Quality part-time work: an evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund

Clare Lyonette and
Beate Baldauf

Institute for
Employment Research,
University of Warwick

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Executive summary

The UK has one of the highest levels of part-time working in Europe, and many women with young children work part time to combine work and caring responsibilities. In spite of regulations relating to the employment of part-time workers, evidence shows that there is a significant pay gap between women working full time and women working part time, caused mainly by the different jobs in which they are employed (Manning and Petrongolo, 2008). There is also a continuing gender pay gap, with women working part time faring particularly badly in relation to men, most of whom work full time. The Women and Work Commission (2006) and other researchers (e.g. Grant et al., 2005) have identified that there are fewer part-time jobs available in higher-level occupations, meaning that many highly qualified women are crowding into lower-level, part-time jobs, which represents a waste of skills and experience. There is further UK evidence that women become stuck in these lower-level jobs, in spite of the fact that many would prefer to return to full-time work at a later stage, and that both career and earnings are negatively affected (e.g. Connolly and Gregory, 2008).

In response to the recommendations outlined in the Women and Work Commission report *Shaping a Fairer Future* (2006), the Government agreed to establish and run a Quality Part-time Work Fund. Twelve projects, covering a broad range of sectors and organisations of different sizes, received funding to "support new initiatives aimed at achieving a culture change, so that more senior jobs [particularly in the skilled occupations and the professions] are more open to part-time and flexible working" (Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), 2009: 31). This report details the evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme, which involved in-depth interviews and focus groups with project managers, part-time workers, human resources (HR) representatives and line managers of part-time workers in the pilot organisations. Case studies of each pilot project were written up, and the main measures and outcomes, as well as costs and benefits, and good or promising practice, were highlighted.

Key findings

- Initial, detailed research is essential in identifying occupation-specific issues and where organisational efforts should be focused, in relation to the increased provision and improvement of quality part-time work.
- Training of line managers is vital in promoting increases in quality part-time work and other forms of flexible working; toolkits and other resources can be effectively used to help employees and managers, and a dual approach leads to better outcomes.
- The identification and promotion of senior part-time workers is an important tool for employers, managers and employees to demonstrate how it can be done; pilot organisations using case studies in their methodological approach were also those which said that this acted as a key facilitator to the success of the overall project.

- Available part-time opportunities need to be advertised more widely, both internally and externally, and organisations should target potential quality part-time employees in hard-to-reach groups. In order to recruit from a wider talent pool and to increase diversity, advertisements need to state explicitly that jobs can be done on a job-share or a part-time basis, rather than leaving it up to the individual applicant to negotiate reduced hours.

- Organisations with a recognised need for part-time workers are more likely to embrace and actively encourage the increased provision of quality part-time work.

- Organisations have the potential to increase quality part-time working during the recession but other priorities and cost-cutting measures may effectively block any major new strategies to promote flexible working.

- The major costs (potential or actual) of introducing quality part-time work, which were highlighted by the respondents, were the extra training and management required, and the need for effective communication between part-time workers, colleagues and line managers.

- The major benefits highlighted were increased commitment and loyalty, improved retention and work satisfaction, and reduced sickness and absenteeism. In all cases, benefits outweighed costs or at least costs and benefits were in balance.[1]

[1] This is based on anecdotal evidence, rather than any available 'hard' data.

1. Introduction

This research report has been prepared as part of the 'Improving understanding of 'quality' part-time work' research project, commissioned from the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick by the Government Equalities Office (GEO).

1.1 Why do we need research on quality part-time work?

The UK has one of the highest levels of part-time working in Europe, and many women with young children work part time in order to combine work and caring responsibilities. Nearly half (45%) of working women and 13% of working men are currently in part-time employment, and there is a steady and consistent rise in the proportion of women working part time, according to the number of children aged under 16 within the household.[2] In spite of regulations relating to the employment of part-time workers, evidence shows that there is a significant pay gap between women working full time and women working part time, caused mainly by the different jobs in which they are employed (Manning and Petrongolo, 2008). There is also a continuing gender pay gap, with women working part time faring particularly badly in relation to men, most of whom work full time. The Women and Work Commission (2006) and other researchers (e.g. Grant et al., 2005) have identified that there are fewer part-time jobs available in higher-level occupations, meaning that many highly qualified women are crowding into lower-level jobs ('occupational downgrading'), which represents a waste of skills and experience. Up to 29% of women from professional and corporate management jobs, and up to 40% in intermediate level jobs, downgrade when moving to part-time work, a figure that increases when women also move employer (Connolly and Gregory, 2008). There is further UK evidence that women become stuck in these lower-level part-time jobs, in spite of the fact that many would prefer to return to full-time work at a later stage, and that both career and earnings are negatively affected (e.g. Connolly and Gregory, 2008). In response to this accumulating evidence, the Government made a commitment to supporting employers to create more high quality part-time and flexible posts (CLG, 2006; GEO, 2010).

1.2 What is 'quality' part-time work?

A crucial part of the strategy aimed at increasing the availability of better quality part-time jobs involved an initial examination of what is meant by 'quality' part-time work. A critical review of existing definitions of quality part-time work led to a revised working definition (for more detailed information, see Lyonette et al., 2010). The evidence review showed that there are few relevant documents that *explicitly* define 'quality' part-time work in either theoretical or empirical terms, and that any operationalisations of quality part-time work are context-dependent (which was demonstrated particularly in evidence from the US).

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[2] Labour Force Survey data, 2009.

Drawing on the previous international literature, the working definition of quality part-time work focuses on four key areas (Box 1).

> **Box 1: Proposed working definition of quality part-time work**
>
> Quality part-time work:
>
> 1. provides the same (pro-rata) terms and conditions, development and progression opportunities as comparable full-time work;
>
> 2. enables the job-holder to maintain (or enhance) his or her skills;
>
> 3. enables the achievement of an acceptable work–life balance, meeting the needs of both employer and employee; and
>
> 4. where a business case can be made, provides the opportunity to increase the number of hours to full-time work, if desired, at the same or a higher job level.

Ideally, quality part-time work should fulfil all these criteria, but it is acknowledged that the working definition has an aspirational element, certainly with regard to the opportunity to reduce hours and increase them again at a later stage, as it is recognised that this will be dependent on both business needs and the current financial situation. In reality, there may be different types of part-time working edging towards the ideal, e.g.:

- 'retention' jobs (Tilly, 1996), which clearly meet criterion 2, but may not meet criterion 1 fully, as the job may not provide the same progression opportunities as for full-time workers; or
- where people have voluntarily or involuntarily taken up a part-time job below their skill level, i.e. criterion 2 has not been met, but the job itself may well meet criterion 1.

1.3 What are the key issues that need to be addressed?

A review of the evidence on quality part-time work revealed that the majority of studies focus on lower-level part-time jobs, primarily as a result of the types of jobs that women regularly move into when reducing their hours, and a lack of part-time jobs at more senior levels. Due to the lack of research into part-time work at higher occupational levels, and because of the need to identify what should be done to promote 'quality' part-time work across all occupational sectors, the review therefore focused on studies that include assessments of part-time professionals and senior staff. It is intended, however, that the implications of our review can be extrapolated to those in other part-time jobs.

In spite of the minimal evidence, a number of key themes relating to the 'quality' of part-time work emerge from the literature. These themes are as follows:

- **Reversibility between full- and part-time work**: many women working part time end up in lower-level jobs with little opportunity for progression; enabling women to move back into full-time work or allowing them to increase their part-time hours, if desired, would help to avoid this.

- **Retaining skill levels and experience**: evidence shows that women who return to work part time after having children tend to move into female-dominated sectors where jobs tend to be at a lower level and less well paid. If more jobs were opened up on a part-time basis at senior levels, women working part time would stand a greater chance of retaining their skills and experiences and moving up the career ladder, and employers would be less likely to lose vital talent.

- **Access to training and development**: although women overall appear to receive more training than men, women working part time do not receive as much training as similar women working full time.

- **Access to promotion**: women working part time are less likely than full-time workers to receive training and development opportunities, and will also have less relevant work experience if working part time for longer periods, which will impact on opportunities for promotion. Negative perceptions of part-time workers, by colleagues and by line managers, also present a barrier to women's progression.

- **Internal communication and consultation**: evidence suggests that all part-time workers (where the data allow for comparisons, this appears to affect women in particular) are less likely to be consulted about work-related matters than full-time workers, even at higher levels. There can also be reported communication problems between part-time workers and managers; for part-time workers who may already be absent for some meetings and training courses, good communication with colleagues and managers may be doubly important.

- **Job content – assigned tasks**: some research, in specific occupational sectors, suggests that women working part time are given different, less challenging tasks and roles to similar full-time workers, and that this practice is not only common in male-dominated occupations, but also in highly feminised occupations.

- **Workload and perceived commitment**: research into female part-time workers suggests that some managers view part-time workers as less committed or motivated than full-time workers, especially where being present in the office is desirable and positively evaluated.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, as other occupation-specific issues are likely to be important. However, our aim was to provide a comprehensive list of issues that represent female part-time workers across different sectors, and so the most important themes were drawn out from the literature. Each theme has been identified as a potential problem for women who move into part-time work, and all clearly need to be addressed in order to improve the experiences of part-time employees, both in the short term and in the longer term.

1.4 What is this research about?

This report details the major part of the overall research undertaken, which was to provide an evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme, funded by the Government to help support employers in creating more high quality part-time and flexible posts.

1.5 Structure of the report

The report begins by describing the individual projects involved in the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme and then moves on to provide a synthesis of the evidence. Detailed sections are included to compare and contrast the measures taken, the main outcomes, the costs and benefits of quality part-time work and any good or promising practice emerging from the pilot projects.

2. The Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme

In the Women and Work Commission report *Shaping a Fairer Future* (2006), it was recognised that women often face penalties if they take time out of the labour market to care for family members or if they work part time or flexibly in order to balance caring with work responsibilities, and that there were few part-time jobs available at more senior levels. In response to the report's recommendations, the Government agreed to establish and run a Quality Part-time Work Fund. Twelve projects, covering a broad range of sectors and organisations of different sizes, received funding from a pot of £500,000 to "support new initiatives aimed at achieving a culture change, so that more senior jobs [particularly in the skilled occupations and the professions] are more open to part-time and flexible working" (CLG, 2009: 31). Projects were funded for one to two years and varied from small projects (£15,000 or less) to large projects of over £60,000 (see Table 2.1). Funding for most projects ended in April 2008, with the last two ending in December 2008 and March 2009 respectively.

For the purpose of this initiative, a 'quality' part-time post was defined as a management position or one earning the full-time equivalent of over £20,000 per year.

Table 2.1: The pilot organisations and the focus of individual pilot projects

Organisation	Individual pilot project's objectives	Amount of funding awarded
Flexworks (initially named Equals One Recruitment)	Develop an online Jobs Board for quality part-time or job-share posts	Large
Working Families	Develop case studies and a toolkit for employers and employees	Medium/large
Youth Action	Develop case studies on black and minority ethnic part-time role models and a toolkit for employers and employees	Medium/large
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Increase the number of part-time posts overall and help to fill 'service-critical' posts within the local authority	Medium/large
Medical Women's Federation	Conduct research and publish a report on part-time work and training in the medical profession	Medium/large
Kellogg's	Develop a coaching programme and women's network for senior part-time women	Medium/large
Royal Mail	Increase recruitment and employment of part-time management posts	Medium
Workers' Educational Association – West Midlands	Conduct research on flexible working within the Workers' Educational Association, feeding into revised management practices throughout the organisation	Medium
Swindon Borough Council	Increase communication between part-time workers and managers and produce case studies of part-time workers for managers and employees	Small

Organisation	Individual pilot project's objectives	Amount of funding awarded
Wisework	Develop a toolkit for managers and employees on part-time work	Small
Tesco	Develop a women's network and organise events	Small
Durham Constabulary	Conduct research on the barriers to senior part-time working for women in the police force	Small

Legend
Small: £15,000 or less
Medium: £15,001 to 30,000
Medium/large: £30,001 to 60,000
Large: more than £60,000

3. Research aims and methods

As part of the conditions of funding, the nominated project managers for each of the pilots were asked to report back on how their individual projects had gone and to provide reports, setting out key findings. To build on these reports, the Women and Work Commission requested a more in-depth evaluation of the individual pilot projects, in order to identify what had been achieved and what were the lessons to be learned. The evaluation was commissioned in August 2009, five months after the last of the pilot projects was completed, and the research was conducted between August 2009 and February 2010.

