

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2022

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

Research partner:  **Lightcast**

Supported by:



INTRODUCTION

We publish this year's Flexible Jobs Index during a cost of living crisis that is biting hard. Those who are not in work are the worst hit and, although unemployment is low, the number of 'economically inactive' people has grown by over half a million post-covid¹. The majority of those who have dropped out of work are aged over 50, citing ill health or the challenges of caring commitments.

And it's estimated that, even before the recent inflation hikes, a further 3.7 million people were struggling in insecure work and low pay².

Recession is now forecast, yet employers continue to find it a challenge to fill vacancies. In spring 2022 vacancies reached a record high of 1.3 million, and although they are beginning to fall we still have the tightest labour market the UK has seen for decades.

Despite the inevitable focus on pay, employers should remember that offering flexible working is also a significant tool to attract talent. Yet, as this index shows, 7 in 10 jobs remain blocked to groups who are unable to work unless they can find flexibility. Older workers, parents and carers, disabled people and those with a health condition are particularly disadvantaged.

It's a huge barrier to job mobility. One in four UK employees works part-time³, and they struggle to progress into better paid jobs as only around 1 in 10 vacancies offer part-time options at salaries above £20,000 FTE. The few part-time jobs that are available at the point of hire tend to be concentrated at low pay levels.

And now, since September's fiscal event, changes to universal credit are pressurising part-time workers to work more hours, seek better paid work, or lose their benefits⁴. But working more

hours simply isn't an option for many parents with children, and better paid part-time work is not available in the jobs market. Britain has a problem with part-time: this vital workforce is being forgotten.

Those seeking other forms of flexibility are impacted too. The pandemic saw an explosion in hybrid working, and those who have benefited now want to progress and move around the jobs market. But they are not always finding hybrid on offer in similar job vacancies elsewhere.

In the face of these blocks in the jobs market, it is disappointing that there is now unlikely to be any movement on the Government's commitment to legislation on 'day one flexibility'. Change will have to come through employer action.

Rather than seeing flexibility as 'nice to have', employers need to recognise it as being essential to help fill jobs,

by either matching the flexibility that workers have at other organisations, or by enticing economically inactive people back to work.

Improved access to flexibility at all salary levels will also enable people to maximise their income, rather than having to compromise on pay and progression simply because they need to work differently.

In this time of ongoing skills shortages, coupled with a cost of living crisis, the risks involved in missed opportunity are so much greater for society as a whole. Employers need to take speedy action on opening up to flexible working from the point of hire.



Emma Stewart
Co-Founder, Timewise

HOW THE INDEX CONTRIBUTES TO JOB MARKET KNOWLEDGE

- The index fills a knowledge gap in job market statistics by reporting on advertised flexible vacancies, where flexible working is offered as a positive benefit to candidates. By updating the index annually, we are tracking progress in flexible recruitment.
- Employers can benchmark their recruitment practices around flexible working against national averages - by salary, role type, region and types of flexibility offered.

CONTENTS

Executive summary	05
Research findings:	
• Year on year growth	08
• Gap between supply and demand	09
• Flexible jobs by salary	10
• Flexibility varies widely by type of role	11
• Few regional variances	12
• Which types of flexible working are most common?	13
• Differences in types of flex by salary level	14
• Differences in types of flex by role category	15
• What the findings mean for the UK jobs market	16



METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2022 is based on analysis of over 6 million job adverts, in the period 01 January 2022 to 30 June 2022

The data source is Lightcast, and job adverts were filtered using 19 keywords relating to different forms of flexible working. As our aim is to track employer behaviour in offering flexible working in quality jobs (rather than in insecure jobs

where flexibility is common and pay is often below living wage), the following types of contracts are excluded from the analysis where it has been possible to identify them: self-employed, freelance, zero hours, commission only and temporary posts. We have also excluded all jobs paid less than £18,500 per annum (a proxy for the UK living wage rate, at the time of the analysis, of £9.50 per hour).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A 'FLEXIBLE JOB'?

In this report, 'flexible job' means any advertised vacancy that is either part-time or offers home-working, hybrid working, flexible start and finish times, flexible shift patterns, remote working, term-time, or job-share. Additionally, jobs that offer 'flexible working' or 'agile working' are tracked; these tend to be full-time jobs where the employer is open to flexible working patterns by arrangement with the candidate.

