ENDING THE TWO-TIER WORKFORCE

TOWARDS GREATER CONTROL AND MORE PREDICTABLE WORK FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a growing 'two-tier' workforce, with workers in frontline roles such as medical staff, transport workers, nurses, cleaners, retail assistants and construction workers, at a clear disadvantage compared to better paid office-based and managerial workers.

• Making up just under a third of the UK workforce, 10.5 million employees, frontline workers too often miss out on the control, dignity, and benefits for health and work-life balance offered by predictable and flexible work.

• The government's 'Make Work Pay' agenda and Employment Rights Bill aim to tilt the balance of power in the workplace more towards employees. Our research and consultation with key frontline sector business leaders and workers highlights the risks in expecting that the new legislation alone will achieve the changes in the workplace needed to allow millions of workers to benefit.

• Timewise has established a coalition of employers, sector bodies and union representatives across the retail, health and social care, construction and transport and logistics sectors. These industry leaders are calling for government to go beyond the legislative proposals in the Employment Rights Bill and work in partnership with industry to create the right conditions for employers to make life-changing improvements to work-life balance for millions of workers.

• These improvements are urgently needed to give workers in the 'everyday economy' greater control and predictability at work and to achieve the government's wider goals on workforce participation, reducing economic inactivity and achieving inclusive economic growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WE CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO:

• **Ensure effective implementation of the Employment Rights Bill by establishing new industrial forums which bring together employers, sector bodies and unions, to resolve sector-specific challenges.**

• Model the forums on Scottish Industry Leadership groups (with appropriate lessons learned), based on a social partnership model and aimed at increasing engagement with labour market and skills policies in England.

  • The transport & logistics sector should be considered as a priority for this approach, based on low levels of existing coordination in the sector, clear sector-specific barriers and employer demand for collaboration identified by Timewise.

  • This should be followed by the construction sector which is similarly lacking sector-wide initiatives to improve job quality (see figure 3, on page 28). These forums could be established informally during the consultation period for the Employment Rights Bill and formalised afterwards, taking into account lessons learnt.

  • In the absence of Department for Business and Trade funding, investment could come from ringfencing just 1.5 per cent of the new skills and growth levy to create a £50m fund to strengthen sector bodies, or UK Research and Innovation (Innovate UK) could consider an investment fund for sector and trade bodies to support national tripartism and new ways of working.

  • Responsibility for negotiating pay and non-wage terms and conditions sits with a social partnership body for health, social care, and teaching support staff. To ensure greater parity across the care workforce, this approach should be extended to all education and early years professionals, starting with a 'fair pay agreement' negotiated with social partners in the early years and childcare sector.

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SPECIFICALLY, THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE (DBT) SHOULD:

- Support the development of industry-wide sector-specific guidance and best practice models across all low-paying industries and occupation groups (based on the Low Pay Commission definition) to accompany the legislation and code of practice. The department should develop this guidance in partnership with leading employers and sector bodies in each sector and experts in predictable and flexible work.

- Draw on Timewise's sector plans, accompanying this report, for each of the four industries we worked with: retail, construction, health & social care, transport & logistics, which can inform the development of guidance for these sectors.

- Give oversight for these reforms to a new **Modern Working Lives Taskforce**, replacing the existing Flexible Working Taskforce. The Taskforce, which should be chaired by a minister, should have responsibility for ensuring legislation is fit for the workplace.

- Charge this new taskforce with ensuring that reforms for more flexible and predictable work can be successfully implemented in low-paying sectors, narrowing the widening gap in the two-tier workforce.

- The **Modern Working Lives Taskforce** should examine options to strengthen 'flexibility by default' through the code of practice accompanying the legislation, including, for example by:

  - Explore a legal duty on employers to consider which flexible working arrangements are available in a role and to publish these in job advertisements, with the new postholder having a day one right to take up the flexible working arrangements that have been advertised.

  - Strengthen consultation requirements, based on the process for Statutory Sick Pay processes.

  - Require internal reporting by employers on the types of flexible working and contracts they have to help inform employees and demonstrate what is possible.

- Measure the success of workers' rights legislation, by re-commissioning the Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS):

  - Make narrowing the gap between site- and shift-based workers and others when it comes to flexible and predictable work an explicit objective of the government's Make Work Pay agenda and a key focus for a new WERS.

  - WERS provided valuable information on employee influence at work, access to flexible working, job satisfaction and individual and collective representation at work.

The new independent review into the role of UK to promote healthy and inclusive workplaces, led by the former Chair of John Lewis, Sir Charlie Mayfield, should include the role of better work design in supporting employers in preventing ill health.

IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP) SHOULD:

- End the 35-hour job search requirement for unemployed claimants. Alongside tailored action plans, this will help replace the current 'work first' model with a focus on securing the right job, allowing job coaches to more easily take into account personal health, caring and parental responsibilities when identifying work and training opportunities, thereby helping people to find jobs they are more likely to keep and thrive in.

- Commit to introducing training for job coaches to work with employers to broker more flexible and secure jobs, as part of its Back to Work agenda.

- Train job coaches in supporting Universal Credit claimants to secure a job that allows more flexibility to manage a health condition, disability or caring responsibilities and provide training for over-50s.

- Introduce in-work progression champions to help workers identify opportunities for part-time or flexible work.

After the two-year consultation period, the responsibilities of the Modern Working Lives Taskforce should transition to become part of an industrial strategy for good work in the everyday economy. The DBT Green Paper on the UK's Modern Industrial strategy identifies the 'foundational sectors' as providing critical infrastructure for our 'growth-driving' sectors. Given their importance for the quality of life of millions of workers and their role in boosting productivity, job quality in the everyday economy should also be the focus of industrial strategy & innovation in the UK.

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CONTEXT

Frontline workers who keep the country moving, look after our health, clean our offices and schools, build our homes and work in our favourite shops make up just under a third of UK employees, at 10.5 million. Often in site-based and shift-based roles, they have little control or choice over their working hours, when they start or finish, or their shift patterns.

- Over five years from 2019 – 2024, over 1.3 million more people in higher paid desk-based jobs gained access to flexible hours working – the ability to vary start and finish times (14 per cent). Shift-based workers have found their jobs frozen in time however, with no change in how many of them can have a say in their working hours (6 per cent).

- 19 per cent of people in higher level managerial and professional positions have access to flexible working hours, just 4 per cent of people in routine occupations do.

- While many desk-based workers are being asked to return to the office a couple of days week, two in five workers are unable to work from home or make use of hybrid working, and work onsite at the care home, shop, hospital or building site which is their place of work.

Our research and consultations have shown that it is vital to recognise that different sectors are at different stages in relation to flexible and predictable work, face unique operational contexts, and have different industrial and workforce compositions. The report shows:

- That it is possible to offer far greater choice and control over working patterns for those in site-based and shift-based roles, and that this does not involve trade-offs in long-term profitability or performance for employers.

- However, the challenges in achieving this are considerable, ranging from: operational complexity due to fixed rosters, schedules and rigid workplace agreements; upfront costs (even if savings are likely to be realised over the longer-term); businesses which rely on a casualised workforce and need support to transition to a different model; and under-funding and commissioning models in the public sector which lead to a lack of capacity or 'slack' in the workforce needed to meet staff preferences.

- A range of scalable solutions and approaches, some of which have already been tested by employers in partnership with organisations such as Timewise.

- These include team-based and employee-led approaches to organising and scheduling work, 'cross-skilling' of staff as a response to the barriers associated with operational complexity; and innovative technologies and models, such as e-rostering and employee-led participatory platforms.

- However, these tend to be isolated initiatives led by individual employers. There is a need for greater adoption, acceleration, and scaling of best practice within sectors and more coordination between industry, unions and government to address sector-specific barriers and realise the welcome ambitions of the Employment Rights Bill.
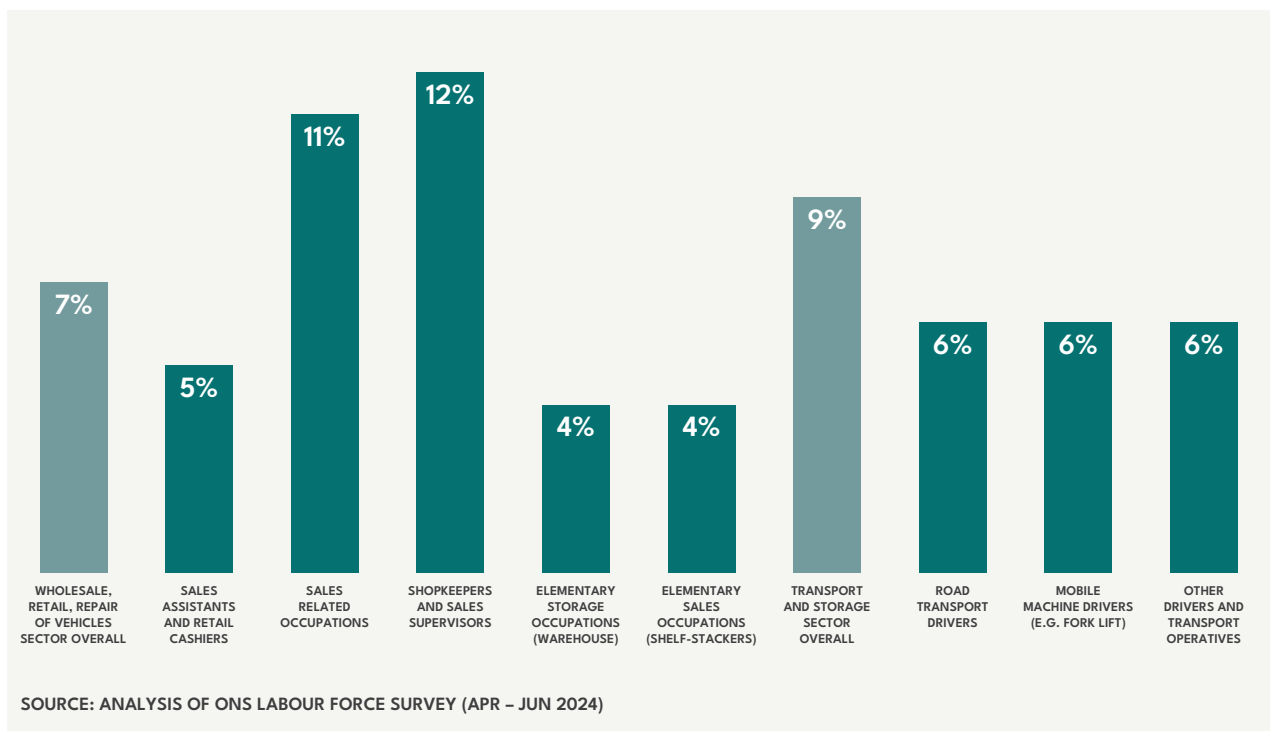

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INTRODUCTION

The new world of work is often viewed as a clash between employees trying to hold on to the flexibility offered by remote working and company bosses keen to drive them back into the office to boost teamwork and collaboration. However, this obscures a different divide - between office-based employees able to take advantage of remote and flexible working, and shift-based and site-based workers who have little control over their hours or place of work.

