timewise
TALENT THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

TIMEWISE
FLEXIBLE JOBS INDEX
WORCESTERSHIRE 2018

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

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RESEARCH PARTNER: Gartner

INTRODUCTION

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

9 out of 10 UK workers currently either work flexibly in some way, or want to[1]. But overall, in Worcestershire, only 11.1% of vacancies for 'quality' jobs at or above £20,000[2] are advertised with some reference to flexible working from the start, either on hours or location.

This huge gap between the supply of flexible jobs and the demand for flexible work is the reason why so many people - particularly women, older workers and those with health and disability issues - are locked out of work. And because flexible work is more prevalent in low-paid jobs (the proportion of jobs below £20,000 that are advertised with flexible options is 19%) others are stuck in low paid part-time jobs they are overqualified for, unable to progress their careers. For all these people to both benefit from and contribute to economic growth in the region, there is a pressing need to drive structural change in the Worcestershire jobs market.

And with almost a third of the region's fastest growing mid-sized companies highlighting access to talent and skills as their biggest challenge to growth, there is a real opportunity to encourage business leaders to get smarter about flexible working in order to be future-fit. These days, a smart approach involves adapting recruitment processes to flexible hiring. To being open to a conversation with candidates about how much, when and where they can work.

The more employers in Worcestershire are encouraged and supported to adapt to flexible hiring, the better able they will be to attract the best possible and most diverse talent from within and outside the region. Ultimately this will improve their business performance.

We hope this new analysis will inspire both Worcestershire policy makers and employers to develop plans to champion flexible hiring in the region, as part of wider inclusive growth strategies.

This will enable employers to access the skills and talent they need. It will also enable local families to enhance their economic contribution, careers and earnings, ensuring the Worcestershire economy benefits all.

Emma Stewart
CEO
Timewise

ADAPTING TO 'FLEXIBLE HIRING' WILL ENABLE EMPLOYERS IN WORCESTERSHIRE TO ATTRACT THE BEST POSSIBLE TALENT, BY ENSURING INCLUSIVITY.

1. Flexible Working: A Talent Imperative, Timewise, 2017
2. £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.

FOREWORD

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and Hewett Recruitment are committed to supporting Worcestershire employers to secure the talent they need for inclusive business growth. Worcestershire has been one of the fastest areas of growth in the country over the last few years and this means the demand for labour is high, therefore new approaches to retaining and hiring staff are required.

As part of our shared commitment to 'The Future of Jobs Commission', the WLEP and Hewett Recruitment have worked together to drive the partnership with Timewise and bring 'The Flexible Jobs Index' to Worcestershire. We both welcome this report and its findings and will build these recommendations into the forthcoming Worcestershire Local Industrial Strategy. We hope this report acts as a catalyst and encourages a proactive approach to flexible hiring, which will bring significant benefits to local employers in terms of attracting and retaining untapped talent.

Gary Woodman
Chief Executive , Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

Louise Hewett
Managing Director, Hewett Recruitment and Founder Member of 'The Future of Jobs Commission'

OBJECTIVES OF THE INDEX

- To fill a knowledge gap on the state of the flexible hiring market in Worcestershire
- 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.

METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index for Worcestershire is based on analysis of over 1.7m job adverts from over 170 UK jobs sites in the period January to September 2018. The data source was Gartner, 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.

HOW MANY QUALITY JOBS IN WORCESTERSHIRE ARE ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE OPTIONS?

Across all jobs advertised in Worcestershire and paid more than £20,000 full time equivalent (FTE), 11.1% offer flexible working options at the point of hire.

TIMEWISE VIEW

- At 11.1%, the proportion of quality flexible jobs in Worcestershire is exactly the same as the UK average, and is extremely low. Research by Timewise[3] has shown that 9 in 10 UK employees either currently work flexibly or want to. This is inversely proportionate to the 1 in 9 quality vacancies in Worcestershire that are offering flexible working options.
- For people who need to work flexibly, the acute shortage of quality flexible jobs is a significant barrier to entering work or moving jobs to progress their career.

