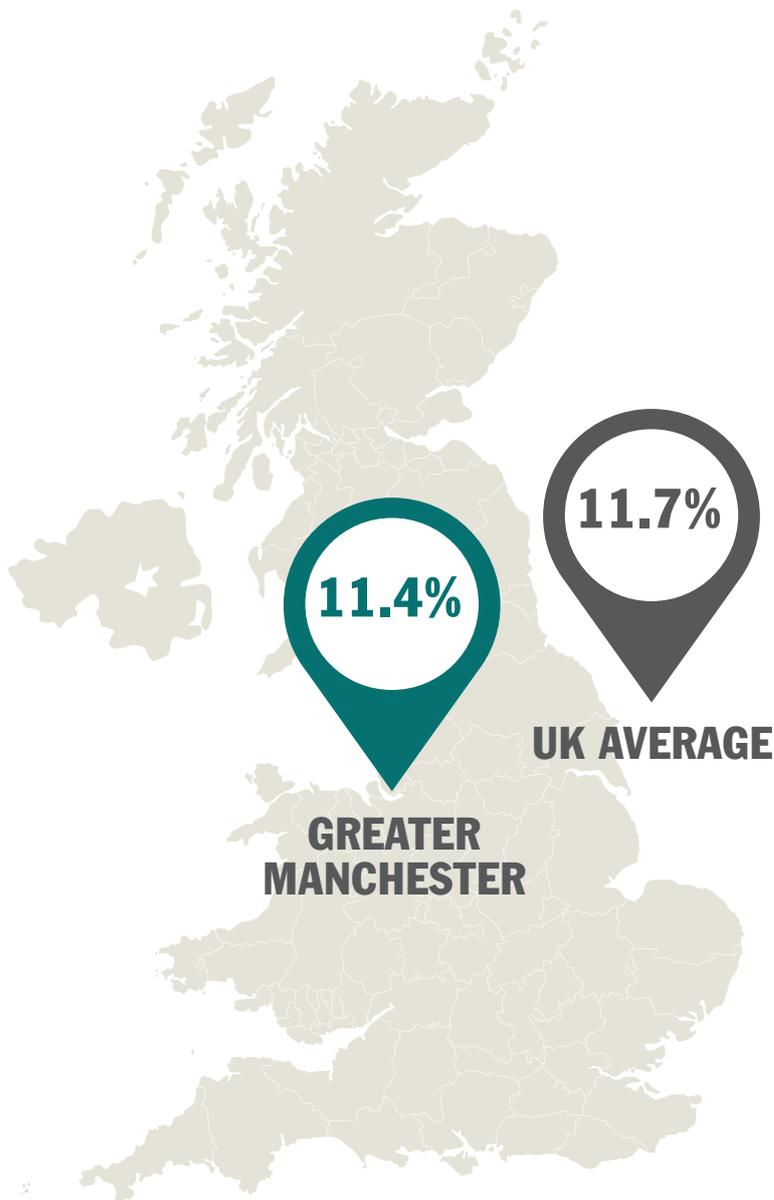
Supporting the Timewise Flexible Jobs Index for Greater Manchester will help to draw attention to the changes that employers can make to get ahead of the curve, future-proof, and help strengthen the city's reputation as a leading talent magnet, globally.

**Bob Ward**  
**North West Senior Partner**  
**EY**

### OBJECTIVES OF THE INDEX

- To fill a knowledge gap on the state of the flexible hiring market in Greater Manchester
- To use this insight to build a business and social case for employers, to encourage change in recruitment practices
- To track progress in flexible hiring as an indicator for inclusive growth.

## HOW MANY JOBS ARE ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE OPTIONS?



Only 11.4% of jobs in Greater Manchester are advertised with flexible working options at the point of hire. This is closely aligned to the UK average of 11.7%.

These statistics relate to all jobs with a full-time equivalent (FTE) salary of £14,000 or more, which roughly equates to the minimum wage.

