



timewise
TALENT THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

TIMEWISE FLEXIBLE JOBS INDEX WEST YORKSHIRE 2017

A report on the proportion of jobs in West Yorkshire 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 West Yorkshire. 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.

More than 7 in 10 UK workers currently work flexibly on either hours or location¹. But overall, in West Yorkshire, amongst jobs paid at least minimum wage, only 13.4% of job adverts offer flexible working from the start. 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 19%, 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 both benefit from and contribute to economic growth in West Yorkshire, there is a pressing need to drive structural change in the regional jobs market.

The Social Mobility Commission by the Resolution Foundation endorses the importance of stimulating more quality part-time and flexible jobs in the UK's jobs market, as key to supporting low paid women in particular to progress in work and raise their families' living standards².

We hope this new analysis will inspire the region's key anchor institutions to work with regional policy makers, and in particular the West Yorkshire Inclusive Growth programme, to start developing plans to champion flexible hiring in the region as part of wider inclusive growth 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 parts of the West Yorkshire economy set for growth (Leeds City region economy is the biggest outside London, with plans to generate 35,700 additional jobs by 2036) there is a real opportunity now to ensure that access to good jobs and progression opportunities are shared by all.

Emma Stewart
Joint CEO, Timewise

"OFFERING FLEXIBLE WORKING FROM DAY ONE OF A NEW HIRE IS KEY TO ENSURING INCLUSIVITY, AS WEST YORKSHIRE'S ECONOMY GROWS."

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
2. The Great Escape?: Low pay and progression in the UK's labour market, Resolution Foundation, 2017

FOREWORD



We in Leeds City Region believe that only by integrating economic and social policy can we achieve inclusive growth; a better quality of life for everyone who lives and works here.

To do this we must address poverty, social exclusion and inequality in harmony with economic interventions that jointly achieve the best outcomes and opportunities for our citizens. One such economic intervention is investigated in this report. By promoting and supporting employers to provide flexible working we can reshape the City Region's labour market to work for the 'unintentionally disadvantaged'; those caring for others, in education or training, or in semi-retirement for whom a 9am to 5pm job is impractical or impossible.

Findings in our latest labour market information report also indicate that people in the City Region welcome employment flexibility, with only one in seven part-time workers citing inability to find a full-time job as the reason they're working part-time.

Much of the comparative data for the City Region sees us ahead of the UK average on flexible working. Nonetheless, the approach and recommendations in this report are an important and collective call to action for the public and private sectors to help our businesses maximise the potential of this group.

Cllr Peter Box

Member of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leader of Wakefield Council

OBJECTIVES OF THE INDEX

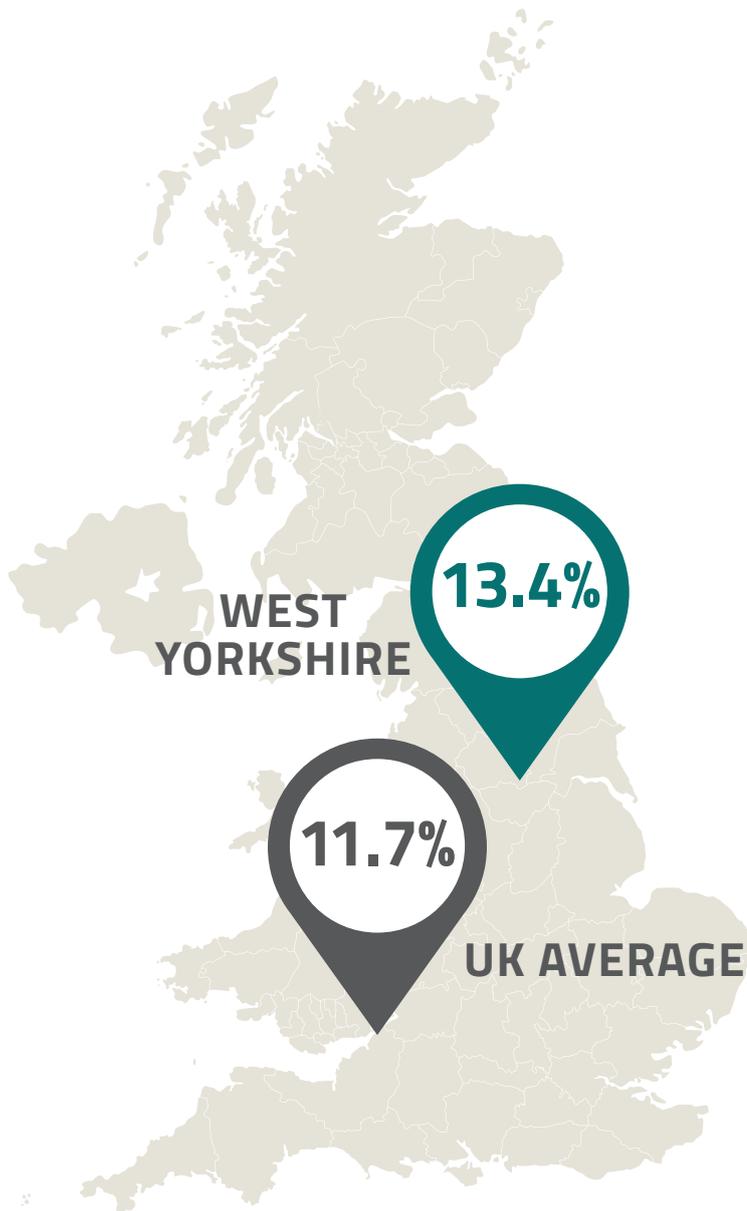
- To fill a knowledge gap on the state of the flexible hiring market in West Yorkshire
- To use this insight to build a business and social case for employers, to encourage change in recruitment practices
- To track progress in flexible hiring as an indicator for inclusive growth.