3.1 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were:

- to examine the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot projects;
- to identify, review and synthesise the evidence, with relation to the key measures implemented and the main outcomes, as well as any barriers and facilitators to success; and
- to identify good or promising practice emerging from the pilot projects.

3.2 Methods

It was initially noted that many of the pilots did not expressly set out to create new part-time posts, but to help change organisational 'culture' via various means (e.g. by creating a recruitment website or a women's network). For this reason, the researchers adopted a flexible approach to the evaluation. For a more detailed overview of the methodology, see Annex A.1.

All project managers in the 12 pilot organisations were initially contacted by email and/or telephone, informing them about the purpose and the methods of the study and asking for their co-operation. The evaluation involved a series of telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews and focus groups. All interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded, with the permission of those concerned, and the researchers wrote up detailed notes afterwards. The interviews were carried out on the basis of a semi-structured interview guide (see the example in Annex A.1). Any reports written about the pilot initiatives and any relevant organisational data were also requested from individual project managers.

The Institute for Employment Research team succeeded in making contact with 11 of the 12 pilot organisations: 26 interviews and three focus groups with key employees were conducted during the fieldwork phase of the research. Table 3.1 presents a breakdown of the interviews and focus groups conducted and the extra information collected.

Table 3.1: Evidence base for the evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme

	Interviews					Total no. of interviews	Focus group	Additional material
	PM	**LM**	**PT**	**HR**	**Others**			
Flexworks	1					1		R
Working Families	1					1		R
Youth Action	1					1		
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	1	1	1	1		4	1 (LMs of PTs)	✳
Medical Women's Federation	1					1		R
Kellogg's	1		1			2		✳
Royal Mail	1	2	1	1		5	1 (PT managers)	✳
Workers' Educational Association	1				1	2		R
Swindon Borough Council	1		1	1		3		✳
Wisework	1				1	2		
Tesco								
Durham Constabulary			4			4	1 (PTs)	✳
No. of interviews	**10**	**3**	**8**	**3**	**2**	**26**	**3**	

Legend:

PM: Project manager	HR: Human resources representative
LM: Line manager	✳: PM's evaluation report, statistical data, etc.
PT: Part-time employee	R: (research) reports produced as part of the pilot

3.3 Limitations of the research

The research process did not allow for a full assessment of 'before/after' data, given that the evaluation was commissioned more than five months after the end of the final pilot project. However, given the different focus of many of the projects and the primarily qualitative methodology employed, this would not have been a suitable strategy. Where possible, we collected data on how far the pilot project made a difference or added value in terms of the overall project aims. As many of the projects focused on changing organisational culture, the impact of this may not be seen for some time.

We made attempts, when possible, to interview several representatives within the organisation in order to avoid unsubstantiated data. However, some of the individual project findings were based on anecdotal evidence provided by a single interviewee, with no access provided to additional data sources, and must therefore be treated with caution. Where additional data were provided at an organisational level, they are generally not stratified by full-time/part-time status, making them difficult to interpret (see also Individual pilot limitations at Annex A.1).

3.4 Anonymity of research participants

Throughout this research, we carried out interviews and focus groups with employees from various organisations. Although the identity of the pilot organisations has already been made public, we have made all attempts to anonymise any sensitive data provided by the respondents.

4. Aims, approaches and main outcomes of the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilots

This chapter outlines each of the pilot programmes, giving details of the issues they aimed to address within the remit of increasing/improving quality part-time work, as well as the main findings. The overview covers the 11 organisations where contact with the project manager (PM) was established.

4.1 Flexworks

Background

Flexworks is a recruitment company specialising in flexible working, providing employment services relating to flexible working recruitment; it includes an online jobs board, training and consultancy. At the time of the project it employed three people, all working flexibly. During the evaluation, one telephone interview was conducted with the PM, who also provided feedback forms from clients and further background information.

Issues to be addressed

- A lack of awareness in organisations of the business case and the benefits of flexible working.
- A need to raise awareness and to "try and drive behaviour by actually offering a solution" (PM).
- A need to encourage organisations to advertise all their jobs as being open to flexible working, and to create a thriving environment where part-time work is seen as a key strategy for employers to attract and retain quality staff.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To set up a jobs board or a specialist jobs service, with a specific focus on higher-level job share/ part-time job creation and achieving fulfilling permanent part-time job placements.

Approach

- To approach at least 2,000 employers.
- To engage at least 200 employers.
- To actively support part-time job seekers.
- To achieve at least 50 successful job-share matches/part-time placements.
- To disseminate best practice and case studies widely around the UK.

Main outcomes

- Engagement of 380 employers (against a target of 200), posting 1,124 vacancies on the website.
- An average of 10 applicants per vacancy.

- 1,320 individuals registered or applied, directly benefiting from the project: 67% were women (885) and 33% men (435).[3]
- Anecdotal information was provided from clients that these were quality candidates and that their talent pool has been widened.
- Other employers' feedback suggests that they have found useful, in particular, the dissemination of information via a conference and regular newsletters.
- A high level of media interest, including an appearance on the BBC programme 'Working Lunch' and working in partnership with *The Independent* newspaper to produce a Flexible Working supplement.

Additional findings

In spite of their overall success in engaging good quality part-time employees, Flexworks noted that the one key thing learned from the pilot was that "there were not that many companies that were ready" for their approach (PM). These organisations needed to "go back a step" and get support to recognise the business case for flexible working. In particular, the PM highlighted the need for operational managers to receive training in how to manage part-time and other flexible workers.

4.2 Working Families

Background

Working Families is a voluntary organisation providing a helpline and legal advice, primarily for low-income families with issues surrounding work–life balance, maternity leave, etc. The organisation employs around 17 people, mostly combining flexible or part-time working. A face-to-face interview was conducted with the PM and copies of the *Hours to Suit* reports were provided for the research team.

Issues to be addressed

- A recognised need to focus on a culture change within organisations, with regard to part-time and flexible working, with top-level examples required to act as role models.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To stimulate a measurable culture change in participating organisations.
- To provide a focus on jobs at higher occupational levels with identifiable and personal 'How I did it' evidence of senior employees reducing their hours in City organisations and in public sector organisations.
- To increase the evidence available to employers and employees in other organisations to argue cases for flexible working and to challenge barriers to reduced-hours working.
- To provide a practical toolkit for managers.
- To disseminate the findings widely.

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[3] The PM noted that the purpose of the website was to introduce the candidate to the employer by forwarding CVs but that they do not get involved in the interviewing and placement processes. For this reason, it was not possible to say exactly how many people were successfully placed with an employer via the register.

Approach

- To publish two sets of case study reports from both the private and public sectors, to include:
  - 20 case studies from each sector;
  - comparative public and private sector analysis;
  - a summary of the business case for better work–life integration at senior levels;
  - a survey of 100 senior people working flexibly.
- To launch the programme via a national 'Hours to Suit' conference.
- To develop an online, interactive 're-tune' toolkit to guide senior workers through assessing the options for part-time working while retaining their career progression and status, and to support senior managers in considering and welcoming such proposals, enabling them to maximise the benefits for the employer.

Main outcomes

- Good dissemination and feedback: currently around 200 users per month[4] were accessing the case study and toolkit area of the website; human resources (HR) interest in developing the resources within their own organisations, with some still asking for examples of part-time and flexible working in senior roles.
- The input of the private sector is important; the case studies in large global organisations are potentially transferable examples of good practice.
- Individual examples were posted online which made them less of a "static" resource (PM).
- Survey results highlighted key issues from quality part-time workers' point of view, to be considered by management and HR in large organisations.

Additional findings

In terms of dissemination, the private sector conference was large and well received: Cherie Blair attended and case study individuals were interviewed. The public sector conference was also well attended, but it was felt that there was less of an impact than in the private sector (PM).

The involvement of Lehman Brothers had a large impact on the private sector, leading to what the PM described as "a snowball effect" with the big players, especially global employers. There was some difficulty in getting small and medium-sized enterprises to take part, with a reluctance on the part of many to believe that findings from larger companies can be extrapolated to those with fewer employees and resources.

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[4] The interview with the PM was conducted in October 2009.

4.3 Youth Action

Background

Youth Action is a charity that works primarily with young people aged 18–25, focusing specifically on those from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, on issues such as training and employment opportunities, volunteering, skills-based opportunities, etc. It also runs an adult programme for volunteers who want to work with young people. The charity employs 11 members of staff and also has over 120 volunteers. One telephone interview was conducted with the PM for the evaluation.[5]

Issues to be addressed

- A recognised need to focus on young women, especially those who might have children at a young age (BME backgrounds).
- A focus on re-engagement in employment, where family expectations for women not to work after having children or to look after older people presented specific problems.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To contribute to the programme from a "non-London based… local perspective" (PM).
- To acknowledge that lots of social and economic factors had to be considered within the BME community.
- To provide advice via a website for employers on how to target BME groups.
- To help and support women from BME backgrounds to re-engage with employment by running workshops, some of which were attended by senior female role models.

Approach

- To identify senior female Asian or Muslim role models (these could be any age, but had to have had some reason for approaching their employer to change working hours, e.g. due to childcare or eldercare responsibilities).
- To run a series of workshops for young women which were attended by the role models, so that the younger women could learn from them (both good and bad experiences). The workshops focused more broadly on skills, CVs, jobs, personal issues, aspirations, etc.
- To design a marketing campaign to raise the profile of the programme.
- To develop a website toolkit for employers and employees, designed in part by a small group of the young women taking part.
- To single out specific individuals and identify gaps in their skill levels, and to approach local colleges (acting as a broker) to ask for support, e.g. to get re-engaged, or top up on skills to get back on the career ladder.

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[5] No other supporting evidence was provided, and it proved impossible to set up further interviews with some of the young women on the programme.

Main outcomes

- The PM reported that the launch of the toolkit attracted much interest from public and private sector organisations, leading to a review of family-friendly policies and recruitment. This, however, represents the subjective view of the PM, as no other supporting evidence was available.
- Increased self-confidence in women from BME backgrounds, when specific positive examples were provided (PM).
- A regular self-help group run at the charity.
- Women who were involved in the programme are now acting as role models, for example going out into the community to identify and talk to other people in similar situations.

4.4 East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Background

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is one of the largest unitary authorities in the country, serving a predominantly rural population of 330,000. Most Council employees work in schools (9,000 out of 14,000), with a 75:25 female to male split. In the non-schools workforce, there is about a 65:35 female to male split. Four face-to-face interviews were carried out with the PM, an HR representative, a part-time employee and a line manager of part-time employees. A focus group was also held with a group of six line managers at a later date.

Issues to be addressed

- Recognised difficulties with recruitment and retention in 'service-critical' areas, for example a struggle to recruit senior school staff, and problems with retaining social work and social care workers.
- A need to get the message out that there were many part-time job opportunities within the Council.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To identify specific service-critical areas.
- To increase the number of part-time workers overall, by wider dissemination of job opportunities and by encouraging greater acceptance among line managers.