### TIMEWISE VIEW

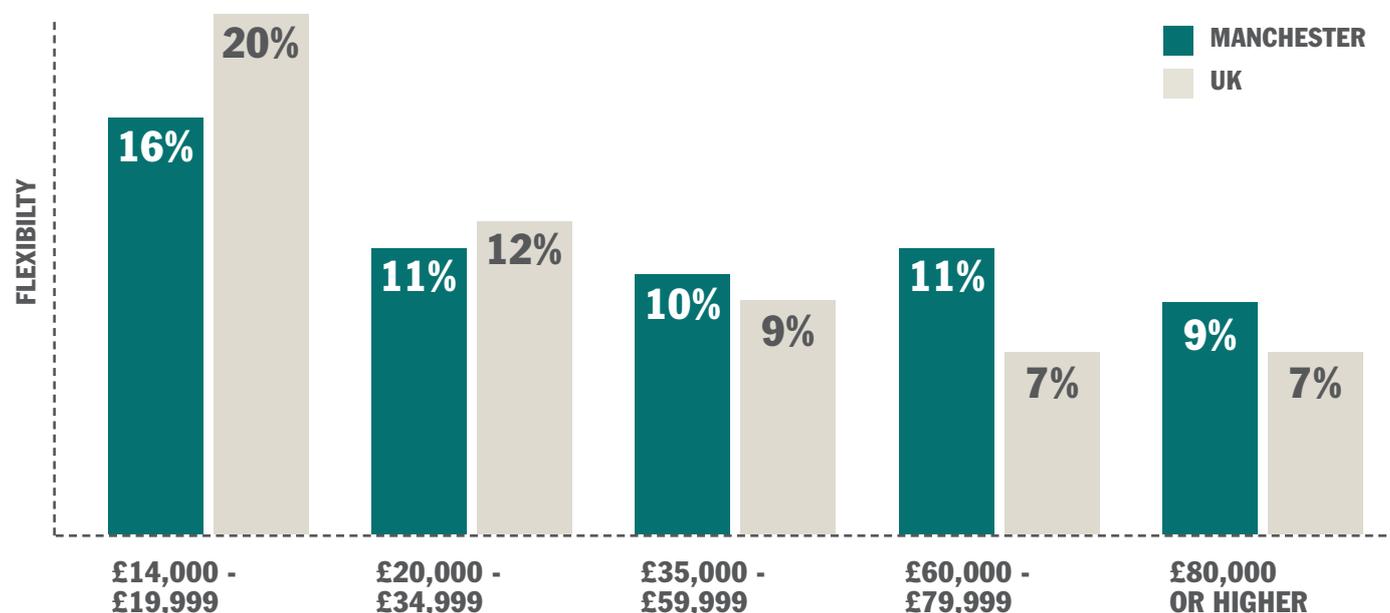
- Jobseekers in Manchester who need to work flexibly can only realistically apply for around 1 in 9 vacancies. This severely narrows down their options and is a significant barrier to entering work or moving jobs to progress in their career.

### 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.

# AVAILABILITY OF FLEXIBLE JOBS VARIES BY SALARY

## PROPORTION OF JOBS ADVERTISED AS BEING OPEN TO FLEXIBILITY, BY SALARY LEVEL



- Availability of flexible jobs in Greater Manchester is highest for jobs paid £14k-£20k FTE, at 16%. Earlier studies<sup>2</sup> have also found a correlation between low-paid jobs and flexibility (in particular part-time work).
- There is a significant drop in availability of flexible jobs in Manchester at salaries above £20k, and a further tightening between £35k and £59k.
- However, comparing Manchester to the average UK statistics, there are significant differences. The availability of low-paid flexible jobs is substantially lower in Manchester than the national average (16% versus 20%). The ratio is slightly lower in the £20k-£34k salary bracket (11% versus 12%).
- Conversely, at salaries above £35k, Manchester's ratio of flexible jobs is higher than the UK average. Moreover, jobs in Manchester that are paid between £60k and £79k buck the national trend of flexibility declining as salary rises.

### TIMEWISE VIEW

- People seeking flexibility at salaries above £20k face a greater squeeze than those in low-paid jobs. This poses a challenge for those wanting to progress their careers whilst needing to retain their flexible arrangement. It supports and explains other Timewise research which has found that many people (1.5 million nationally) are trapped in low-paid flexible jobs below their skill level<sup>3</sup>.
- This suggests both a pressing need and an opportunity to tackle under-employment amongst lower paid workers who need flexibility - not by providing more hours, but by unlocking a greater number of better paid roles to flexibility.
- The differences between Manchester and the UK average, for flexible jobs by salary, are interesting. We have not come across such substantial differences in any other region we have investigated. More granular analysis could possibly ascertain if the reasons lie in the types of roles available in Manchester, or perhaps in variations between large cities and more sparsely populated areas.

