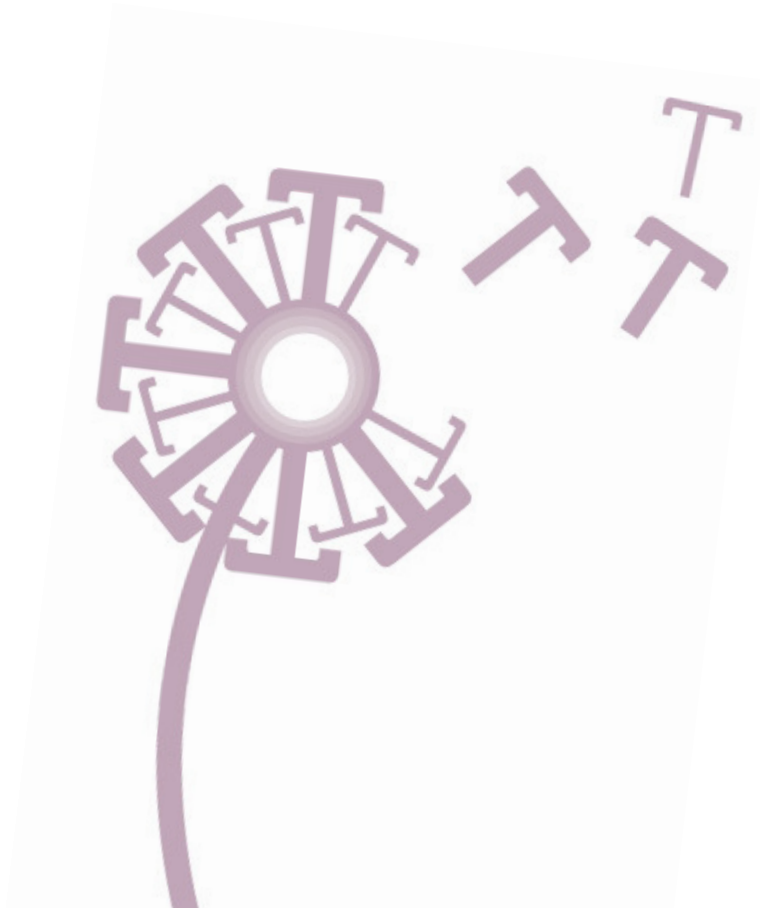




Unlocking the
benefits of
flexible working



What is flexible working?



The standard 9 to 5 five-day week is not flexible – it's quite the opposite. It operates on a 'one size fits all' presumption, not recognising that every business and department is different and every workforce individual.

Opening up to flexible working can benefit business in a number of ways. The key is to carefully align your particular business needs with the flexible working options available to you. Matching the right option to the right role can mean a new lease of life for the way you do business.

What are the different options?

'Flexible working' covers any non-standard working pattern involving a change in the time or place (or both) in which work is normally done.

There are 8 key types of flexible working...

What are the different options of flexible working?



Part time

An employee is contracted to work fewer than the standard number of contractual hours per year. Part time employees usually work less than 30 hours per week over an agreed number of days per week, but there can be huge variations in working patterns eg 5 short days or 2, 3 or 4 longer days.

Job sharing

Two part-time employees share the duties of one role. In a 'shared responsibility' arrangement, the individuals both carry out all the duties of the job, and work on different days (often with one overlapping day, to ensure continuity). Each person simply picks up the work where the other left off.

Job splitting

The responsibilities of one job are divided between two employees, so that each person has distinct duties. In a 'split responsibility' arrangement a full time role is effectively split to create two distinct part time positions, with no overlap.

Term time only

An employee works under a permanent contract but takes a mixture of paid and unpaid annual leave during school holidays (the contract usually specifies that no annual leave should be taken during term time). Salary is usually paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.

Staggered hours

Staggered hours, or 'flexi-time' spreads out the arrival and departure times of employees without necessarily altering the weekly number of hours worked. They enable an employee to work full time, but with the flexibility for different start / finish times.