There are 10.5 million frontline workers in roles as diverse as medical staff, transport workers, nurses, cleaners, retail assistants and construction workers, making up just under a third of UK employees.[1] In total, four million workers in the UK work shifts – that's just over one in eight of the working population.[2] Very few shift workers have access to flexible working hours - the ability to vary start and finish times. In 2019, only 6.7 per cent of shift workers reported using this form of flexible working, compared to 12 per cent of those who never did shiftwork. By 2024, access to flexible working hours among shift workers remained the same (6 per cent) but had risen to 14 per cent for non-shift workers.[3] This equates to over 1.3m more people who have gained access to flexible hours working over the past five years, with no change for shift workers. And while 'return to office' mandates dominate the news agenda, latest data shows that 40 per cent of workers need to be in their place of work, so are unable to work from home or make use of hybrid working.[4]

FIGURE 1A: PREVALENCE OF FLEXIBLE HOURS WORKING BY SECTOR AND OCCUPATION

7%	5%	11%	12%	4%	4%	9%	6%	6%	6%
WHOLESALE, RETAIL, REPAIR OF VEHICLES SECTOR OVERALL	SALES ASSISTANTS AND RETAIL CASHIERS	SALES RELATED OCCUPATIONS	SHOPKEEPERS AND SALES SUPERVISORS	ELEMENTARY STORAGE OCCUPATIONS (WAREHOUSE)	ELEMENTARY SALES OCCUPATIONS (SHELF-STACKERS)	TRANSPORT AND STORAGE SECTOR OVERALL	ROAD TRANSPORT DRIVERS	MOBILE MACHINE DRIVERS (E.G. FORK LIFT)	OTHER DRIVERS AND TRANSPORT OPERATIVES

SOURCE: ANALYSIS OF ONS LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (APR – JUN 2024)

Occupations with the highest levels of shiftwork have some of the lowest levels of flexible hours working (see Figure 1A). Many shift workers are on insecure contracts such as zero-hour contracts. Research by the TUC has shown that 84 per cent of workers on zero-hour contracts have been offered shifts at less than 24 hours notice and more than two-thirds of zero hours contracts workers (69 per cent) have had work cancelled with less than 24 hours notice, making everyday life and responsibilities difficult to plan and organise.[5]

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FIGURE 1B: SHIFT WORK AND FLEXIBLE HOURS WORKING BY OCCUPATION

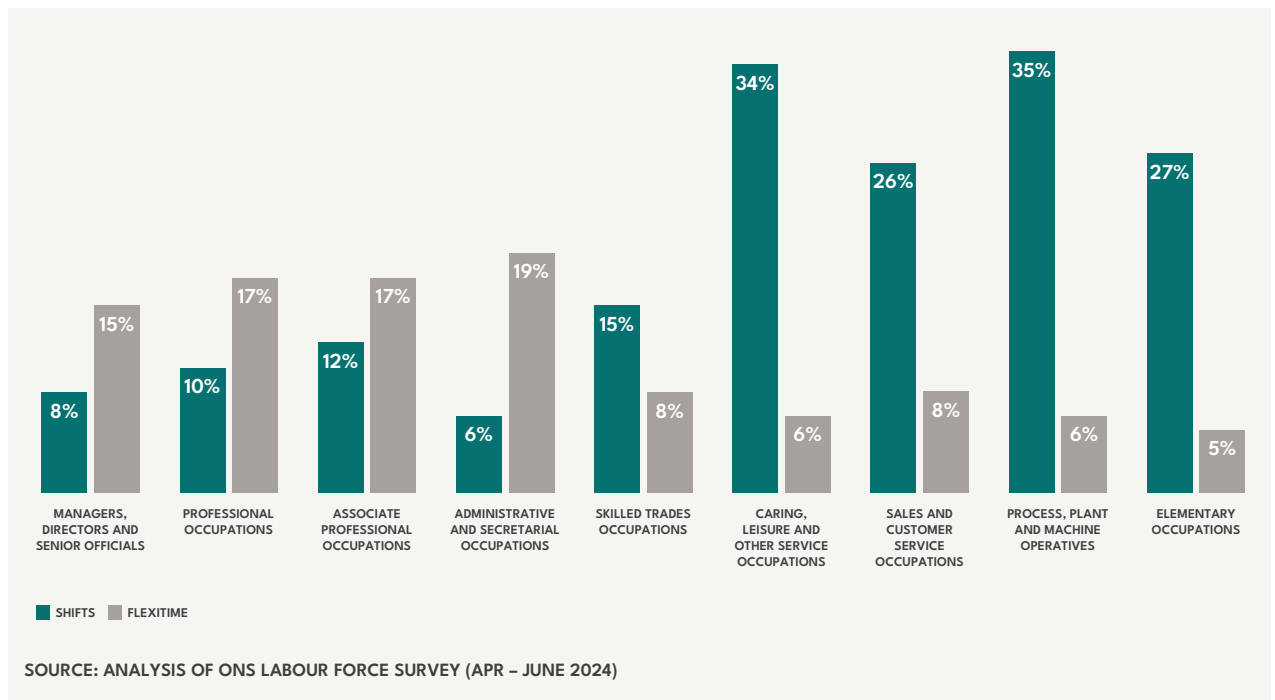SOURCE: ANALYSIS OF ONS LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (APR – JUNE 2024)

Figure 1B shows shift work and flexible hours working by occupation. Our analysis finds that 19 per cent of people in higher level managerial and professional positions use flexi-time, compared to 4 per cent of people in routine occupations. Access to part-time and flexible work in the UK is limited and highly uneven.[6] The global pandemic led to a well-publicised increase in regular home-working – now the most common form of flexibility reported by employees.[7] But other forms of flexibility such as part-time work, job sharing and annualised hours either stagnated or declined over the same period.[8] Recent data published by the Office for National Statistics showed that home working largely benefits higher earners in white collar, office-based jobs and higher paying occupations[9], compared with site-based workers who cannot work remotely.

Why does this inequality matter? Because evidence suggests that job security and having a degree of control over working hours (in terms of start and finish times), have a strong correlation with health at work and job satisfaction.[10] Job satisfaction has fallen significantly among low-paid workers over the past few decades.[11] Research for the Healthier Working Lives Commission shows a strong link between factors like insecure or precarious work and job strain and poorer health and wellbeing, often in sectors like transport, logistics and retail.[12]

A lack of flexible and secure work is a key factor in acute public sector recruitment and retention crises. For example, there are an estimated 40,096 nursing vacancies in the UK; with a lack of flexible working options identified as one of the key reasons.[13] It is estimated that 40,000 additional early years workers are needed just to deliver the government's new free childcare entitlement[14], and teaching vacancies have more than doubled over the past three years.[15] Similarly, construction and transport and logistics, which are critical sectors for the government's growth agenda, experience serious labour shortages, with 85 per cent of construction firms reporting recruiting problems and 76 per cent of transport firms looking for new staff.[16] Surveys of frontline workers and evidence from local skills improvement plans suggest that self-respect, dignity and work-life balance that come with autonomy and flexibility at work matter as much as (if not more than) levels of pay.[17]

Finally, it matters because certain groups are more likely to require flexible jobs to access and remain in work, including carers (predominantly women and single parents), older workers and people with health conditions or disabilities.[18] Without good quality flexible options, more workers will be pushed into precarious work which offers the flexibility they need or they will stop looking for work altogether. Official data shows that among those aged 50-65 years who had left or lost their job since the pandemic, flexible working was a big consideration in deciding whether to return to work. Of those who said they would consider returning to work (58 per cent), the most important factor when choosing a new job was flexible working arrangements (32 per cent), followed by good pay (23 per cent), and being able to work from home (12 per cent).[19]

Tackling this must therefore be a key priority for the new government, which aims to increase economic participation (by reaching an 80 per cent employment rate) and to reduce rising economic inactivity.

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THE 'MAKE WORK PAY' AGENDA

The government's 'Make Work Pay' agenda aims to make work more flexible and secure for millions of workers over the next parliament. The new Employment Rights Bill represents the biggest reform of workplace rights in a generation, introducing flexible work 'by default'. This builds on the changes made by the previous government in April 2024, which made it possible for employees to make a request on day one of their employment. The Labour government has tightened up the previous policy, putting more onus on the employer to accept any 'reasonable' request.[20]

The new legislation seeks to meet the rising demand for flexible working – with over four out of five workers seeking to work flexibly now or in the future.[21] Surveys suggest that more than 8 in 10 male full-time employees either work flexibly already or say they want to, rising to over 9 in 10 women and young people.[22] This reflects cultural shifts, such as the increasing involvement of fathers in childcare[23] and the changing expectations of younger workers.[24] Another key driver is public health, with a growing understanding of the links between health and job quality[25], and the role of good work in reducing inequality.

The Bill also proposes to tackle 'one-sided flexibility' in zero-hours contracts through a right to guaranteed hours, with a contract that reflects the number of hours regularly worked and a right to reasonable notice of shifts, and payment for shifts cancelled or curtailed at short notice. This builds on the previous government's Predictable Terms and Conditions Act of 2023 (which this government does not plan to bring into force) and is an important recognition of the importance of stability and predictability for workers' economic security.

The 'Make Work Pay' agenda forms part of the government's plan for 'long-term national renewal and growth', alongside a commitment to greater economic stability, investment in infrastructure and skills and a new industrial strategy. But important questions remain unanswered. How will employers respond to the workers rights' legislation? What does good look like in relation to flexible, secure and predictable work and how will it be measured? Will this all be enough to deliver a step-change in access to good flexible jobs for those in insecure, site-based and shift-based work?

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report sets out the findings from Timewise research which seeks to understand the potential to improve access to quality flexible work in four sectors: health and care; retail; construction; and transport and logistics. We chose to focus on these sectors for several reasons: they each have high levels of shift-based and site-based work; and they have between 13 and 49 per cent of workers who are low paid, and between 11 and 29 per cent of workers on an insecure contract or volatile hours. Together these industries make up more than a third (37.5 per cent) of employee jobs and are therefore a key test of whether (and how) new legislation will improve work-life balance for site-based and shift-based workers.

Four 'sector guides' for each of these sectors are published alongside this report, offering sector-specific recommendations for employers and sector bodies on improving access to flexible and predictable work for frontline employees.

