



# THE TIMEWISE FLEXIBLE JOBS INDEX 2017

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

RESEARCH PARTNER:

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2017 edition of the Timewise Flexible Jobs Index. Based on in-depth research across 6 million job ads, it's designed to provide insight into the flexible jobs market by looking at how many jobs are advertised flexibly up front.

Let's start with the good news; the flexible jobs market is continuing to grow. This year's figures show a small increase in the proportion of jobs paid £20K FTE or more which were advertised flexibly at the point of hire, from 8.7% in 2016 to 9.8% now.

However, given that 54% of the workforce currently work flexibly in one way or another<sup>1</sup>, there's still a huge gap between supply and demand for flexibly advertised jobs. If the market continues to grow at this modest rate, it could take as long as 40 years for the number of jobs that are advertised as offering flexibility to match the number of people in that market. And that's ignoring the fact that there are another 8.7 million people who don't currently work flexibly, but would like to if the jobs were there<sup>2</sup>.

Does it matter? Well yes, it does; and not just for employees. If there aren't flexible jobs to apply for, these individuals have nowhere to go, and can end up trapped in jobs beneath their skill-set, forced to make a choice between flexibility and quality, or leave the workforce altogether. That's a massive waste of talent, training and skills, which businesses looking to tackle skills shortages and low productivity can no longer afford to overlook.

And to be clear, we're not just talking about women with children here. From the millennial generation, 92% of whom identify flexibility as a top priority when jobhunting<sup>3</sup>, to early retirees who still have a vast amount of skills and experience to share, flexibility is becoming more desirable across the whole jobs market.

So, if we're going to ramp up the rate of increase, we all need to take action. Whilst there's a lot of discussion about building a better jobs market, much of the debate has been focused on how to make poorly paid jobs, such as those in the gig and zero hours economies, more secure and of better quality. What's missing is a focus on how to improve the flexibility of existing, permanent, high-quality jobs.

At Timewise, we want to fix that. We're calling on employers to start taking flexible hiring more seriously; to look creatively at how good quality roles can be designed to be more flexible; to build flexible career pathways and to actively recruit and champion flexible workers.

This won't happen overnight, but it's time to pick up the pace of change. If we do, maybe next year the growth of the flexible jobs market will be something to shout about.

**Karen Mattison and Emma Stewart**  
**Joint CEOs of Timewise**

1. 54% of the UK workforce work flexibly: Employee Outlook, Focus Commuting and Flexible Working, CIPD, 2016
2. A Flexible Future for Britain, Timewise, 2014
3. The Future of Work: Jobs and Skills in 2030, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014

## OBJECTIVES OF THE INDEX

- To help fill a knowledge gap in job market statistics by reporting on quality 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.

## METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2017 is based on analysis of 6 million job ads from over 300 UK job boards in the period September to December 2016. The data source was CEB Talent Neuron, and jobs were filtered using 14 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.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A 'FLEXIBLE JOB'?

### Flexible

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 permanent 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.

### Quality

By 'quality' we mean:

- jobs with an annual FTE salary of £20,000 or higher<sup>1</sup>
- excluding jobs that are: low paid zero hours, temping, self-employed, freelance, franchise opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> £20,000 is the threshold for meeting minimum income standards for parents, older people and disabled people. Source: How Flexible Hiring Could Improve Business Performance and Living Standards, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016.