Note on the data: This is the first year that Lightcast has been used as the data source for the Timewise Flexible Jobs Index. Benchmark testing has indicated that the data is very similar to that produced in previous years by the Gartner Talent Neuron tool, with an average discrepancy of only -1% in the analysis period of Jan-June 2022.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE OVERALL PICTURE

- **Low proportion of flexible jobs at the point of hire:** In spite of the shift to hybrid working since the pandemic, the proportion of jobs adverts that offer any form of flexible working remains surprisingly low at 30%.
- **Jobs market still lags behind the employment market:** 9 in 10 UK workers want to work flexibly⁵, and 5 in 10 employees now do so⁶. Yet only 3 in 10 jobs offer flexibility.
- **Key driver for low pay and under-employment:** 7 in 10 jobs are closed to people who are only able to work if they can find a flexible role. As a result, many people become trapped in low paid flexible jobs, because that is all that is available to them.
- **Key cause of the gender pay gap:** Women who transition to part-time work while they raise a family are often unable to take their part-time arrangement with them in a promotion or a move to a new employer. Some leave the workforce altogether and struggle to re-enter it.
- **Employers are losing staff:** Anecdotal evidence suggests that employers are beginning to lose staff to competitors who offer better flexible arrangements⁷. People who want to work flexibly often bypass job adverts where it is not overtly offered⁸.

DIFFERENCES BY SALARY

- **No visible pattern on the surface:** The proportion of job adverts that offer flexibility goes up and down a little across different salary levels, without much of a significant pattern. This is a very different picture from the early years of this Index, when flexibility above £20k was rare.
- **...But sharp divisions beneath:** However, analysis by role category and flex type reveals some sharp divisions between jobs that can and can't be done from home, and where part-time work is and isn't available. We are still a long way from having equal access to flexible working, for all workers.

DIFFERENCES BY ROLE CATEGORY

- **Unequal access:** Availability of flexible working in job adverts varies widely depending on the type of role. Feminised sectors such as social care and nursing have always offered the most flexibility, and many office based roles are now catching up thanks to hybrid patterns. But other role categories lag far behind, particularly those in the foundational economy which struggle to offer remote working. And it needs to be remembered that the ratio is low in all cases.
- **Investment is needed:** To ensure fairness and to be competitive in the recruitment market, businesses need to invest in better job design and management capability. While the cost may seem prohibitive, the return on investment (in the form of lower staff churn and sickness rates) can be significant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FLEXIBILITY

- **Part-time remains stigmatised:** Part-time is offered in only 12% of job adverts (even though 25% of all employees work part-time), and is strongly linked to low pay. It is also linked to frontline roles in feminised sectors such as nursing, hospitality and retail, whilst being rarely offered in professional roles such as finance, marketing, IT and legal. At salaries above £20k, and increasingly as pay gets higher, many part-time workers are excluded from the jobs market.
- **The hybrid revolution has not fully reached the recruitment market:** Home-working or hybrid working is only offered in 12% of job adverts, even though 1 in 5 UK employees now work in this way⁹. Hybrid supports work-life balance without a reduction in take-home pay, and is

increasingly available for higher earners. But it is virtually off limits for those on low pay who need it most.

- **Time-based flexibility is rarely offered:** Variable hours or flexible shifts are offered in only 3% of job adverts. This is disappointing to see, as flexi-time can be a relatively easy form of flex to accommodate and is an important option for those jobs where home-working is not possible, helping employers to provide a degree of equity between their frontline and office based staff.
- **'Flexible working' lacks clarity:** Unspecified offers of 'flexible working' feature in 10% of job adverts. This 'mop up' term is mistrusted by many flexible jobseekers. Best practice is to clarify which types of flex will be possible (home-working, part-time, flexible hours of work etc).

- **Overall, greater parity is needed:** There are valid reasons for the disparity between which types of flex are available in which occupations. Low-paid roles often have fixed working hours and site locations, to meet operational demands; higher-paid roles carry more autonomy. However, with better job design, some form of flexibility is possible for all roles; finding the type of flex that's compatible with operational demands is the key to creating fairer, more inclusive workplaces.

WHAT SHOULD EMPLOYERS DO?

- Offering flexible working will help to attract people back into the labour market, and to switch jobs. Employers who fail to offer flex are cutting themselves off from a proportion of the candidate market,

as many people who need flexibility are nervous to ask for it and will bypass job adverts that do not overtly say it is an option.