OUR APPROACH

This report brings together key research findings from the Industry Voices for Better Frontline Work programme, supported by the abrdn Financial Fairness Trust. The programme is working to increase the supply of good flexible jobs for low and middle-income workers by:

• Providing specific examples of 'what works' to improve working practices and patterns for low-paid workers in frontline roles experiencing or at risk of insecure and unstable work.

• Creating new evidence and resources, leveraging the opportunity created by planned legislative change.

• Building a coalition of industry champions for flexible and secure work in four key sectors with a large frontline workforce: health and care, retail, transport and logistics, and construction.

• Making the case for investment in workforce and job design change.

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The report is based on a 12-month engagement with employers, workers, experts and sector representatives. It involved two phases:

PHASE ONE: IN-DEPTH INDUSTRY RESEARCH

A literature review and in-depth interviews were conducted with a range of employers and industry representatives across the four sectors of focus. The interviews were primarily with HR and senior operational leads and sought to understand:

- Their response to legislation from the previous and current Government relating to workers' rights, including Day-One rights to flexible and predictable work.

- The demand for flexible and secure working patterns in their workforce, focusing on low-to-middle earning, shift-based roles, including nurses, home care workers, site-based construction workers, customer-facing retail staff, and bus, lorry and train drivers.

- Their approach to implementing flexible and secure work for their frontline staff, including the operational challenges they face and the opportunities for greater impact across their organisation and sector.

PHASE TWO: INDUSTRY AND WORKER ENGAGEMENT

These findings were then tested and refined with sector stakeholders in order to identify policy and practice solutions for increasing the adoption of flexible and secure work in their industries. Stakeholders helped to develop good practice visions, diagnose key barriers, and identify the opportunities for change and impact for employers, sector bodies and government. The activities included:

- Eight roundtable discussions with employers, trade unions and sector bodies. These were chaired by leaders within each sector including: Danny Mortimer, Chief Executive of NHS Employers; Helen Dickinson OBE, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium; Kim Sides, Executive Director of BAM Construction; and Kevin Green, Chief People Officer at First Bus and Timewise Chair.

- Two focus groups with lower-income workers in site-based roles in healthcare, retail, construction, and transport. We spoke with 13 workers in total.

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1. A COMMON VISION FOR SECURE AND FLEXIBLE WORK IN FRONTLINE SECTORS

Our engagement with employers, sector bodies and workers revealed that, with the right sectoral strategies, incentives and support, not only is it possible to implement flexible and secure work in frontline sectors of the economy, but there is a clear case for doing so.

Employers and industry can use flexible working cultures as a way of meeting both:

- Short-term business needs such as recruitment, retention and lowering absenteeism.

- Long-term workforce challenges, including attracting and maintaining a more diverse and resilient workforce able to respond to skills and labour shortages.

> There is a burning platform for change in our industry - we have labour and skills shortage challenges, demographic challenges, and a big challenge in recruiting a diverse workforce. Innovative flexible and secure working models can be part of the answer.
>
> **TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR LEADER**

> I talk to members on a regular basis whose families look different to how they looked 20 or 30 years ago. They need increased flexibility, whether it's to manage childcare or spend more time with their families... flexibility can improve diversity in the industry.
>
> **TRADE UNION SECTOR LEADER IN CONSTRUCTION**

If it is done well and at scale across sectors, greater frontline predictability and flexibility can also make important contributions to wider national policy priorities including:

- Labour market equality and workforce participation, by lowering barriers to entry and in-work progression for groups such as those with caring responsibilities, older workers and those of any age with disabilities and health conditions.

- Reducing economic inactivity, by allowing people with existing health conditions and disabilities to stay in work or to return to work, as well as helping to prevent ill-health through creating the conditions for a healthier work environment.

- Inclusive economic growth and productivity, by boosting employee wellbeing, raising workforce participation amongst groups that historically face structural barriers to employment, and helping to address the sector-based skills and labour challenges that inhibit growth.[27]

> Flex both ways is a lot better for your wellbeing.
>
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

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> **Flexible and fair work can provide equitable access to employment for people [that face barriers in the labour market].**
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

> **We know that long-term stress and sickness absence is an issue. Flexible work can provide opportunities to support and improve well-being across the sector.**
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

SNAPSHOT: The Timewise Construction Pioneers Programme worked with four organisations in 2021 to pilot flexible working for site-based roles. It found that a move to a more output-based approach to pay, changes to how shifts were arranged and an increase in homeworking (for non-manual roles) led to improvements in well-being and increased productivity. While there were upfront implementation costs, a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis found that savings from reduced sickness absence or reduced staff turnover outweighed the costs within three years.[28] It also found that increased flexibility did not necessarily come with a trade-off: there was no detrimental impact on time, quality, productivity or performance.

Our industry leader panels highlighted the need for sector-specific support and action to increase adoption of flexible and secure work in frontline roles: and Timewise has developed a sector plan, accompanying this report, for each of the four industries we worked with. While the context and capacity of each sector varies, the insights from industry leaders across the four diverse sectors nevertheless pointed to a common vision for what success could look like.

There was broad support for an expansive industry definition of flexible and predictable work: Not only as an individualised 'right to request' enacted through compliance with national legislation or internal HR policies, but more ambitiously as a sector-led agenda to improve workforce practice and empower workers through better job design, innovative work organisation, and culture change.

Insights from the industry panels suggested three building blocks for making progress on this good practice vision: (1) resetting the narrative around flexible and predictable work (2) 'making it real' by testing and trialling new practice (3) shifting cultures and systems towards flexible and predictable work as the default.

I. RESETTING THE NARRATIVE AROUND FLEXIBLE AND PREDICTABLE WORK

A key starting point is to shift industry perceptions and understandings of what flexible and predictable work actually is. It is typically seen as a statutory 'right' to a working arrangement requested by individual employees and granted by managers, but disconnected from broader processes of work design and work organisation. This means it can be perceived as adversarial: our consultation with workers suggests employees in frontline roles in particular rarely request it for fear of it putting them in an awkward position with their managers or harming their career, while managers are not always aware of the business benefits it can bring.

To reset this narrative, industry leaders emphasised two key things.

PUTTING EQUITY AND WORKER VOICE AT THE HEART OF THE AGENDA

Equity and worker voice in flexibility means ensuring all employees have a say over their working hours and patterns – regardless of role or level of seniority. In other words, it should be an agenda that is for the entire workforce and should involve creating working cultures where all employees have greater ownership of and input into their working patterns.

Seen in this way, rather than being an isolated agenda, industry leaders stressed that flexible work can be integrated into a wider workforce offer to make work and careers attractive in their sector: creating more roles offering flexibility, stability and predictability, and overcoming associations of their industry with insecure and inflexible work.

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> It sounds wonderful – for people to be able to work when they can and fit work around their lives and responsibilities.
>
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

> The framing and telling of the story is important - it is not just about 'flexible' working, it is fundamentally about fair work so that workers have more security, control and predictability. If you make it about fair work a lot more of the workforce will feel it applies to them.
>
> **HEALTH SECTOR LEADER**

> Fair and flexible work can help to showcase retail as the people-centric industry that it is.
>
> **RETAIL SECTOR LEADER**

> Flexible work should not be seen as just a women's issue. It should be seen as something that enables everybody's work life and family life to be better, to be more productive.
>
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

> We need to make the industry more attractive to attract people from more diverse backgrounds.
>
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

GATHERING CLEARER EVIDENCE AND DATA FOR BUSINESS COSTS AND BENEFITS

Flexible and secure work can create tangible benefits not only for workers but also employers themselves, including lowering costs and boosting productivity. While there are costs associated with introducing flexible work, Timewise research suggests that, after as little as a few years, the savings can outweigh the initial cost of investment through improved retention and reduced sickness absence.[29]

In consultations, our participants suggested that the implementation of flexible work should be data-led and embedded within a clear business case which resonates with business and organisational leaders, based on actionable data, evidence (including cost-benefit and ROI calculations) and case studies.

> We are in an industry with really tight margins. Getting businesses to invest in new working models and leadership support is really difficult. So you have to show them real data - show a clear business case in terms of KPIs such as absence rates, turnover rates, productivity and efficiency.
>
> **RETAIL SECTOR LEADER**

> It's important to have good data and information around impact and how this all works - and to be creative with the data [in terms of how it is presented and used to inform decision-making].
>
> **HEALTH SECTOR LEADER**

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HEALTH AND CARE WORKFORCE

Health and care are the UK's biggest employers with 1.5 million workers in the NHS and another 1.5 million in adult social care. Whilst the majority of health workers are in the NHS and benefit from standard pay and conditions, the care sector is far more diffused, with 32% of adult social care workers on zero hours contracts.[30]

Health and care employers have significant issues attracting and retaining staff in roles which are critical, challenging but often poorly paid. The need for predictable and flexible working in a predominantly female sector is understood but not always seen as possible to provide, with so many operational constraints and a desire to put patients first.

RETAIL WORKFORCE

Employment in the retail sector represents approximately 8.6 per cent of the UK total, with around 3 million employees, reasonably evenly distributed across the countries and regions. The 314,000 retail businesses make up 5.7 per cent of all UK businesses, and in 2023, retail sales in Great Britain were worth £510 billion, an increase of 3 per cent on the previous year.[31]

The current pace of change in the retail sector is unprecedented: the number and type of roles needed are changing, with a growing proportion of sales taking place online and fewer physical stores. This is also a sector where employers face significant pressure on margins and have real challenges attracting and retaining staff.

Women make up 53 per cent of the retail workforce. Part-time work is common, particularly in store and distribution teams, but this decreases with seniority and managerial responsibility, which can hinder progression. Women remain under-represented at the most senior levels in retail (board and executive team). That said, the split between men and women in middle and senior management roles is far less pronounced today than previously, with the introduction of flexible working cited as an effective way to drive up gender diversity in these roles.[32]

II. TESTING AND TRIALLING NEW PRACTICES AND SHARING LEARNING

Mainstreaming flexibility within organisations requires new ways of planning, scheduling and organising work, which means challenging existing practice. Industry leaders identified a range of practical considerations to help the agenda land effectively within organisations and across sectors.

Setting up partnership between employers, sector bodies and unions, with unions taking an active role in the agenda by increasing awareness of new employment rights among workers and having constructive dialogue with employers and their own members on how more flexible ways of scheduling and arranging work can support wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, and security and flexibility. Rigid workplace agreements that split workers into different rosters (some with predictable shifts, others with far less predictability and choice) were highlighted as a challenge to flexible working in parts of the transport sector because they constrain the extent to which work can be scheduled differently to better meet the preferences of all employees.