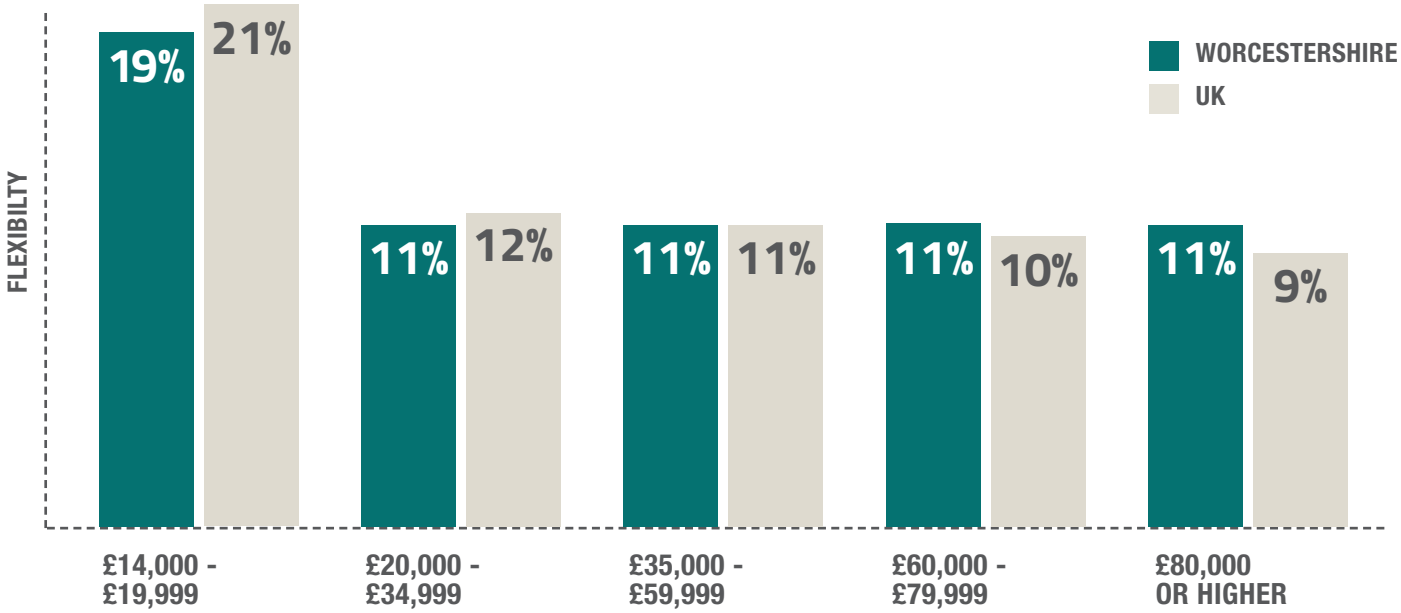
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A 'FLEXIBLE JOB'?

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 or remotely, flexible start and finish times, flexible shifts, term-time, annualised or compressed hours.

3. Flexible Working: A Talent Imperative, Timewise, 2017

AVAILABILITY OF FLEXIBLE JOBS VARIES BY SALARY

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



- Availability of flexible jobs in Worcestershire is highest for jobs paid £14k-£20k FTE, at 19%. This is a little behind the UK rate of 21% in this lowest salary band. Previous Timewise Flexible Index reports, and also earlier studies by other researchers[4] have found a similar correlation between low-paid jobs and flexibility (in particular part-time work).
- There is a significant drop in the availability of flexible jobs in Worcestershire at salaries above £20k, from 19% to 11%.
- The proportion of flexible jobs is flat across all the salary bands above £20k in Worcestershire. In slight contrast, the pattern for the UK as a whole shows a continued marginal decline as salary rises.

