**Timewise Foundation: Written Evidence for Women and Equalities Committee inquiry to inform Government strategy on reducing the gender pay gap, focusing on women aged over 40.**

**Summary Statement**

Timewise is concerned that the government’s policy proposals do not fully address the issues surrounding the gender pay gap, where the greatest pay differential is between men full time and women part time.

It advocates 2 areas to be addressed;

- To require further transparency on the pay differential between part time and full time work because part-time workers earn less than full-time workers not just because they work fewer hours, but because types of jobs associated with part-time or flex hours are clustered in lower paid roles.

- To invest in demand side interventions to stimulate more employer action directly on flexible job design and changing recruitment practices to unlock better quality of jobs to flexibility across all industry sectors and across all levels of seniority. So women that require part time or flexible work, are not forced to devalue their skills potential because they seek an adjustment in working hours.

**About Timewise Foundation**

The Timewise Foundation (TWF) is a multi-award winning social enterprise and leading change agent for the flexible recruitment market in the UK. TWF undertakes activities to position the social and business benefits of quality part time and flexible work and provides a range of advisory and recruitment services to employers to stimulate change in their recruitment practices. This work delivers social impact for low to middle income families who need quality flexible jobs to fit work with caring responsibilities and raise their household income.

Funded by Government Equality Office, Timewise has surveyed over a thousand potential ‘women returners’, and asked them what has happened to their careers after taking a career break, and what they want now.
Through our division Women like Us we provide frontline support over 500 parents in London each year to find work or progress in work that they can combine with family responsibilities. Our social impact analysis highlights that our services lift 82% of our clients out of poverty through better quality flexible jobs, of whom 98% are women and two thirds are from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

Our activity generates over £500,000 economic impact to families and the state each year and our innovative approach has influenced both business and government policy at regional and national levels.

**Evidence Submission:**

1. The gender pay gap is at its greatest between full time men and part time women. Part-time workers earn less per hour than their full-time counterparts at every level of qualification. The differences in pay levels between part and full-time workers are largely due to different occupational composition.

2. The majority of women with children in the UK want to work part time or flexibly to fit with their caring responsibilities. Timewise recent research on women returners, funded by Government Equality Office, found that 70% of women returning to work after having children wanted a job with flexibility and only 13% want a full time job.

3. Women choose part time roles so that they can fit around their caring responsibilities, but this means choosing from a small pool of externally advertised flexible roles, concentrated in the low paying occupations and sectors, such as cleaning, caring and retail.

4. The lack of quality flexible jobs in the recruitment market limits women’s options and is a significant contributor to the pay gap for women over 40. Timewise Foundations recent Flexible Jobs Index research, funded by Joseph Rowntree Foundation, provides new data into the state of the flexible jobs market. **It highlighted that only 6% of quality (over £20,000 FTE) job vacancies are advertised with some sort of flexibility.**

5. This compares to over 96% of employers who state they offer some sort of flexible working. The distinctions is that employers either
only consider creating jobs on a flexible or part time basis if there has historically been done that way, i.e. specific sectors such as retail, care or if an individual employee has asked for flexibility.

6. The lack of quality flexible jobs advertised implicates the earning thresholds of women in two ways:

- Women have to trade down and take lower paid roles that offer the flexibility they require, these jobs are typically in low paying sectors such as care and retail, women are working below their potential and have traded down their skills in return for flexibility they require. Nearly half of women working in part time work are over qualified for their job (1)
- The lack of quality jobs available for flexible workers to move into causes a bottleneck for the 5.4 million workers wanting flexibility. Timewise Research, shows that 77% of workers with flexibility in their existing jobs feel ‘trapped’ in their current role. This lack of job mobility for flexible workers is a major factor in the failure of the female talent pipeline.

7. Timewise is calling for more employers to embrace flexible hiring as well as flexible working. This means that an employer will openly advertise a job to be considered on a flexible basis (on either hours or location) from day one, rather than waiting the statutory 26 weeks.

8. Employers looking specifically for actions to take on tackling low pay should consider unlocking intermediary level roles to flexibility as an aid to career progression. This would have a positive impact on women in part-time low paid work who currently opt out of progressing as they cannot retain the flexibility they need in roles at the next level up.

**Conclusions:**

To support this Timewise calls for the government to act in the following ways:

- There is a need for government at all levels to invest in demand side interventions to stimulate more employer awareness and action on the benefits of flexible job re-design and flexible hiring, as a way to attract, retain and progress the talent of women at all levels.
To demonstrate leadership by routinely advertising its own quality vacancies as open to flexibility at national, devolved, regional and local levels. This will enable government to realise the benefits of attracting and retaining talent, and to champion the benefits of flexible hiring from experience.

**BIO: Emma Stewart MBE, Joint CEO and Founder of Timewise Foundation**

- Listed as one of the UK’s ‘social entrepreneurs to watch’ by Real Business magazine and listed as one of the ‘UK’s Top Radical thinkers’ by the Guardian and Nesta, Emma Stewart MBE is the co-founder and Joint CEO of Timewise Foundation ([timewise.co.uk](http://timewise.co.uk)), and also Women Like Us.

Timewise is the multi award winning social business building a visible jobs market for people who need good quality flexible jobs, and represents 70,000 people. Emma’s focus is on supporting low-to-middle income parents to find work to fit with family and raise their living standards.

- Emma regularly engages with government to help shape policy in relation to mothers, work, gender inequality and child poverty. She is a member of the London LEP Skills and Employment Board, and currently chairs the London Child Poverty Alliance. She has previously co-chaired the Department for Work and Pensions’ Family Friendly Working Hours taskforce, and has contributed to numerous reports and initiatives to improve women’s participation in the workplace.

- Most recently, she put the issue of flexible hiring on the wider industry agenda with the launch of the [Timewise Flexible Jobs Index](http://timewise.co.uk), featuring in the Daily Telegraph, Times, Guardian, Management Today and more. Prior to Timewise, Emma enjoyed a successful career in documentary production and as a freelance business development consultant.

7 December 2015

1. **Schuller 2011 'Gender and Skills in a changing Economy, UKCES**