# SLOW YEAR ON YEAR GROWTH

## PROPORTION OF JOBS AT £20K+ FTE, ADVERTISED AS BEING OPEN TO FLEXIBILITY



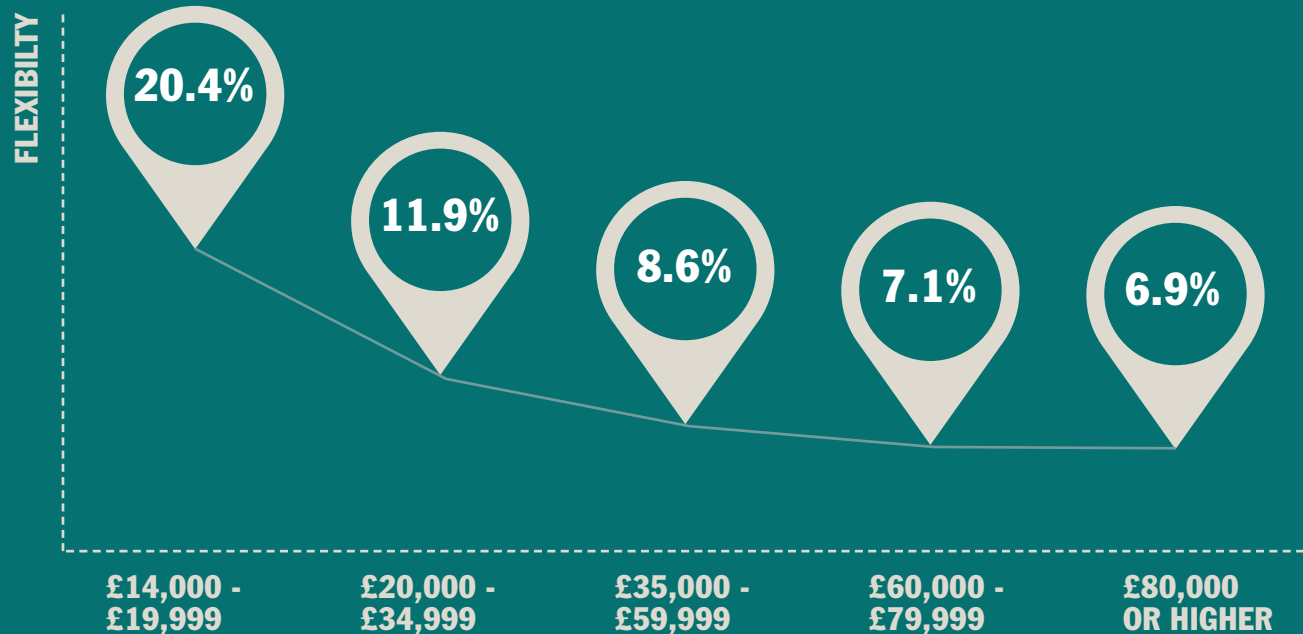
### KEY POINTS

- The proportion of quality flexible jobs is edging up by only a few percentage points each year.
- At this growth rate it will take approximately 40 years to reach 54%, the point at which the supply of flexible jobs would match the current proportion of employees who work part time or flexibly.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 54% of the UK workforce work flexibly: Employee Outlook, Focus Commuting and Flexible Working, CIPD, 2016