> **There is a big opportunity to work with trade unions on this agenda. We need to bring them around to flexible working and scheduling. We have to show that working collaboratively with unions on this means more young people in the industry, and a lot of other benefits that would be beneficial to unions and workers.**
>
> **TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR LEADER**

Being data-led – this means being clear and precise about how different ways of arranging work will impact on costs and productivity, but also using data and stories creatively to engage staff and inspire leaders and managers to take action. Our consultation with workers found workers themselves see flexibility as a key route to increased performance and employee engagement.

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Piloting and trialling solutions - starting at a smaller scale by testing new self-rostering technologies or scheduling arrangements within specific teams, departments or sub-sectors, and then capturing and sharing learning to support scalable solutions.

Willmott Dixon used pilots and trials as a way of spreading their approach to frontline flexible working across their construction business sites. The company refers to this as "agile working", distinct from formal flexible working because it is arranged informally with line managers. The pilots, conducted in a handful of sites, allowed workers to agree different rotas and work schedules directly with their line managers. The trials provided a proof of concept, finding a significant boost to workforce morale and increased productivity on site. The model was then rolled out by operations managers across the business. Rather than being an initiative driven by its People team, managing directors and operational leads are key to the roll-out, demonstrating the importance of finding ways to operationalise new practices.[33]

Supporting non-job-related provisions that allow employees to access flexible work. This means exploring how factors such as childcare provision and transport to and from work can be addressed as flexible working arrangements and new working patterns are developed.

TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS WORKFORCE

Transport and storage, as a broad industry category, employs approximately 1.6 million people in the UK.[34] It is a growing industry group, the growth in which over the last decade has been led by hauliers and couriers, with other land transport, water and air transport remaining relatively stable.[35]

In terms of workforce, this is a sector that struggles to attract and retain women - only 25 per cent of people working in the sector are female[36], and representation of people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, although increasing, is below the ONS UK population average.[37]

CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

Construction is a critical sector for the UK, employing more than 2.2 million workers and contributing approximately 6.4 per cent of GDP.[38]

Despite expected increases in demand for construction workers to build key infrastructure and clean energy programmes, the industry continues to experience a critical skills shortage. The Construction Skills Network forecasts that an additional 251,500 extra construction workers are needed by 2028 to meet demand.[39]

With more workers leaving the industry than joining, now is the time to look at how to make the industry more attractive, particularly to younger workers. According to the UK Trade Skills Index 2023, the construction and trades industry needs 937,000 new recruits over the next decade, known as "the missing million".[40] The Timewise Flexible Jobs Index 2023 highlighted that the sector has the lowest ratio of flexible working across all sectors – with only 10 per cent of roles advertised with some form of flexible working.[41]

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III. SHIFTING CULTURES AND SYSTEMS TOWARDS FLEXIBLE WORKING AS THE DEFAULT

> **Flexibility works for everybody. It shouldn't be about policies but [about] people.**
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

While small-scale projects and pilots are important when it comes to demonstrating the value and viability of flexible working models in particular contexts, setting flexibility as the 'default' across an entire business demands longer term shifts in culture, processes and systems. This means:

- Industry role models and strategic leaders in sectors setting a clear vision and providing vocal support for secure and flexible work. This can be enabled through a people-centric, trusting culture at organisation and team level, set by senior leaders, enacted by managers and promoted widely by workers themselves. Timewise's work with employers has shown the value of a peer-led approach to promoting flexible work across the workforce (including to those less likely to request it). This can include the use of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) that focus on new ways of working and workers that become internal champions or allies for flexible working models.[42]

> **It's about empowerment and trust. You need good management, leadership and communication to build a workforce that feels empowered at work.**
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

- This in turn can help facilitate culture change across organisations, including by empowering managers to more proactively implement flexible and predictable work. In particular this may involve shifts in the attitudes and capabilities of managers to promote flexible working more actively to their staff; training and development to integrate and socialise new working patterns across teams; and increased understanding by all workers of their rights and opportunities for secure and flexible work, and confidence in exercising them. Mainstreaming flexibility and predictability in this way shifts the emphasis away from individual requests which can be perceived as disruptive by managers and exposing for employees.

> **To make this work we need to invest in manager capabilities, including at store level. To champion flexible work, to challenge norms and mindsets around management that act as barriers, there is a big piece around the role and capabilities of the manag**
> **RETAIL SECTOR LEADER**

- The effect of these changes will mean that flexibility is no longer limited to individual-focused 'request-response' arrangements (where individuals are granted fixed patterns of work within a roster, often reducing the options available to colleagues). Rather, a range of new working patterns and arrangements are opened up to all employees. These are tested via pilot projects and socialised through training and development, with managers leading team conversations about ways of working and establishing expectations around what is and is not possible.
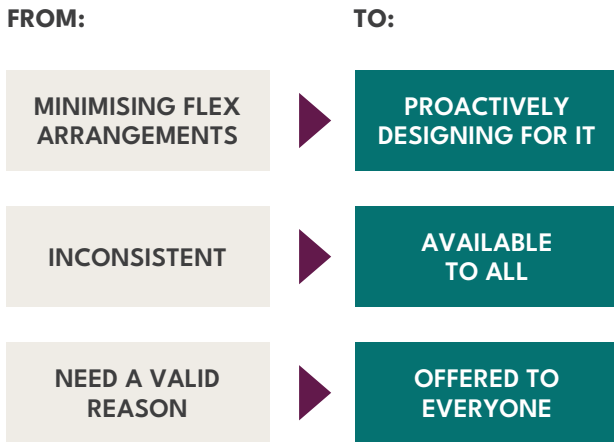
> **We need to personalise the employee experience the same way that we try to personalise patient care.**
> **HEALTH INDUSTRY LEADER**

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SHIFTING TO A FLEXIBLE WORKING CULTURE

Without a supportive organisational culture and championing from management, flexible working within organisations is likely to be patchy, inconsistent and largely inaccessible to low-paid workers in 'hard to flex' roles. Timewise's work with employers suggests some key shifts are needed to move from an 'individual request-response' culture to a 'flexible by default' culture that promotes inclusion at work:

FROM: **TO:**

MINIMISING FLEX ARRANGEMENTS	▶	PROACTIVELY DESIGNING FOR IT
INCONSISTENT	▶	AVAILABLE TO ALL
NEED A VALID REASON	▶	OFFERED TO EVERYONE

INSIGHTS FROM WORKER PANELS: 'PEOPLE-FIRST' CULTURES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR WORKERS TO HAVE A GREATER SAY AT WORK

There was a strong degree of alignment between the more expansive vision for flexible and secure work articulated with industry leaders and what workers valued.

Workers often lack confidence in expressing their preferences through the existing individual request-response framework, fearing that it might harm their career. They described the current approach to flexible working within companies as a "tick-box" exercise, and expressed a preference for a manager-led approach where managers authentically and proactively promote flexible working options to their teams.

Workers generally endorsed the idea that flexible and secure working can be mainstreamed through new workplace cultures and systems. One participant summed this up in terms of flexibility flowing "naturally" in workplaces where managers have a style that gives workers voice and helps them to feel part of an activity.

While participants were pragmatic and understood the constraints and complexities of work scheduling in frontline and site-based roles, there was nevertheless a widely shared sense that their work could be managed differently and would benefit from a more people-oriented approach.

> **Flexibility works for everybody. It shouldn't be about policies but people.**
> **WORKER**

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2. KEY CHALLENGES AND COMMON BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

The reality is that despite pockets of excellent practice, there is some distance between the goal of establishing secure and flexible working cultures and where key industries actually are in practice. Frontline workers still worry about one-sided flexibility that favours employers but gives them little input, control and security.

Our engagement with employers and industry leaders surfaced a range of complex barriers to implementing flexible and predictable working models. There are three types of barriers in particular that stand out. They are common across all sectors but apply in different ways:

- Operational and capacity constraints that limit the ability to innovate and schedule work differently, especially in contexts where demand fluctuates and is difficult to predict.

- Lack of sectoral coordination and collective action which make it difficult to overcome structural barriers and disincentives to change, such as procurement and supply chain practices, the nature of commercial arrangements and intense market competition.

- Cultural and management challenges mean many leaders and managers are resistant to change or too risk averse to re-think how they schedule and organise work.

> **We are all being held back by old-fashioned attitudes to work.**
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

OPERATIONAL AND CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS TO ORGANISING WORK DIFFERENTLY

Managers and leaders face a range of operational and structural challenges to introducing flexible working at scale.

Lean staffing models. Numerical flexibility - the ability to adjust the numbers of staff or their hours worked - is the primary mechanism for minimising operational costs and responding to fluctuations in demand in a number of the sectors we looked at. These lean staffing models create a lack of 'slack' in the workforce, meaning managers can face difficulties in giving staff input or control over working hours. This leads to a reliance on a casualised workforce that lacks security and predictability.

- In 'bricks-and-mortar' retail the standard workforce model relies on full-time managers working long hours, supported by part-time, customer-facing roles scheduled to meet fluctuations in demand. This often means irregular working hours, short notice shifts and last-minute changes, especially when companies face workforce issues such as unfilled vacancies and sickness-related absence.

- Contracted social care provided at home is usually paid on an hourly basis and working patterns are organised into short, task-based visits around periods of high demand.

- In sectors such as health, construction and transport, where full-time work is dominant due to the interdependency of different roles, staff work long hours to minimise handovers. This leads to staff shortages and fluctuations in demand being managed through use of overtime and casualised workers.

> **To get true flexibility you need optimal staffing levels: when staffing levels aren't at the optimum point, it's more difficult.**
> **HEALTH SECTOR INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER**

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Pressurised and complex operational environments with issues such as challenging client expectations, complex supply chains, high turnover rates, tight margins and budgets, lack of capacity and complexity of work and scheduling, means managers often have little room to manoeuvre and tend to default to 'what they know', rather than taking risks with scheduling and organising.

- In transport the rigid and highly complex nature of contractual requirements with commissioners, scheduling processes and collective scheduling agreements with unions gives limited opportunity for worker choice or input, and can lead to shift patterns which are highly variable and inconsistent from one period to the next.

- In highly skilled sectors, such as health and construction, the interdependency of different roles adds complexity and leads to a preference for full-time employees with minimal staff handovers. In health, the priority is to keep patients safe 24/7, while in construction project managers have to provide supervision at all times to meet health and safety standards on-site.

> The operational environment is the major barrier - we are so busy delivering, the headspace to innovate is limited."
> **HEALTH EMPLOYER**

> There is a fragmented industry structure. A major challenge is how the industry and site work is currently organised and structured, and associated commercial arrangements."
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

- In social care contracting arrangements are often based on price competition and provide little certainty about how many packages or hours will be allocated. In domiciliary care, there are also complex challenges associated with a 24-7 service model, high vacancy rates and specific skills mix requirements. In addition to acute underfunding and lack of national support, this limits the ability to schedule and organise work differently.