Approach

- To identify problem areas.
- To promote existing part-time opportunities, for example attending careers events or improving the intranet.
- To sell the message about flexible working both internally (to managers within the council) and externally (to the future workforce).
- To think more creatively about job design, for example job-sharing head-teacher posts or amalgamating roles into longer part-time posts, and to encourage managers to think 'outside the box' when a particular role is about to be advertised.
- To monitor outcomes, for example a workforce satisfaction survey or looking at absenteeism rates.

Main outcomes

- An increase from 55% to 57% working part time across the Council over two years (excluding casual workers), representing around 600 new part-time jobs.[6]
- A clearer recruitment website and intranet.
- All managers are now being asked to consider if a particular role could be covered by a part-time worker, or whether or not there is a different way of doing things.
- Managers are becoming more accepting of part-time work, which was apparent in their workforce planning and service plans.
- Absenteeism and sickness rates have fallen consistently every year, and happiness and satisfaction are greater (but these findings could not be stratified by full-time/part-time status).

Additional findings

The focus group with line managers also highlighted that managers were very much aware of the need for part-time workers within the council, especially in service-critical areas. Active efforts were being made to "find new models", for example schools coming together under one head-teacher. Other ideas included allowing one head-teacher to go part time either to manage his/her retirement or to take up other responsibilities on a part-time basis, keeping their school duties also on a part-time basis, and for another (more junior) co-head to "step up"; this person could then work part time in both roles, providing lots of advantages, including having someone ready to take on the full-time headship when necessary.

Development and skills training were generally available to all, including those at lower grades, e.g. 'Smart Moves', a training programme including IT that was geared more towards lower-grade staff. Where possible, opportunities for part-time workers to engage with training were facilitated by managers, for example by dividing staff into two groups (trainees and workers) and swapping over at lunchtime, if only a half-day course. However, it could not be verified whether or not these changes and new ways of thinking had come about directly as a result of the pilot programme.

4.5 Medical Women's Federation

Background

The Medical Women's Federation is the largest organisation of women doctors, with a membership of about 1,200 female doctors and medical students. It has charitable status and aims "to advance the personal and professional development of women in medicine, to change discriminatory attitudes and practices and to work on behalf of patients". More and more women are studying medicine, now accounting for 40% of the medical workforce, yet they only make up 27% of consultants. For the evaluation, one face-to-face interview was conducted with the PM.

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[6] The focus of this pilot project was to increase all part-time jobs across the Council, so this figure includes lower-level occupational posts, as well as higher-level jobs.

Issues to be addressed

Having heard discontented views about part-time work in the medical profession, the Medical Women's Federation wanted to explore this further by conducting a piece of research that would stand up to scrutiny and would be able to drill down further into the issues.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- An interest in looking into part-time training and working, which is very pertinent to the female workforce.
- To get as wide a view as possible of what people on the ground thought was working, what was not, and what recommendations would need to be taken forward for the future.

Approach

- To conduct a qualitative study, involving 60 telephone interviews and four focus groups with doctors currently working part time. Of the participants in the study, 90% were female and 20% were members of the Medical Women's Federation. A researcher was commissioned to conduct the research.
- To produce a full-length report and a summary.
- To host a launch event to present the report's findings to key stakeholders.

Main outcomes

- A report providing in-depth insight into the experiences of doctors working or training part time with regard to attitudes to part-time work, part-time training posts, part-time career grade posts and career development; suggestions on how to address these issues; and recommendations that would need to be taken forward by key stakeholders. The research "really gave substance" to part-time training and working (PM), as little research to date has focused specifically on this area.
- Widespread dissemination of the report findings: 750 copies of the summary report were distributed to key stakeholders and interested parties (deaneries and the Royal Colleges, as well as individual doctors, managers and HR directors with an interest in part-time working) and the project dissemination event was attended by 50 key influencers.
- The study was reported by the PM to have had real benefits and "has been taken extremely seriously", including the use of the findings for further work.
- Ongoing informal dissemination of the results of the study.

4.6 Kellogg's

Background

Kellogg's is a large food manufacturer of cereals and snacks. In the UK, there are approximately 2,000 employees, ranging from skilled craftspeople to administrative and support staff. There are three UK sites; more men work in manufacturing, but there is a more balanced male/female split in other areas. A telephone interview was conducted with one of the employees originally involved in the programme (PM rep), as the PM has since left for a job overseas. A further telephone interview was conducted with one of the female part-time workers on the coaching programme.

Issues to be addressed

- A recognition that women were not coming through into senior levels of the organisation; the organisation wanted to retain and nurture the best talent within the organisation.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- How to support high-potential women: the project acted as "a fact-finding mission" as to why women were not progressing to higher levels (PM rep).
- To garner information via coaching/counselling sessions on more effective working and time management.
- To identify the barriers to moving up for these women, and what was stopping them from taking on a bigger role.

Approach

- To identify senior women who were currently working (or wanting to work) part time.
- To hold six one-to-one coaching sessions with four senior women and a facilitator.
- To encourage the women to remain as a network to share their experiences and understandings.
- At the end of the session, to ask each woman to fill in a feedback form.
- To provide each woman with books and website details for continued support.

Main outcomes

- All women valued the coaching and those who took part wished the coaching to be rolled out to all senior part-time women (although other organisational priorities meant that this has not taken place).
- The women became more comfortable in challenging their managers; the pilot helped them to manage their workload and to delegate appropriately.
- Those taking part then coached their managers in turn to show how it could work and also coached other people in their departments. They became "positive role models".
- There is still some resistance to part-time workers but "capability" is accepted as important. According to the PM rep, part-time working is becoming more accepted; although it is important to recognise that this only represents one person's view.
- People are more aware of diversity and the need to recruit talent to be a successful business.

Additional findings

The senior part-time worker who was interviewed commented that, as a consequence of having a few more senior women such as herself working part time, more women at junior levels were returning from maternity leave and asking for part-time work. She felt that the way you change things is by "being in the business and doing it" (part-time employee).

She further commented that, despite this positive development, higher-level jobs within the organisation were harder to find on a part-time basis in the UK (although Europe-wide, there are now more women in management positions than previously). When asked, she said that if she saw a job that she wanted to go for, she would apply for a full-time post and then try to negotiate it to part-time hours. In line with evidence identified within the literature, she also felt that reducing working hours was seen as compromising one's career.

4.7 Royal Mail

Background

Royal Mail provides a national postal service and employs around 160,000 people. The workforce is predominantly male (84%). Interviews were conducted with the PM, an HR representative and two line managers in one of the three pilot sites. In addition, a focus group was held in the same pilot site with four part-time managers recruited during the pilot programme.

Issues to be addressed

- A lack of senior part-time posts overall, and women not progressing into more senior roles.
- How to provide new part-time workers with the opportunities to progress into management in the same way as full-time workers.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

Royal Mail identified an opportunity to create part-time management roles as a result of changes in customer demand, fluctuating work flows across a 24-hour period, and the introduction of new technology. Royal Mail also recognised that there was an appetite in the working population for good quality part-time working opportunities, particularly within the female labour force.

Approach

- To create nine part-time management roles in two pilot sites, thus achieving a 10% part-time management quota across these sites. Due to the interest among Royal Mail staff in the pilot programme and the demand for such posts, the number of part-time management posts advertised internally and externally rose to 22 across three sites.
- To target women in particular (drawing on the results of specially commissioned research, the advertisements were designed to appeal to women and were also published on websites of specific interest to women).
- To provide training and support for part-time managers (training programme offered on a part-time basis, mentoring) and line managers (half-day briefing sessions aimed at equipping them to work with part-time, rather than full-time, managers).
- To develop career paths for part-time managers.
- To evaluate the impact these posts make on the rest of the team and their targets.
- To expand across other regions if the evaluation is positive.

Main outcomes

- 341 people expressed an interest in the roles and 231 completed full applications, including 101 women (44%).
- 17 people were offered a permanent part-time management position (nine women, eight men), exceeding the original target of nine posts. All but two are still working as part-time managers, including one currently on maternity leave.
- Royal Mail successfully convinced operational managers to participate in the pilot programme to help facilitate progression into part-time managerial roles.
- Feedback from the programme was generally positive, including training which was deemed to have produced high quality reports and presentations.
- There was uncertainty about expanding quality part-time posts at Royal Mail, in spite of a good business case.

4.8 Workers' Educational Association – West Midlands Region

Background

The Workers' Educational Association, a voluntary organisation founded at the beginning of the 20th century, is the largest provider of adult education in the UK. The Workers' Educational Association – West Midlands Region is one of nine regions in England that are part of the WEA's National Association. It employs a total of 41 staff paid monthly and around 220 sessional tutors, and has a high share of female, part-time working staff in general and also among its managers.

Issues to be addressed

- To assess staff awareness relating to the availability of part-time management positions.
- To explore support structures for sessional tutors interested in management positions.
- To examine whether current part-time managers feel adequately supported in achieving their work–life balance.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- Supporting quality part-time work in adult education, with a particular focus on home-working.

Approach

- Action research to identify any issues around supporting the work–life balance of managers, particularly part-time managers; the study drew on 11 interviews, including all nine women in the West Midlands region currently holding a part-time management position, and two male part-time managers, to allow for some comparison.
- Development of an action plan based on the outcomes of the research:
  - review of workload and job descriptions of all managers within the region;
  - develop the website further and make more use of e-communication;

- development/review of policies (induction, performance management) – this is being aligned with preceding developments at national level;
- mentoring and peer support for new staff, including new managers;
- wider dissemination of all vacancies.

- Providing opportunities for interested sessional tutors to shadow managers.

Main outcomes

- Publication of research report and executive summary (based on a literature review and the interviews).
- Reallocation of tasks and revised job descriptions within the management team, where this proved to be necessary.
- Development and implementation of a staff development programme, including a course for managers on time management and taster sessions for managers wanting to mentor newcomers.
- Reduction in face-to-face meetings of managers through increased use of e-communication.
- Management meeting day moved to midweek when most part-time workers are at work.
- Regular staff appraisals to provide support for career aims.
- Regular monitoring of staff satisfaction (covering staff paid monthly and sessional tutors – in progress).
- Notification of internal vacancies to all staff with an email account (new website with vacancies in progress).

4.9 Swindon Borough Council

Background

Swindon Borough Council is a local authority, employing 8,000 staff in total, 4,430 (54%) of whom work part time, with the greatest proportion working in schools (2,466, or 56% of all part-time workers). Those areas with fewer part-time workers were in Swindon Commercial Services (6%) and business transformation (26%). Three telephone interviews were conducted with the PM, a line manager of part-time workers and a part-time employee. Details were also provided by the Council on the numbers of part-time employees and of case studies posted on the intranet.

Issues to be addressed

A recognised lack of senior part-time role models in the organisation (further up the career ladder, people were more likely to work full time); the Council also wanted to get existing part-time workers' views on what it was like to work for the organisation and to promote the Council via the pilot programme.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To provide an opportunity for current part-time workers to get together and feed back to the senior management team.
- Changing managers' views about part-time workers and improving take-up of flexible working, including senior managers.
- To learn from other organisations.
- To raise customer awareness of available part-time jobs.

Approach

- To examine communication methods within the organisation.
- To develop case studies of part-time workers to be presented on the intranet.
- To increase dissemination of available part-time jobs at the Council (for example attending recruitment fairs).
- To hold focus groups with part-time workers, full-time workers and managers to share experiences.
- To develop action and communication plans to ensure that the programme was broadly implemented.
- To implement an education and development process for managers.

Main outcomes

- The provision of background information to support new ways of working.
- Case studies of part-time workers have been put on the Council intranet to help managers understand how it can work; evidence of good practice about how the organisation supports part-time working.
- The proportion of part-time workers has not significantly increased since the pilot, but flexible working has increased overall and communication has improved.
- People are now thinking differently about those who work part time and are home-working, partly due to the pilot and partly due to the impact of the recession.

