

Thursday 4 December, 2014 FRONT PAGE OF EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS

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Part-time salaries are catching up, but slowly

Work-life balance More women and (some) men are shunning full-time jobs, writes *Alison Maitland*

The pay of women working part-time in the UK has risen faster than that of men and all those in full-time work.

The news comes as increasing numbers of women are choosing to return to work, including to very senior roles, on a part-time basis. Within the civil service, the trend got a push last week when Jo Swinson, minister for employment relations, called for the UK government to do more to support part-time working.

Analysis by Timewise, a specialist in flexible recruitment, also shows that the number of men choosing to work part-time rose by 8 per cent in the past year to 975,000 and could hit 1m next year.

The findings are published with Timewise's third annual Power Part Time List, and appear exclusively in the FT and on FT.com today. The list showcases 50 top executives who work fewer than five days a week, some of them managing multimillion-pound budgets and teams of hundreds of people on a part-time basis.

Analysis of official data shows that the median pay of women working part time has increased by 38.2 per cent over the past decade, compared with 35.4 per cent for women in full-time roles, 32.5

per cent for men working part time and 28.5 per cent for men in full-time jobs.

"The only clear reason we can see is that growing numbers of women are returning to work after having children to the job they were doing before, on a part-time basis," says Timewise co-founder Karen Mattison. She suggests the wider availability of flexible working is countering the trend for women to trade down to lower-paid roles so as to manage work and family demands.

Despite this, the pay gap between full-time and part-time jobs remains wide, with most part-timers still in lower-skilled, lower-paid roles. Part-time workers currently earn 36 per cent less per hour than full-timers, using a full-time equivalent basis, Timewise says.

At the current rate, it would take 102 years for the gap to close, but progress could be faster if employers advertised more high-quality jobs on a part-time and flexible working basis, says Ms Mattison. "Currently, only 3 per cent of all advertised jobs are for part-time roles, earning over £20,000. It's an opaque recruitment market. So part-timers looking for a job elsewhere or for a promotion are trapped, because they don't want to lose the flexibility they have and can't see where else to apply."



Median pay of part-time women has increased by 38 per cent over the past decade

The traditional work model is, however, coming under increasing pressure, as employers look to their current and future talent pool. A global study of more than 16,000 "millennials" (born between 1984 and 1996) published last month by Insead, a French business school, found that nearly three-quarters choose work-life balance over a higher salary. More than 80 per cent say they value balance over their position.

This unites the generations. A global study by PwC of 40,000 staff last year found "widespread similarities between millennial employees and their non-millennial counterparts, all of whom aspire to a new workplace paradigm that places a higher priority on work-life balance and workplace flexibility".

Research shows a gap between workforce preferences and what many employers offer. More than a third of UK employers say absence levels have increased because employees are struggling to cope with caring responsibilities outside work, according to the CIPD, the UK professional human resources body. But only one in six organisations has policies to help people balance their personal and working lives, it found.

At the other end of the spectrum, more companies are starting to give

people more freedom over where, when and how they work by focusing on outcomes rather than work hours. In a few cases, including Virgin and Netflix, this extends to having no limit to how much annual leave some staff can take.

Lynn Rattigan, deputy chief operating officer for EY in the UK and Ireland, who works four days a week and is a Power Part Time List judge, says traditional work patterns in many cases are not compatible with doing business in a global economy or the needs of a modern workforce.

Most of the trailblazers in this year's list are senior women who have changed work schedules to accommodate family life. Many have continued part time as their children have grown up because they find it productive or want to be role models for others.

A quarter of part-time workers are men, yet many still find it hard to be open about work preferences or needs. "Men express fear of what clients might say, but that's something of a red herring," says Ms Mattison. "Clients are grappling with these issues themselves."

See *At Work With The FT*, Page 5. The full *Power Part Time List 2014* and case studies can be read online at ft.com/recruitment

Family values: senior women are choosing part-time work to accommodate home life

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