- Retail is characterised by pressurised operational environments, cost pressures and extremely tight margins, and high turnover rates.

Leaders and managers lack the necessary tools, capabilities and incentives to mainstream flexible working. There is a lack of consistency in leadership and management support for this agenda, and in the provision of skills and tools to embed the right culture. The right systems, data and processes are often not in place, while organisational KPIs may be at odds with new ways of working. This, in addition to a lack of support and training for line managers, can mean managers simply do not have the tools nor the incentives to have conversations with their teams and plan work differently.

> These are very reactive industries, very short term and not used to thinking ahead. And this spills over to a capability gap – managers often do not know how to do things differently.
> **TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS SECTOR LEADER**

LACK OF SECTORAL COORDINATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Some of the operational barriers discussed above are beyond the control of individual employers (especially SMEs). A lack of sector-wide approaches to workforce planning, industry bodies that have limited capacity to coordinate action, and weak sectoral institutions for spreading and scaling good practice, mean that, while many employers may be open to new ways of working, they do not have the right support structures to make it happen in practice within their sector.

Most sectors have limited institutional capacity for sectoral coordination and championing. Of those sectors we consulted, the health sector has the highest level of sector coordination, with flexible working promoted actively as part

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of the NHS People Plan and through NHS England as a regulatory body. Other sectors lacked the institutional capacity to coordinate workforce strategies and interventions, tackle complex barriers to flexible and secure models of work, and coordinate efforts to accelerate its adoption amongst employers.

> **We are too individualised in our approach to flexible work, and many employers sit outside of trade bodies.**
>
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

This can result in low levels of employer awareness of the demand for flexible work and how it can meet long-term workforce needs. Many employers have yet to recognise how major workforce challenges facing their sector - including a demographically changing workforce and the need to attract new and more diverse talent, or risk acute labour shortages - are connected to job design, work organisation and the 'career offer', of which flexible and secure work is a key part.

- In transport and logistics, we heard that there is a lack of knowledge among employers in the sector: about the type of flexible and secure work that is sought by their existing workforce; and about the demand from potential candidates and those new people/hires employers would like to attract to the industry.

> **Changing employee expectations and trends around the future of work are a burning platform: the NHS could lose the war for talent without addressing it.**
>
> **HEALTH INDUSTRY LEADER**

Lack of sector-wide sharing of good practice limits employers' understanding of how work can be organised differently in frontline roles and the business benefits of doing so. Many employers and managers lack an understanding of what 'flexible and secure work' means for frontline and shift-based roles within their sector. This is compounded by a lack of best practice case studies and precise data that links flexibility and security to productivity and efficiency impacts in specific sectoral and operational contexts. This lack of a nuanced understanding of flexible work can create a sense of panic amongst managers, who may deem flexible working requests unmanageable. Workers also tend to be poorly informed about their rights and opportunities to work differently. This can also stifle demand for flexible and secure work.

> **We're very fragmented as a sector. To elevate flexible work we need to make it more visible – with evidence, case studies, benchmarking.**
>
> **RETAIL SECTOR LEADER**

> **They think that if they give you flexibility then the company will get out of control. A domino effect.**
>
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Cultural barriers, and leadership and management-related issues were common across all sectors we analysed, and presented the most significant impediments to a shift towards flexible and secure working cultures. There are two key dimensions of this.

The continued influence of traditional organisational cultures and corresponding leadership behaviours. Some leaders and decision-makers are unaccustomed to change and innovation in workforce approaches and strongly wedded to current practices and procedures. In some cases, this includes a lack of trust for employees undertaking flexible roles. Changing ingrained attitudes and behaviours is a major challenge, even in sectors like health where flexible work is promoted through strong institutional levers.

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> **There is a trust issue. If employers give us flexible working then they think we will rip them off.**
> **WORKER, FOCUS GROUP**

> **A big challenge is getting people to trust the idea that you can work differently.**
> **HEALTH INDUSTRY LEADER**

> **There are outdated perceptions from leadership about what constitutes hard work.**
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

> **It can feel like you are having to battle against the model to bring in flexible working.**
> **TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS EMPLOYER**

Lack of team-based cultures for organising work. These work cultural gaps can also persist because of the predominance of an individualised request-response culture which can result in a lack of shared responsibility between employees and managers to organise work. When team-based and systems-based cultures of work organisation are missing, managers tend to be reactive, risk averse or lack the 'psychological safety' to implement new ways of working. This contributes to perceptions amongst leaders and managers that flexible and secure working models are too difficult or risky to introduce.

> **We have to try to move beyond a 'request-response' culture and make flexible working the norm and culturally embedded, so that it is not just about the flexible working request.**
> **HEALTH SECTOR LEADER**

> **There can be a fear of change with many often reverting back to what has *always* been done.**
> **CONSTRUCTION SECTOR LEADER**

Timewise works to ensure that 'two-way flexibility' - secure and flexible work that delivers for both employers and employees – is available for everyone who wants it. From our work across many frontline sectors, we know that work-life balance is a key element of any great place to work. The 'shift-life balance' model we have developed, for example, changes the way that rosters and shift patterns are created for greater input, notice and stability for frontline workers (see Figure 2) and has created change in occupations as varied as junior clinical fellows, nurses and early years professionals.

## SHIFT-LIFE BALANCE: A MODEL FOR CHANGE

The first, overarching principle is about the size and volume of work: does the individual want to work full-time or part-time? Once this has been defined, employers then need to consider:

• Input into the schedule: Enabling the employee to influence or express a level of preference into their shift pattern.

• Advance notice of the schedule: Giving the employee fair warning of their shift pattern.

• Stability of the schedule: Offering the employee a regular pattern from week to week or month to month.

The aim of these principles is to help employees manage their responsibilities outside of work, make plans and organise the rest of their lives.[43]

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Is it impossible to deliver a good work-life balance for shift-based employees? No. But it does mean we need a different set of principles, and a different way of talking about flexible working, from which to build the change process. Drawing on the work of USA-based academic Sue Lambert, as well as Timewise work in tough-to-crack sectors, we have identified the principles which we believe will improve work-life balance for shift workers in the UK. And we've used them as a basis for a 'Shift-Life Balance' model for frontline employers to consider how to change the way that rosters and shift patterns are created.

FIGURE 2: TIMEWISE 'SHIFT-LIFE BALANCE' MODEL

APPROPRIATE WORKLOAD FOR PART-TIME OR FULL TIME

INPUT

STABILITY

ADVANCE NOTICE
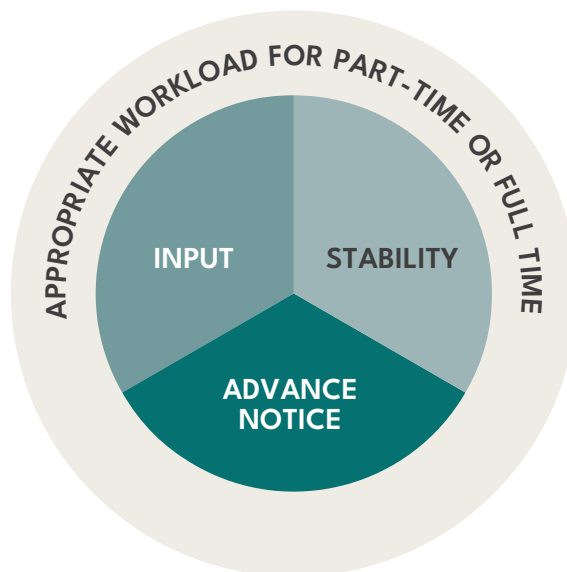
INSIGHTS FROM WORKER PANELS - ONE-SIDED FLEXIBILITY AND LACK OF FLEXIBLE WORKING CULTURES

The challenges identified in this section also negatively affect the relationship between employers and their workforce. Members of our worker panels highlighted a range of barriers to them accessing and taking up flexible work, much of which focuses on the persistence of dated workplace cultures in site-based work.

GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND REALITY

Several participants saw flexible working policies within their organisation as a "box-ticking exercise", arguing that in practice they weren't relevant because of work cultures, manager attitudes and expected ways of working. "They are portrayed as being there but if you use them, it's a negative thing."

WORKING CULTURES AND EXPECTATIONS

Some participants viewed the old-fashioned working approaches mentioned above to be driven by a range of factors largely centred on manager attitudes, mistrust of workers and a fear of reduction in productivity and achieving KPIs, which creates a "fear factor" amongst managers and leaders. This fuels a lack of trust between managers and workers. "They think that if they give you flexibility then the company will get out of control. A domino effect." Addressing these cultural and capability challenges was seen as a major challenge.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WELLBEING

There was a strong sense among participants that flexibility would enhance their work-life balance. "I would rather take flexible working over a pay rise. It would make me a happier person."

And yet there was a pervasive sense that employers feel that workers should be focused on their work and not disrupt the rigid systems and processes imposed on them. "They don't want us to have a life outside of work." These perceptions were inextricably linked to the recurring theme of one-sided flexibility. "Flex both ways would be a lot better for your wellbeing."

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBILITY

Most participants were unaware of the right to request legislation, but said that they were unlikely to use it for fear of it being too confrontational. They were conscious that it's only a right to ask for it and not to have it, and it would be easy for employers to say no. "I wouldn't be brave enough to ask [submit request] for fear it might damage my career."

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3. TOWARDS GREATER EQUITY FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

The gap between what industry and workers would like to do and what is stopping them from doing so is, nevertheless, starting to be bridged with green shoots of good practice and, in some cases, breakthrough innovations. A range of scalable solutions and approaches have emerged and have been tested by employers in partnership with organisations such as Timewise. Much of the best practice we have observed has, nevertheless, been isolated initiatives led by individual employers, and there is a need for greater adoption, acceleration, and scaling of best practice within sectors.

This points to a number of opportunity areas that sector leaders and policymakers could prioritise to accelerate the adoption of flexible work in site-based and shift-based roles. The core challenge is progressing this good practice from a patchwork of initiatives driven by a small number of employers, towards a more cross-sector approach capable of inspiring collective action and achieving the shifts in operating and business models needed to mainstream flexible working cultures across industries.

Key opportunity areas include:

- Adoption and scaling of best practice models, particularly team-based and employee-led approaches to organising and scheduling work, and cross-skilling of staff as a response to the barriers associated with operational complexity.

- Supporting innovative technologies and models, such as e-rostering and employee-led participatory platforms.

- Stimulating stronger sectoral action to strengthen coordination and support for employers and workers.