Additional findings

A senior part-time worker reported that the pilot programme resulted in improved communication (she has been approached as a positive role model about how she manages in a part-time job), and that it has also raised awareness among managers that there is a large base of people wanting to work part time. The intranet also provides support for people wanting to work part time and lets them know that their managers have been briefed on the issues:

"For me personally, their being such a flexible employer has enabled me to stay. I know that I could go contracting and I could go and work elsewhere but I… always say that I stay here because of the flexibility and it's not always about money… that to me is one of the biggest benefits and you wouldn't get that in all organisations." (Part-time employee)

The Council has implemented several new initiatives, partly in response to New Ways of Working (NWOW), which is currently being rolled out (the pilot programme helped to get this off the ground). Managers are actively being trained to deal with NWOW, and there is also 'Care First', a system where all employees are offered impartial, free advice from a consultant about issues such as how to approach your manager if you want to go part time, the impact of going part time, and worries about the recession.

4.10 Wisework

Background

Wisework is a consultancy that supports organisations wishing to introduce flexible working in order to become more effective. The company employs four consultants (three men and one woman) and all work flexibly. A face-to-face interview was conducted with the PM and a further telephone interview was conducted with a client who had used the '3-Choice' toolkit.

Issues to be addressed

- A recognition of the need for an attitude and culture change within organisations about flexible working.
- Flexible working is also seen primarily as an issue only for working women with children, when it can be beneficial for lots of employees.

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To review organisational and management barriers to flexible working.
- To aid thinking about decisions to change working patterns.
- To promote benefits and plan solutions.

Approach

To produce a toolkit for employers and employees to use, consisting of three elements:

- '3-Choice' – a discussion facilitation tool to help leaders/trainers run a workshop that explores organisational thinking about part-time and flexible working, including any specific issues impacting on women's careers;
- a self-evaluation questionnaire for individuals considering part-time working at senior levels;
- a series of up to ten one-page 'fact sheets', each tackling a specific aspect of senior part-time working.

Main outcomes

- The toolkit is still the most accessed part of their website,[7] although it has been difficult to monitor in terms of take-up.
- Short one-page checklists and notes work well, far better than a large book on the subject of flexible working. When supported by short vignettes of individual workers, this helps to get the message across.
- The questionnaire also gets people thinking and responding; it can even help people to decide that flexible working will *not* suit them.
- Previous feedback about '3-Choice' from 12 organisations was almost universally positive, including comments such as "energising and challenging". It is good for organisations that are keen to improve diversity.

Additional findings

The client who was interviewed had hired Wisework to run workshops to advise employees who had been asked to work from home, in a bid to make necessary budget cuts. She highlighted the advantage of impartial, external consultants in explaining an initially unpopular move: "having an independent person, not somebody internally giving a corporate message". She added that somebody was needed who can come in and say "Well, this is what's happening in the big wide world". She was impressed with the Wisework tools, describing the '3-Choice' cards as very useful, "original and relevant".

4.11 Durham Constabulary

Background

Durham Constabulary covers a predominantly rural area, which is concentrated around 12 main towns. There is a low proportion of ethnic minorities relative to the national average. As of March 2007 (latest figures available), there were 1,704 police officers: 1,305 male (76%) and 399 female (23%), and 902 support staff: 373 male (41%) and 529 female (59%). Three telephone interviews and a focus group with part-time workers took place and one written response was received by email. The PM's initial evaluation report was also used, as she was unavailable during the period in which the interview was arranged.

Issues to be addressed

- A recognised under-representation of women within senior police officer posts, specifically in relation to female investigators (there were no part-time workers at inspector level or above).

Focus of the Quality Part-time Work Fund project

- To research the issues relating to the lack of part-time senior women in the police force and increase the number of part-time senior police officer posts, especially investigator roles.
- To achieve a culture change in the way that senior managers view part-time and flexible working.

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[7] The interview with the PM was conducted in November 2009.

Approach

- To produce good practice guidance packs on flexible working and maternity leave.
- To run workshops for senior officers.
- To run consultancy sessions for senior officers.
- To introduce a 'buddying' scheme for female part-time workers.

Main outcomes

The following outcomes are based on the PM's initial evaluation report, but note that this could not be followed up by interviews with staff who were directly or indirectly involved in the pilot programme, as planned (see Limitations and difficulties encountered at Annex A.1). Instead, this report has been supplemented with data from part-time workers at the Constabulary, drawing on a series of interviews and a focus group. It should also be noted that the Constabulary received the smallest amount of funding of all the pilot projects.

- Both men and women still did not feel confident in requesting flexible work, because they believed their managers would say no; and often they do say no (PM).
- There were many difficulties in returning to work after maternity leave, with no induction or recognition of what it means to be absent for up to a year. Suggestions included a notebook or log of small changes that occurred over the year, for example changes to computers or telephone systems.
- There was a recognised need for greater focus on the application of flexible working policies: even though the options exist, in practice they are often not implemented.
- There was also a need for more management training (particularly male middle-management) to increase awareness that those working flexibly can do a job well and that mothers can still be committed workers (PM).
- The research allowed for the establishment of priorities on flexible working.
- Since the focus of the research survey had taken a female-focused perspective, there had been a certain amount of dissatisfaction expressed by men who felt excluded from the research.
- Five Key Actions were recommended to top management (at the time of writing the evaluation report,[8] the PM was waiting to hear about the next step in launching new policies and applying them more thoroughly). This will aim to apply flexible working arrangements across the board to improve consistency, instead of some teams or managers being more open to it than others.
- Uniformed posts are often seen as male, career-level jobs (for example in CID), whereas more women work in staff/support roles. Although there had been an increase in the number of women in senior police positions (from one to three) in the previous year, these women had had to break barriers themselves and be very determined. More support and means to help women progress into those positions was required (PM).

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[8] March 2010.

Additional findings

A female part-time police inspector (previously 'front-line' but now desk-based) and participants in the focus group commented on part-time entitlements in comparison with full-time ones, for example benefits, pension and holiday entitlements are reduced accordingly. One woman argued that she would have to work an extra three years (if she stays at 36 hours per week) before she gets her full pension, in comparison with full-time workers.

There was some discussion about jobs that cannot realistically be done on a part-time basis, e.g. it would be difficult to be a senior female investigator working part-time hours. A detective inspector cannot leave for childcare reasons at a specific time, as they often work late hours, go home for a few hours and then come back if there is an emergency, for example if a murder is reported.

Part-time workers are still "very much the rarity" (part-time worker), and many women see part-time work as career-limiting in the police force. A part-time employee gave an example of one woman currently on maternity leave who is about to come back to work full time as she would see it as a backwards move to go part time. She then commented on "restricted duties" when she was pregnant with her two children: "Both my roles that I carried out when I was pregnant were really rubbish, soul-destroying, not very career-developmental, tortuous." There was no discussion of what she would like to do and no help with career development. "It was very much a case of 'Well, let's quickly make a job up for you'." She later commented that her husband also worked in the police force, working very long hours. She concluded that if they had no children, perhaps she could have been more ambitious and tried to progress. However, even for the next rank, she could not see how she could do the hours which "would be just too unforgiving". "So I think career-wise, my career pretty much stops at this level" (part-time employee, working 36 hours per week).

5. What measures were implemented by the pilot organisations?

In spite of their common aim, the pilot organisations varied in their approaches to the pilot programme, implementing a series of different measures, as described below (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Main measures employed by the pilot organisations

Pilot programme measures	Royal Mail	Medical Women's Federation	Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands)	Durham Constabulary	Kellogg's	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Working Families	Youth Action	Flexworks	Wisework	Swindon Borough Council
Researching the issues	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓
Development of toolkits for assessing the suitability of part-time/flexible working							✓	✓		✓	
Development and dissemination of case studies							✓	✓			
Advertisement of part-time posts and recruitment of part-time staff	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓
Developing/implementing/revising human resources (HR) policies or new advice and guidance to accompany HR policies			✓	✓		✓					
Training and support for part-time managers	✓		✓		✓						
Development of career paths for part-time managers	✓				✓						

5.1 Researching the issues

Seven of the pilot organisations set out to research the issues in relation to their specific project aims and objectives. There were many similarities between Swindon Borough Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council, both local councils with high levels of part-time working, both dependent on part-time workers in many of their front-line services, and both well aware of impending budget cuts as a consequence of the recession. In both councils, the initial stages of the pilot projects involved efforts to identify the main problem areas (for East Riding of Yorkshire Council this related to recruitment and retention issues, while for Swindon Borough Council this entailed an examination of their communication strategies and how part-time workers experienced working at the Council). Swindon Borough Council organised focus groups with part-time workers, full-time workers and line managers in order to share experiences and to feed back information to the senior management team. This method of detailed data gathering also provided good background data to take forward their New Ways of Working initiative, which is currently being implemented.

For the Medical Women's Federation, research was conducted to explore part-time training and working within the medical profession and had already involved the identification of some discontent among female doctors. A series of telephone interviews and focus groups was conducted, which led to the publication of a widely-disseminated report. Royal Mail had also carried out some preliminary research into the lack of part-time women at more senior levels in the organisation (only 8% of managers and 5% of female senior managers were working less than full time at the beginning of the pilot programme, in spite of the fact that 41% of women employed within Royal Mail Letters overall were working in part-time roles). In the initial stages of the project, Royal Mail worked in partnership with an expert consultancy team, conducting extensive external and internal research to identify the major problems and the most effective ways in which to target female part-time managers. Durham Constabulary had also found, in their research into the problems with women progressing in the police force, that there were still some traditional attitudes surrounding part time work, and that working part-time is still seen by women themselves as career-limiting, although to a lesser degree in the more female-dominated support staff side of the Constabulary.

Having been aware of anecdotal evidence that some part-time managers were finding it difficult to achieve their work–life balance, the Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands) researched the issue in more depth, drawing on interviews with 11 part-time managers in the West Midlands region (nine women and two men). These results fed into an action plan, which included a strategic review of management roles and responsibilities. Taking a different approach to the programme, Youth Action had recognised that women from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds often married young and became disengaged from the labour market (see also Lyonette et al., 2010), partly due to cultural issues surrounding the acceptability of work or the expectation by others of women's availability to care for children and older relatives. They also identified that employers need to take a 'pro-active' approach to job advertising, for example targeting specific publications where people from BME backgrounds might be job-hunting, such as BME niche publications.

5.2 Development of toolkits for assessing the suitability of part-time/flexible working

Three organisations designed practical solutions to increase and improve the take-up of part-time and flexible working options, for use by employers and employees. For Wisework, this involved a three-part toolkit, based on previous successful tools designed to promote flexible working. Specifically, the toolkit used '3-Choice' cards, which involve the discussion of dilemmas printed on a pack of cards, a self-evaluation questionnaire for individuals to work through in order to work out if flexible working would suit them, and a series of fact sheets tackling specific issues relating to senior part-time work.

Working Families designed a similar resource: an online, interactive toolkit for both managers and senior employees. For employees, this involved an assessment of the options for part-time working while maintaining career and status, whereas for managers the toolkit provided support in considering such proposals from part-time workers. The 're-tune' toolkit was developed to act as a practical resource after the publication of the case study reports, which demonstrated how specific individuals had approached the issue successfully.

Youth Action also designed an online toolkit, which was designed in part by the women involved on the programme. The toolkit was based on interviews and case studies, and included tips for employers and employees.

In spite of the different focus of the three individual pilot organisations, they all recognised the benefits of allowing individual employees who were considering part-time and flexible working to work through the options themselves (in the case of Wisework, the project manager (PM) reported that it often led to people realising that it would not be a practical option for them). They also realised that managers had to be fully involved in the process and that a dual approach, involving both employee and manager, led to more effective outcomes overall.

5.3 Development and dissemination of case studies

As already outlined, Working Families published case studies of senior people working flexibly in both the public and private sectors in two separate reports, *Hours to Suit*, widely disseminated at two conferences. Swindon Borough Council similarly used case studies of part-time staff on their website.