- It's important to consider what flexibility is possible for ALL roles, as there is always a way to offer employees more input and control – even in roles that are customer-facing or demand long hours.
- Employers need to move from thinking 'why should we?' to 'how can we?' Training is needed for hiring managers to design flexible jobs for a range of roles, with different flexibility patterns including part-time.
- Transparency is important in job adverts, specifying which forms of flexible working are possible for the role.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

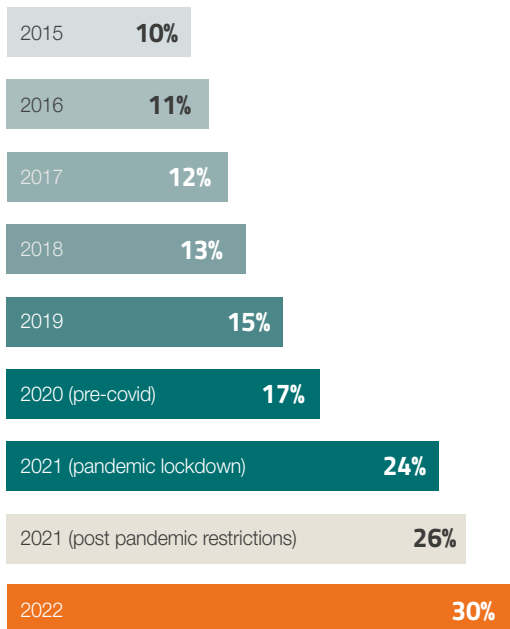
WHAT SHOULD POLICY MAKERS DO?

- Bring forward the employment bill to include Flexible Working by Default from day one, with an additional duty on employers to consider flexibility and state it in job adverts where possible.
- In the meantime, introduce a requirement for all organisations which receive public funds to commit to considering flexible working from day one.
- Commission analysis of the financial return of investing in flexible hiring, to challenge concerns about increased burden and cost.
- Introduce a flexible job design training module through BEIS, to support SMEs to build their capabilities.
- DWP should undertake an urgent evidence review of its proposed requirements for part-time workers on Universal Credit to seek more hours, and determine how effective this could be in reality. The review should revisit the evidence¹⁰ from previous in-work progression trials on stimulating better flexible work. DWP should also scope broader employer facing interventions to stimulate flexible hiring, through existing employment support and specifically its 50Plus initiative for older workers.
- Convene employers to undertake flexible hiring trials at a sector level, through the Women's Business Council within GEO.



YEAR ON YEAR GROWTH

PROPORTION OF JOBS ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE WORKING



KEY FINDINGS

- In 2021 and 2022, following the impact of the pandemic, the proportion of flexible jobs has increased at a greater rate than the small increments of the pre-covid years. This is of course largely due to the introduction of ‘hybrid working’ (any blend of home and office working) to help ease people back to the workplace after enforced periods of home-working.
- In spite of the shift to hybrid working, the overall proportion of flexible jobs remains surprisingly low at 30%.

TIMESWISER INSIGHTS

The jobs market still lags behind the employment market:

While hybrid patterns appear to be a permanent and widespread feature of office working, this behaviour shift is not being reflected in the jobs market. Part-time is another form of flexible working that is widely available in the workplace but rarely offered at the point of hire.

Key driver for low pay and under-employment: 7 in 10 jobs are closed to people who are only able to work if they can find a flexible role. As a result, people with caring commitments (mostly women), older workers, and those with health conditions often become trapped in low paid

flexible jobs, because that is all that is available to them. Opening up more flexible opportunities at higher salary levels, especially part-time ones, will unlock progression routes for them.

Key cause of the gender pay gap:

This inclusivity failure caused by the lack of flexible jobs manifests itself in issues like the gender pay gap. Women who transition to part-time work while they raise a family are often unable to take their part-time arrangement with them in a promotion or a move to a new employer. Some leave the workforce altogether and struggle to re-enter it. The stagnation or loss of skills has a lasting impact.

GAP BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND



**9 IN 10 PEOPLE
WANT FLEX**



**5 IN 10 PEOPLE
WORK FLEX**



**3 IN 10 JOBS
OFFER FLEX**

Well before the pandemic, 9 in 10 UK workers wanted to work flexibly¹¹, and 5 in 10 employees are now lucky enough to do so¹². Anecdotal evidence suggests that employers are beginning to lose staff to competitors who offer better flexible arrangements¹³. People who want to work flexibly often bypass job adverts where it is not overtly offered¹⁴.