Compressed hours

Employees work the standard full time contractual hours, but over fewer days. Usually a 5 day week is compressed into 4 or 4.5 longer working days . Or a 10 day fortnight can be compressed into 9 days.

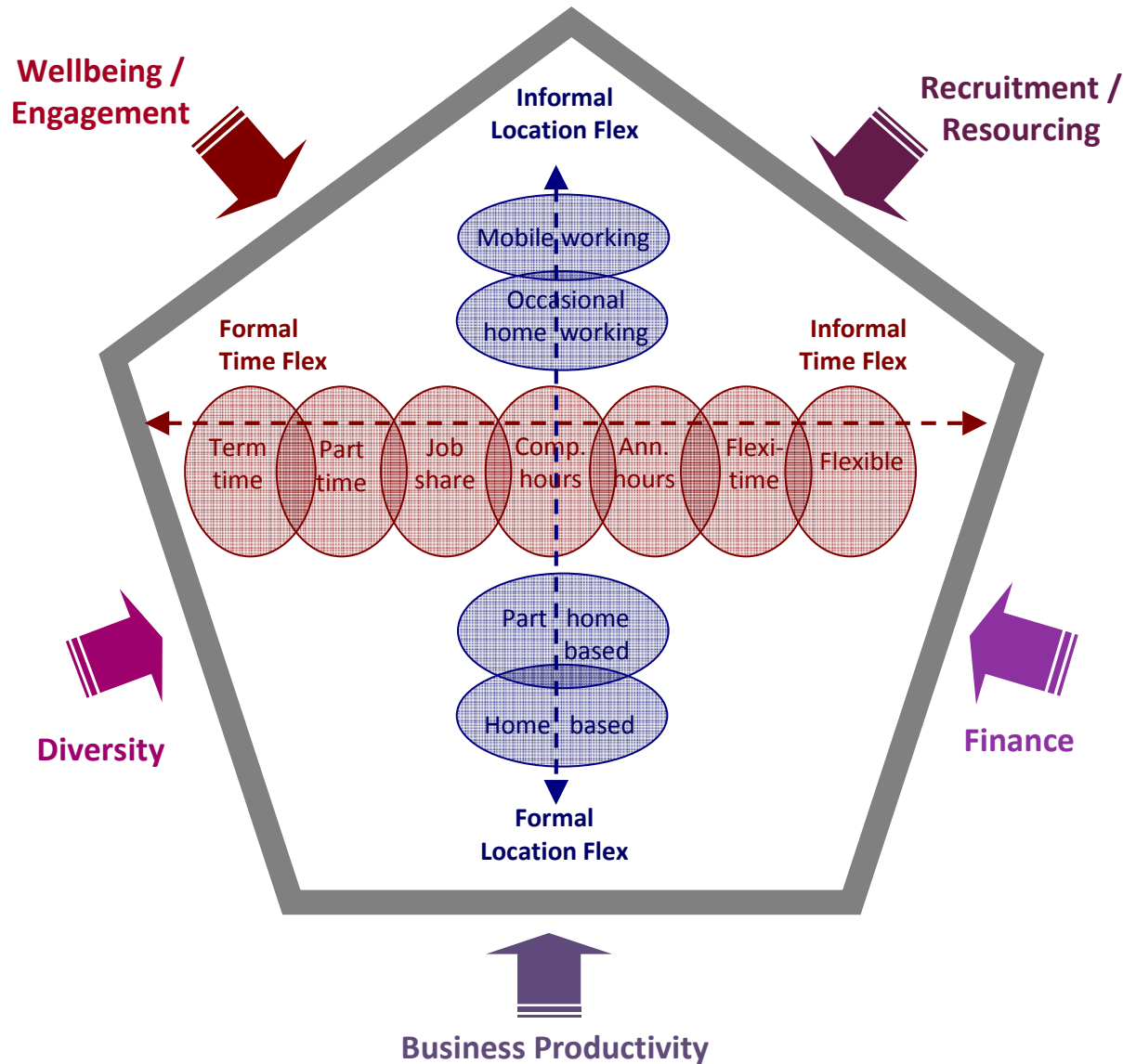
Remote working

An employee carries out a proportion (or all) of their duties from home rather than on the employer's premises. Remote working can be done informally, eg an occasional day at home by ad hoc agreement, or it can be a formal regular arrangement each week.