<sup>2</sup> Sources include: Low Pay Britain, the Resolution Foundation 2015; Building a Sustainable Quality Part-Time Recruitment Market, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

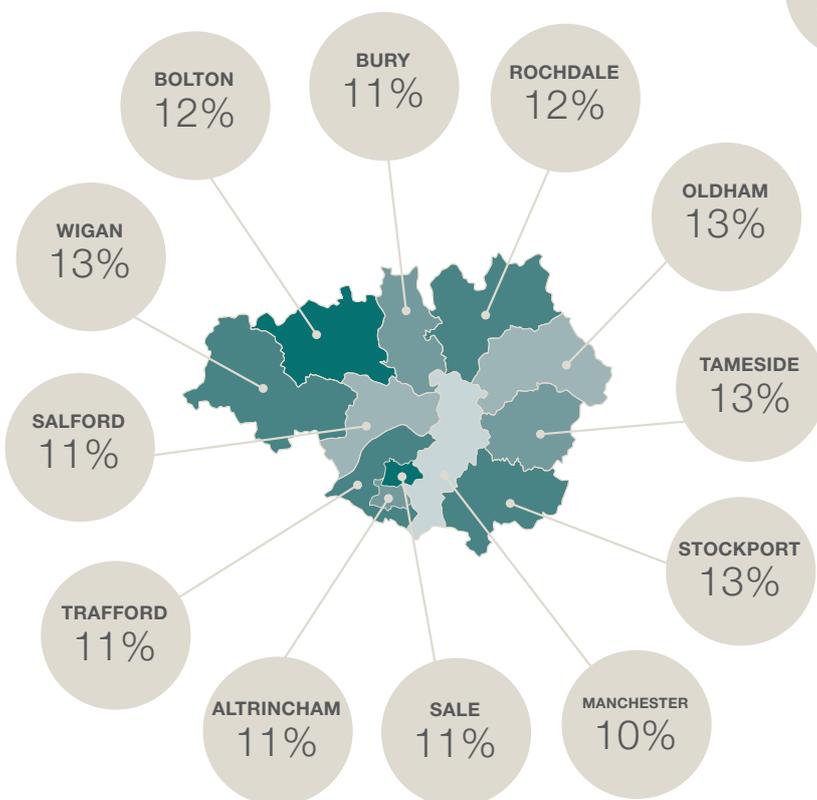
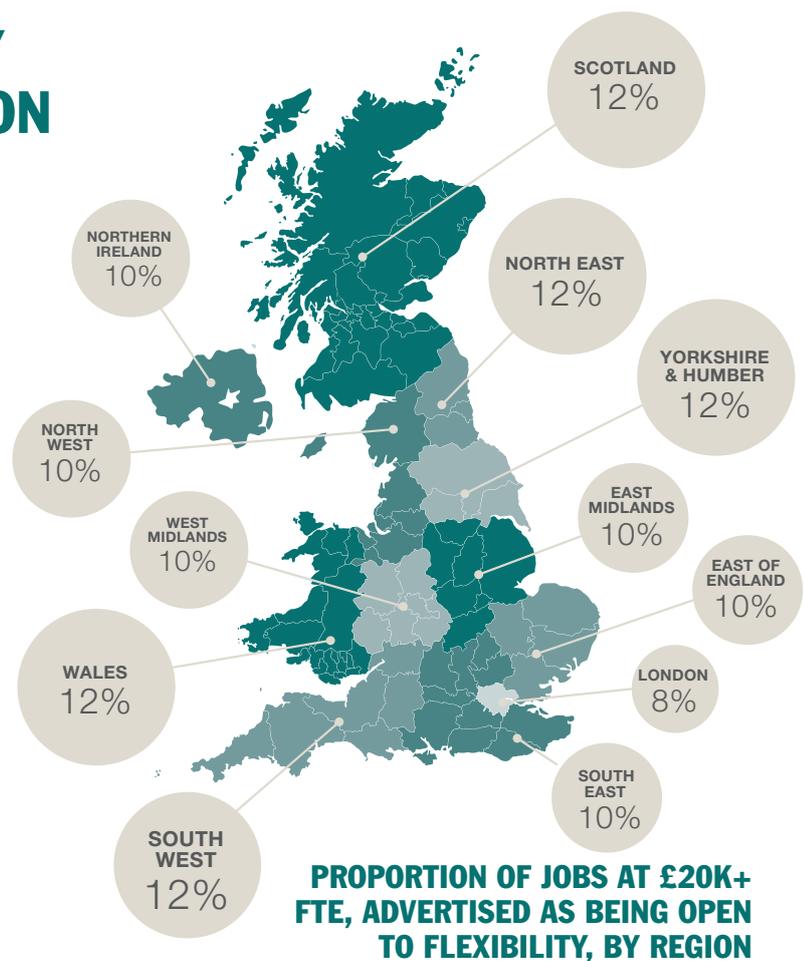
<sup>3</sup> How Flexible Hiring Could Improve Business Performance and Living Standards, research by Timewise, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016

## PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS, BY REGION

The analysis in the rest of this report looks only at 'quality jobs', paid over £20,000 FTE<sup>4</sup>. This is in order to focus attention on those jobs where the availability of flexible working options is much reduced at the point of hire, and where there is greatest potential to address the issue of under-employment.

The UK average proportion of quality flexible jobs (paid £20k+ FTE) is 10%, and the map shows regional variations. The North West region aligns with the national average, at 10%.

Within Greater Manchester, the city of Manchester has the lowest proportion of quality flexible jobs (see diagram below). It should be noted that two thirds of all jobs in Greater Manchester are in Manchester, so the city therefore contributes overwhelmingly to the county's overall average of 10%.

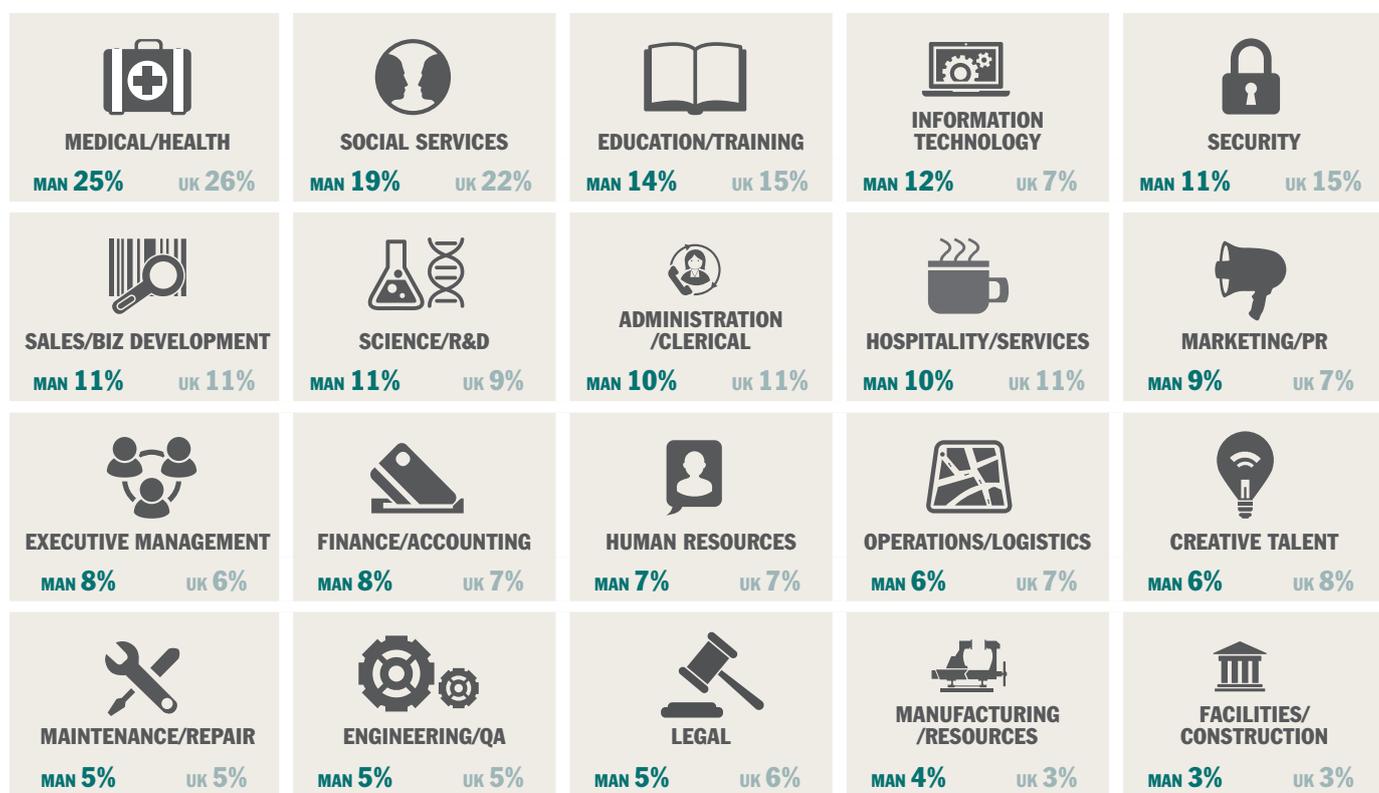


### TIMEWISE VIEW

- The proportion of flexible jobs is low in ALL regions of the UK. The problem is a national one.
- Greater Manchester has an opportunity to embrace flexible hiring sooner than other regions, maximising its use of workforce skills, attracting talent to the area, and leveraging the greater productivity that will result.