Yet against this background of high demand for flexible working, our Index shows that fewer than 3 in 10 jobs are being advertised with options to work flexibly.

TIMEWISE INSIGHTS

A recruitment ‘own goal’: All the evidence points to one thing: failing to offer flexibility at the point of hire means that employers are missing out on talent. It’s difficult to fathom the reason behind their reticence. Is it a lack of understanding, simple inertia, or a more deep-rooted prejudice that is proving hard to shift? Employers need to question their approach and take remedial action.

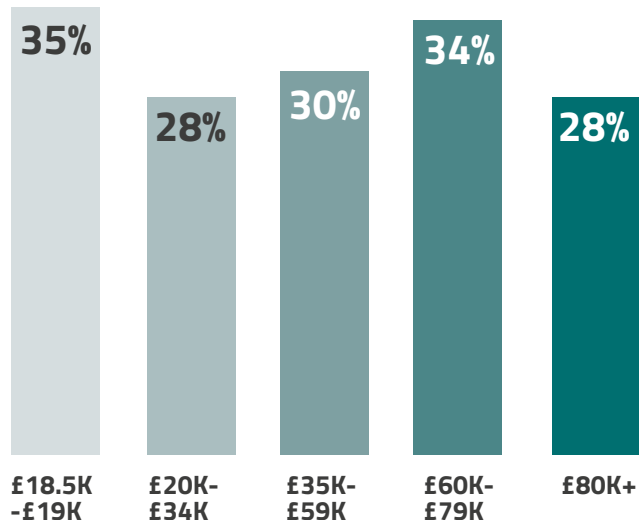
The demand for flex is universal:

While parents, people with health concerns and older workers might need flexibility the most, it’s clear that it is desired by all. And having had a taste of home-working and flexible hours during the pandemic, employees are now keen to hang on to patterns of work they have proved to be successful.



FLEXIBLE JOBS BY SALARY

PROPORTION OF JOBS ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE WORKING, BY SALARY LEVEL



KEY FINDINGS

















- As in all previous index reports, jobseekers' access to flexible working is highest amongst the lowest paid roles (35%).
- There is then a significant drop in the availability of flex (to 28%), for jobs paid £20k-£34k.
- The proportion then begins to climb again, peaking at 34% for roles paid £60k to £79k before tailing off above £80k.
- Even at the highest ratio of 35% for low-paid roles, it's worth remembering that this falls well short of candidate demand for flexible working (9 in 10 people want it¹⁵).

TIMEWISE INSIGHTS

At first glance, access to flexibility in job adverts goes up and down a little across the different salary bands, without much of a significant pattern. This is a very different picture from the early years of this Index, when flexibility above £20k was rare. However, our analysis by role category and flex type (to follow on the next few pages) reveals some sharp divisions between jobs that can and can't be done from home. We are still a long way from having equal access to flexible working, for all workers.

FLEXIBILITY VARIES WIDELY BY TYPE OF ROLE

PROPORTION OF JOBS ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE WORKING, BY ROLE

ADMINISTRATION/ CLERICAL  30%	EDUCATION/ TRAINING  30%	ENGINEERING/QA  27%	CONSTRUCTION/ FACILITIES  17%
FINANCE/ ACCOUNTING  32%	HOSPITALITY/ SERVICES  33%	HUMAN RESOURCES  37%	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  32%
LEGAL  31%	MAINTENANCE /REPAIR  17%	MANUFACTURING/ RESOURCES  16%	MARKETING/PR  33%
MEDICAL/HEALTH  36%	OPERATIONS/ LOGISTICS  22%	SALES/BIZ DEVELOPMENT  29%	SOCIAL SERVICES  44%

KEY FINDINGS

- Social services roles have the highest availability of flexible working – 44% of job adverts offer it. In this sector, part-time work is relatively common, as are flexible shifts. Medical/health roles (36%) and hospitality/services (33%) offer similar patterns of work.
- Above average access to flex is now offered in a number of office-based role categories, because of increased home-working: HR (37%), marketing (33%) IT (32%), finance (32%).
- Three role categories have stubbornly low rates of flex: manufacturing (16%), construction (17%) and maintenance and repair (17%). This may be gender based – they are male dominated roles where historically low requests for flexibility may have shaped cultural resistance to it.