ADOPTION AND SCALING OF BEST PRACTICE MODELS

Team-based and employee-led approaches. Employers, industry leaders and workers all pointed to the limitations of an individual request-response model. They argued that team-based analysis of working preferences can open up opportunities to meet the flexible working needs of a greater number of staff, balance multiple, sometimes conflicting preferences for different working patterns, and ensure fairness across a team. This, in turn, could reduce the need for formal requests to work flexibly.

> Some managers say 'well, if I've agreed X number of working patterns with people in my team, and someone else then comes in asking for that, I can't allow them to have that because operationally I won't be able to run the service.' We have to run an efficient and high quality service. But looking at it in a team-based way, maybe you get more win-win situations across the team. A team-based approach is where the team takes responsibility for knowing that they've got to fulfil the shift and they work on that and deliver the service.
>
> **HR MANAGER, NHS TRUST**

A team-based approach can be an effective alternative to existing practice which involves case-by-case arrangements that meet the needs of particular individuals, but which can make rostering and scheduling even more difficult and increase insecurity for the wider staff body.

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> " Being in the construction industry, we do have to produce the work, the tangible output work that we do. The legislation is very much on an individual request, not around teams, which makes it harder to make things work. It has got to be a team effort.... I think if you think holistically as a team it can be more flexible but obviously the legislation is individually based and clearly we will respond to those individual requests.

HR BUSINESS PARTNER, CONSTRUCTION

CASE STUDY: PILOTS WITH SHIFT-BASED MANAGERS AT NATIONAL GROCER

Using the insights from the Retail Pioneers Programme, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and endorsed by the British Retail Consortium (BRC), Timewise supported a large national grocer to design and conduct pilots with shift-based managers in three large format stores.[44]

The pilots trialled two key approaches: team-based scheduling and outputs, and flexible hiring.

The impact of the pilots included:

- Satisfaction with work-life balance increased from 44 per cent to 91 per cent

- Satisfaction with flexibility increased from 61 per cent to 91 per cent

- Advance notice of shift patterns improved from 2 weeks to 6 weeks, providing greater stability and predictability.

CASE STUDY: ROYAL FREE LONDON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

In 2019 Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust became the first NHS Trust accredited by Timewise for their work on flexible working. The Trust became early implementers of an organisation-wide approach, supported by a clear set of principles and an expansive vision for where, when and how staff can work flexibly - encompassing informal and formal patterns.

There have been a number of key enablers of successful implementation:

- An inclusive and equitable workforce-wide approach that includes frontline staff. Although the pandemic led the Trust to bring forward new hybrid and agile working models, subsequent work has focused on frontline workers to ensure they are not left out.

- E-rostering has been rolled out across the whole organisation for nursing and midwifery, healthcare support workers and now the medical workforce. 64 per cent of rosters are approved as a result of self-rostering, with meaningful staff input into when and how they work.

- Encouraging trial periods to enable managers to test flexible working models, see what is possible and have better conversations with staff.

- Data is brought together through ward dashboards that allow the right conversations to happen at the right places, and to set clear targets.

Despite these successes, leaders at Royal Free recognise that embedding flexible work is a continuous process of application and adaptation, sustained through long-term culture change.

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CASE STUDY: WH SMITH - CHOICE OF CONTRACTED HOURS FOR STORE SALES ASSISTANTS

WH Smith Travel operates a network of busy travel stores in airports, rail stations, hospitals and service stations across the UK. They realised that the wide opening hours required in these stores provided an opportunity to think differently and provide workers with greater flexibility and choice, without foregoing their job security.

From speaking to their store teams about how they would prefer to work, WH Smith decided to widen the range of contracted hours that they offered – employment contracts now range from a minimum of 8 hours per week, up to 39 hours per week. Across their Travel business there is a real split in terms of how much people have chosen to work - with 49 per cent of contracts below 20 hours, and 51 per cent above (including 35 per cent over 30 hours per week).

When people start work their manager talks to them about what they would like in terms of work pattern, and this is reviewed periodically to ensure it is still working for the retailer and the employee.

In turn this provides greater flex for the business as well, with team members working across a range of patterns, and able to offer additional hours at peak times on an 'opt in' basis. The number of formal flexible working requests has significantly reduced, which indicates that team members are usually able to get the flexibility they need through this approach.

CASE STUDY: TIMEWISE PIONEERS PROGRAMME WITH THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

A Timewise Pioneers Pilot with four construction firms suggested that cross-skilling can play a key role in supporting greater flexibility. Training more workers to meet site health and safety requirements, for example, reduces the reliance on certain roles being present at all times.

The pilot projects also tested staggered start and finish times, team-based rostering and output-based approaches that enabled people to leave when their work is finished. Participating firms introduced flexi-days, allowing staff to accumulate additional hours in exchange for one day off each month, as well as home-working where possible, including a day a month for site-based managers to complete administrative tasks.

As a result of the changes, fewer people were working over their contracted hours. A higher proportion said that they had a decent work-life balance. There was a significant fall in absence rates and sickness. The changes supported greater diversity in recruitment, led to increased trust among workers, and helped older workers to stay in work for longer. There was no adverse impact on costs or timelines as a result, and hybrid working in office-based roles also led to savings in office costs and increased productivity for one firm.[45]

CASE STUDY: WICKES – REDESIGNING MANAGERIAL ROLES TO BOOST FLEXIBILITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Timewise worked with retailer Wickes to design, trial and evaluate a six-month pilot across 14 Wickes stores. This involved redesigning managerial roles in store and giving store, duty and operations managers more flexibility, input and control over their working patterns.

A range of working arrangements were trialled and adopted by the managers including compressed weeks and shorter days. In doing so the retailers improved progression routes for shop floor staff by creating visible flexible opportunities to step up into. The chance to work in a flexible way at a more senior level improved staff satisfaction and work life balance for existing managers. The changes had no negative impact on store performance indicators, and increased manager satisfaction with working hours. Feedback from the pilot participants showed that 96.5 per cent of store managers were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their working hours at the end of the pilot, compared to 66.5 per cent pre-pilot.

As a result of the pilot success, Wickes have now rolled out flexible working options to all store management roles across their 230 stores nationwide.[47]

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Cross-skilling staff as a response to operational complexity. Employers have choices about how to respond to operational complexity. An alternative to numerical flexibility is functional flexibility, where staff are trained and given autonomy to enable them to be deployed flexibly, working across a broader range of job roles and tasks within pay expectations.

Cross-skilling can also play a role in traditionally lower skilled industries, as well as enabling progression routes for part-time and flexible staff.

- **Skills for Care** advocates cross-training as a way for care providers to manage emergencies and staffing gaps, reducing the need to rely on agency staff.

- **In retail** some of the supermarkets we engaged are piloting contracts offering more guaranteed hours for staff, with more stability in shift patterns, supported by broader, less task-controlled jobs.

- **Research by the Living Wage Foundation** has highlighted how some major global retailers are investing in cross-skilling to enable operational efficiencies, lower prices and high customer service, delivered by an engaged workforce with stable, fairly paid jobs.[46]

SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND MODELS

Some NHS Trusts and large retailers we spoke to are making use of e-rostering technology to enable individual staff to more easily indicate preferences for shifts, to 'self-roster', or to support shift swaps between workers, combined with longer notice periods for shifts.

SNAPSHOT: Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust has rolled out e-rostering across the entire organisation for its nursing and midwifery, healthcare support and medical workforce. 64 per cent of rosters are approved as a result of self-rostering, with meaningful input from workers into when and how they work (see case study box above for more).

The most transformative practices involve staff collectively setting schedules through team-based and employee-led approaches. Such approaches work most effectively when they are not simply about a fairer distribution of unpopular shift patterns but are accompanied by wider changes to work organisation that enable more stability and a positive culture of flexible working overall.

- Timewise has trained a number of employers in a participatory approach to working patterns, where managers design and agree schedules collaboratively with staff, who are given space to negotiate their different preferences as individuals within a team context. Evidence from employers and Timewise research shows it can reduce the need to submit formal flexible work requests, encourages collective staff ownership and can lead to improvements in staff voice and motivation. It also promotes flexible work as an inclusive agenda that benefits all employees, tackling the common assumption that it is only for parents and carers.

CASE STUDY: A TEAM-BASED APPROACH TO ROSTERING TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR NURSES

In a pilot with three hospitals in 2019, supported by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, Timewise explored whether a team-based approach to the roster could give nurses greater control of their working patterns. The goal was to improve nurses' work-life balance, with a view to alleviating the NHS staffing crisis. We worked with 240 nurses in seven wards in three hospitals.

The traditional roster process tends to create a two-tier system with 'special' arrangements for a few with flexibility discouraged for everyone else. In the team-based approach developed by Timewise, all the needs of all nurses on the ward are considered and producing a fair rota is a collective responsibility that requires cooperation across the ward.

Pre and post surveys of participating hospitals showed that the proportion of nurses who:

- Felt their work-life preferences were being met went up from 39 per cent to 51 per cent.

- Scored highly on amount of input they have into rosters went up from 14 per cent to 26 per cent.

- Felt they had a strong sense of collective responsibility went up from 16 per cent to 36 per cent.[48]

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CASE STUDY: NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKING MODELS THROUGH LOCAL COLLABORATION AND TRAINING

The Care Careers team at Norfolk County Council are working actively with local care providers, helping them to identify opportunities to offer greater flexibility to their workforces, through training on flexible job design and hiring flexibly.

Timewise delivered a Train the Trainer programme for the Care Careers team at Norfolk County Council to build their knowledge and understanding, and they are now continuing this work with providers, influencing practice and driving more flexible working opportunities for the social care workforce across the county.

CASE STUDY: FIRST BUS – PILOTING NEW APPROACHES TO ROSTERING AND SCHEDULING

First Bus is one of the UK's largest bus operators, with a fleet of over 4,800 buses and a workforce of 13,500. The company has a strong focus on building its identity as a service business prioritising customers and people (its workforce). As with many others in the sector, it has sought to address major challenges around staff retention, an ageing workforce, and a need for more diverse talent (especially at senior levels).

Flexible and predictable working is seen as a key way to attract, retain and diversify its workforce. The company replaced top-down job appraisals with more person-centred conversations, alongside multiple employee engagement surveys every year. The large amount of data from this revealed work-life balance as the key challenge for its workforce.

First Bus recognised that to address these issues, it had to explore how to change the way it constructs work, rosters and schedules. Currently there is a high degree of complexity, with dozens of different bargaining units and arrangements. This creates somewhat of a two-tier workforce: a fixed lines roster where people have predictable work patterns and a general roster with relatively less predictability and frequent shift rotations.