TIMEWISE VIEW

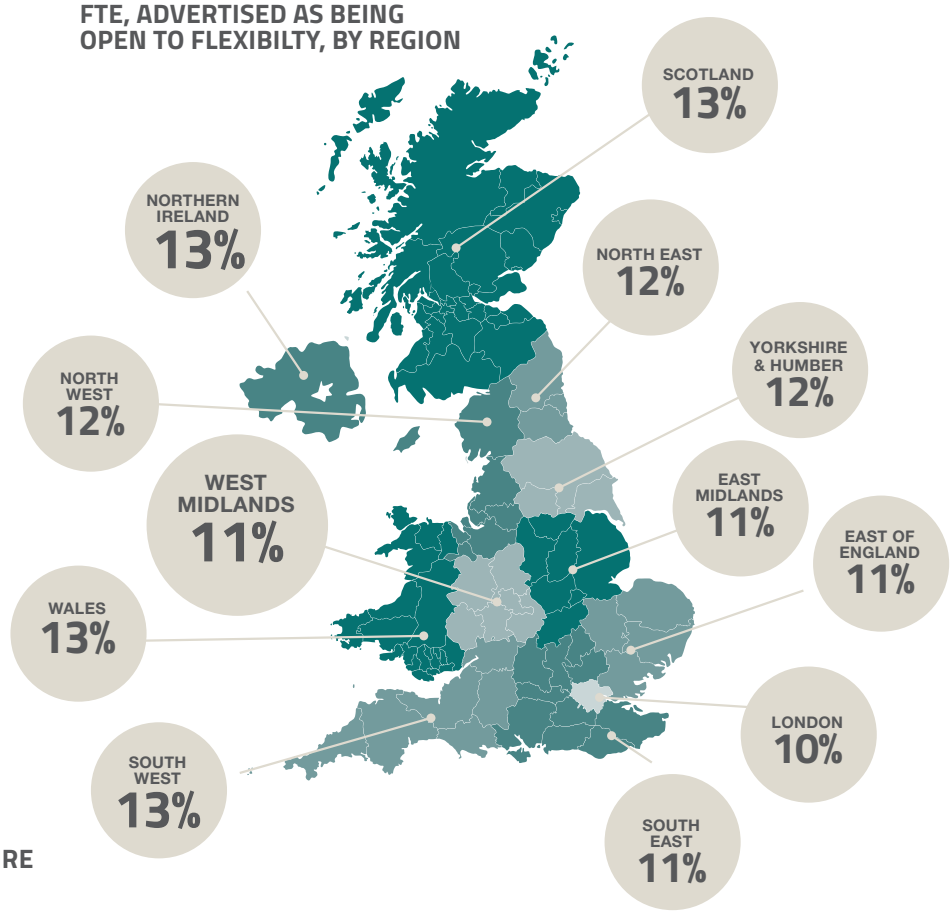
- People seeking flexible working at salaries above £20k face a greater squeeze than those in low-paid jobs. This poses a challenge for those wanting to progress their careers whilst needing to retain their flexible arrangement. It supports and explains other Timewise research which has found that many people (1.5 million nationally) are trapped in low-paid flexible jobs below their skill level[5].
- There is an opportunity to tackle under-employment amongst lower paid workers who need to work flexibly. Instead of increasing their earnings by working more hours, people who need flexibility would be better served by an increase in jobs being unlocked to flexible working at the next salary rung up. This would directly tackle a key structural barrier to progression for almost half of the region's existing part-time workers who are currently stuck in low paid roles[6].

4. Sources include: Low Pay Britain, the Resolution Foundation 2015; Building a Sustainable Quality Part-Time Recruitment Market, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012
5. How Flexible Hiring Could Improve Business Performance and Living Standards, research by Timewise, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016
6. No Silver Bullet - Doing More to Support our Lower Paid Workers, the Lower Paid Workers Group, March 2015

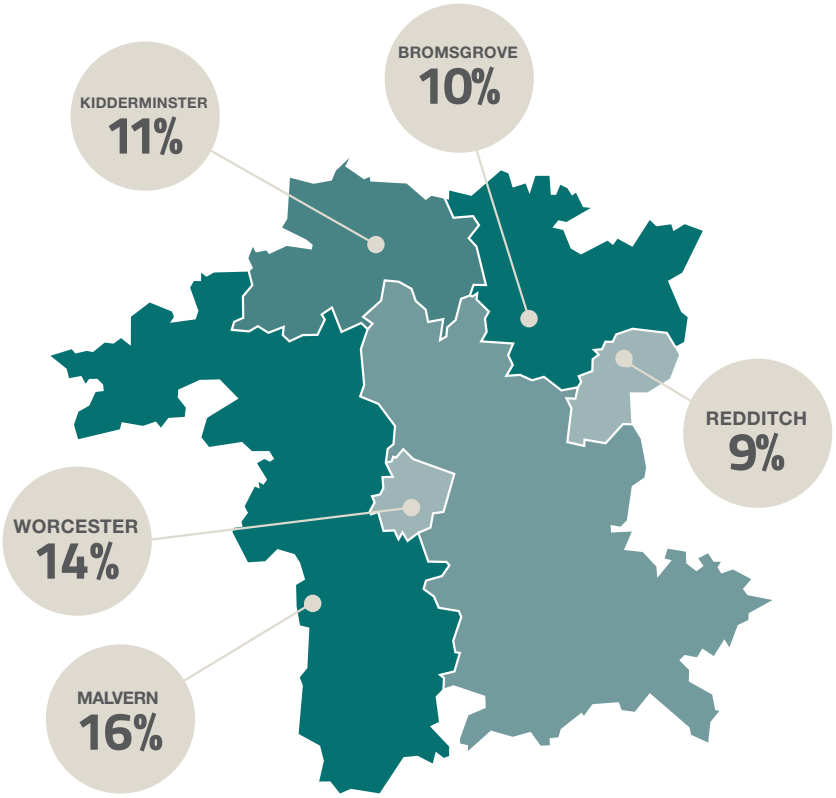
PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS, BY REGION

The UK average proportion of quality flexible jobs (paid £20k+ FTE) is 11%, and the map shows regional variations. The West Midlands is aligned with the national average at 11%.