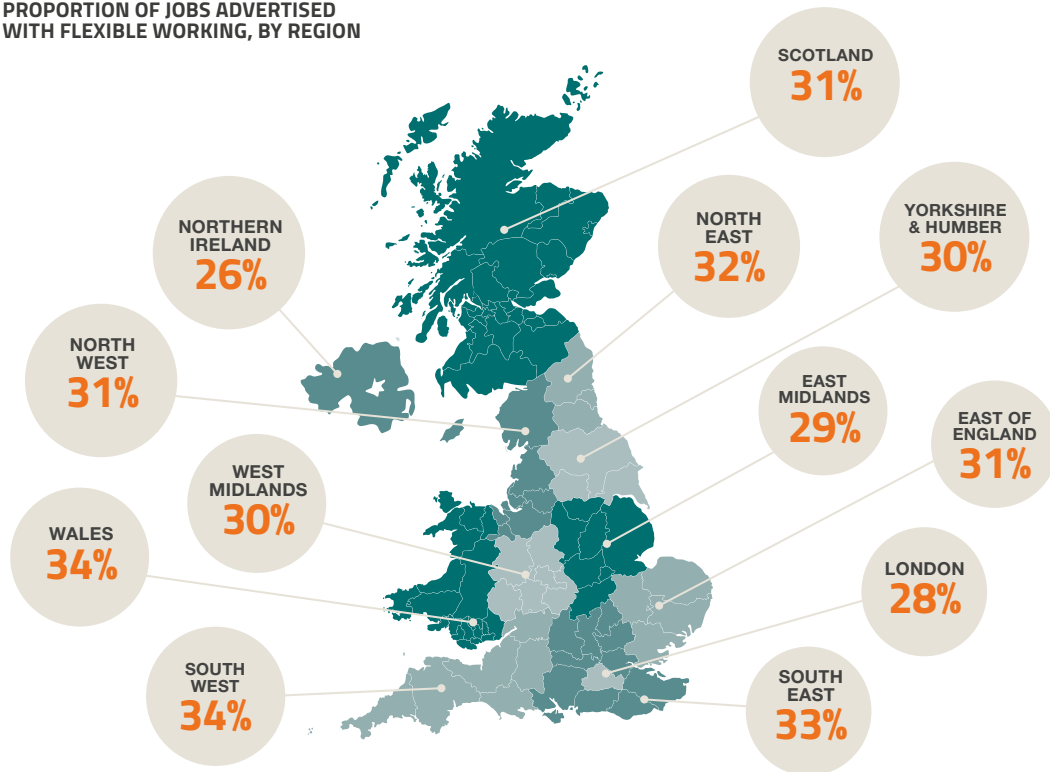
TIMESWISE INSIGHTS

Access to flex varies widely depending on the type of role. To ensure fairness and to be competitive in the recruitment market, businesses need to invest in better job design and in equipping managers with the skills to adapt to new ways of working. Sector based pilots, to explore flexible working patterns that are compatible with the operational requirements of different roles¹⁶, are a good way for employers to test how to overcome complex operational constraints.

While the cost and effort may seem prohibitive, the return on investment (in the form of lower staff churn and sickness rates) can be significant – with costs potentially being recouped within just a few years¹⁷.

FEW REGIONAL VARIATIONS

PROPORTION OF JOBS ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE WORKING, BY REGION



KEY FINDINGS

- The availability of flexible jobs is broadly similar across the UK, with Wales and the South West taking a slight lead (both at 34%).
- Northern Ireland (26%), Greater London (28%), and the East Midlands (29%) have rates below the average for the UK.

TIMEWISE INSIGHTS

In early years' index reports, regional variations were more marked than they are now, and this was largely due to localised salary variations. High regional flex ratios were linked to a high proportion of low-paid part-time jobs in that region (because part-time was the main type of flexibility on offer in those years, and was more common at lower salary levels).

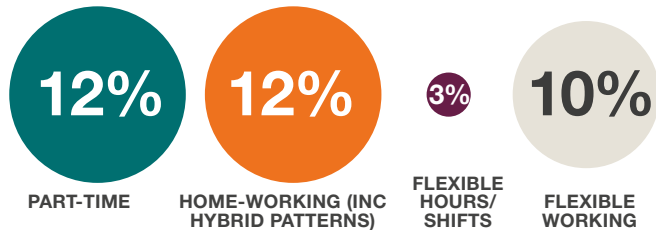
Recently, and especially since the pandemic, the flatter variations across regions

are a result of flatter ratios across salary levels, due to the growth of hybrid and flexible working for higher paid knowledge workers. Within many regions, the problem of part-time work being restricted to low-pay jobs will persist, but is more hidden.

