

How to find a part time or flexible job



We've been there. We know what you're going through.



10 years ago we were both candidates looking for part time jobs. We sat and waited patiently for an employer to advertise the perfect role. We spent 6 months looking, and nothing came up. This was the wrong approach as there is a bottleneck in the part time and flexible jobs market. We realise now that we needed to make it happen, and that we had to go out and find opportunities. They were not going to come to us.

Although the job market has changed, it is still confused and challenging for those of us who just want a part time or flexible job. That's why we've launched Hire Me My Way to highlight to employers that there is huge demand for flexibility, so they therefore need to be open and clear about it at the point of hire.

We are impatient for change and we want the market to move quicker than it is, but we realise that you need a new job and you need some advice and support now. You can't just wait for the market to improve. That's why we've put together this guide to give you advice, hints and tips – this is the same kind of advice we give to our friends.

It IS possible to get a flexible job, even if it's not been advertised. You just have to know how to work the market. Finding what you want may take time but, with this guide, we'll help you get there faster.

All the best and good luck

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Joint CEOs, Timewise, the flexibility specialists behind Hire Me My Way

More than half the UK workforce work part time or flexibly, but less than 1 in 10 jobs advertise this.

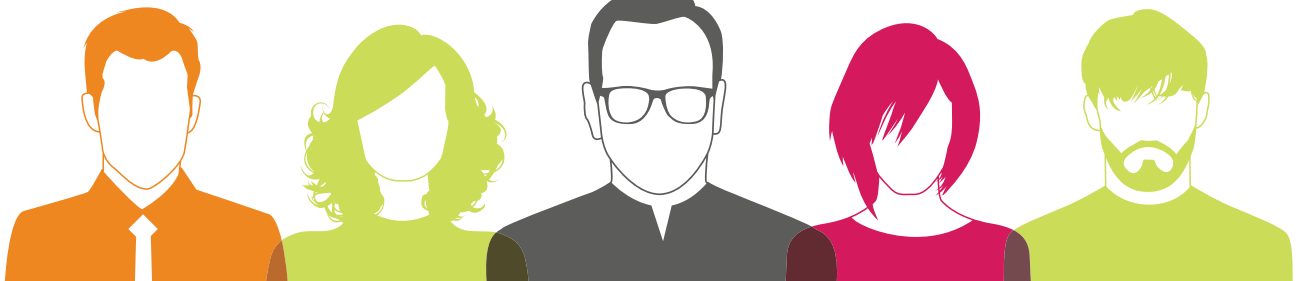
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Key facts to keep you motivated

14.1 million people want flexibility. There is increasing pressure for businesses to offer this.

91% of UK-based managers say they are open to discussing flexible working within the recruitment process.



A growing number of businesses are open to flexibility at the point of hire. We're leading the way in this space.

Having an experienced employee working flexibly **can save a business money.**

Overall, flexible working can **contribute £90bn to the UK economy.**

Questions we are always asked

We've put together these key questions based on our own experience and that of candidates and recruiters.

Are my job options full time, part time or nothing?

Not at all. There are so many different variations on flexible working besides part time; ranging from working core or reduced hours, job shares, shift work and term time only, right the way through to remote working. Think about all your options as there are many ways to flex. See page 6 for more information.

Should I accept I can't have it all and take a drop in skills and salary?

You need to ask yourself the question: what's more important. Job level and salary, or hours? If job level and salary is first and foremost, then be prepared to wait as the perfect role may not be advertised for a while. We have more advice on this approach later on.

If you're looking to trade salary for flexibility, then take a look at what's out there. You need to think carefully about what you'll be comfortable with. For example, what's the lowest salary you'd be willing to accept? Will you get bored or resentful if you downshift your responsibilities? Could you try a new career path, starting near the bottom again? These questions will help you decide whether to hold-out for the right job or compromise.