Youth Action also recognised the importance of using case studies of individual women at senior levels to act as role models to others, and senior working women from BME backgrounds came to talk confidentially to young women from similar backgrounds during a series of workshops. The Youth Action website also had specific case study examples for employers and potential employees to read, and the role models attended the pilot programme launch and talked to employers about issues relating to the employment of women from BME backgrounds.

5.4 Advertisement/promotion of part-time posts and recruitment of part-time staff

Six organisations focused on increased advertising and promotion of part-time posts, and/or the recruitment of part-time staff. For the two local authorities, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, there was a similar focus: getting the message across to potential and current employees about the job opportunities available on a part-time basis. This involved the implementation of a similar strategy by both, which included attendance at recruitment and careers fairs and improving the intranet for current employees. In a similar way, vacancies at the Workers' Educational Association (both full time and part time) are now being advertised more widely both regionally and nationally, with email notifications sent out to all Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands) tutors for regional posts. This has been driven forward at national level, in order to facilitate the transition of sessional tutors into managerial positions, but the pilot project helped to promote these issues within the region.

Flexworks worked in partnership with Working Families and the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science and Technology, an area already recognised as having difficulties in retaining well-qualified women (Tomlinson et al., 2009). The Flexworks project set out specifically to create an online jobs register for quality part-time and job-share posts, to be used as a free resource by both potential employees and recruiting employers.

Royal Mail employed a different strategy, deliberately setting out to advertise for, and recruit, part-time managers in three pilot areas, with attempts to target women in particular, in order to change the demographics of operational management. Consultant research had identified that women were more likely to use specific forms of internet advertising to search for jobs, resulting in a widespread campaign. Focus group participants, comprising one female and three male part-time managers who were recruited onto the Royal Mail scheme, agreed that the jobs had been advertised widely, both internally and externally. Internal advertising included the intranet, workplace posters and a roadshow. An external candidate applied for a part-time post after seeing the job advertised in a local newspaper and on the Royal Mail website.

Durham Constabulary also set out to increase recruitment of senior part-time women (background data had shown that there were no part-time women at the rank of inspector or above in senior investigative roles). Overall, there was a much higher proportion of women working on the staff/support side than in police officer roles within the Constabulary. Although there was an increase in the number of women in senior police positions during the project (from one to three), these were not women in part-time positions.

5.5 Developing/implementing/revising HR policies or new advice and guidance to accompany HR policies

Three organisations set out to develop or change existing HR policies. The Workers' Educational Association was already in the process of developing new national HR policies, e.g. induction and performance management, when the Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands) also identified a need for this, as a result of the project. The new induction policies are envisaged to facilitate the integration of part-time managers working remotely in an organisation with dispersed leadership. Performance management has been extended to cover sessional tutors who will now also be required to have a staff appraisal and a professional development plan, which is envisaged to provide more support to sessional tutors wanting to progress into a management position within the Workers' Educational Association. As the PM highlighted, "It's that blended approach to support somebody in their work but also to progress to a more senior position."

East Riding of Yorkshire Council set out to review and develop relevant policies to encourage flexibility in work. During the early part of the project, it was found that the Council was already doing a lot with regard to increasing and improving flexible work, including flexible working and home-working policies. As a result of the programme, however, all managers are now being encouraged to think more creatively about new and existing jobs, by being asked to consider if a particular role can be done on a part-time basis or whether there might be a different way of doing things.

Durham Constabulary originally intended to produce good practice guides on flexible working and maternity leave, and to introduce a buddying scheme for female part-time workers. However, the PM's original evaluation report and the focus group participants suggested that the focus of the project

changed, due to the limited budget and the identification of barriers to uptake of part-time and flexible working.[9]

5.6 Training and support for senior part-time workers

Three organisations focused on training and support for part-time managers (Kellogg's, Royal Mail and the Workers' Educational Association). Having realised that very few high-potential women reach the most senior levels within the organisation, Kellogg's ran a series of one-to-one coaching sessions for four senior women, employing an external facilitator. The aim was to identify the barriers for these women in moving up to higher levels and also to support the women in working more effectively on a part-time basis. All women gave positive feedback about the coaching sessions and recommended that they be rolled out to all senior part-time women. Women were also provided with tools to help them work through other issues, and were encouraged to maintain a network. However, there were some reported problems with this, due to limited available time and women working on different days.

Royal Mail also provided mentoring and on-the-job training (Learning As You Go, or LAYGO) for its new part-time managers. Courses operated as two weeks in the classroom, followed by two weeks on the floor, allowing managers to return to the classroom to discuss any issues. Focus group participants reported that this was useful, although they also said that there was sometimes a mis-match between what was said on the course and what happened in practice. One manager described the course as an "eye-opener" and a stepping-stone, acting as an introduction to management. An HR representative, involved in the initial stages of the pilot programme, was impressed by the quality of reports and presentations by the part-time managers during the training courses: "We were hot-housing these people and giving them some really good development." He concluded that mentoring and regular coaching support was vital. Focus group participants similarly reported some good experiences of mentoring, highlighting the importance of good relationships with mentors. One identified and approached a potential mentor himself, arguing that his best choice would be someone who was working next to him, rather than a senior manager. There was general agreement that the people they approached were very helpful, and that mentoring was often quite informal (e.g. a simple question on the telephone).

At the Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands), a continuing professional development programme has replaced previous ad hoc courses. As a result of the action research undertaken, this programme now contains a time management course for managers to help support them in their work–life balance.

5.7 Development of career paths for part-time managers

Royal Mail and Kellogg's both focused on the development of career paths for their part-time managers (for Royal Mail these were newly recruited managers, and for Kellogg's these were women who had already been identified as high-potential and future leaders). One woman involved in the Kellogg's coaching sessions has been promoted since the pilot programme (working in the same job

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[9] Note the earlier limitations with regard to the evaluation of this project.

but with greater responsibility) and has acted as a role model for the rest of her team: "What she's learned, she's shared with them" (PM rep). She now has a team in which she and two of her staff each work four days per week.

Royal Mail made considerable efforts to increase the number of women working part-time in managerial posts, and the pilot programme resulted in the recruitment of nine women across the three pilot sites. The focus group participants (one woman and three men) were split on their future plans, however: two wanted to remain as part-time managers, primarily due to their other, non-work, commitments, while two would now prefer full-time work. One issue that arose as problematic for the Royal Mail managers was the lack of available (paid) time as a part-time manager to do administrative work, with most focus group participants working significantly longer hours than contracted in order to keep up. These findings support some of the difficulties of maintaining a part-time career path, identified from the literature (see Lyonette et al., 2010). On the other hand, the Kellogg's part-time manager sometimes worked an extra hour or two in the evening (checking emails, etc.). Although she occasionally spent extra time in the office or came in for meetings on her days off, she was able to take time off in lieu. She acknowledged that her work is project-based, making it easier to manage, whereas the Royal Mail part-time managers were required to undertake operational duties as soon as they arrived for work, leaving them little time for other responsibilities.

Summary

- Detailed research into culture-specific, occupation-specific or sector-specific issues will identify where efforts need to be focused.
- Toolkits can be effectively used to help both employers and employees work through the positive and negative aspects of part-time working; a dual approach leads to more effective outcomes.
- Case studies of senior part-time workers are important tools for both employees and managers in getting the message across about part-time working and how it can be done.
- Job advertising, both internally and externally, needs to focus on targeting potential quality part-time employees in hard-to-reach groups and promoting part-time opportunities more widely.
- HR policies need to be revised to highlight the need for quality part-time and other flexible workers. At the same time, managers must be encouraged to think more creatively about current and future roles.
- Training and mentoring, as well as the provision of self-help tools and resources, are crucial for managers working part time.
- There is some evidence that part-time managers in operational roles do not have sufficient time to fulfil extra duties such as administrative tasks, and work significantly longer hours than contracted to complete their work.

6. What were the major outcomes of the pilot projects?

Major outcomes of the different pilots varied according to the initial focus of the projects, although many reported similar outcomes. These will be highlighted and the key findings summarised.

Table 6.1: Major outcomes from the pilot programme

Major outcomes	Royal Mail	Medical Women's Federation	Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands)	Durham Constabulary	Kellogg's	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Working Families	Youth Action	Flexworks	Wisework	Swindon Borough Council
Identification of the benefits of line management training				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Dissemination of results of the pilot projects, internally or externally	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Dissemination of research reports/tools		✓					✓	✓		✓	
Change in the organisational culture						✓					✓
Identification of role models to help promote part-time working					✓		✓	✓			✓
Increasing the take-up of part-time work	✓					✓			✓		
Sustaining quality part-time work						✓					✓

6.1 Identification of the benefits of line management training

Previous occupation-specific research has shown that the line manager's role is crucial in either facilitating or blocking part-time and flexible working in general (Edwards and Robinson, 2001). It is recognised that managers need to be shown how to deal with initial requests for part-time and flexible working and also how to cope with the potential challenges of working with part-time workers. Six organisations highlighted the benefits of line management training and the need for line managers to understand the importance of an increase and improvement in quality part-time work. This was viewed as a positive outcome in three of the projects (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and Kellogg's), whereas for the others, it highlighted ongoing deficiencies and the need for further training (Durham Constabulary, Flexworks and Wisework). East Riding of Yorkshire Council, well aware of the need for increased part-time work, especially in service-critical areas, referred to a recent organisational push to reduce sickness absence within the organisation, linked under a 'wellbeing at work' programme. Almost all managers were trained in attendance management, part of which involved publicising a range of flexible policies to benefit employees.

Swindon Borough Council organised focus groups for part-time workers, full-time workers and managers in order to share experiences and discuss problems. It was generally reported by interviewees that these had improved communication and had helped managers to become more aware of the desire for part-time work. There are also toolkit pages for management and employees on the Swindon Borough Council intranet to provide support.

For Kellogg's, the line management training was an informal outcome of the coaching programme for senior part-time women. The coaching helped the women to manage their workloads and to delegate appropriately. They then coached their team members and their managers in turn to show how it could work: in one case, a woman involved in the coaching programme has actively supported others in her team who wished to work part time, and several members of her team, as well as herself, now work successfully on a reduced-hours basis. As a direct result of this approach, her line manager is now very positive about flexible working.

Other organisations recognised that line manager training was still vital in order to increase quality part-time working. For example, Durham Constabulary previously ran a programme for managers, which has been on hold for some time. The Core Leadership Programme was seen as important in increasing knowledge of flexible working as "a positive way to structure employment, break down traditional ideas and realise that not all jobs are the same or need to be the same" (PM).

Flexworks and Wisework, consultancy organisations with several years' experience of working with other organisations in promoting the benefits of flexible and part-time working, similarly highlighted the importance of line manager training. Flexworks, in their efforts to increase quality part-time working via an online jobs board, recognised that not all organisations were ready for their approach, and "in particular, operational managers need training". Previous work with managers had shown that such training could be very effective: "What was a pain and was going to make their job difficult suddenly becomes a help and that's how you can change the mindset very, very quickly" (PM). Wisework made similar comments, but acknowledged that current managers are trained very differently now than in previous years, with less reliance on formal planning and more of a focus on how to manage people (PM).

6.2 Dissemination of results of the pilot projects

Six organisations implemented specific dissemination strategies to promote the results of the pilot widely. The major objective of the Medical Women's Federation programme was to conduct a piece of empirical research to identify best practice in part-time working within the medical profession and to encourage the retention and return to work of women doctors. A full report was published and widely disseminated to relevant institutions, including the British Medical Association and the Department of Health (750 reports were distributed in total at the end of the project). A launch event was also attended by 50 key influencers. Working Families held similar high-profile launch events to disseminate their findings and had the additional advantage of widespread interest and support from private sector organisations, including Lehman Brothers and Ernst and Young. Role models used

in the case studies were also interviewed during these events. After running a marketing campaign, Youth Action also held a launch event, which was attended by employers and role models involved in the pilot project.