# FLEXIBILITY DECLINES AS SALARY RISES

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



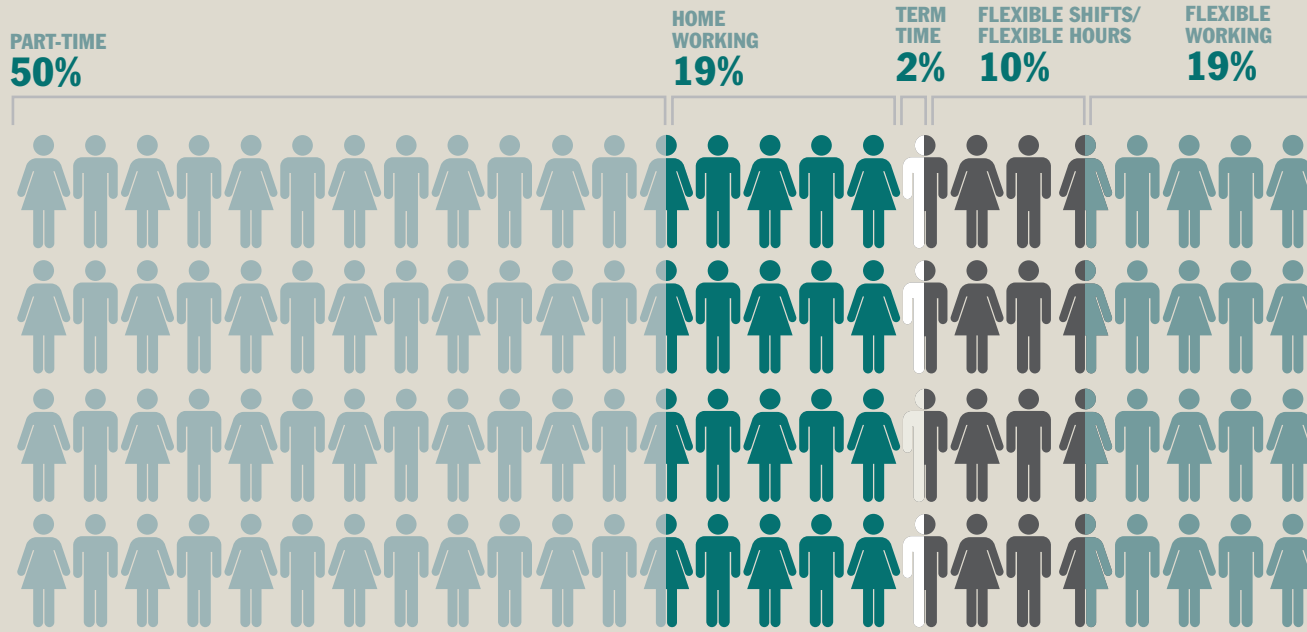
### KEY POINTS

- The declining trend in flexibility as salary rises poses a huge challenge for flexible workers who want to progress in their careers whilst retaining their flexible arrangement.
- Availability of flexible jobs is best below our quality jobs threshold of £20k FTE, at 20.4%. Earlier studies<sup>3</sup> have also found a correlation between low-paid jobs and flexibility (in particular part-time work).

3. Sources include: Low Pay Britain, the Resolution Foundation 2015; Building a sustainable quality part-time recruitment market, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

# WHICH TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE MOST COMMON?

## TYPES OF FLEXIBILITY ON OFFER, AMONGST FLEXIBLE JOBS PAID £20K+ FTE























### KEY POINTS

- Half of all flexible jobs are part time
- The greatest potential for growth in the flexible jobs market lies with the other forms of flexibility, as employers can potentially open up their full time jobs to remote working or flexible hours.