Even employers open to flexibility may not give you what you want. Make sure you start your job search with ideal and worst-case scenarios. **Be prepared.**

My sector is not great for part time or flexible working. How can I be more creative in my job search?

Think about all your job search options. Look at your skills, talents and experience as they could be transferable. Think about exploring new areas; if you've always worked in a particular field or profession, maybe look at different sectors that tend to be more open to flexibility.

If you're struggling to identify your key skills and experience, then you could talk to a career coach who will help you find clarity out of confusion. There are many good coaches across the UK, and the Hire Me My Way team also offer a free careers advice service for parents on low incomes.

There is no one set route to finding a flexible job. Open yourself up to all possibilities.



I've seen a great job, but flexibility is not advertised. Should I apply?

Just because it's not advertised, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. If you are well qualified for the job, then go for it! Just two things before you apply:

- Do some research on the company to check they are open to flexibility and already have staff working this way. We have found that businesses who don't have employees already working flexibly are unlikely to hire on this basis.
- Look carefully at the job description. Is it a role that you are confident can be done in less time or with the flexibility you want? If and when you get a job offer, you'll need to present a good case for making flexibility work in the role.

Should I make direct contact with a business and ask up front for a part time or flexible job?


Most businesses are happy for CV's to be sent on a speculative basis and this can be surprisingly successful. Before establishing that contact, we always advise you to research the company to find out if they are open to flexibility.

In certain sectors, like retail or education, it is standard for a candidate to ask up front if there are any vacancies, so don't worry about approaching a store manager or school office as they are used to these types of enquiries.

I want 3 days or nothing. Am I being too rigid?

If this is a dealbreaker and you feel strongly about working part time, then this is fine. If you are not in a rush, then take your time, but be aware that this process could take months.

If you need to get a job quickly, then we would suggest you compromise instead of holding out.



As candidates we have to do our bit too. Lead on the talent and skills that we bring, not the flexibility we want.



What are my flexible working options?

There are many options out there. It's no longer part time or nothing. Here are some of the many ways you can flex.

PART TIME

Working three or four full days, or shorter days up to five days a week



COMPRESSED HOURS

Full time hours, but over fewer days

SHIFT WORK

Fixed hours outside of the regular 9 -5



ANNUALISED HOURS

For example, an 80% contract which is fulfilled at flexible times across the year

FLEXIBLE OR STAGGERED HOURS

This usually involves being in the office during agreed 'core hours'



JOB SHARE/JOB SPLIT

Two people share the responsibilities of one job, or split them into two distinct part time jobs

FREELANCE

You work for yourself



ZERO HOURS

You only work when the employer needs you

REMOTE WORKING

Working from home or anywhere that isn't the office or place of work



TERM-TIME ONLY

These are commonly to be found in schools, universities or some public sector jobs



Where to find part time and flexible work

**There are many ways you can search for a job.
We highlight some of the choices on offer to you.**

Recruitment agencies

Recruiters work directly with candidates and employers. Once you've sent in your CV the recruiter will meet with you to get to know you and find a role that's a good fit for you and the employer. When you get to job offer stage, they will also be able to negotiate on your behalf. The recruiter will also be able to give you a better idea of company culture and attitudes to flexibility before you go to an interview.

There are many recruitment agencies, both on a local and national level. Do a google search to find out who the main recruiters are in your area and check if they offer part time or flexible roles. Even if they don't, still send your CV as you can always apply for a full time role and negotiate later.

Part time and flexible recruiters

There are more and more local recruitment companies starting up focusing purely on part time and flexible working opportunities. As with any other recruitment agency, get in contact and start building a rapport with the consultants, so you are front-of-mind when they get new roles.

Job boards

Job boards are a great way to search for jobs but they do lack the personal touch you'd get from a recruitment agency. Job applications go direct to the employer and you have to negotiate your own flexibility.

On the flipside, job boards do have all the latest jobs and a lot more choice than a recruiter. In fact, agencies also place ads on job boards, so they can be a great way of finding out who the big or specialist agencies are in your area.