Although at an early stage, the company has worked with Timewise to design and conduct pilots to explore how it can structure work differently, undertaking surveys and learning about employees' preferences, and partnering with unions to agree principles to enable more input into rosters and more options for part time patterns. It is also working with schedulers and those responsible for allocating staff members to duties, providing tools and advice to help them plan and allocate work and schedules differently to be more responsive to these preferences. It recognises that long-term culture change is needed to shift to a flexible working culture that can attract and retain a diverse and dynamic workforce.

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STIMULATING STRONGER SECTORAL ACTION AND COORDINATION

The examples of good practice detailed above challenge the assumption that flexible and predictable work is not possible to achieve in site-based and shift-based roles, and that it necessarily involves trade-offs in profitability or performance for employers. Our engagement with industry leaders, employers and workers points to the need for wider sectoral interventions and resources to address sector-specific barriers and scale examples of good practice.

FIGURE 3: SUMMARY OF SECTOR-SPECIFIC BARRIERS AND STATE OF SECTORAL COORDINATION

SECTOR	SECTOR-SPECIFIC BARRIERS	EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SCALE BEST PRACTICE	EXISTING SECTORAL COORDINATION - AND FUTURE NEED
HEALTH	• Pockets of best practice, but a lack of scale and depth in implementation of flexible and predictable working practices. • Sector is strong on standard approaches but specific application of best practice for flexible working in each role and setting is less well developed. • Lack of funding for investment in technology eg trialling AI solutions for building intelligent rosters and optimum staffing arrangements.	• Identifying flex solutions for each profession, setting and role type; more extensive trials of team-based rostering; wider adoption of self-rostering tech; wider use of innovative approaches such as the 'Any Hours' and 'Suits You' shifts that give workers more choice and control; NHS retention metric which includes flexible working and could help accelerate change.	• Strong existing sectoral coordination. NHS Employers and social partnership forum chaired by Secretary of State for Health and Social Care which regularly meets on non-pay issues. **Need for more sector-specific guidance and dissemination of best practice models.**
SOCIAL CARE	• Low funding levels and commissioning arrangements which encourage competition on cost, not outcomes; lack of shared standards for more flexible and predictable work and lack of a sector-wide People Plan as in the NHS.	• More extensive implementation of evidence-based approaches to team-based rostering and self-rostering; cross-skilling to help build in more resilience into schedules; and training and support for roster managers.	• Limited existing coordination, but new 'fair pay agreement' to be negotiated between employer and worker representatives as part of Employment Rights Bill. This will set out legally binding minimum pay and other terms and conditions for the sector. **Need for more sector-specific guidance and best practice models.**
RETAIL	• Stereotypical images of industry and jobs within it and abuse of frontline workers contributing to skills and talent shortages; challenges for smaller businesses in particular in implementing legislative proposals; lack of sector-specific best practice.	• Adoption of technology to support shift swapping; wider use of minimum contracted hours to give workers security and predictability; greater use of term-time contracts; and greater flexibility for managerial (salaried) staff.	• Active sector bodies with some good existing sectoral coordination - particularly on equality, diversity and inclusion. Existing mechanisms that can be built on to improve the spread of sector-specific best practice, innovation and accountability. **Need for more sector-specific guidance and best practice models.**

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SECTOR	SECTOR-SPECIFIC BARRIERS	EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITIES TO SCALE BEST PRACTICE	EXISTING SECTORAL COORDINATION - AND FUTURE NEED
CONSTRUCTION	• Contracting and commissioning models that drive low margins and lean staffing models; a high proportion of SMEs with limited HR capacity; a sub-contracted workforce; and rigid planning and scheduling of work acting as a barrier to flexibility.	• Adoption of team-based rostering agreements to give workers more input into their hours of work; and building discussions about working patterns and preferences into project start-up phases with local team agreements.	• Existing sector-wide initiatives on training and skills (including ConstructionSkills, the sector skills council, and the Construction Industry Training Board) but no coordination on job quality apart from some equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives. **Need for more sector-specific guidance and best practice models. Case for an industrial forum to ensure greater sectoral coordination and employer demand to support this.**
TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS	• Rapidly ageing workforce demographic and need to challenge perception of industry to attract new workers; rigid nature of scheduling processes and collective scheduling agreements at a local level; challenges in sharing best practice due to commercial sensitivity and first mover advantage	• More trialling of roster preference systems; wider adoption of technology to allow shift selection and swapping; offering part-time opportunities to older workers considering retirement; and more part-time and flexible options for training.	• Little or no existing sectoral coordination on flexible and predictable working; limited sector-wide initiatives. **Need for more sector-specific guidance and best practice models. Strong case for an industrial forum and employer demand for greater sectoral coordination and cross-industry working.**

Greater employer coordination within sectors is essential to tackle the barriers and realise the opportunities presented above and for effective labour market and skills policy more broadly. It is widely acknowledged that institutions to support effective dialogue between employers, sector bodies, unions and the government are lacking in the UK. This is particularly the case since the Sector Skills Councils set up under the previous Labour government in 2002 have all but fallen away. Employer-led organisations in the UK are typically more focused on lobbying, standard-setting and providing services to member employers than focusing on labour market issues and collective bargaining, as is typically the case in more coordinated economies, such as Denmark and Sweden. The lack of these kinds of institutions and coordination risks labour market policy that is either 'impossible to implement or which is ignored by employers'[49].

However, there are important examples from within the UK to learn from. In Scotland, the government's Fair Work agenda places more emphasis on social dialogue and collective employment regulation. Scottish industry leadership groups (ILGs) are forums that align industry and government strategies and articulate sectoral asks and offers, where government input can add value. There are ILGs in industries ranging from construction, food and drink, retail to aerospace and life sciences. Some receive funding from the Scottish government while others are self-funded. They frequently have social partnership representation (employer, union and government representatives). A recent review found that the ILGs align industry and government strategies to make them more effective and are well positioned to reach businesses not touched by the usual agency or Government channels[50].

The Resolution Foundation has proposed that similar institutions are established in the UK, calling for the introduction of 'good work agreements' to bring together workers and employers to collaboratively solve problems and address poor-quality work in specific pockets of the economy. These would focus on issues including training and progression, pay and wider terms and conditions – such as job security and flexibility.

In the final chapter we examine the implications of these findings for policy and practice and make recommendations for government, sector bodies, employers and unions.

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4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The government's 'Make Work Pay' agenda and Employment Rights Bill aim to tilt the balance of power in the workplace more towards employees by tackling the 'one-sided flexibility' that leaves workers with little say over their working hours and patterns. Our research and consultations have shown that a stronger statutory framework alone will not produce the workplace culture, business and operational shifts needed to achieve this. This is especially the case for shift and site-based roles in the frontline sectors we have examined, who have little predictability or control over their work. More predictability and control results in a greater sense of dignity and self-respect for workers.

We identify two potential weaknesses in the plan to Make Work Pay which need to be tackled to realise the ambitions of the agenda. Firstly, in relying so heavily on the individual response-request system between line manager and employee to agree flexible and predictable working arrangements, there is a risk of exacerbating uneven power dynamics in the workplace. Our consultations with lower income workers suggest they can often lack confidence in expressing their preferences through the individual request-response framework, fearing that it might harm their career. Many workers will be unaware of their new rights altogether. And managers agreed that relying on this framework can lead to lack of a shared responsibility for organising work, as it assumes solutions for more flexible and predictable work are individual in nature when they are often collective and team-based.

The second weakness - a related one - is that the Employment Rights Bill takes a 'one-size–fits-all' approach when it comes to sectors. Our work has shown that it is vital to recognise that different sectors are at different stages in relation to flexible and predictable work, face unique operational contexts, and have different industrial and workforce compositions.

To take the transport and logistics sector for example, while there are a different set of issues for bus, train and logistics companies, common challenges persist across each of these parts of the industry which require sectoral coordination to overcome. With a rapidly ageing workforce, high staff turnover and significant costs of attracting new workers into the sector, participants identified that a cross-sector 'pact' on flexible working options as part of a sector-wide recruitment campaign could help attract a younger, more diverse workforce.

A complementary set of strategies, interventions and policies will be needed alongside the Make Work Pay legislation to prompt wider workplace shifts to enable change across the frontline sectors we have examined. A one-size-fits-all approach needs to be replaced with a sector-based approach for the everyday economy, supported by the right kinds of approaches and institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Timewise has established a coalition of leading employers, sector bodies and union representatives who are calling for government to work in partnership with industry and workers to ensure legislative proposals in the Employment Rights Bill can be successfully implemented.

Requirements are different in each sector, as set out in summary Figure 3. In health, social care and retail, our assessment based on the industry roundtables we held is that the existing (or planned in the case of social care) institutions have the ability or potential to be able to scale and deepen innovation and best practice in the way we have outlined. However, we would recommend that this is further incentivised and supported by government working with industry to publish a set of sector-specific guidelines in these sectors to help all employers and particularly SMEs, to put the Employment Rights Bill legislation into practice.

In the construction, transport and logistics sectors, coordination is less well developed to overcome specific barriers and drive forward best practice. There is a risk that proposals to improve the quality of work will be ignored by employers or

seen as impossible to implement as a result. There is, however, a strong level of interest among employers and sector bodies in the potential benefits of greater negotiation between employers, unions, sector bodies and government. There is an appetite for forums which can bring together workers and employers to collaboratively solve problems and successfully respond to the legislation.

WE CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO:

Establish new industrial forums bringing together employers, unions, sector bodies and unions, to collaboratively resolve sector-specific challenges and increase engagement with labour market and skills policies in England. These should be modelled on the Scottish Industry Leadership groups, learning appropriate lessons, and based on a social partnership model.

The transport & logistics sector should be considered as a priority for this, based on low levels of existing sectoral coordination, clear sector-specific barriers and employer demand for collaboration as identified by Timewise. This should be followed by the construction sector which is similarly lacking sector-wide initiatives to improve job quality. These forums could be established informally during the consultation period for the Employment Rights Bill and formalised following this depending on lessons learnt.

In the public sector, a new SSNB (School Support Staff Negotiating Body) will ensure all school staff have access to fair pay and conditions. A new 'fair pay agreement' for social care will set out legally binding minimum pay and other terms and conditions for the sector. This approach should be extended to the care workforce more widely – with early years professionals the next to achieve recognition through an extension of the fair pay agreement into early years and childcare.

THE DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE (DBT) SHOULD:

Issue sector-specific guidance and best practice models across all low-paying industries and occupation groups (based on the Low Pay Commission definition) to accompany the legislation and code of practice. These should be developed in partnership with leading employers and sector bodies in each sector and experts in predictable and flexible work.

Give oversight for these reforms to a new Modern Working Lives Taskforce, replacing the existing Flexible Working Taskforce, which should have responsibility for ensuring legislation is fit for the workplace and be chaired by a minister. This body should also be charged with ensuring reforms for more flexible and predictable work can be successfully implemented in low-paying sectors, narrowing the widening gap in the two-tier workforce.