Freelance/interim contract

Freelancers and interim managers typically work on short to medium term projects and can be employed either full or part time. Freelancers are self-employed and can invoice the company either per day worked, or for a set project fee. Interim managers can be either self-employed or employed.

5 drivers for flexible working



There are typically 5 drivers for businesses to turn to flexible working.

Most organisations should be able to find arrangements that work for their business, as many different options of flexibility are possible - along the two axes of time and location, as well as the scope for informal or formal arrangements.

Benefits of flexible working



Flexible working is a pro-active business solution to help grow your business and your profitability. It encourages companies to take a questioning approach to each job, thinking through how best to employ staff to achieve business aims. Flexible working can help businesses to:



Attract talent

- Access a wider range of skills and experience, as significant numbers of candidates will not consider full time roles.
- Helps you to grow a skills base with a richer, more diverse mix of people.
- Future-proofs your employer brand: 92% of Generation Y consider flexibility as a top priority when selecting a workplace.
- Small businesses can bring in senior levels of expertise at an affordable cost.



Retain & progress talent

- Retain employees who want to work flexibly – previously mostly mothers, but the right to request is soon to be extended to all employees.
- Go beyond retention, helping talented staff to develop their careers whilst working flexibly, and thereby maintaining a pipeline of diverse talent through to senior levels.
- Research has shown that employees who work flexibly are more satisfied with work and less likely to leave.



Boost engagement

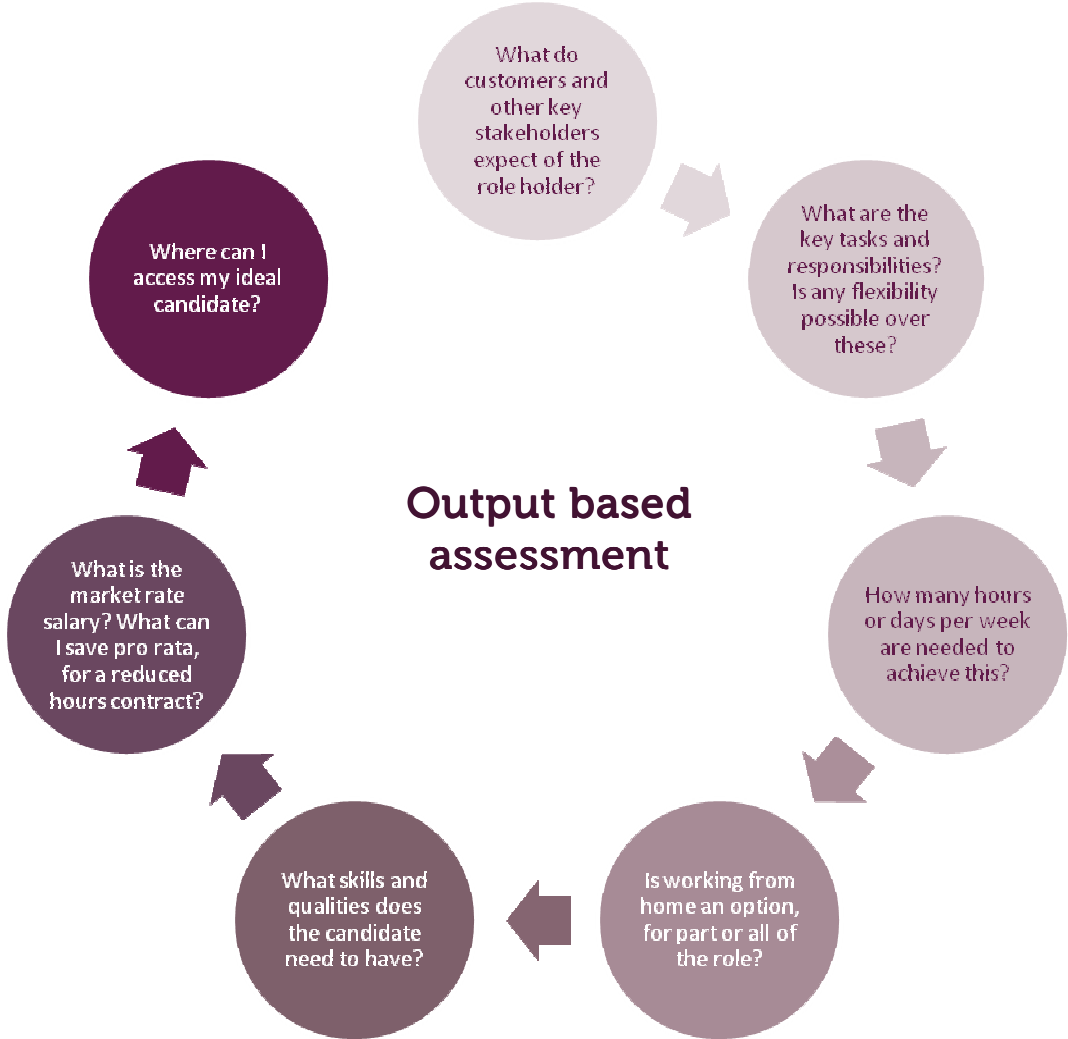
- Research suggests that a better work / life balance results in a less stressed and a happier and more productive workforce.
- Flexible workers can be more motivated, and fully focused on the job during their working hours.
- Flexible working is known to reduce absenteeism.