- Manchester city's lower proportion of flexible jobs (compared to its satellite towns) probably reflects a tendency for availability of flexible jobs to drop in areas of plentiful skills supply. For example, London has the lowest proportion of flexible jobs in the UK.

<sup>4</sup> The quality job threshold of £20,000 FTE was established in How Flexible Hiring Could Improve Business Performance and Living Standards, by Timewise for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016. The threshold is based on meeting minimum income standards for parents, older people and disabled people.

## PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS, BY ROLE



The proportion of quality jobs (paid over £20k FTE) advertised with flexible options varies considerably depending on the type of role. In Manchester (as across the UK) health and social services are significantly ahead of other categories.

Manchester broadly mirrors the UK pattern for flexibility by role, although in many cases the ratio is slightly lower in Manchester.

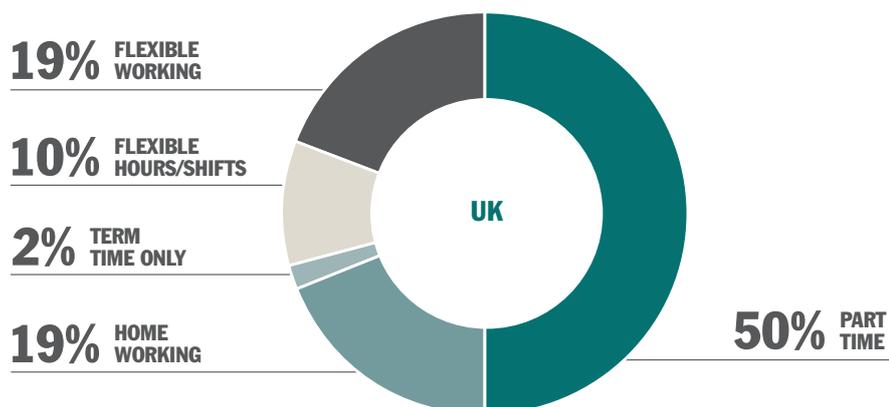
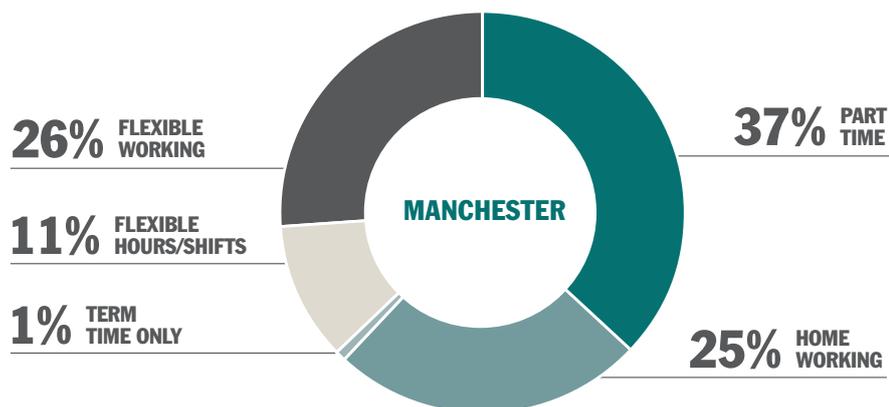
There is one notable exception to this: Information Technology, for which the ratio of flexible jobs in Manchester is 12% - significantly higher than the UK average of 7%. Other exceptions, where the ratio is slightly higher in Manchester, include Science/R&D, Marketing, and Executive Management roles.

