

Connecting Women With the Labour Market in Sandwell

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Forward

Gender Equality

Sandwell MBC has worked in close partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, and eleven other local authorities over the last three years to take part in this national research study, the *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets Project (GELLM)*.

In participating in this Project the organisation has made a firm commitment to disseminate and implement the research findings by engaging with key stakeholders during all stages of the project. The philosophy for implementing change in relation to gender equality has been based on the commitment that each Service Area will continue to be instrumental in taking forward the responsibility for aligning their service priorities for gender equality in their Business Plans.

Through active participation in this research project Sandwell MBC is well prepared for its new legal responsibility for implementing the 'Gender Duty' requirements of the Equality Act 2006 in all key service areas and to effectively address gender inequality in the borough.



Cllr Pauline Hinton
Deputy Leader of the Council



Allison Fraser
Interim Chief Executive



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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following for their help and assistance with the research. We are especially grateful to those who shared their knowledge and experience of labour market conditions and developments in Sandwell and of the circumstances of local women.

Shabia Begum, North Smethwick Resource Centre
Linda Bowen, Sandwell Job Centre Plus
Lyndon Bracewell, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Rachael Jones, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Ros Kerslake, RegenCo, Sandwell
Bhupinder Kaur Mann, Smethwick Job Link
Surinder Punn, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Samina Saudigar, Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association
David Scott, Smethwick Job Link
Bhavna Solanki, Cape Hill Sure Start
John Sutton, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Ann Thomas, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

We would also like to extend a special thank you to all the women who gave up their time to take part in the focus group discussions in Sandwell, for sharing with us their experiences and thoughts about working and living in Sandwell, and for speaking so openly about their lives. The information they provided has been invaluable to this research. To ensure anonymity we cannot name them individually. We hope this report captures some of the key issues of importance to them.

Members of the GELLM Team contributed as follows:

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Key findings

This study has explored the situation of unemployed and economically inactive women in Sandwell, and the scope for developing projects which would assist local women who are not in paid employment in the transition to paid work. Women's circumstances in the Soho and Victoria and St. Paul's wards were examined in depth.

Women's circumstances in the two wards

Although the study found that a significant proportion of economically inactive women want to work, compared with women in Sandwell and in England as a whole, in these two wards:

- working age women were much less likely to be in paid employment
- the proportion of women working part-time was very low
- lone mothers were less likely to work part-time
- women workers were more likely to work in low skilled jobs, and less likely to work in skilled, managerial and professional jobs
- many women work close to home
- working age women were much more likely to be economically inactive or unemployed
- female unemployment was high
- unemployment was particularly high for women of Pakistani origin
- high percentages of working age women were claiming Income Support
- in contrast to the trends nationally, and in Sandwell overall, levels of economic inactivity amongst women have been growing
- a high proportion of unemployed and economically inactive women had last worked in low skilled jobs
- many local women have no qualifications: these women are less likely to be in work
- lone mothers were more likely to be economically inactive

Women outside paid work

Local organisations emphasised the following as barriers to employment for local women:

- lack of skills and qualifications
- limited labour market aspirations
- caring responsibilities
- lack of fluency in English
- limited knowledge of the labour market
- lack of confidence
- lack of affordable childcare
- low pay

Local women emphasised the following in their discussions about the labour market:

- Their strong desire to work

- The importance of paid work for self esteem and as an example to children
- The difficulty of acquiring up-to-date qualifications and work experience
- The potential impact of discrimination
- Their willingness to travel to work
- The limited availability of part-time jobs
- The negative impact of long absences from work on their skills and confidence
- A new acceptance in Asian communities of the importance of work for women
- The importance of support, guidance and mentoring to aid women's transition to work

Building successful employment projects for women: recommendations

Successful employment projects will:

- Understand and respond to the circumstances of women's lives
- Understand the differences between women in local neighbourhoods
- Use existing knowledge within local community centres
- Target projects on women
- Provide paid work experience for women
- Combine paid work experience with training and education, leading to qualifications
- Provide women with personal support, guidance and mentoring
- Offer women a wide range of employment services
- Reach out to women in the places they go to day to day
- Secure employer support and engagement
- Establish partnerships of local employers willing to offer women a range of paid work experience opportunities
- Encourage employers to 'take a risk' and employ local women
- Understand changing needs in the labour market and the skills needed for new jobs