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



PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS IN KEY TOWNS/CITIES OF WORCESTERSHIRE



TIMEWISE VIEW

- The proportion of quality flexible jobs is low in ALL regions of the UK. The problem is a national one.
- With future inward investment coming into the region aimed at stimulating the creation of new jobs and boosting productivity in key sectors, Worcestershire has an opportunity to embrace flexible hiring. This will enable employers in the region to maximise existing workforce skills, attract new talent to the area, and leverage the greater productivity that will result.

PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS (£20K+ FTE), BY ROLE

MEDICAL/HEALTH
WOR 29%
UK 27%

SOCIAL SERVICES
WOR 28%
UK 22%

EDUCATION/ TRAINING
WOR 19%
UK 12%

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
WOR 12%
UK 10%

ADMINISTRATION/ CLERICAL
WOR 11%
UK 12%

MARKETING/PR
WOR 10%
UK 10%

FINANCE/ ACCOUNTING
WOR 9%
UK 10%

SALES/BIZ DEVELOPMENT
WOR 8%
UK 11%

ENGINEERING/QA
WOR 4%
UK 6%

Only role types with 200+ flexible jobs in Worcestershire are shown above

The proportion of quality jobs advertised with flexible options varies considerably depending on the type of role. Across the UK (and in Worcestershire) health and social services are significantly ahead of other categories. This is because of the widespread availability of flexible shift patterns in these sectors.

Worcestershire broadly follows the UK pattern for flexibility by role. The discrepancy is significant in only one category: education, where the rate is 19% in Worcestershire versus only 12% national average.

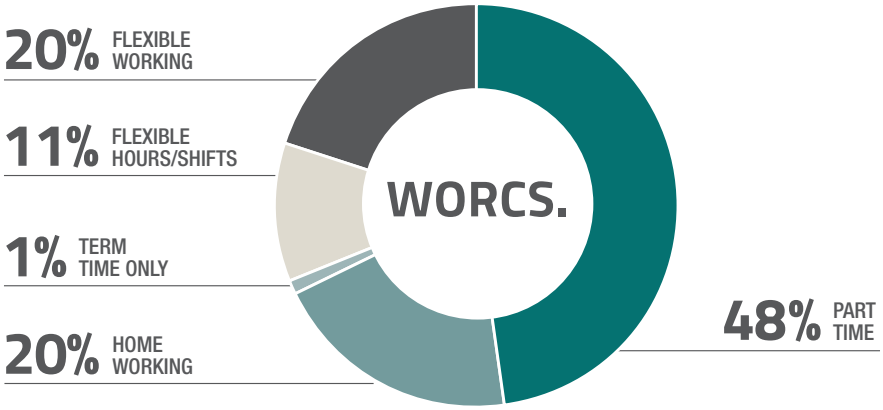
TIMEWISE VIEW

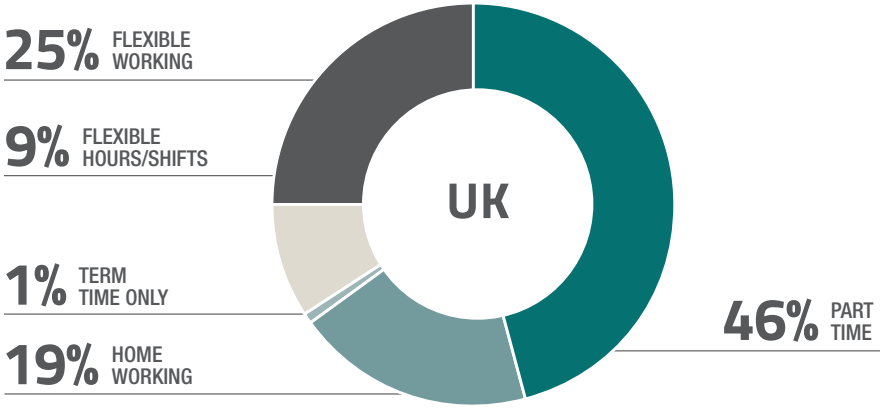
- The high rates of flexible hiring in health and social care reflect the nature of work, which involves many frontline shift roles. The sector faces a wider challenge here, to ensure that flexible shift patterns work well for employees as well as for service delivery. To attract new workers, and retain existing staff, flexible working patterns need to offer sufficient control and predictability in how and when work is done[7].