# FLEXIBILITY VARIES WIDELY BY TYPE OF ROLE

## PROPORTION OF JOBS AT £20K+ FTE, ADVERTISED AS BEING OPEN TO FLEXIBILITY, BY ROLE TYPE

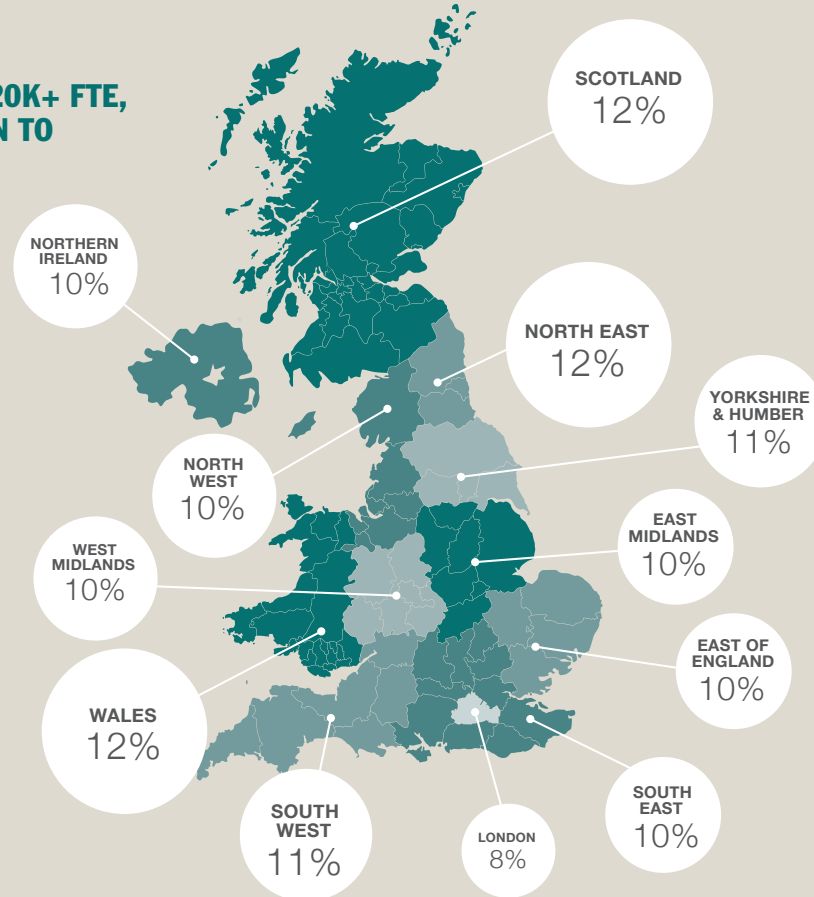
 <b>MEDICAL/HEALTH</b> <b>26%</b>	 <b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b> <b>22%</b>	 <b>EDUCATION/TRAINING</b> <b>15%</b>	 <b>SECURITY</b> <b>15%</b>	 <b>SALES/BIZ DEVELOPMENT</b> <b>11%</b>
 <b>ADMINISTRATION /CLERICAL</b> <b>11%</b>	 <b>HOSPITALITY</b> <b>11%</b>	 <b>SCIENCE/R&amp;D</b> <b>9%</b>	 <b>CREATIVE/TALENT</b> <b>8%</b>	 <b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b> <b>7%</b>
 <b>MARKETING/PR</b> <b>7%</b>	 <b>OPERATIONS/LOGISTICS</b> <b>7%</b>	 <b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b> <b>7%</b>	 <b>FINANCE/ACCOUNTING</b> <b>7%</b>	 <b>LEGAL</b> <b>6%</b>
 <b>EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT</b> <b>6%</b>	 <b>MAINTENANCE/REPAIR</b> <b>5%</b>	 <b>ENGINEERING/QA</b> <b>5%</b>	 <b>MANUFACTURING /RESOURCES</b> <b>3%</b>	 <b>FACILITIES /CONSTRUCTION</b> <b>3%</b>

### KEY POINTS

- Health and social services are significantly ahead of all other categories, reflecting the shift-work patterns of nurses and care workers, and possibly the fact that these are largely ‘feminised’ roles.
- Low rates of flexibility in areas such as maintenance, engineering, manufacturing and construction may also stem from gender issues.
- Many ‘professional’ roles suffer from lower than average rates of flexible working. This goes hand in hand with the earlier finding of a decline in flexibility at higher salaries.

# PROBLEM IS GREATEST IN LONDON

**PROPORTION OF JOBS AT £20K+ FTE, ADVERTISED AS BEING OPEN TO FLEXIBILITY, BY REGION**



## KEY POINT

- 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>.

<sup>4</sup> 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 is 27%).



# SUMMARY

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- The proportion of jobs paid £20k+ FTE which are advertised with flexible working options is only 9.8% (a modest increase from 8.7% the previous year).
- This is a very low proportion of flexible jobs in comparison with the high demand (an estimated 54% of employees currently work flexibly).
- The supply of quality flexible jobs is at its lowest in London (8%) and for several 'senior' or 'hard to fill' roles (for example, 6% for Executive Management, 7% for IT roles, 5% for engineering).