The Modern Working Lives Taskforce should examine options to strengthen 'flexibility by default' through the code of practice accompanying the legislation, including, for example, by:

- Exploring a legal duty on employers to consider which flexible working arrangements are available in a role and to publish these in job advertisements, with the new postholder having a day one right to take up the flexible working arrangements that have been advertised.

- Strengthening consultation requirements, based on the process for Statutory Sick Pay processes.

- Requiring internal reporting by employers on the types of flexible working and contract types they have within the workforce – to help inform employees and demonstrate what is possible.

Measure the success of workers' rights legislation, by re-commissioning the Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS). WERS provided valuable information on employee influence at work, access to flexible working, job satisfaction and individual and collective representation at work. Narrowing the gap between site-based and shift-based workers and the rest of the working population on flexible and predictable work should be a focus for a new WERS and an explicit objective of the government's Make Work Pay agenda.

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THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (DWP) SHOULD:

End the 35-hour job search requirement for unemployed claimants. Alongside tailored action plans, this will help replace the current 'work first' model with a focus on securing the right job, allowing job coaches to more easily take into account personal health, caring and parental responsibilities when identifying work and training opportunities, thereby helping people to find jobs they are more likely to keep and thrive in.

Commit to introducing training for job coaches to work with employers to broker more flexible and secure jobs, as part of its Back to Work agenda. Job coaches should be trained in supporting Universal Credit claimants to secure a job that allows more flexibility to manage a health condition, disability or caring responsibilities. Training for over-50s and in-work progression champions should also be introduced to help workers identify opportunities for part-time or flexible work. DWP should commit more broadly to reviewing evidence for investing in the role of flexible and part-time work to raise workforce participation rates.

COMBINED AUTHORITIES SHOULD:

Align action on flexible and secure working with the delivery of key strategic priorities; invest in more support to employers who struggle to improve flexible working; ensure flexible work standards in 'good work' charters are inclusive of all types of roles and accessible to site-based employers; and influence their procurement chains to encourage increased flexible working.

After the two-year consultation period, responsibilities of the Modern Working Lives Taskforce should transition to become part of an industrial strategy for good work in the everyday economy. The DBT Green Paper on the UK's Modern Industrial strategy identifies the 'foundational sectors' as providing critical infrastructure for our 'growth-driving' sectors – given their importance for quality of life for millions of workers their role in boosting productivity, job quality in the foundational economy should also be the focus of industrial strategy & innovation in the UK.
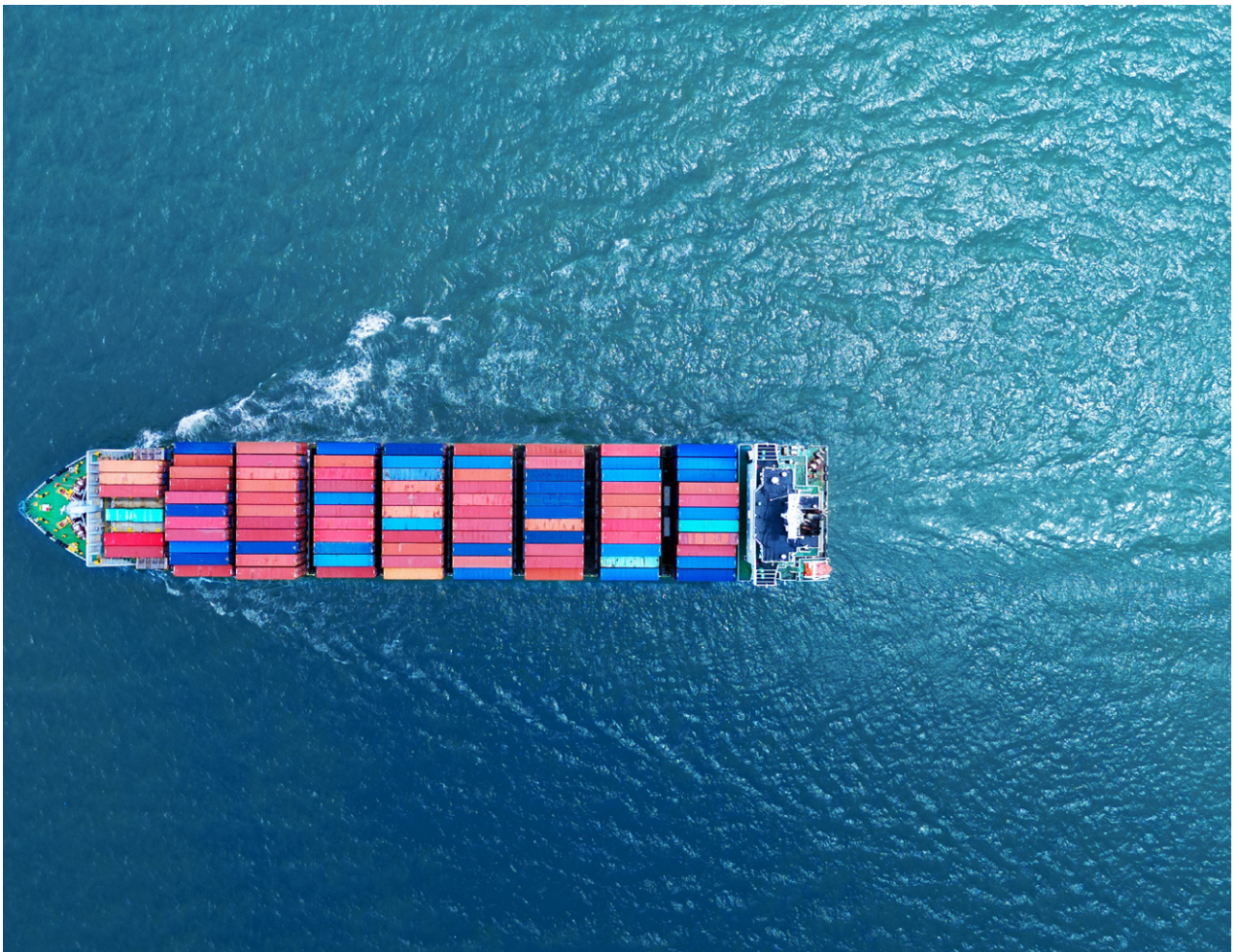

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CONCLUSION

The inspiring examples from employers throughout this report demonstrate that it is both possible and achievable to give frontline employees greater say in their hours and patterns of work. In each of our chosen sectors – retail, health, social care, construction and transport and logistics – we engaged with employers who for many years have been improving job flexibility and security to address key people challenges, such as staff shortages, ageing workforces, and broader issues, such as inclusivity and gender balance.

There is a wider 'burning platform' for change, beyond the clear disadvantage for these workers and their families. Acute public sector recruitment and retention crises in our focus sectors of health and social care, as in the childcare and education sectors, are unsustainable. Labour shortages are equally acute in the construction and transport sectors, which are critical to both the UK's growth and Net Zero missions. Employers urgently need to attract younger workers for whom work life balance is a key priority, to replace their ageing workforces.

The government's objective of reversing record rates of economic inactivity by bringing more people back into the workforce also demands greater availability of part-time and flexible work. More varied hours and scope for shaping how work is organised is essential for those who are over-50 and for those with health conditions and disabilities, if the government is to reach its target of an 80 per cent employment rate.

However, our analysis also shows we are far from seeing 'flexibility by default' and more predictable working across sectors. If these factors are left unchallenged, the result is likely to be a growing 'two-tier workforce', with office-based employees who are able to take advantage of remote and flexible working to manage life and work more effectively, and shift-based and placed-based workers who have very little control over the hours they work and their location of work.

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APPENDIX

FLEXIBLE WORK: At Timewise we use 'flexible working' to describe any kind of working pattern that does not fit into the traditional 9-5, five days a week. Timewise believes that flexible roles should be quality, permanent ones which benefit employers and employees alike. Our definition therefore excludes zero hours or temping contracts. Roles can be designed to be more flexible by allowing greater choice on WHERE people work, WHEN people work and HOW MUCH people work. Common forms of flexible work include part-time work, flexible start and finish times, term-time only work, home-working, compressed hours and returner programmes.

SECURE WORK: Jobs that provide workers with a steady, reliable income alongside regular hours or predictable shifts. This can include contracts that reflect actual hours worked, advance notice of shifts for hourly-paid workers, a guaranteed minimum number of hours for any role, and ensuring the workforce has access to quality, permanent positions. Secure work allows workers to better manage their budgets, plan for the future and balance work and personal commitments.

FRONTLINE WORKERS: For our analysis of the prevalence of 'flexi-time' (the ability to vary start and finish times) across sectors and occupations in the UK, we used definitions developed by the ONS during the early part of the pandemic.[26] This captured those in jobs requiring (a) close proximity to other people AND/OR (b) exposure to disease. This includes health and care workers such as nurses, medical professionals and carers, retail shop staff, transport workers, construction workers, cleaners and security staff. The sectors we focused on for this research are those with a proportionally higher number of frontline workers (health and care, construction, transport and logistics, and retail).

SITE-BASED WORKERS: Workers who have to spend all or most of their time working 'on-site', undertaking work that cannot be done remotely or in an office. Typically this includes, for example, construction workers and safety inspectors. Our definition also includes those who must work on location in places such as hospitals, care homes, shops and supermarkets, warehouses, and transport and logistics sites.

SHIFT-BASED WORKERS: Shift-based work involves employers scheduling employees to work in shifts rather than traditional 9-5 schedules. It is especially common in businesses or organisations that operate a 24-hour service. Different types of shift work include day shifts, night shifts, split shifts and rotating shift schedules. Shift work is common in sectors such as health and care, retail, and transport and logistics.

CROSS-SKILLING: Cross-skilling, or multi-skilling, involves training staff to be able to work across a broader range of job roles and tasks (in line with pay expectations). A multi-skilled workforce can enable more flexibility at work by reducing the reliance on certain roles to always be present and allowing a wider pool of employees to cover certain work tasks. When cross-skilling is done well it can support development and in-work progression for lower income workers on flexible contracts.

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Timewise's mission is to create healthy, equitable and inclusive workplaces for all by widening access to good quality, flexible work. We are the UK's leading experts on job design and we tackle barriers to change with both policymakers and employers. Through our research, we evidence the need for good flexible and predictable work to boost the living standards of low and middle earners. We believe good flexible jobs enable employees to gain increased autonomy and control over how much, when or where they work. Through our programmes, we trial practical solutions and scale these through consultancy and campaigns.

If you would like more information on this guide or to work with us, please email: info@timewise.co.uk.

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