Wider policy changes are also needed, including:

- Developing a strategic overview of the changing labour market
- Allocating local strategic responsibility for raising local levels of employment
- Tackling low pay, in partnership with local employers
- Acknowledging the potential for labour market discrimination, and establishing policy to address it
- Providing affordable childcare
- Reviewing the aims and objectives of ESOL courses

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the potential for establishing projects, based in Sandwell, which would assist women in the transition from unemployment or unpaid family work into paid employment.

For some women outside paid work, especially those living in deprived neighbourhoods, the transition into paid work can be a complex journey, fraught with difficulties and setbacks. Other work has shown that for some groups of people it may be necessary to develop new and innovative policy and programmes to support the step into paid work and to increase people's employability in the future (Schmid 1998; Fagan and Rubery 1996).

Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) projects provide one model for such an approach. These are employment projects which seek to build a bridge to work by providing participants with paid work on a temporary basis, together with focused training, support for personal development, and assistance with job search (Marshall and Macfarlane 2000). This study was designed to explore interest in developing ILM-type projects focused on women amongst the statutory and voluntary sector locally. It also explored the views and experiences of local women who are outside paid employment

The research was undertaken between July 2005 and February 2006, using a variety of methods: statistical analysis of ward level data; interviews with key people with knowledge of the local labour market; interviews with people with an understanding of the circumstances of local women; and focus groups with local women who were not in paid employment. The research was focused on the wards of Soho and Victoria and St. Pauls.

This study is one of six local research studies carried out within the GELLM research programme. Parallel studies on *Connecting women with the labour market* have also been undertaken in: Birmingham; Camden; Thurrock and Wakefield. A synthesis report, giving the findings for all five areas, is also available (Grant et al 2006). The *Gender Profile of Sandwell's Labour Market* (Buckner et al 2004) provides the district-wide statistical context for this study.

Women outside paid work: a neglected group

There are high percentages of women of working age who are outside paid employment, whether we consider England as a whole, Sandwell, or the specific wards which are the focus of this study. In England, 1 in every 3 women of working age is outside paid employment, and in the wards we are considering here, 1 in every 2 women of working age is outside paid employment.

There are many reasons for this, often to do with women's lives, as mothers and as carers, and the choices they make at particular points in their lives. But not all women of working age who are outside paid employment have chosen to be out of paid work, and many are not happy with their current circumstances. Some of these women have been made redundant, some have been looking for work but find they do not have the right skills or experience to secure a job, and some have experienced discrimination because of where they live or because of their ethnicity, sex or age. Others have found work, but struggled to stay in work. All of these groups of women are the focus of this study; they are women who want to work but who, for a range of reasons, are not working.

In many ways this group of women has been neglected, both in terms of the understanding of their lives, and in terms of policy. The widespread assumption that women outside paid employment are largely content not to work is not supported by evidence. In 2004, 23% of economically inactive women in England, a total of 903,400 women, wanted paid work¹. In addition, 4.4% of women were unemployed, a further 472,000 women. In Sandwell, 22% of economically inactive women wanted paid work, and with the district's unemployment rate in 2004 at 7.6%, this means there were almost 10,500 women in Sandwell who wanted paid work. Thus, thousands of women outside paid employment would like to work - but very little is known about their experiences, their aspirations and the circumstances of their lives.

Policy responses to build bridges to work for local women

Policy responses which build bridges to work for local women are important because of the very scale of unemployment and economic inactivity

¹ ONS, Annual Population Survey, December 2004 – March 2005, Crown Copyright.

amongst women of working age in the localities being studied.

They are also important because women can face specific barriers in accessing paid employment. These may arise from: women's absences from the labour market related to caring and other family responsibilities; the quality of local jobs; poor access to transport; and gender discrimination. Women from ethnic minority groups may face additional obstacles in the labour market, including race discrimination (Reid 2002; Willson 2003). Women who have migrated to Britain may be restricted by a lack of familiarity with the British labour market, lack of fluency in the English language, limited knowledge of British training and educational systems, and difficulty in securing recognition for qualifications gained overseas.