Finding part time and flexible work on a general or sector-specific job board

Most of the major job boards now have a part time search function. This usually comes up on the left side of the screen once you've started your search. However, very few job sites have a search category for jobs that are 'Open to flexibility'. In these cases, your keyword search needs to be very precise.

Keyword search tips:

- ALWAYS put part time or flexible working, or any other type of flexibility you're looking for, in the job search bar
- AVOID the term flexible hours as this could mean a long hours contract
- Once your keyword search is delivering the right kind of jobs, make sure you save it and set a job alert for future roles that are advertised.

See page 9 for lists of job sites and recruiters.

Local employers

Find out who the relevant employers are in your area, get to know them and their websites to see if they are open to part time and flexible working, and regularly check if they have any jobs. Most large employers have an HR function, which will be happy to look at speculative CVs and can tell you more about their stance on part time and flexible working. We've found this route to be extremely effective. Get to know the team. Give them a call to introduce yourself prior to emailing your CV, cover letter or application form.

Job search directory

To get you started, we've chosen a few examples of the main recruiters and job boards across the UK.

Recruitment agencies with offices nationwide

- Reed
- Michael Page
- Brook Street
- Robert Half
- Robert Walters
- Hays
- Adecco

Part time and flexible recruiters

- Capability Jane
- Ten2Two (South East)
- Women Like Us (for low income parents in London only)

Part time and flexible specialist job boards

- Timewise Jobs
- Flexiworkforce

Job boards for working mums

- Mumsnet Jobs
- Working Mums
- Mumplusbusiness
- Simplymumsjobs.co.uk (London and Kent)
- Mothers Mean Business (Yorkshire)

General job boards

- Reed
- Totaljobs
- Indeed
- Glassdoor
- Jobsite
- Gumtree
- Monster

Sector-specific job boards

- Carehome.co.uk/jobs
- Retail Choice
- caterer.com
- Brand Republic Jobs
- eFinancial Careers
- Charity Jobs
- Simply HR Jobs
- Simply Sales Jobs
- Accountancy Age Jobs
- Jobsgopublic

There are hundreds of specialist job boards. Do a Google search on your specialist area to find out more.

Employers open to flexibility

These are some of the businesses backing Hire Me My Way.
Visit our website to find out more.

 Building a better
working world MAKE TOMORROW, TODAY 1ST 1,000 DAYS
NEW PARENT SUPPORT

The application and cover letter process

As candidates we have to do our bit too and lead on the talent and skills that we bring, not the flexibility that we want.

Should I raise my flexible working needs in my job application or cover letter?

In a word, no. This is a common mistake and you should approach this as you would a full time job. When you've seen a great role, you need to make sure your job application is the best it can be to stand out from the crowd. If you are applying for a job advertised as open to flexibility then there is no need to explain your personal reasons for wanting a part time or flexible arrangement.

Bad Example:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am interested in the job for [REDACTED]

Working these hours would suit me well as I have two children, aged 6 and 8 who I need to collect from school and the childminder.

My CV shows the qualification and experience I have acquired in the past, as I have been on a career break due to childcare reasons.

I am looking forward to getting back to my career now and hope to be given an opportunity.

What if it's clearly advertised as a part time role? Do I mention it then?

Some employers like this approach and some don't. For those that do, it shows you are committed and that you are not someone who wants the role as an interim solution whilst waiting for a full time role. It's usually fine to briefly mention in the closing paragraph of your cover letter why the part time arrangement suits you.

Employers only want to know about your skills. You are applying for a job, the process is no different if it is a full time, part time or flexible role.

How NOT to write a cover letter

Here are examples of a good and bad cover letter. The bad example leads with why the candidate needs a part time role. This is not the correct approach. Always lead on skills first and leave the flexibility for later.