### TIMewise VIEW

- Manchester's comparatively high ratio of flexible jobs in Information Technology is interesting, especially as this sector is widely believed to struggle with skills supply. IT is the highest volume type of quality job, representing over 17% of all quality jobs in Manchester (the proportion is 15% nationally).
- Direct employment in IT in Manchester is now at 52,000, second only to London<sup>5</sup>. It may be that Manchester's IT industry has turned to flexible working as an employee benefit, as growing businesses compete to attract talent. This is worth further exploration, and sharing good practice from employers who have hired flexibly within this sector.

# WHICH TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE MOST COMMON?

## TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING AMONGST QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS



Amongst flexible jobs advertised in Manchester and paid £20k+ FTE, 37% were part-time jobs, 25% offered home-working, and 26% stated openness to unspecified forms of flexible working.

The spread of types of flexible working in Manchester is very different from the national picture, where part-time jobs are much more common, at 50%.

### TIMEWISE VIEW

- The particularly low availability of part-time jobs in Manchester is a concern, as part-time is the preferred working arrangement of most flexible workers<sup>6</sup>. It would be interesting to explore whether there is particular resistance to part-time working amongst Manchester employers, or whether the low ratio is due to other factors such as demographics (demand side) or the types or quality roles available in Manchester (supply side).
- It is important to remember that the potential for increasing flexible hiring lies with full-time jobs being opened up to flexible working options. Greater understanding of job design (looking at when, where, and in how much time jobs need to be done) can enable employers to consider which types of flexible working options are possible. This can then be articulated in the job advert, so candidates can see the availability of the specific type of flexibility they need (eg part-time, home working or simply flexing the start and end times).

# SUMMARY

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Only 16% of low-paid jobs in Manchester are advertised with flexible working options, and the ratio is squeezed further at salaries above £20,000. Across all salary levels, only 11.4% of jobs are advertised with flexible working options at the point of hire.
- Jobseekers in Manchester who need to work flexibly can only realistically apply for around 1 in 9 vacancies. This severely narrows down their options and is a significant barrier to entering work or moving jobs to progress in their career.
- More than half of all UK employees work flexibly, so the availability of flexible jobs at the point of hire is substantially out of step with demand.
- Manchester has a high ratio of flexible jobs in Information Technology (12%), when compared with the national average (7%). For other types of roles, Manchester broadly follows the national pattern.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

This analysis suggests that a high number of employers in Manchester are cutting themselves off from a proportion of the candidate market, by not stating their openness to flexibility in their recruitment advertising. This untapped talent represents not just women with caring responsibilities, but also older workers, millennials and those simply seeking to work differently.

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 widest possible talent through flexible hiring. Learning to manage by outputs can also drive efficiencies, better utilise existing talent and ultimately help drive productivity.

Unlocking jobs to flexibility will also enhance job mobility within Manchester, providing greater access to more employment opportunities and career progression for those currently stuck in low paid part-time jobs because of their need to work flexibly.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO REGIONAL POLICY MAKERS

**Strategy:** There is an opportunity for Manchester to drive inclusive growth by increasing the proportion of quality jobs available with flexible working at the point of hire. In particular, policy makers should consider a targeted sectoral approach – engaging with employers where jobs and growth are predicted and there is greatest potential to create a flexible jobs marketplace.

This will help to deliver on the Mayor of Manchester’s commitment to develop a Good GM Employers’ Charter – setting out basic standards and actions around flexible working that are expected of good businesses, to address issues such as the pay gap between men and women.