METHODOLOGY

The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index for West Yorkshire is based on analysis of 138k job ads from over 80 UK job boards in the period June to September 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.

In this paper, data reporting has been restricted to those sub-samples with flexible jobs volume of at least 100, to support statistical validity.

HOW MANY JOBS ARE ADVERTISED WITH FLEXIBLE OPTIONS?



Only 13.4% of jobs in West Yorkshire are advertised with flexible working options at the point of hire – slightly higher than 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

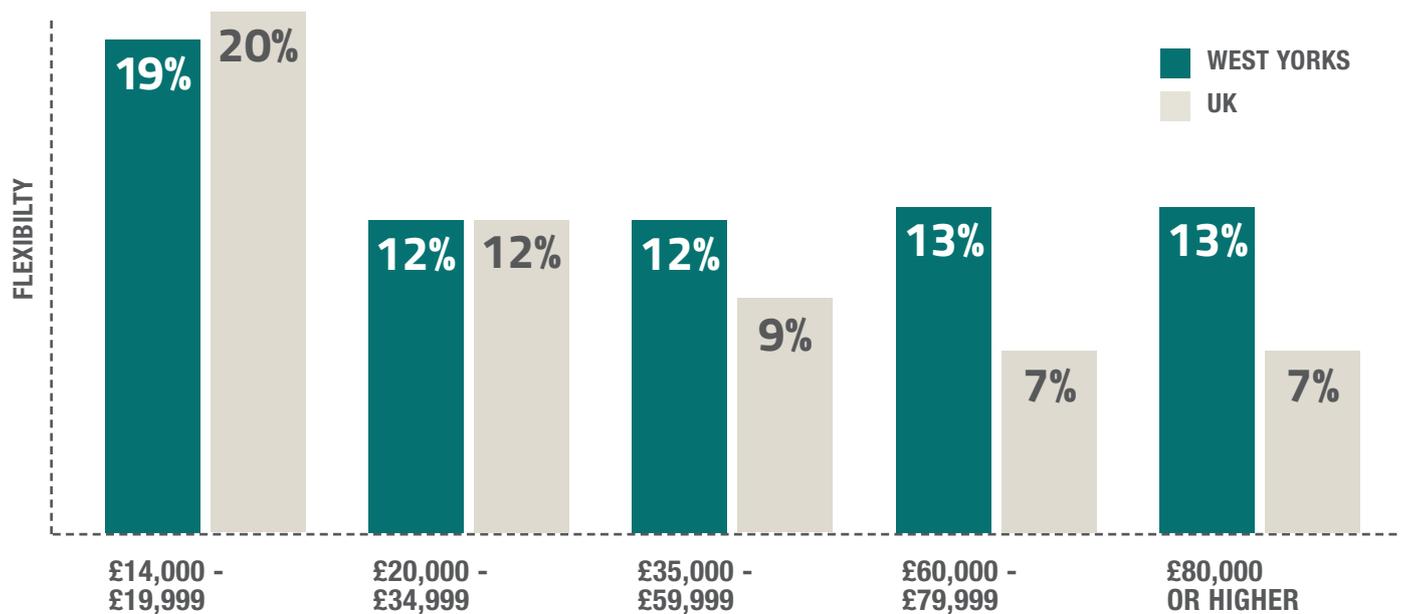
- Only 1 in 7 vacancies in West Yorkshire offers flexible working, severely narrowing down the job options for people who need it. The shortage of flexible jobs is a significant barrier to entering work or moving jobs to progress their career.