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKERS

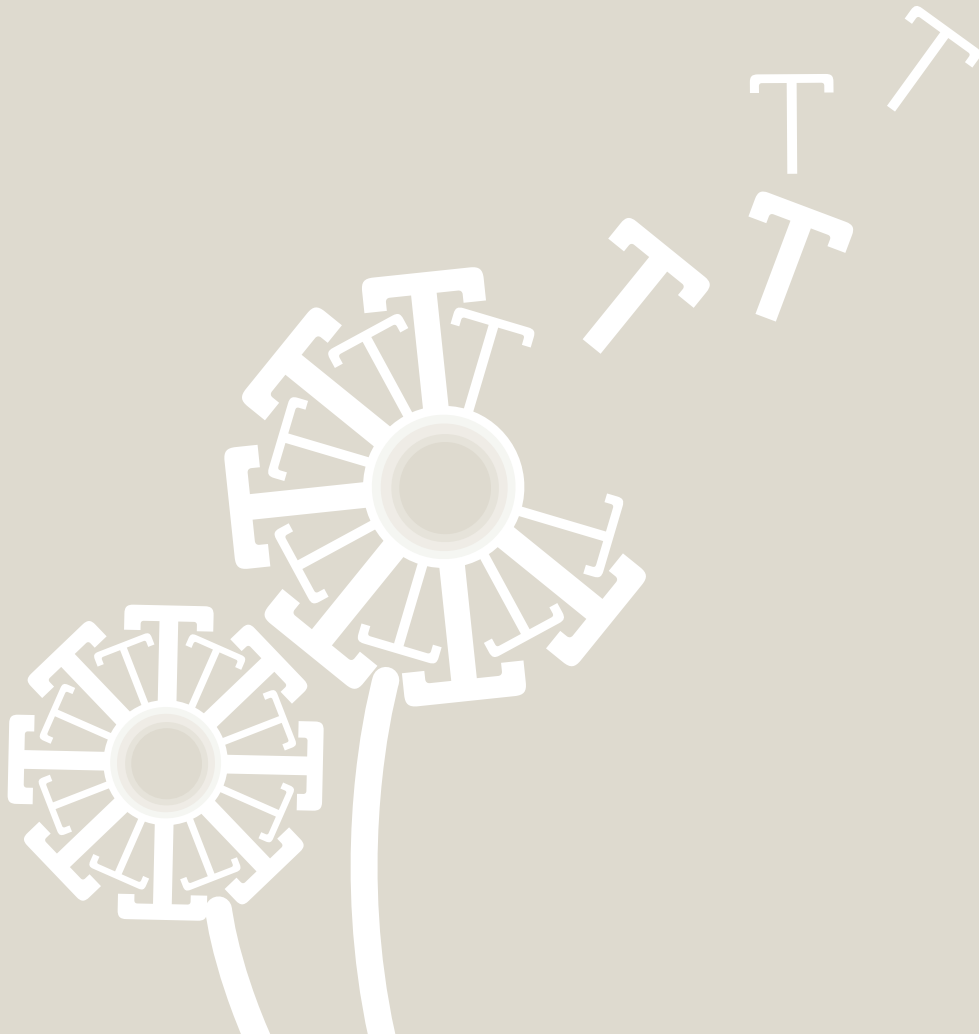
- People who work flexibly, particularly part time, often get 'stuck' in their current roles, because there isn't a flexible jobs market for them to go to. Even at their current employer, it's hard for flexible workers to progress, as roles they might move up to are not openly advertised as flexible.
- It's common practice for flexible workers to trade down to get the flexibility they need. Some even abandon their careers completely. The result is a loss of skills to business and the economy.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Missing out on candidates:** The gap between the proportion of people who work flexibly and the availability of flexible opportunities at the point of hire is causing a talent bottleneck, particularly for women. 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. A deeper understanding of how to design roles can also drive efficiencies and help employers

maximise the performance of their existing teams.

- **Building flexible career pathways:** Employers need to consider how they advertise jobs internally, to motivate and support their flexible workers to progress their careers. Neglecting this issue causes a failure in the talent pipeline, and puts employers at risk of under-utilising employees who stay in the same role for too long because they can't retain their flexible working pattern whilst moving up to a more senior role.
- **How can employers take action?** 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 clearly 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.



**timewise**  
TALENT THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Timewise works to unlock the flexible jobs market in the UK. We share market insights on flexible working and flexible hiring, deliver training and consultancy to help businesses attract and develop the best talent, and conduct research such as this annual Flexible Jobs Index. We also run Timewise Jobs, a jobs board for roles that are part time or open to flexibility.

**CONTACT US ON 0207 633 4444**  
**[WWW.TIMWISE.CO.UK](http://WWW.TIMWISE.CO.UK)**

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