There will also be sectoral differences between the regions. For example, if a region has a high proportion of jobs in social care, health and hospitality (where flexibility is more common), their overall flex rate will be higher.

WHICH TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE MOST COMMON?

PROPORTION OF JOB ADVERTS OFFERING SPECIFIC TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING



KEY FINDINGS

- Three main types of flex all have similar rates of availability: part-time (offered in 12% of all job adverts), home-working (12%) and generic 'flexible working' (10%). Most of the latter group are full-time jobs where the employer is open to unspecified forms of flexibility, by negotiation with the candidate.
- Time-based flexibility, in the form of variable hours or flexible shifts, is less common – offered in only 3% of job adverts.
- In terms of change since last year, part-time has increased significantly (from 8% in Q1 2021 to 12% now); home-working has also increased, from 10% to 12%.
- Over a longer timeframe, home-working has unsurprisingly seen the greatest gains, as a result of lockdown measures during the pandemic. In Q1 2020, pre-covid-impact, only 3% of job adverts offered options to work from home.

TIMEWISE INSIGHTS

The hybrid revolution has not fully reached the recruitment market:

Given that hybrid patterns of work appear to be here to stay, and that 1 in 5 UK employees now work in this way¹⁸, it's puzzling that home-working/hybrid working is only offered in 12% of job adverts. As mentioned previously, candidates are voting with their feet when it comes to hybrid patterns, and employers who don't offer it are losing out.

Is the part-time rise a blip? Part-time working has historically been fairly stagnant – rising only from 7% to 8% over the period from 2015 to early 2020. But following the end of lockdown restrictions, the rate increased to 10% by Q3 in 2020 and has now increased again to 12%. This may be a new long-term trend, or may simply be a blip that reflects the types of jobs being advertised as we emerge from the pandemic – part-time

is relatively common (although still low) in hospitality, health and social care roles.

Flexible hours are rarely offered:

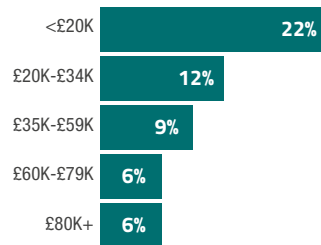
Flexible working hours/flexible shift patterns are an important option for those jobs where home-working is not possible, and can help employers to try to provide a degree of equity between their frontline and office based staff. Such low rates of availability (3%) are disappointing; employers would do well to consider doing more, as this can be a relatively easy form of flex to accommodate.

'Flexible working' is too vague an offer: Around 1 in 10 job adverts say the role is open to flexible working, but a research study by Timewise Jobs¹⁹ has found such wording is treated with scepticism by many flexible jobseekers. Best practice is to clarify which types of flex will be possible (home-working, part-time, flexible hours of work etc).

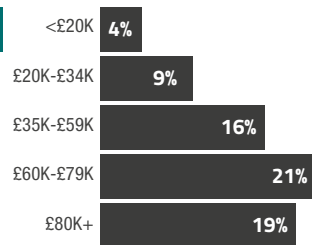
DIFFERENCES IN TYPES OF FLEX BY SALARY LEVEL

ANALYSIS BY SALARY LEVEL, FOR KEY FLEX TYPES

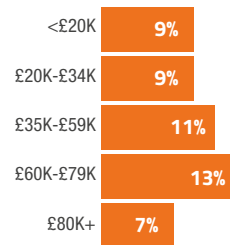
PART-TIME



HOME-WORKING



FLEXIBLE WORKING



KEY FINDINGS

Looking at snapshots of the three main types of flex, it is clear that there is considerable disparity across salary levels:

- Part-time is fairly common amongst the lowest paid jobs (22%), but falls by nearly half above £20k FTE (to 12%) and is offered in only 6% of job adverts at £60k FTE or more.

- Conversely, home-working (or hybrid working) is offered more often at higher salary levels, peaking at 21% for roles paid £60k-£79k. It is an option in only 4% of the lowest paid jobs.
- Flexible working (where the form of flex is unspecified) has a flatter pattern across the salary bands, but is also highest for roles paid £60k-£79k.

TIMEWISE INSIGHTS

A two-tier jobs market of flexible haves and have-nots perpetuates, and is a growing concern in light of the cost of living crisis.