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, 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 West Yorkshire is highest for jobs paid £14k-£20k FTE, at 19%. This is closely aligned to the UK rate of 20% in this lowest salary band. Earlier studies³ 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 West Yorkshire at salaries above £20k. In the £20k-£34k salary band, the rate is the same as the UK overall, at 12%.
- However, unlike the overall UK pattern where the availability of flexible jobs shrinks further as salary rises, in West Yorkshire the trend is much flatter for all salaries above £20k, and even rises very slightly at salaries above £60k.

3. Sources include: Low Pay Britain, the Resolution Foundation 2015; Building a Sustainable Quality Part-Time Recruitment Market, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2012

4. How Flexible Hiring Could Improve Business Performance and Living Standards, research by Timewise, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016

5. No Silver Bullet - Doing More to Support our Lower Paid Workers, the Lower Paid Workers Group, March 2015

TIMWISE VIEW

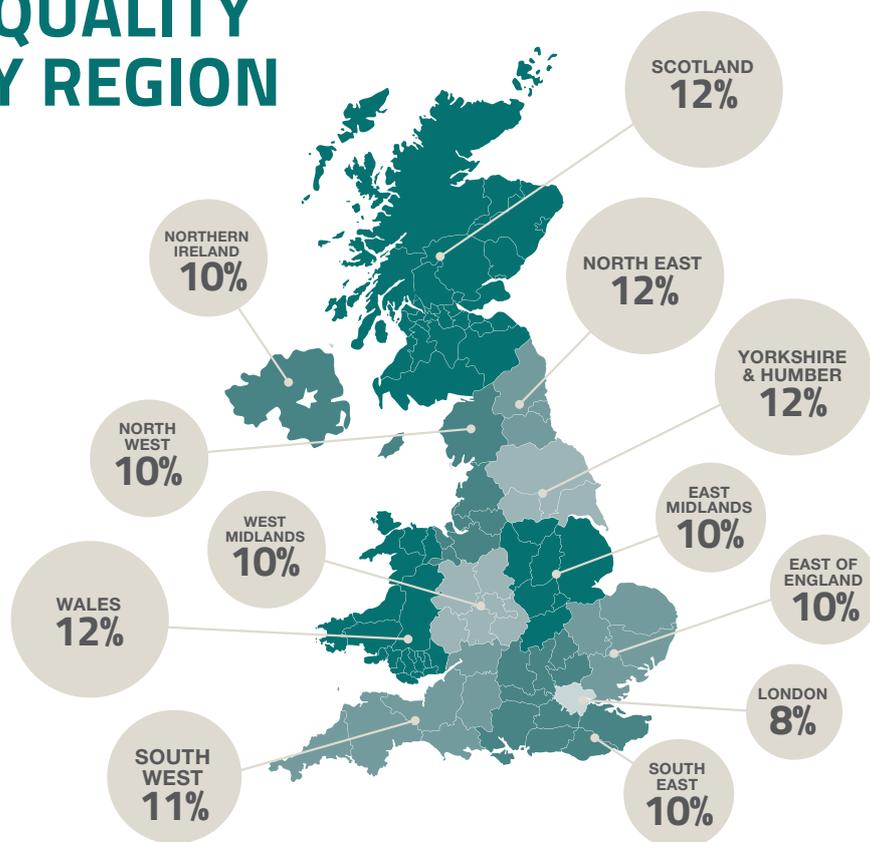
- People seeking flexibility at salaries above £20k face a greater squeeze than those in low-paid jobs. This poses a challenge for those wanting to progress their careers whilst needing to retain their flexible arrangement. It supports and explains other Timewise research which has found that many people (1.5 million nationally) are trapped in low-paid flexible jobs below their skill level⁴.
- The greatest need for improvement is in the £20k-£34k salary bracket. There is 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 roles to flexibility at the next salary rung up. This will 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 roles⁵.
- It's interesting that West Yorkshire bucks the national trend with higher (but still low) rates of flexible hiring at all salary bands above £35k. In fact, the higher rate at these higher salaries is the only reason why West Yorkshire's all-salary average of 13.4% pips the UK average of 11.7%.

PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS, BY REGION

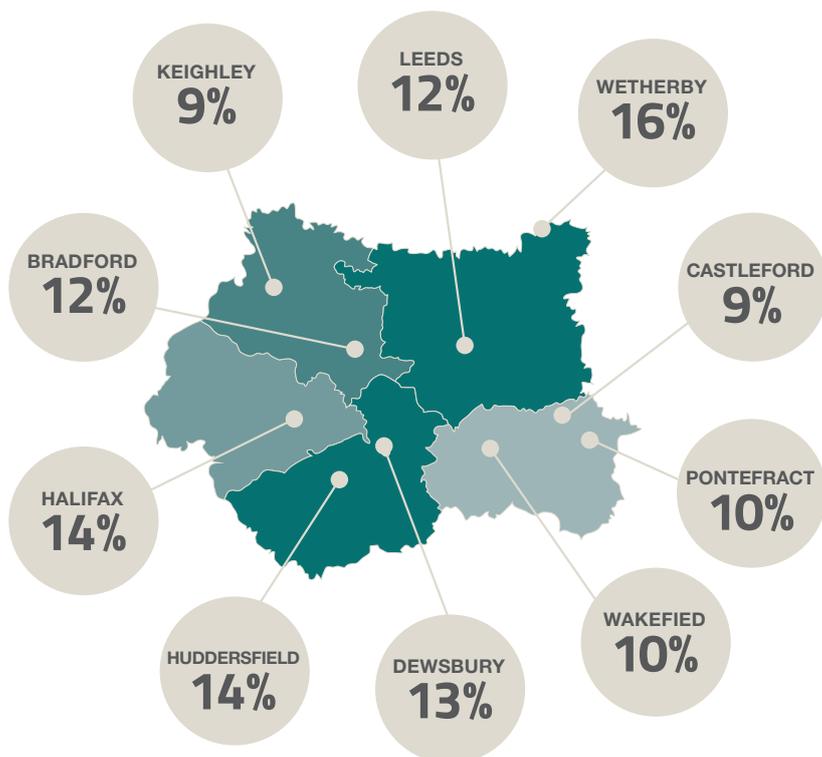
The analysis in the rest of this report looks only at 'quality jobs', paid over £20,000 FTE⁶. This is in order to focus attention on those jobs where the availability of flexible working options is much reduced at the point of hire, and where there is greatest potential to address the issue of under-employment.

The UK average proportion of quality flexible jobs (paid £20k+ FTE) is 10%, and the map on the right shows regional variations. The region of Yorkshire & the Humber is slightly higher than the national average, at 12%.

The map below shows flexible job rates for key cities and towns in West Yorkshire⁷. Nearly two thirds (64%) of all quality jobs in the county are in Leeds and Bradford, which share a flexible jobs rate of 12%. So these two cities are setting the pace for the region's overall average (for quality jobs) of 12%.



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



TIMESWISE VIEW

- The proportion of flexible jobs is low in ALL regions of the UK. The problem is a national one.
- West Yorkshire 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. This is particularly relevant for the main city regions such as Leeds and Bradford which experience relatively low rates of GVA per head, which in turn is based on low employment rates and under-performance on productivity.

PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS IN TOWNS/CITIES OF WEST YORKSHIRE

6. 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.

7. Data is included only for towns with more than 100 flexible job vacancies.

PROPORTION OF QUALITY FLEXIBLE JOBS, BY ROLE



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

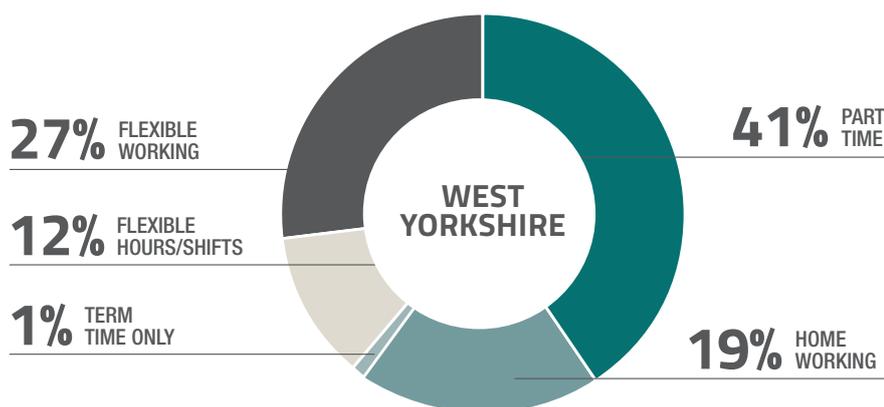
Otherwise, West Yorkshire broadly follows the UK pattern for flexibility by role, but with the ratio generally higher by a percentage point or two. There are three categories where the ratio in West Yorkshire is significantly higher: Education (21% in West Yorkshire vs 15% national average), Information Technology (15% vs 7%) and Finance/Accounting (10% vs 7%).