Despite these specific and formidable barriers to work facing women, there are few national programmes and policies specifically focused on women. The key national programmes are *The New Deal for Lone Parents* (NDLP) and the *New Deal for Partners of the Unemployed* (NDPU), but many economically inactive women who want to work do not fit these categories. Indeed, only women with some connection to the benefit system would be drawn into these programmes. Many women outside paid employment do not have this link with the benefit system, and thus lack a connection with organisations such as Jobcentre Plus.

In some localities, voluntary sector organisations have developed with a specific focus on women who are out of work. Such projects are often an invaluable support to local women but, by virtue of their voluntary nature, they are usually small scale projects, with insecure funding.

We emphasise the importance of 'the local' as the context in which people can best be supported in their engagement with work for several reasons. Central government policy and regulations may be insufficient to bring about effective and sustainable transitions into paid work for some groups of people, and there can be unique circumstances in specific localities. Instead, it is important to delegate 'more decision making power to individuals of local agencies in order to adjust to individual needs and local circumstances' (Schmid 1998).

Policy Context

The New Labour Government regards paid employment as the best route out of poverty, and since 1997 has reshaped tax, benefit and employment policy with the aim of transferring people from welfare into work. Key policy developments include: the New Deal programmes, which provide different amounts of support and compulsion to join the labour market; the introduction of Tax Credits for low paid earners with children, as incentives to enter paid work; and the introduction of the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

Despite significant employment growth, the government acknowledges that pockets of worklessness persist in certain localities; developing new ways of addressing worklessness has thus become a key focus of government policy (DWP 2000; HM Treasury 2000; HM Treasury 2002; DWP 2004). These developments engage not only central government but also local authorities and their partners, in some localities through Local Strategic Partnerships. It is recognised that deprivation is often highly concentrated in neighbourhoods, and requires tailored approaches to providing services and work incentives. Government and local authorities are also committed to closing the gap between average employment rates and the employment rates of disadvantaged groups and those living in deprived neighbourhoods where unemployment and economic inactivity are high (HM Treasury 2004). The overall target is to achieve an employment rate of 60% for women in the European Union by 2010 (EU 2004). In the UK the government has set a target of an 80% employment rate overall.

To achieve the study objectives, we have:

- Examined the changing nature of the Sandwell labour market
- Explored the circumstances and aspirations of working age women in Sandwell who are not in paid employment
- Gathered information about existing employment projects and labour market developments in Sandwell

On the basis of this new analysis, at the end of this report we offer recommendations on employment projects which might assist women outside paid employment in the transition to paid work.

Women's circumstances in St. Pauls and Soho and Victoria in Sandwell

St. Pauls and Soho and Victoria are among the most deprived wards in Sandwell and England. The wards are located to the south east of Sandwell, bordering on Birmingham (Figure 1).

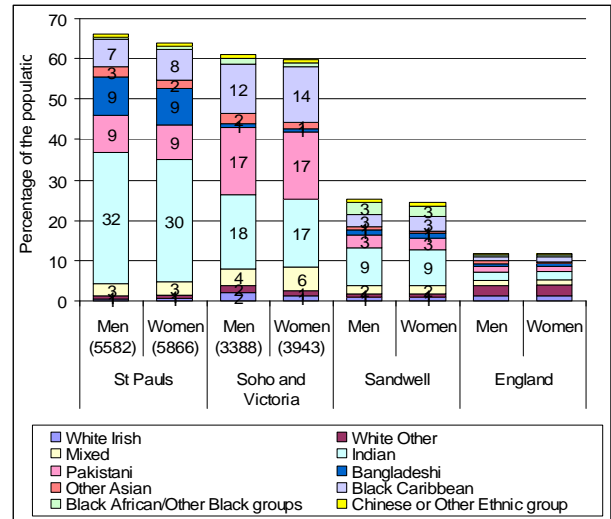
The population in these wards was relatively young in 2001 compared with Sandwell and England as a whole. 26% of the population in St. Pauls, and 29% in Soho and Victoria, were aged 0-15, compared with just 22% in Sandwell and 18% in England. In both wards only 12% were aged 65 or over, compared with 16% in both Sandwell and England.