Swindon Borough Council focused on improving internal communication, as well as promoting the Council more widely. After examining what they could do to promote part-time work more widely, they developed case studies of part-time workers on the intranet. They have also developed banners and go to recruitment fairs to increase promotion. Royal Mail prepared and distributed an article about their project, which was circulated to all employees in the staff magazine, and the 'Where Women Want to Work' website was used during the recruitment campaign to highlight the project and to advertise roles. *Equal Opportunities Review* published an article about the pilot project (October 2008). See: www.eordirect.co.uk/ArticleSearch.aspx?q=royal%20mail (accessed 27 February 2010).

The Workers' Educational Association disseminated its own research report internally and also addressed work–life balance issues by undertaking a review of portfolio management and offering a programme of continuing professional development. The PM felt that this approach to supporting part-time employees applies quite well in the Workers' Educational Association and "could be replicated perhaps in other regions". Other regions had already incorporated certain things (e.g. staff inductions and performance management), but not as a direct result of the pilot project.

6.3 Dissemination of research reports/tools

Four pilot organisations also focused on the dissemination of their research reports and/or toolkits developed during the pilot programme. The *Making Part-time Work* report is freely available to download from the Medical Women's Federation website. See: www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk/makingparttimework/index.htm (accessed 27 February 2010).

The *Hours to Suit* reports, produced by Working Families, are available for sale on the website. See: www.workingfamilies.org.uk/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.product_details&flypage=ilvm_fly2_grey.tpl&category_id=5&product_id=8&Itemid=707 (accessed 27 February 2010).

Wisework agreed to make their '3-Choice' toolkit freely available on their website as part of the pilot project, which meant that it could not be used as "a bespoke tool with value" (PM). If requests for advice are made by potential clients, however, the toolkit can be used as part of their overall programme of promoting flexibility within the workplace. The toolkit is still available on the Wisework website. See: www.wisework.co.uk/assets/qptw%20toolkit.pdf (accessed 27 February 2010).

Although Youth Action's website refers to the pilot project, no further information is provided (accessed 27 February 2010). However, the PM reported that the launch of the toolkit attracted a lot of interest from public and private sector organisations, with some employers approaching Youth Action for advice, which led to the setting up of a small advisory group.

6.4 Change in the organisational culture

Both Swindon Borough Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council reported a culture change within their organisations with regard to flexible working overall. However, it must be noted that as both councils are actively involved in increasing and promoting part-time working, and as impending budget cuts have led to a push for new ways of thinking about particular roles, any change in culture may not necessarily be as a result of the pilot project alone. The line managers who attended the focus group at East Riding of Yorkshire Council were all aware of the advantages of increasing part-time work and their dependence on part-time workers for several of their services. For example, two line managers commented: "Without part-time workers, there would be no social care", and "Schools would not be able to run without part-time staff." A culture change among management was regarded by one interviewee as the most important issue, in respect of increasing and improving part-time work. Another interviewee, currently working part time, had seen a positive change in the time she had been at the Council, with requests for flexibility becoming much more accepted than previously. Statutory policies changed over the course of the pilot project (e.g. the right to request flexible working for carers), which may also have had an impact on increased requests for, and take-up of, flexible working patterns.

For Swindon Borough Council, the pilot project provided background data for the New Ways of Working programme, which was being rolled out across the Council, and which was seen to be the main contributor to a culture change. An interviewee commented that "It's about the most positive workplace I've worked in for embracing part-time working, job shares, flexible working, and makes it work", in comparison with other places where she had worked. "What I've found nice about working for a local authority is that it's part of the norm really, part of how we work."

Other pilot organisations reported some evidence of changing attitudes with regard to part-time and other forms of flexible working, but that other priorities, often driven by budget constraints or organisational restructuring, had had the effect of taking the focus away from increasing and improving quality part-time work.

6.5 Identification of role models to help promote part-time working

Previous research (Smithson et al., 2004) found that flexible working policies in accountancy appeared to have the most effect when senior staff (especially men) acted as role models. This in turn led to a greater acceptance of part-time work within the organisation, as other employees see how it can be done successfully. Four of the pilot organisations recognised the importance of identifying role models to help promote part-time working. Working Families produced *Hours to Suit* reports, which described individuals at senior occupational levels working part time or using different flexible options, in both the public and private sectors. Swindon Borough Council also used case studies of part-time workers on their website to encourage others considering the move to part-time work or to help managers understand how it can work effectively. The feedback in both cases demonstrated that "examples are powerful" and "much more effective" in getting the message across about part-time working.

Swindon Borough Council staff found real-life examples much more useful than figures showing the percentage of people working part-time (PM), and the case study examples were also useful for managers to see that other managers were able to cope successfully with issues specifically related to part-time workers.

Youth Action also recognised the importance of role models, holding workshops where senior working women from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds came to talk to young women from similar backgrounds. In one instance, after attending the workshop, a woman with two young children applied for and got a job, where she has since progressed and now manages a team of people. This woman now volunteers at the charity and acts as a role model herself, by going out into the community with an outreach worker and talking to other women in similar situations.

Kellogg's, on the other hand, did not deliberately set out to identify role models within the organisation to help promote part-time working but, as a result of their coaching programme of senior part-time women, these women then acted as effective role models to other women considering the option to work part time, as well as to managers who saw that it could be done.

6.6 Increasing the take-up of part-time work

Three organisations reported an increase in part-time work as a result of the pilot projects. In the cases of Royal Mail and Flexworks, recruiting quality part-time workers was the main objective of the pilots, with a view to longer-term expansion of quality part-time roles. For East Riding of Yorkshire Council, increased take-up of part-time roles at all levels was as a result of wider advertising and promotion strategies undertaken during the pilot project, and there was a 2% increase in part-time posts overall, representing around 600 new posts.

Royal Mail set out to recruit nine new part-time roles. Additional internal funding allowed the programme to be expanded, with a targeted advertising campaign designed to attract women externally. Seventeen people were offered permanent part-time and job-share positions, nine of whom were women.[10] All but two managers are still working part time, including one currently on maternity leave.

The objective of the Flexworks programme was to develop an online jobs board, specifically focused on quality part-time or job-share roles. The programme exceeded expectations, with the posting of 1,124 vacancies and the engagement of 380 employers (against a target of 200). There was an average of ten applicants per vacancy.

Although Swindon Borough Council hoped to increase the numbers of people working part time, they were not as confident as East Riding of Yorkshire Council that they had increased the percentage of part-time workers within the organisation, but reported that there was a definite increase in the numbers working flexibly overall.

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[10] Some 231 completed applications were received, 101 of which came from women (43.7%). This represented a significant increase in previous operational campaigns, in which only 18% of women had applied.

6.7 Sustaining quality part-time work

Of all the pilot projects, only two (East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Swindon Borough Council) have been successful in efforts to sustain quality part-time work in the longer term. East Riding of Yorkshire Council did not deliberately set out to create new part-time jobs at higher levels. However, a broader approach to increasing part-time working overall and strong HR policies relating to part-time and flexible jobs, as well as the Council's reliance on part-time workers in several key areas, mean that the Council is fully committed to sustaining quality part-time posts in the future.[11] Although Swindon Borough Council did not report an increase in quality part-time roles over the course of the pilot project, the Council was similarly confident in its ability to sustain quality part-time work, with all interviewees agreeing that the organisation was committed over the longer term. One interviewee commented that "it's a cost-driver. Because whereas before we would have employed someone full time, we might think 'OK, do we need a full-time person'?"[12]

Other pilot organisations reported difficulties in sustaining quality part-time work after the end of funding. This was often due to a lack of resources, organisational restructuring and changed priorities, managerial change and/or a continuing need for a culture change within the organisation. For example, although Flexworks originally intended to develop their online jobs board for quality part-time work, this proved unsustainable, due to a lack of ongoing funding and a reluctance on the part of potential clients to pay for the service.

6.8 Other outcomes

Some organisations reported project-specific outcomes. As part of their action plan, the Workers' Educational Association (West Midlands) introduced a range of measures to support part-time managers in their work–life balance. A key element was a strategic review of the roles and responsibilities allocated to managers in order to achieve a more equitable workload, resulting in a reallocation of duties in some cases and corresponding contractual changes. Another core element was the increased use of e-communication, with web-conferencing facilities currently being added to the new website. This is helping to reduce face-to-face meetings and associated travel time. Furthermore, regional management teleconferences have been moved to a regular working day for part-time workers (previously meetings may have been held on days when part-time workers were not at work).

[11] When asked, all interviewees felt that part-time jobs at East Riding of Yorkshire Council fulfilled the first three criteria of the working definition of quality part-time work (see Chapter 1). However, all commented on the difficulties of fulfilling criterion 4, the ability to move from part-time to full-time work at the same or a higher job level, as this depended on available budget and business needs. However, it was generally agreed that efforts would be made, where possible.

[12] All interviewees were asked whether part-time jobs at Swindon Borough Council fulfilled the four criteria of 'quality': as with East Riding of Yorkshire Council, all agreed that they fulfilled the first three criteria of the working definition of quality part-time work, but all commented on the difficulties of fulfilling criterion 4, as this depended on available budget and business requirements.

Summary

• Line management training is crucial in order to increase and improve quality part-time work within organisations. For some pilot projects training provided positive outcomes, whereas for others the project highlighted the need for further training.

• Wide dissemination of the pilot projects had not been undertaken by all pilot organisations; for those which did so, good dissemination led to an increased awareness of the issues by key parties.

• Three of the pilot organisations produced toolkits or reports, which are still advertised and available for access on their websites, allowing for continued dissemination and online support for employers and employees.

• The two organisations reporting a significant culture change with regard to flexible working were the local authorities, and because of their existing and ongoing work to promote flexible working, it is difficult to measure the added value of the pilot project in this respect. Other pilot organisations reported that other priorities, often driven by budget constraints or organisational restructuring, had had the effect of taking the focus away from increasing and improving part-time work.

• Organisations that had focused on identifying role models to promote quality part-time work all reported significant positive outcomes, either within the public, private or voluntary sectors.

• Three organisations recorded an increase in quality part-time work as a result of the pilot projects, but apart from East Riding of Yorkshire Council, there was some doubt about further increases after the end of funding.

• The two local authorities were the only pilot organisations reporting a definite commitment to sustaining quality part-time work, in part due to their dependence on part-time workers for delivery of services and also as a means of reducing overall costs. Other pilot organisations reported difficulties in sustaining quality part-time work because of a lack of resources, organisational restructuring and changed priorities, managerial change and/or a need for a culture change within the organisation.

7. What were the major barriers and facilitators to success?

Interviewees were asked if there were specific identifiable barriers to success, as well as what had helped to make the pilot project succeed (see Annex A.1 for detailed interview guides). Owing to the sensitive nature of this information, with some interviewees expressing concern about anonymity, we have kept individual pilot organisation responses anonymised in this instance, highlighting the key barriers and facilitators identified overall.

Table 7.1: Main barriers and facilitators to success in the pilot projects

Main barriers to success in increasing/improving quality part-time work:
• Competing time demands of people involved in the pilot project
• The recession and other key organisational priorities
• Changes in staffing (project managers, staff who help to implement the project)
• Lack of funding to sustain the programme
• Line management resistance
• Need to demonstrate a business case for increased part-time work
Main facilitators in increasing/improving quality part-time work:
• Methodology used
• Top-level and line management support
• The recession and associated budget cuts
• Recognised/acknowledged need for part-time workers in the organisation
• Human resources (HR) implementation and expansion of national-level legislation

7.1 Barriers to success

The barriers to overall success of the individual pilot projects included the following:

- *Competing time demands of people involved in the pilot project*: Some of the pilot organisations highlighted the fact that those people initially involved in the pilot project had had difficulties in maintaining their commitment, due to competing time demands. This was often due to organisational restructuring or a lack of funding to allocate to the project (see also 'Lack of funding' on the following page).