TIMESWISE VIEW

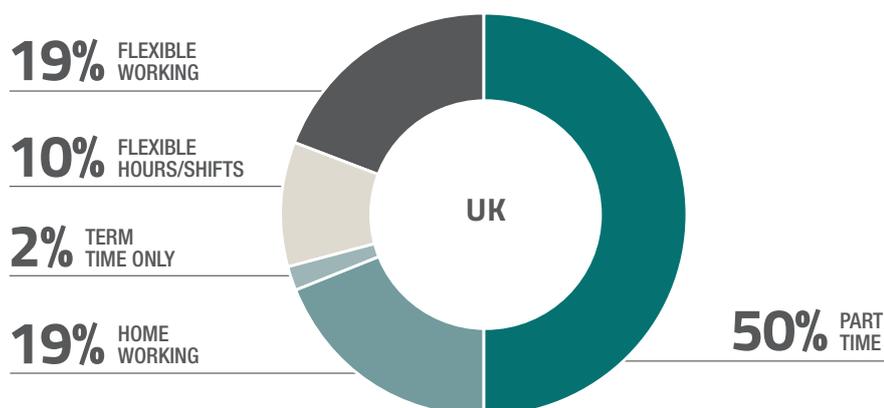
- The high rates of flexible hiring in health, social care and education naturally skew the average rate for all roles. There is a huge amount of work to be done to improve flexible hiring in 8 role categories where the ratio is below 10%. The need is pressing, as more than 40% of all job vacancies in West Yorkshire are in these low performing role categories.
- West Yorkshire's comparatively high ratio of flexible jobs in Information Technology is interesting, and we saw a similar rise in our recent index report for Greater Manchester. IT roles are the biggest job category by far, contributing 19% of all quality jobs in West Yorkshire (the proportion is 16% nationally). This fast-growing sector is widely believed to struggle with skills supply and it may be that the IT industry in the north of England 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 West Yorkshire and paid £20k+ FTE, 41% were part-time jobs, 27% stated openness to unspecified forms of flexible working, 19% offered home-working, and 12% offered flexible shift patterns.



The availability of part-time jobs in West Yorkshire is much lower than the UK average (41% vs 50%), while the availability of jobs with generic openness to flexible working is much higher (27% in West Yorkshire vs 19% nationally).

TIMESWISE VIEW

- The low availability of quality part-time jobs in West Yorkshire is a concern, as part-time is the preferred working arrangement of most flexible workers⁸. It would be interesting to explore whether there is particular resistance to part-time working amongst West Yorkshire employers, or a mistaken assumption that people don't want to work part-time.
- 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).

8. 54% of employees who work flexibly in any way, work part-time – CIPD Employee Outlook report on Commuting and Flexible Working, 2016

KEY FINDINGS

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Only 19% of low-paid jobs in West Yorkshire are advertised with flexible working options, and the ratio is squeezed further at salaries above £20,000. Across all salary levels, 13.4% of jobs are advertised with flexible working options at the point of hire.
- Jobseekers in West Yorkshire who need to work flexibly can therefore only realistically apply for around 1 in 7 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 almost 9 in 10 of all UK employees either working flexibly already, or saying they want to, the low availability of flexible jobs at the point of hire is substantially out of step with demand.
- The role types with the highest ratio of flexible jobs in West Yorkshire are health (24%), social care (21%) and education (21%). In Information Technology the ratio of 15% is also notable as it is significantly higher than the national average (7%). But many role categories have flexible jobs ratios of lower than 10%, and much work is needed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

This analysis suggests that a high number of employers in West Yorkshire 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 West Yorkshire, 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: The West Yorkshire Inclusive Growth programme aims to create job opportunities for thousands of local people, improve productivity, and improve the quality of life for everyone. There is an opportunity for West Yorkshire to deliver on these aims, and identify new routes to progressing low paid workers into better jobs, by increasing the proportion of quality jobs available with flexible working at the point of hire. 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 become increasingly important with a 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 other sectors.

Lead by example: As key anchor institutions, local authorities and other statutory bodies can adopt a more proactive approach to flexible job design and be explicit in their own job adverts about the type of flexible working they will consider at the point of hire. This will set an example to local businesses, and can also be used to encourage suppliers through the procurement chain to follow this approach. This will help support the aims in the West Yorkshire Combined Authority’s Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to maximise local employment impact.

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 employers 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. These groups are all identified as disadvantaged in the region; while some will have low skills, others will be trapped in low pay or locked out of work simply due to the structure of the standard 9-5 jobs market.

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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