A high proportion of the population in these wards is from ethnic minority groups (Figure 2). 64% of women living in St. Pauls and 61% of women in Soho and Victoria are from ethnic minority groups, compared with 22% of Sandwell's total female population.

The largest ethnic minority group in the locality is people of Indian origin, representing almost a

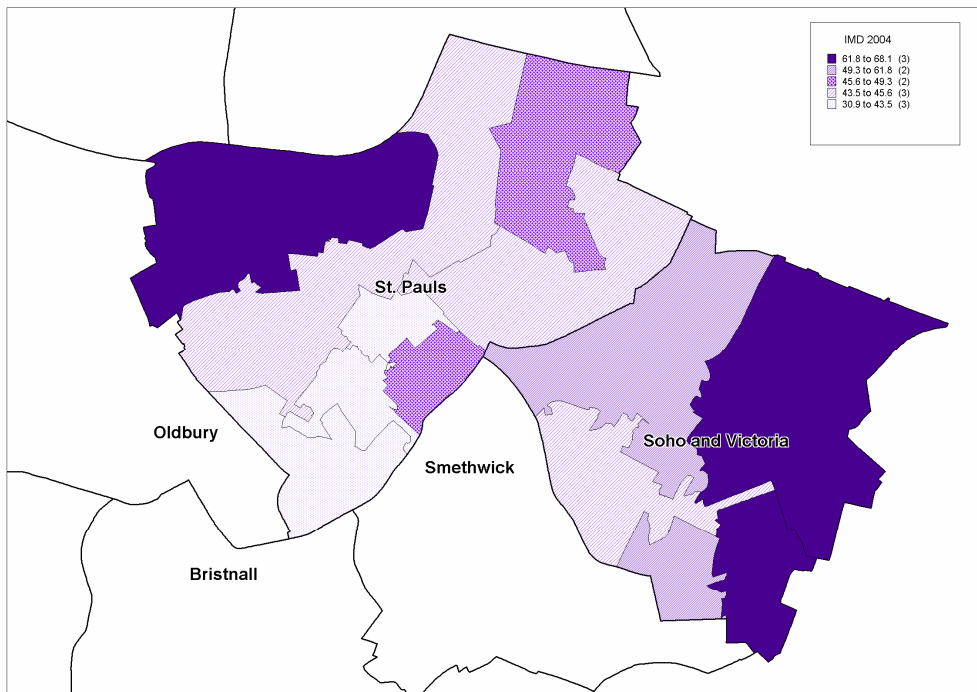
third of the population in St. Pauls and almost a fifth of the population in Soho and Victoria. Other significant ethnic minority groups in these wards are people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

Figure 2 Ethnicity in St. Pauls and Soho and Victoria wards



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Figure 1 Pattern of deprivation: St Pauls and Soho and Victoria wards 2004



Source: ODPM, Crown Copyright 2004, 2001 Census Super Output Areas, Crown Copyright 2004. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown.

Figure 3 Main occupations and industries of women in employment

	St. Pauls	Soho & Victoria	Sandwell	England
Occupation				
Managers, senior officials	7	5	8	11
Professionals	6	8	6	10
Associate professionals & technical occupations	11	13	11	14
Process, plant and machine operatives	12	8	7	3
Elementary occupations	20	19	16	12
Industry				
Manufacturing	19	11	15	9
Health and social work	20	25	19	19
Finance and real estate	14	16	14	18

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Health indicators for the wards show a high proportion of women of working age in these wards have a limiting long-term illness (LLTI): around 1 in 5 women in both wards, compared with 16% of women in Sandwell and 8% in England.

Women's employment²

Women of working age in both wards are less likely than women nationally to be in paid employment. In St Pauls, only 45% of women of working age - and in Soho and Victoria only 38% - were in employment, compared with 58% in Sandwell and 64% in England. Thus employment rates for women in the two wards fell way below the 60% employment rate target.

Levels of part-time working amongst women in the two wards were low. Many women who want to combine caring with paid employment prefer to work part-time or in jobs with flexible working patterns. In St. Pauls only 14% of women were part-time employees - in Soho and Victoria only 12% - compared with 23% nationally.