- *The recession and other key organisational priorities*: The recession appeared to be both a barrier and a facilitator. When described as a barrier, it was often due to an organisational change of focus, with impending budget cuts as a consequence of the recession. Other organisational priorities often acted as a brake on increased flexible and part-time working.

- *Changes in staffing*: Some organisations reported on changes in staffing during the course of the pilot project, which meant a change of structure; this sometimes meant that the replacement person was not as fully committed to the programme, or that they had different priorities. During the

evaluation process, the researchers experienced some difficulty in gaining initial access to some of the organisations, as the contact person had changed and other staff were unaware of the project.

- *Lack of funding to sustain the programme*: In spite of the success of many of the pilot projects, many were unable to sustain an increase in quality part-time work due to lack of funding to maintain the programme. Some organisations made attempts to charge for their services in order to offset staffing or other maintenance costs, but this proved unfeasible. In some cases, this meant that the project was unable to maximise its full potential, with wider dissemination and increased uptake of part-time posts impossible.

- *Line management resistance*: In line with much of the available evidence (see Lyonette et al., 2010), one of the major barriers to the increase and/or improvement in quality part-time work is the resistance of line managers and perceived difficulties in managing part-time staff. One interviewee commented that "They would be the first port of call that would say no in an organisation if they're not aware of how it could be managed... If they're scared or they're unaware, then they're going to be negative." Most of the pilot organisations reported that there were signs of change, however, and that most of the resistance came from older or more traditional members of staff, representing 'pockets' of the organisation, rather than the majority.

- *Need to demonstrate the business case for increased part-time work*: In spite of much evidence demonstrating the benefits to businesses of increasing and improving quality part-time work, another identified barrier to success was the need to sell the benefits organisation-wide. For those pilot projects that had succeeded in demonstrating and selling the business case, this then acted as a facilitator to success of the pilot project (see 'Top-level and line management support', below).

7.2 Facilitators to success

The facilitators to overall success of the individual pilot projects included the following:

- *Methodology used*: It is interesting to note that all of those pilot projects which reported that the methodology used during the programme was a key contributor to its success employed case studies of part-time workers, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach (see also Smithson et al., 2004).

- *Top-level and line management support*: The support of top-level staff and line managers was recorded as a major contributor to success by five of the organisations, the greatest number included under any of the 'barriers' or 'facilitators' sections. As noted before, this has previously been identified in the literature and, furthermore, when support was not available, this was also identified as an important barrier (see above).

- *The recession and associated budget cuts*: The recession also acted as a facilitator to success for some projects, in terms of increasing the provision of quality part-time work. As one interviewee told us, "There's an opportunity during the recession to do things smarter." Due to impending budget constraints, many organisations were thinking more creatively of ways to cut costs without making redundancies (see also Chapter 2). The recession was, in some cases, acting as a catalyst to increase part-time work, viewed by many as "a cost-driver".

- *Recognised/acknowledged need for part-time workers in the organisation*: In those organisations where part-time workers were essential or where there was a recognised need for more quality part-time staff as a result of organisational change, there was likely to be both higher-level support and a recognised culture change, with respect to increasing and improving part-time work. Where this was not the case, the opposite seemed to be the case, with continued resistance from managers and some reports of negative attitudes towards part-time workers, creating barriers to the increased provision of quality part-time work.

- *HR implementation and enhancement of national-level legislation*: In some cases, adherence to HR policies helped to implement change at an organisational level and many had gone beyond national-level policies (for example, the right to request flexible working for parents with children under 16), by expanding this right to all employees. One interviewee said that her organisation "would never say no, they just have honest conversations" with employees about what would work and what might not. Dissemination of these policies was also a crucial facilitator, as one interviewee pointed out: "If you're explicit about that in your publicity material, it does encourage people."

Summary

- A key barrier to success was a change in management or overall staffing of those involved on the project and/or competing time demands, leading to a reduced level of commitment in some cases.

- The recession appeared to be both a barrier and a facilitator: when organisational priorities had changed due to the recession, this often led to a reduction in commitment to the increased provision of quality part-time work, but for organisations planning for future budget cuts, the recession was providing support for a push towards more part-time and flexible working.

- Lack of longer-term funding for the pilot projects often meant that even successful projects were unable to maintain their level of commitment and therefore plans to roll out the projects more widely were often abandoned or deferred.

- Line management and top-level commitment to the pilot projects was vital, and longer-term goals to expand the provision of quality part-time work were often facilitated by this level of support. Lack of commitment by managers and supervisors was also the most important barrier identified, and was reported by a range of organisations.

- Those pilot projects that had succeeded in demonstrating and selling the business case for increasing quality part-time work were more likely to report overall success of the pilot project.

- Organisations using case studies in their methodological approach were also those which said that this acted as a key facilitator to the overall success of the project.

- All of the HR representatives interviewed were aware of the benefits of increasing quality part-time work. Strict adherence to HR policies, as well as wide dissemination, helped to implement change at an organisational level, with many going beyond national-level policies in their efforts to increase part-time working.

8. The costs and benefits of quality part-time work identified in the pilot data

Costs and benefits were identified by all interviewees. Almost all of the organisations recognised the potential for additional recruitment costs, particularly for job-share posts, extra time managing more people, and more review processes and appraisals. East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Royal Mail and the Medical Women's Federation also referred to the potential for extra training costs and problems relating to continuity and communication between managers and part-time workers. Other organisations referred to the extra costs of training managers effectively (Flexworks).

However, representatives from all organisations were almost universally convinced that the benefits of increasing quality part-time work outweighed the costs. Swindon Borough Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Youth Action and Kellogg's all referred to increased employee satisfaction and happiness, as well as greater focus and motivation of part-time workers, and said that those working part time were more likely to appreciate the efforts of their employer in allowing them to achieve a greater work–life balance, so increasing their flexibility and loyalty. Flexworks, Wisework, Working Families, Youth Action and Kellogg's similarly outlined improved work–life balance, creativity and productivity, as well as greater retention, leading to reduced recruitment costs. Wisework and Royal Mail focused on reduced absenteeism and sickness among part-time workers. East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Medical Women's Federation pointed to the improved coverage of a job if two or more people were doing it, rather than just one. Individual organisations argued that flexible working can cut commuting time and costs (Working Families, Workers' Educational Association), lower office costs (Youth Action), and increase the diversity of the workforce, reflecting the wider community (Swindon Borough Council). Other costs and benefits were also mentioned.

The major costs and benefits identified by the respondents (in order of the number identified by individual interviewees) are summarised in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: The costs and benefits of quality part-time work, as identified by the pilot respondents

Actual and potential costs
• Extra training (if job share)
• Extra appraisals (if job share)
• Communication problems
• Extra advertising and recruitment costs (if job share)
• Management of more people
• Extra training needed for managers

Actual and potential benefits
• Increased commitment and loyalty
• Improved retention
• Improved work satisfaction
• Reduced sickness and absenteeism
• Better productivity
• Better coverage of a role (if job share)
• Increased recruitment of hard-to-fill posts
• Attracting and retaining talent and skills
• Better flexibility provided by part-time workers
• Attracting a more diverse workforce
• Role covered for less money
• Increased work–life balance
• Attracting returners to workforce and gaining skills learned and financed elsewhere
• Reduced travel (costs and time)

9. What has been learned? Good/promising practice from the pilots

Focusing on the outcomes described in the previous chapters, we now highlight what we have learned, what has been done effectively, and what could be used by other organisations keen to promote quality part-time work. Good or promising practice, identified from the pilot data, is summarised below:

- Researching the issues and identifying the problem
- Identifying and promoting senior role models
- Training line managers
- Disseminating available part-time posts widely
- Reviewing and disseminating human resources (HR) policies
- Selling the business case to senior management.

9.1 Researching the issues and identifying the problem

Not all pilot organisations had the same problems and initial, detailed research into key organisation-specific issues highlighted where efforts should be focused. East Riding of Yorkshire Council identified recruitment and retention problems in certain occupations, for example recruiting head-teachers to a predominantly rural and sometimes isolated area of the country. Both East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Swindon Borough Council also recognised the need to improve the promotion of available part-time posts, and Swindon Borough Council identified an additional need for improved communication between team members. Youth Action identified recruitment difficulties in engaging those from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, a key issue in diversity planning for many organisations. For the Medical Women's Federation, an examination of training and working part time in the medical profession was implemented in response to the identification of discontented views among some female doctors.

9.2 Identification and promotion of senior role models

Several of the pilot organisations incorporated into their projects the identification and promotion of senior role models to highlight how quality part-time working can be achieved and managed successfully (Working Families, Youth Action, Kellogg's and Swindon Borough Council). For their coaching programme, Kellogg's identified potential female leaders currently within the organisation, who were working part time or considering doing so; these women then acted as role models for their own team members, their managers and more widely across the organisation: "I as the individual have got to make this work because that then shows the management that when it is managed effectively and when you have the right person with the right support doing it, it is absolutely no different to someone working full-time." (PM rep)

In all the cases outlined, it was recognised that a dual-targeted approach to employees and managers had to be implemented in order to be effective.

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Case study 9.1: Swindon Borough Council and the promotion of role models

The HR team actively promoted part-time working throughout the organisation so "people knew it wasn't a thing you don't talk about or you don't do". One interviewee participated in a focus group and was now included as a case study on the organisation's intranet. Case studies of managers who had worked to ensure that their employees could work part time and who were successful in managing part-time workers were also included and promoted "for the other managers to then read about these case studies, and they could go to a peer to talk about it".

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9.3 Training line managers

The benefits of line management training emerged as one of the most important issues in the pilot projects, and acted both as a facilitator to success and as a barrier, if not implemented. The Flexworks pilot project focused on an increase in quality part-time working via an online jobs board, but feedback from clients, and previous experience of working with organisations to promote flexible working, highlighted the fact that operational managers needed training, and that such training was extremely effective.

In an overall strategy to promote flexible working, East Riding of Yorkshire Council had trained almost all managers in attendance management, part of which involved publicising flexible policies of benefit to employees. Swindon Borough Council reported a similar strategy, partly in response to the recession and anticipated budget cuts: to highlight the issues and identify solutions, they organised focus groups for part-time workers, full-time workers and managers. Toolkits and case studies of part-time workers and their managers were also posted on the intranet to provide support (see Case study 9.1). Similar online resources were developed by Wisework and made available on their website, allowing managers and employees to work through the issues relating to the management of part-time and other flexible workers.

9.4 Wide dissemination of available part-time posts

Wide dissemination of the pilot projects had not been undertaken by all pilot organisations; for those that did so, good dissemination led to an increased awareness of the issues by key parties. Royal Mail, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Swindon Borough Council all focused on increased advertising and promotion of part-time posts and/or the recruitment of new part-time staff (see Case study 9.2).

Case study 9.2: Royal Mail and a widespread advertising campaign

Royal Mail set out to recruit part-time managers in three pilot areas, with a specific focus on targeting women (although they had a high proportion of women working part time, this included only 8% of managers and 5% of female senior managers). Research, carried out as part of the pilot project, showed that women were more likely to use specific forms of internet advertising in job-searching, which resulted in a widespread recruitment campaign. Internal advertising included the intranet, posters within the workplace and a roadshow. Further dissemination included the circulation of an article about the project published in the staff magazine, and available jobs were advertised on the 'Where Women Want to Work' website during the recruitment campaign. Focus group participants, who had all been recruited through the programme, all agreed that the advertising had been effective.

9.5 Reviewing and disseminating HR policies

While many HR representatives highlighted the importance of 'individual conversations' with employees and the importance of flexibility on both the part of the individual part-time worker and the line manager in making it work successfully, clear HR policies also helped to drive the message home that part-time working was an integral part of the organisation and needed to be seriously considered when advertising for new posts (e.g. East Riding of Yorkshire Council – see Case study 9.3). None of the pilot organisations specifically used the threat of statutory policies to force wider implementation of part-time working, and some had gone beyond national-level policies (Kellogg's, East Riding of Yorkshire Council).