The part-time trap: At salaries above £20k FTE, and increasingly as pay gets higher, part-time workers are excluded from the jobs market. For some groups (particularly parents of young children, and even more so for single parents) the choice can often be to work part-time or not work at all. And many of these people become trapped in jobs below their skill level, unable to find a part-time arrangement in an appropriate post. This has a damaging effect on the UK talent pool, workplace inclusivity and the persisting gender pay gap.

Home-working for the higher-paid:

Hybrid working supports work-life balance without a reduction in take-home pay, and is increasingly available for higher earners. But it is virtually off limits for those on low pay who need it most.

Equality is impossible, but greater parity can be achieved:

Low-paid roles often have fixed working hours and locations, to meet operational demands and because of management reporting lines. Higher-paid roles carry more autonomy, and are more likely to be office-based with home-working possible. So there are valid reasons behind the disparity in flex types by salary level. However, with better job design, some form of flexibility is possible for all roles; finding the type of flex that's compatible with operational demands is the key to creating fairer, more inclusive workplaces.

DIFFERENCES IN TYPES OF FLEX BY ROLE CATEGORY

	PART-TIME	HOME-WORKING	FLEX HOURS SHIFTS	FLEX WORKING
ADMINISTRATION/CLERICAL	13%	12%	2%	9%
EDUCATION / TRAINING	18%	4%	1%	7%
ENGINEERING/QA	9%	12%	1%	10%
CONSTRUCTION/FACILITIES	11%	4%	1%	4%
FINANCE/ACCOUNTING	6%	20%	2%	12%
HOSPITALITY/SERVICES	21%	2%	6%	7%
HUMAN RESOURCES	10%	22%	2%	12%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	4%	22%	2%	11%
LEGAL	6%	19%	1%	12%
MAINTENANCE/REPAIR	8%	5%	2%	4%
MANUFACTURING/RESOURCES	11%	2%	2%	3%
MARKETING/PR	6%	21%	2%	12%
MEDICAL/HEALTH	21%	5%	7%	15%
OPERATIONS/LOGISTICS	10%	8%	1%	6%
SALES/BIZ DEVELOPMENT	13%	12%	2%	7%
SOCIAL SERVICES	24%	7%	8%	16%

KEY FINDINGS

- **Access to part-time jobs** is particularly low in IT, finance, marketing, and legal. These are office roles which, with attention to job design, should generally be possible to offer on a part-time basis.
- **Home-working** is understandably low in frontline roles. However, even in these sectors there are many roles (particularly managerial ones) which could have an element of home-working.
- **Flexible hours/shifts** are rarely offered for any roles - never rising above 8%. This suggests a lack of thought by recruiters, as flexi-time is usually the easiest form of flexibility to accommodate, with little need for job re-design.
- **Unspecified flexible working** is lowest for the frontline roles, as for home-working.

TIMewise INSIGHTS

The two tier jobs market that was apparent in the earlier salary analysis is visible again here, in occupational differences in access to flexibility. Part-time roles are relatively common in several frontline sectors, while home-working and an openness to 'flexible working' are more readily available for office roles.

Part-time work is one of the key issues at the heart of occupational segregation, as it is more prevalent in 'feminised' sectors such as retail, hospitality and nursing where pay is low. But it doesn't have to be this way: with good job design, most roles can be worked part-time in any sector, and this would facilitate greater gender equality.

WHAT THE FINDINGS MEAN FOR THE UK JOBS MARKET

Vacancies are still going unfilled, driven by over half a million people leaving the workforce during and since the pandemic²⁰. Despite talks of recession, forecasts suggest that skills gaps will perpetuate for some time. Employers therefore need to work harder to attract people back into the labour market, and to switch jobs.

Tackling the problem through investment in skills and training will take too long, and attracting workers from outside the UK is getting more difficult. But offering flexibility from the point of hire can have an immediate effect, by opening jobs up to a wider talent pool.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