Improve cost efficiency

- Flexible working reduces employee slack. If a job can be done in 3 or 4 days, why pay for 5?
- It also allows you to schedule staff time to match the peaks and troughs in your business.
- Remote working facilitates hot-desking, saving on office space, and can reduce your organisation's carbon footprint.

Job design for flexible success



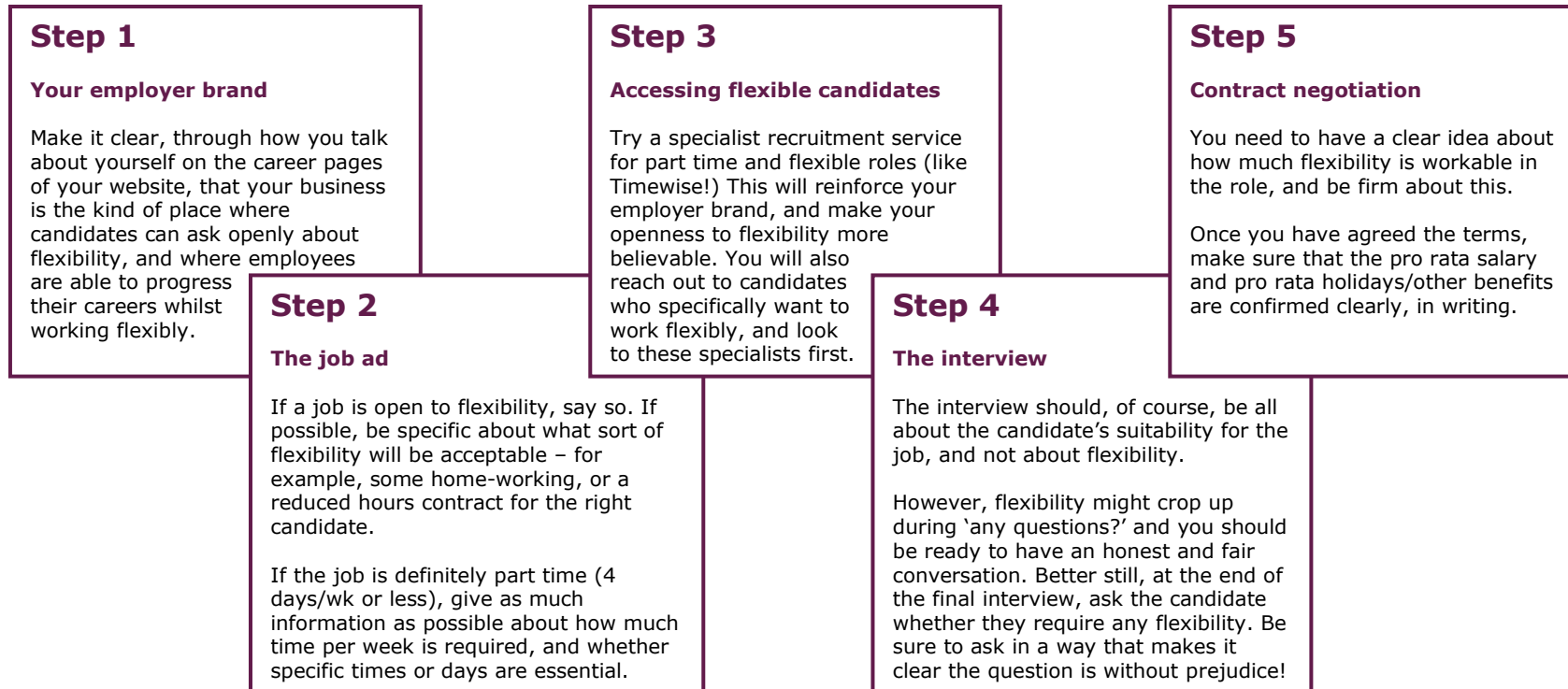
Deciding if a new job can be worked flexibly involves adjusting to an output based assessment, rather than thinking in terms of head count.