Case study 9.3: East Riding of Yorkshire Council and innovative HR policies

Although some organisations reported that individuals who wished to work as a job share were responsible for finding their own partner, or that there would be a minimum of help from the organisation, East Riding of Yorkshire Council policy states that, if a job-share partner is not readily identifiable, they will advertise for the post to be filled; if advertised twice and the post is still unfilled, the employee has the option to either take the job on a full-time basis or look to be redeployed elsewhere in the organisation. East Riding of Yorkshire Council has also gone beyond statutory policies (the Employment Act 2002 introduced the right for parents of young and disabled children to request flexible working; in April 2007 this right was extended to cover carers of adults, and in spring 2009 to those with children under 16). Council policy allows all its employees to request flexible working, and makes every effort to respond to individual requests.

9.6 Selling the business case to senior management

Unless there is clear recognition and acknowledgement at top levels of the business benefits of increased quality part-time working (for example better retention, increased diversity and a wider talent pool to draw on, reduced absenteeism, etc.), it is unlikely that widespread efforts will be made to develop focused strategies to increase and improve quality part-time working. In spite of much evidence demonstrating the benefits to businesses of increasing and improving quality part-time work, many pilot organisations reported a lack of senior management acceptance and a general resistance to increasing part-time work. Those pilot projects that had succeeded in demonstrating and selling the business case, often linked to cost-cutting during the recession (e.g. Swindon Borough Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council), were more likely to fulfil the initial objectives of the project. Working Families argued that more should be done to demonstrate the business case, with employers being provided with a clear map of work reorganisation and good data showing absenteeism by full-time/part-time or flexible working. The recession offers an opportunity for change, with regard to flexible working of all kinds, and providing employers and senior management with the right information might bring about this change more rapidly.

10. Conclusions

This qualitative evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund pilot programme examined the evidence from 11 of the 12 pilot projects. All the pilot projects had a different focus, with different measures used and varying amounts of funding awarded. For this reason, a flexible approach was taken to the overall evaluation.

In spite of some difficulties in gaining access to organisations, as well as some unforeseen circumstances that delayed progress of the evaluation, findings did demonstrate that these organisations had employed innovative and imaginative ways to help increase the provision of quality part-time work, at a time when the recession was forcing many organisations to cut costs. Those organisations that relied heavily on part-time workers, namely the two local authorities included in the pilot programme, had already taken measures to actively promote more flexible working overall, and the recession was perceived to be acting as a facilitator to increasing the numbers of part-time workers. Human resources (HR) policies within these two organisations also served to promote the importance of increased part-time work, and senior management and line managers were generally on board. For other organisations, this commitment was still lacking, and training programmes and resources for line managers were seen to be critical in facilitating quality part-time work and flexible working overall.

The major costs (potential or actual) of introducing quality part-time work that were highlighted by the respondents were the extra training and management required, and communication problems; the major benefits were increased commitment and loyalty, improved retention and work satisfaction, and reduced sickness and absenteeism. In all cases, benefits outweighed costs or at least costs and benefits were in balance. Many costs were seen as 'absorbable', and it was acknowledged that employers had to recognise the longer-term benefits of a more flexible workforce.

The key findings from the pilot projects highlighted the following:

- Initial research is essential for the identification of occupation-specific issues and where efforts should be focused.
- Toolkits and other resources can be effectively used to help employees and managers, and a dual approach leads to better outcomes; managers need training in order to facilitate their negotiations with part-time workers, both in considering requests for part-time work and coping effectively with part-time workers in the workplace.
- Part-time workers should not be expected to work significantly longer hours than contracted and should be given the opportunity to fulfil administrative duties during their contracted working hours.
- Demonstrating and selling the business case for increasing quality part-time work is crucial in getting commitment from senior management and line managers.

- Identifying and promoting senior part-time workers are important tools for employers, managers and employees to show how it can be done; organisations using case studies in their methodological approach were also those which reported that this acted as a key facilitator to the success of the overall project.

- Advertising, both internally and externally, should target potential quality part-time employees in hard-to-reach groups and promote available part-time opportunities more widely.

- Organisations with a recognised need for part-time workers are more likely to embrace and actively encourage the increased provision of quality part-time work.

- Organisations have the potential to increase quality part-time work during the recession, but other organisational priorities and cost-cutting measures may effectively block any major new strategies to promote flexible working.

- When organisational priorities had changed due to the recession, this often led to a reduction in commitment; but for organisations preparing for future budget cuts, the recession was providing support for a push towards more part-time and flexible working.

- HR representatives are generally aware of the benefits of increasing quality part-time work and have a vital role to play in encouraging managers to think more creatively about current and future roles. Strict adherence to, and wide promotion of, HR policies helps to implement change at an organisational level, and many organisations go beyond national-level policies in their efforts to increase part-time working.

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Annex A.1

A.1.1 Methodology involved in the evaluation of the Quality Part-time Work Fund projects

The project manager (PM) of each pilot organisation was contacted initially via email, specifying the purpose of the evaluation, who we wished to speak to and how long the interviews would last. Each organisation was approached according to the type of pilot initiative undertaken. For example, for those pilots focusing more specifically on the increased take-up of quality part-time posts within their organisations, the Institute for Employment Research (IER) team conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews with up to four key members of those organisations (although this was rarely possible):

- the PM (usually working in HR);
- an equal opportunities, union or diversity representative;
- a line manager of part-time employees;
- an employee, preferably already working in a quality part-time position (if not available, an employee considering taking up a quality part-time post).

Those pilot organisations that focused on providing practical toolkits or job-share registers were evaluated slightly differently. It was important that face-to-face interviews took place with PMs but also that additional material was collected, where possible (e.g. feedback forms, reports published, etc.). The PMs were also asked to identify any relevant individuals willing to be interviewed for the evaluation who had accessed their toolkits or registers or had used their services in the past. For those pilot organisations focusing more on pre-implementation work, such as providing recommendations or good-practice guides, in-depth interviews were conducted with the PM of the pilot projects as a minimum, with additional material sought where possible (e.g. research reports).

In each case, attempts were made to conduct face-to-face interviews but, if this was not possible, telephone interviews were chosen as the next approach to encourage participation (for example if the organisations were especially difficult or expensive to access due to location, or if interviews with key personnel could not be set up on the same day). In cases where access was still not possible, the GEO team were informed and discussions took place on how best to proceed. With permission, all interviews were audio-recorded and the researchers were responsible for writing up detailed notes afterwards. The interviews were carried out on the basis of a semi-structured interview guide (see page 58).

The more detailed evaluations of three pilot projects included focus groups at the workplace: with East Riding of Yorkshire Council, this involved a focus group with six line managers of part-time workers; for Royal Mail a focus group was conducted with four of the part-time managers recruited during the pilot programme; and for Durham Constabulary a focus group was carried out with eight part-time employees. All focus groups lasted for around 90 minutes. Both researchers attended and addressed the focus groups, the groups agreed to be audio-taped, and detailed notes were written up afterwards. Focus group participants also filled out a short questionnaire asking about main job responsibilities, direct reports, job satisfaction, etc. All interview and focus group data were read by both main researchers in order to avoid bias.

A total of 26 interviews were conducted with various employees within the different pilot organisations, as well as clients of the organisations (ten PMs, three line managers, eight part-time employees, three HR representatives other than the PMs, and two 'others').

A.1.2 Limitations and difficulties encountered

The IER team succeeded in making contact with 11 of the 12 pilot organisations, in some cases only after several attempts. This substantially increased the time it took to arrange access and to undertake interviews. Difficulties in gaining access were communicated to the GEO team, which also attempted to make contact with the final organisation. It was then agreed that no further attempts should be made.

Some of the organisations changed their objectives or felt that they had been overly ambitious in their initial objectives. Due to the evaluation being conducted well after the end of the pilot programme, we had little initial information on the pilot projects and often relied on the proposal documents. During the course of the interviews, it became clear that specific objectives had changed but, in most cases, the pilot organisations had made efforts to fulfil their obligations.

A.1.3 Individual pilot limitations

Some unforeseen difficulties were encountered in some organisations: staff who were scheduled to be interviewed were absent due to sickness; PMs proved to be difficult to contact as they had moved on to another job at another company location; it was a busy period across the business; or industrial action was taking place.

In one organisation, the facilitation of interviews and focus groups was fortunately taken on at very short notice by another member of staff; however, this proved somewhat less effective with regard to contacting staff who had some involvement in the initiative itself. Although all of the organisations concerned were happy to be involved and to rearrange interviews early in January 2010, this delayed the final collection of the fieldwork until early February 2010.

A.1.4 Example of interview guide employed in the evaluation study (PM/HR manager version)

1. To begin with, could you just tell me briefly what your organisation does?

2. And approximately how many people work here?

3. And what is your own job here?

4. Could you tell me a bit about why your organisation became involved in the pilot programme?

5. What were the specific areas that *you* thought were most important to target within the programme?

6. Were there any particular eligibility criteria for people to access the programme?

7. As far as you are aware, what were the particular indicators that your organisation used to measure success of the programme?

8. *(If not already answered)* Were there any particular things that you could see that helped the programme to succeed?

9. *(If not already answered)* In your view, were there any particular barriers to the programme succeeding or that slowed it down?

10. Could you perhaps give me an example of something that you considered to be a real benefit of the programme?

11. Did you see any evidence of a culture change or an attitude change within the organisation as a result of the programme?

12. Overall, do you think that the organisation was successful in doing what it set out to do? If so, why? If not, why not?

13. Were there any unexpected results from the programme?

14. *(If male part-time posts not mentioned yet)* Did you notice any interest from men in taking up part-time posts?

15. If you were to design the programme again, what would you do differently, if anything?

16. Can you think of anything that other organisations might be able to use from your own organisation's experience to increase the provision of quality part-time work?

17. Do you feel that there are any particular costs to the employer of introducing quality part-time work?

18. Do you think that there are any particular benefits to the employer of introducing quality part-time work?

19. We are also interested in the impact of the recession on the provision of quality part-time work: has your organisation had to make any adjustments, such as making people redundant or offering them part-time work, because of the recession?

20. *(If not)* Do you think that this is likely in the future in your organisation?

21. Do you think that your organisation in particular has committed to keeping up or offering (more) quality part-time jobs since the end of funding?

22. Do you feel that there are any specific barriers to sustaining or increasing quality part-time posts in your organisation? *(If yes)* How would you suggest that the organisations could overcome or address these barriers?

23. We've recently been carrying out a literature review, and we have defined quality part-time work as having four major criteria *(read each out separately; if relevant, ask if their organisation provides each; if not relevant, read all out and then ask question e)*:

   a) Jobs that provide the same (pro-rata) terms and conditions, development and progression opportunities as comparable full-time work:

      (If relevant) Would you say that your organisation provides this for part-time workers? *(If not, why not?)*

   b) Jobs that enable the job-holder to maintain (or enhance) his or her skills, including employees who reduce working hours after a short period of leave:

      (If relevant) Would you say that your organisation provides this for part-time workers? *(If not, why not?)*

   c) Jobs that enable the achievement of an acceptable work–life balance, in line with business needs:

      (If relevant) What about this in your organisation – do you think this is the case? *(If not, why not?)*

   d) Jobs that provide the opportunity to increase the number of hours to full-time work, if desired, at the same or a higher job level:

      (If relevant) Do you think that your organisation is able to provide this for part-time workers? *(If not, why not?)*

   e) With this in mind, what do *you* consider to be the main things that would define quality part-time jobs (in your organisation)? *(Probe for any similarities, differences.)*

24. Was there anything else that you think we may have missed that you feel was important in the programme overall?

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