7. Relevant sources include Caring By Design, Timewise, 2017 - a report on flexible shift patterns in the social care sector.

WHICH TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE MOST COMMON?

TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING AMONGST QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS





Amongst flexible jobs advertised in Worcestershire and paid £20k+ FTE, 48% were part-time jobs, 20% stated openness to unspecified forms of flexible working, 20% offered home-working, and 11% offered flexible shift patterns.

The pattern of types of flexible working in Worcester is similar to that of the UK as a whole, except for the lower proportion (20% versus 25%) for jobs that are open to unspecified forms of flexibility.

TIMEWISE VIEW

- The potential for increasing flexible hiring lies with full-time jobs being opened up to flexible working options. Worcestershire's lower proportion of jobs offering unspecified 'flexible working options' suggests that the county may be slightly behind many areas of the UK in this practice. As a key anchor institution, Worcestershire LEP can lead a change on this by encouraging employers in the county to consider whether flexible working is possible for the right candidate, whenever they are recruiting.

KEY FINDINGS

- Only 11.1% of quality jobs in Worcestershire (those paid more than £20,000 FTE) are advertised with flexible working options.
- Jobseekers in Worcestershire who need to work flexibly can therefore only realistically apply for around 1 in 9 quality vacancies. This severely narrows down their options and is a significant barrier to entering work or moving jobs to progress in their career.
- With 9 in 10 of all UK employees either working flexibly already, or saying they want to, the low availability of quality flexible jobs at the point of hire is substantially out of step with demand.
- It's worth noting that the proportion of flexible jobs is higher for jobs paid below £20,000 FTE, at 19%. The contraction of availability of flexible working at higher salaries (19% contracting to 11% above £20k) locks many people in low-paid flexible jobs that they are over-qualified for. This is because, for many people, flexible working is a necessity not a preference, and they are unable to progress into a better job and keep their flexible pattern.
- The role types with the highest ratio of flexible jobs in Worcestershire are health (29%) and social care (28%). However, the 'flexible shift patterns' advertised in these sectors often, in reality, turn out to offer the employee little control or predictability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

This analysis suggests that a high number of employers in Worcestershire 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 from both within and outside the region 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 employers' ability to retain and progress existing talent. Employees will be able to better fit work with caring or health issues at various life stages so will be less likely to drop out of the workplace. And employers will be able to provide internal progression opportunities 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 Worcestershire LEP to drive more inclusive growth in the region, by increasing the proportion of quality jobs available with flexible working at the point of hire. This will help the region's fastest growing businesses to tackle their biggest challenge – retaining and attracting talent – by unlocking access to a wider pool of candidates seeking flexibility in their next job. And, in doing so, employers will be unlocking opportunities for people with skills and experience who are currently excluded from the workplace because they are unable to work the standard 9-5, such as women returners or people with health issues.

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. For Worcestershire this would mean focusing on STEM sectors where thousands more quality jobs are forecast, for example with the expansion of key employment sites including Malvern Hills Science Park. The cross cutting nature of the technology sector will become increasingly important in the changing regional labour market, where a 'hollowing-out' of skilled and semi-skilled occupations, traditionally in the manufacturing sector, is impacting on access to good quality jobs; meanwhile roles requiring different skill-sets are emerging in the new sectors.

Unlocking more quality jobs to flexibility will also enhance job mobility within Worcestershire, 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.

Lead by example: Key anchor institutions and cornerstone employers within the county, including all public sector employers, should adopt a more proactive approach to flexible job design and be more explicit in their own recruitment advertising about the type of flexible working they will consider at the point of hire.

Champion the benefits: Worcestershire LEP and its strategic partners, from local authorities to lead employers to recruitment agency partners, should use their networks to champion the social and business benefits of flexible hiring to business in the region. For example, targeting employers with high volumes of new jobs and explaining how flexible hiring can help to ensure that new job opportunities are accessible to those people who need to work flexibly - ranging from millennials to parents, to those with health or disability issues, to older workers. This would enable groups which are identified as excluded from workforce opportunities to re-start their careers, thereby maximising the existing skills of many people who are economically inactive within the region.

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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