Think through what you expect in terms of outputs and KPIs. Does the role holder need to be present in the office every day? Can some of the tasks be covered by other employees, to achieve greater efficiency? What skills are vital, and which are optional?

Recruiting candidates into flexible jobs



When you open up to flexibility at the point of recruitment, you can access a large additional talent pool of candidates who will not consider a full time role. And you strengthen your employer brand, by recruiting on a strategy of “We can give you the flexibility you want and your career.”



Managing flexible teams



Good communication is the key. Talk promptly to your part time and flexible employees, as soon as any issues arise. Encourage your other employees to be open to the benefits that part time and flexible working can bring. Follow these top 10 tips....

1. Test new arrangements if possible - trial periods can provide an opportunity to monitor and review, making tweaks if necessary.
2. Address assumptions - talk to your team and find out how they feel about part time and flexible working. Let them know your rationale, and discuss the benefits flexible working will bring to the company.
3. Ensure that full time employees understand that flexible workers might work differently. For example, they might never work late, but be very focused on the job during working hours. They might also take work home with them. What matters is getting their job done, meeting their pro-rata KPIs.
4. Build a shared understanding of what you expect of staff who work flexibly. Set boundaries and encourage your team to respect them.
5. Support all your line managers to handle conversations about flexibility, including training if possible.
6. Make sure your part time and flexible employees are involved within the wider team. Work things so that they can attend team meetings; update them on anything important that happens when they're not in the office.
7. Get your team to talk openly and honestly to each other about workloads and working arrangements. There will be tricky areas, such as holidays during half-terms and school holidays, but try to get them to consider compromises and find their own solutions.
8. Think through what part time means for benefits packages, bonuses, salary, bank holidays etc. Discuss this upfront with employees and prospective candidates to avoid confusion and surprise.
9. Set necessary processes and systems in place - for example what happens if a part time employee is absent? This is especially important when a role is client-facing or managerial.
10. Consider how you can make things easier for employees who are parents. For example, you may want to look at providing childcare vouchers or directing them somewhere that will help them source suitable childcare.

The Timewise group



The Timewise Foundation promotes the social and business benefits of flexible working through research, public affairs and initiatives like the Power Part Time List.
0207 633 4559



Events, consultancy and training to help employers bring flexible working to life. We help Partners explore ways to aid career progression and maintain a diverse pipeline of talent.
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The only UK jobsite exclusively for roles that are part time or open to flexibility. We provide a platform for businesses to position themselves as inclusive employers, reaching a diverse talent pool of candidates.
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Our recruitment agency will find your business the right candidate from the best talent available – whether you need someone full time, part time or have flexibility to offer.
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