- Consider the risk of inaction on flexible hiring:** Failing to offer flexibility cuts out a proportion of the candidate market, whether that is people who will now only consider a job with hybrid patterns, or those who need to work part-time due to other commitments. The part-time candidates who are 'lost' through the lack of decent vacancies include many experienced, mature workers who represent some of the very best available talent.
- Consider what flexibility is possible for ALL roles, to improve parity:** While there is no one-size-fits-all flexible working pattern, there is always a way to offer employees more input and control – even in roles that are customer-facing or demand long hours.
- Shift the company mindset on flexible hiring:** Move from 'why should we?' to 'how can we?' and train hiring managers to design flexible jobs for a range of roles, with different flexibility patterns including part-time. They need to feel confident about which types of flexible working are compatible with different roles.
- Be proactive and transparent during the recruitment process:** Many candidates (including two in five mothers²¹) are nervous to ask about flexibility – don't just assume they will. It's important to be clear in job adverts about which forms of flexible working are possible for the role; for example, reduced hours (part-time), home-working (or a blend of home-working/workplace), flexible shifts, flexible start and finish times.
- Pilot flexible hiring:** Test the water in one department or in one type of role, to give other departments the confidence to follow suit.

WHAT THE FINDINGS MEAN FOR THE UK JOBS MARKET

WHAT SHOULD POLICY MAKERS DO?

- **Bring forward the employment bill** to include Flexible Working by Default from day one, with an additional duty on employers to consider flexibility and state it in job adverts where possible.
- **In the meantime**, through the Cabinet Office, introduce a requirement for all organisations which receive public funds to commit to considering flexible working from day one for any roles created as a result of those funds.
- **Commission wider analysis** to highlight the financial return of investing in flexible hiring, especially for frontline industries and SMEs, to challenge concerns of increased burden and cost. This could be done through the Flexible Working Taskforce.
- **Introduce a flexible job design training module** through BEIS working together with industry intermediaries and the Small Business Charter Network, to support SMEs to build their capabilities. This could be funded through current initiatives such as Help to Grow, or as part of future growth funds.
- **Urgently review the proposed requirements for part-time workers on Universal Credit** and determine how effective it could be in reality for them to increase their hours. The review should revisit the evidence²² from previous in-work progressions trials on stimulating better flexible work. DWP should also scope broader employer facing interventions to stimulate flexible hiring, through existing employment support and specifically its 50Plus initiative for older workers.
- **Convene employers to undertake flexible hiring trials at a sector level**, through the Women's Business Council within GEO. These should have a focus on part-time work, to support its priority of targeting sectors with the most significant gender pay gaps.

REFERENCES

1. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9366/CBP-9366.pdf>
2. https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Insecurity%20Complex%20-%20Low%20Paid%20Workers%20and%20the%20Growth%20of%20Insecure%20work_1.pdf
3. ONS Labour Market Statistics, May-June 2022, downloadable here: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/fulltimeparttimeandtemporaryworkersseasonallyadjustedem01sa>
4. <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6978625840913760256/>
5. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-working-talent-imperative/>
6. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/trends#gref>
7. <https://employernews.co.uk/news/employers-at-risk-of-losing-staff-over-poor-benefits-and-lack-of-flexibility/>
8. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/gaining-an-edge-in-the-fight-for-talent/>
9. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/trends#gref>
10. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-in-work-support-for-people-claiming-universal-credit/universal-credit-in-work-progression-randomised-control-trial>
11. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-working-talent-imperative/>
12. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/trends#gref>
13. <https://employernews.co.uk/news/employers-at-risk-of-losing-staff-over-poor-benefits-and-lack-of-flexibility/>
14. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/gaining-an-edge-in-the-fight-for-talent/>
15. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-working-talent-imperative/>
16. For example, <https://timewise.co.uk/article/making-construction-a-great-place-to-work-can-flexible-working-help/>, <https://timewise.co.uk/article/improving-nurses-work-life-balance/>; <https://timewise.co.uk/article/modern-retail-nation-of-part-time-shopkeepers/> and <https://timewise.co.uk/article/developing-a-whole-school-approach-to-flexible-working/>
17. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/reaching-a-positive-financial-return-on-investment-in-flexible-working/>
18. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/trends#gref>
19. <https://timewise.co.uk/article/gaining-an-edge-in-the-fight-for-talent/>
20. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9366/CBP-9366.pdf>
21. <https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/changes-flexible-working-legislation-dont-go-anywhere-near-far-enough>
22. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/developing-in-work-support-for-people-claiming-universal-credit/universal-credit-in-work-progression-randomised-control-trial>

Timewise works to unlock the flexible jobs market in the UK. We share market insights on flexible working and flexible hiring, deliver 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.TIMEWISE.CO.UK

Copyright Timewise 2022
Timewise Foundation C.I.C. is a limited company registered in England and Wales Company number: 5274371