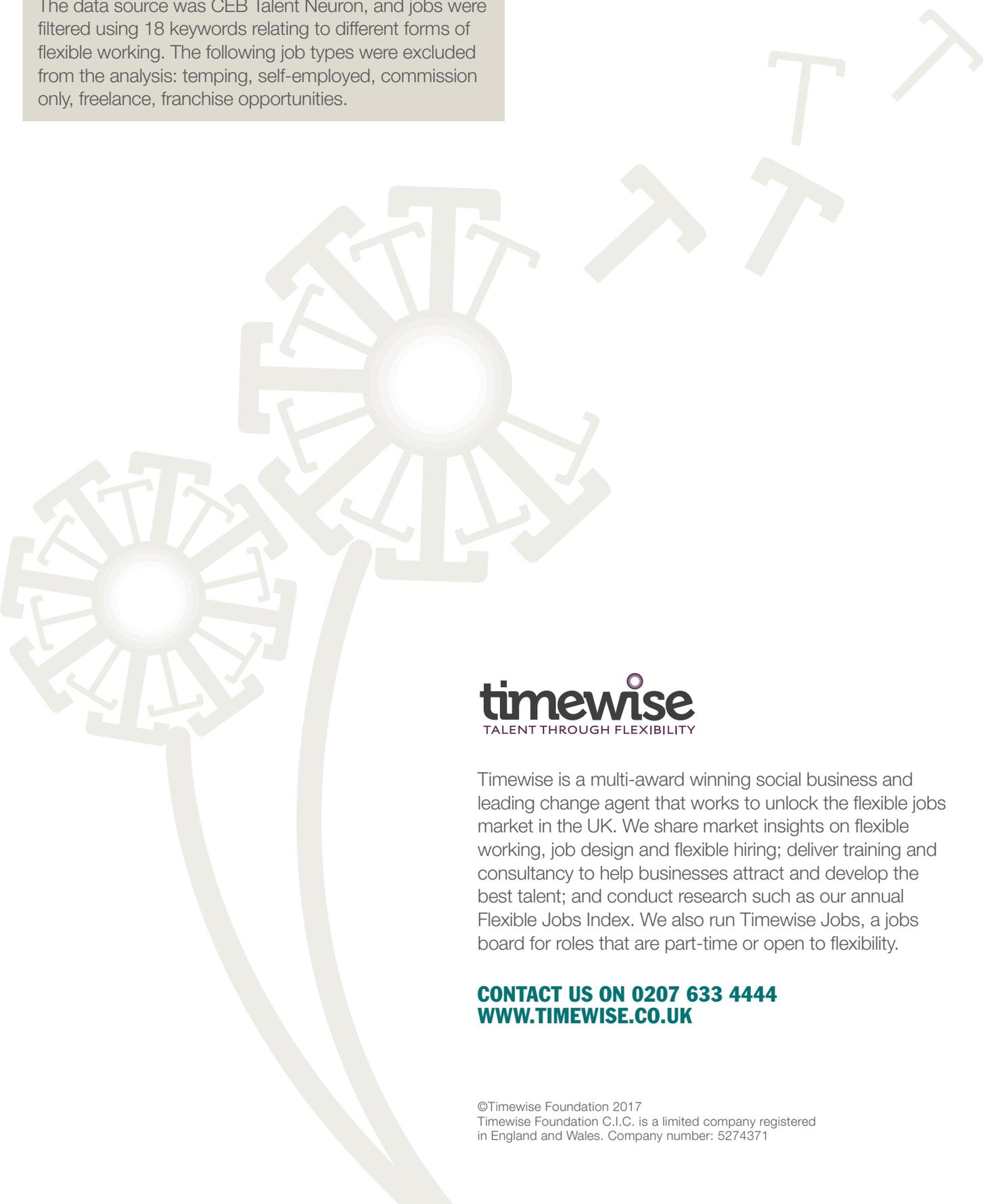
**Lead by example:** As key anchor institutions within the county, local authorities and other statutory bodies can adopt a more proactive approach to flexible job design and be more explicit in their recruitment advertising about the type of flexible working they will consider at the point of hire.

**Champion the benefits:** Local authorities should champion the social and business benefits of flexible hiring to business in the region, through their supplier networks and beyond. For example, they could target businesses with high volumes of new jobs and explain how flexible hiring could help to ensure that new job opportunities are accessible to those people who need to work flexibly, including parents, those with health or disability issues and older workers.

This will help to deliver on the Mayor’s commitment to create a gender-balanced Combined Authority; to make Greater Manchester the most inclusive city-region in the country on disability issues; and to help businesses to upskill and recruit older people.

## METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index for Manchester is based on analysis of over 190k job adverts from over 80 UK job boards in the period January to March 2017. The data source was CEB Talent Neuron, 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.



**timewise**  
TALENT THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Timewise is a multi-award winning social business and leading change agent that works to unlock the flexible jobs market in the UK. We share market insights on flexible working, job design and flexible hiring; deliver training and consultancy to help businesses attract and develop the best talent; and conduct research such as our annual Flexible Jobs Index. We also run Timewise Jobs, a jobs board for roles that are part-time or open to flexibility.

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