Good Example:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am applying for the role of Digital Marketing Manager at [REDACTED]

I have a wealth of experience in this area, having worked for 12 years at [REDACTED] where I was Head of Marketing. In this role, I was responsible for content strategy and I managed a team of 9 people. Prior to this, I was at [REDACTED] where I gained extensive experience in Marketing and PR.

I am a strong team-player and I am quick and keen to rise to challenges, which is evident from my previous positions.

I am interested in this role as I am keen to develop my experience in this area. With the marketing industry changing so much, I see Digital and Social media as key growth areas and something I am keen to continue to be part of.

Attached is my CV, but if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

The interview process

Raising flexibility during the interview process is where candidates feel most pressure. When is it the right time to ask without jeopardising your chances of getting the job?

There are no hard and fast rules. You know your mind. **Trust your instincts**

At what point in the interview process do I ask for flexibility?

Employers don't usually talk about flexibility in interviews, so there is a bit of guess-work to be done here still. Ultimately, we would like this dialogue to be as open as salary negotiations and we have launched Hire Me My Way in order to make that change.

In the meantime, this is something you need to think about. If the job ad states it's a part time role and you have any questions about days or hours worked, then it's ok to discuss in the interview.

For any other role, try not to ask during the interview, but after you have been given a job offer.

However, sometimes, it may start to enter into discussions during the final round of a stage-based interview process. There is nothing wrong with going by gut instinct. If things are going well and the subject comes up, then you may as well go for it.

If the subject doesn't come up, then you can try a soft approach and scope it out during the interview by asking questions about the company. An example would be to ask the employer how they would describe the company culture.'



The negotiation process

A job offer means you are the right person for the job. It is standard to expect some negotiation. You do this with salary or notice period, so why not your working hours?

How do I raise flexibility when a full time job has been advertised as 'Open to flexibility'?

Ask the employer what types of flexible working arrangements they offer. For some, it may be hours worked or the option to work remotely. If you don't get the answer you want, then make your suggestion.

The employer will want to hear a solid case from you as to how you'll make the flexible arrangement work. You will ideally have thought this through before applying! If you're already working flexibly, then use this to persuade your future employer that you can manage the arrangement. In fact, more and more employers are now agreeing to match the flexibility you had in your previous role.

How do I negotiate flexibility when it hasn't been advertised?

Deep breath! You've been offered the job and they want to hire you, so they will take your request seriously. However, some roles just aren't cut out for flexibility and a new employer does have the right to refuse your request, so you do need to be aware of this possibility. If they do agree then expect compromise on both sides in order to reach a consensus. Ultimately, you want the

employer to feel comfortable and confident with the arrangement.

As above, you need to present the employer with a sound case for flexibility. If you haven't worked flexibly before, consider areas such as:

- When asking for a day or two working from home, check the job description and identify tasks that are easily done away from the distractions of an office.
- If your previous experience has been at a more senior level, then you can make a case that you can do the role in shorter timescales and therefore reduce your hours.

Can I get the working hours I want on a Zero Hours contract?

As these contracts are for use around seasonal or events work, it's not so much about negotiating but making sure your contract is clear and in line with Government recommendations. Employers do not have to guarantee you set hours of work per week, but they do have to pay you minimum wage and you have the same employment rights as a permanent member of staff.

Some employers, however, will guarantee a set number of working hours per week and may then increase the hours. Bear in mind

that the employer might not give you much advance notice of your hours of work, so the job may not be right if you have to source childcare at very short notice.

Can I negotiate hours on a shift contract?

With this type of work the hours are usually fixed, especially if it is night shift work. A night worker should not work more than an average of 8 hours in any 24-hour period.

I'm worried about the employer's response

Our research has shown that 9 in 10 employers are open to the idea of hiring a talented flexible worker. It just isn't communicated clearly enough. An issue we're working on. If your talents fit the job description and you are the best candidate for the job, then don't be apologetic or nervous about asking. Be confident.

Go for that job with confidence and deal with the flexibility question as and when you get the job offer. You might be surprised by the response.