

# Time to bend

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**If you Google 'flexible working' you'll get pages of legislative and administrative advice from the government, unions and lawyers. Evidence perhaps, that flexible working is seen as a problem to overcome, rather than as the key to unlocking the conundrum faced by UK employers – a sustainable skilled and productive workforce.**

Flexible working is defined as a way of working that suits employees' needs, for example: part-time, flexi-time, compressed hours, job share, term-time working, career breaks and working from home.

Since 30 June 2014, under UK Law any employee who has worked a minimum of 26 weeks is entitled to make one

Of those working full-time 25% would prefer to work part-time. 93% of those currently not working are seeking a part-time or flexible full-time role.

The figures are not surprising, given that the benefits of working flexibly reported by employees already doing so include: more control over work-life balance; more leisure time and the ability to carry out their caring duties.

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*... a work-place culture where people are judged by their work not the hours*

Employers offering flexible working believe that it can: increased productivity, lower absenteeism and turnover, improve recruitment and

request to their employer per annum to work flexibly.

reduced carbon foot-print/release cash through less travel.

**There's a compelling case for flexible working.**

Most UK workers want to work flexibly. According to a research study '[Flexible Working: A Talent Imperative](#)' published in September 2017 by [Timewise](#), in collaboration with EY, 87% of full-time employees want to work flexibly; 63% already do.

Whilst the statistics demonstrate that progress has been made towards flexible working, research suggests that for it to deliver the expected benefits, employers need to improve the way it's being done.

Building on their earlier research study, in May 2018 Timewise, in collaboration with Deloitte, published: '[A Manifesto for Change:](#)

## [A Modern Workplace for a Flexible Workforce](#)

It highlights that 30% of those working flexibly feel they are regarded with less status and importance and that 25% believe they have less access to opportunities and are over-looked for promotion.

Of the respondents, 70% feel this could be achieved by their employer taking an active rather than passive approach to flexible working policy.

For example, by creating a work-place culture where people are judged by their work not the hours they work and where managers truly support and enable work-life balance for their teams.

Time is running out. The demand for skilled workers is already outstripping supply.

Organisational success relies on having a sustainable skilled and productive workforce – core benefits of flexible working.

Let's make 2019 the year in which we put flexible working at the top of our agenda, making it the rule, rather than the exception. To see it and implement it as a solution, rather than a problem.

It will require creativity, courage and compromise.

**It's time to bend.**

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### *Note:*

*Health and Care colleagues can read more about the work Timewise has been doing with the NHS in their July 2018 report, '[Flexible Working in the NHS: The Case for Action](#)', commissioned by the London Women's Leadership Network and the London Leadership Academy.*

You can [contact the author here](#),

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