Part-time working amongst lone mothers in these wards was at a very low level. Although part-time employment can be particularly helpful for lone mothers, in Soho and Victoria and St Pauls just 15% of lone mothers worked part-time, compared with 21% in Sandwell and 26% in England as a whole.

Women workers in the two wards were more likely to work in low skilled jobs, and less likely to be in skilled, technical, professional or managerial jobs than in either Sandwell or England. Almost a third of women in St. Pauls, and over a quarter in

Soho and Victoria, worked in elementary jobs or in operative positions. This is about double the national figure of 15% (Figure 3).

At the same time, only 5% of women in Soho and Victoria and 7% in St. Pauls worked as managers or senior officials, compared with 11% nationally.

Women workers in the two wards were particularly concentrated in certain industrial sectors (Figure 3). Almost a fifth of women in St. Pauls (19%) worked in manufacturing jobs, compared with 9% in England as a whole, while only 14% of St. Pauls' women worked in the finance and real estate sector, compared with 18% nationally.

Many women workers in the locality worked close to home. 58% of women workers in St. Pauls, and 69% of women in Soho and Victoria, travelled less than 5km to work, well above the national figure of 48%.

A high proportion of women workers in the locality walked to work: 17% of women in St. Pauls and 16% in Soho and Victoria compared with 14% in Sandwell and 13% in England.

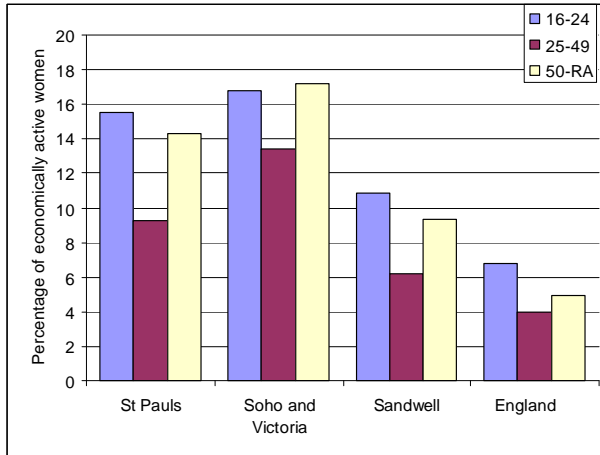
Women's unemployment and economic inactivity

A high percentage of working age women in the two wards were either economically inactive or unemployed in 2001. In St. Pauls, 52% of working age women were either economically inactive or unemployed. In Soho and Victoria the figure was 58%, well above the figures for Sandwell (40%) and England as a whole (33%). This represents over 3,000 women in the two wards. Levels of unemployment amongst women were high in the two wards across all age groups (Figure 4). The level of unemployment was very high for young

² Source for the data in this and the following section: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

women - between 15% and 17%, compared with 7% in England.

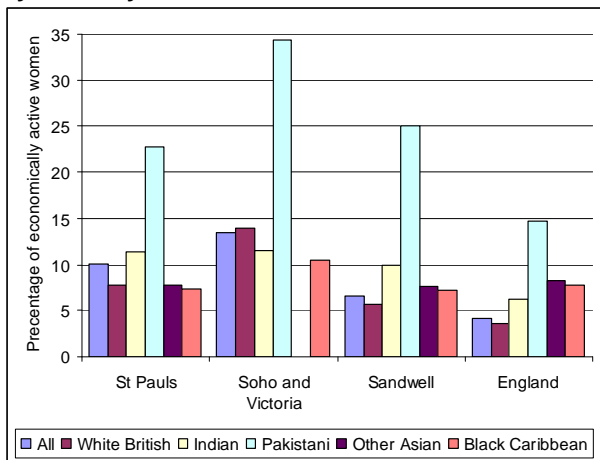
Figure 4 Unemployment rates for women by age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Unemployment rates varied between different ethnic minority groups, and were particularly high for women in some ethnic minority groups (Figure 5). Most strikingly, in Soho and Victoria over a third of Pakistani women were unemployed and in St. Pauls the figure for Pakistani women was 22%.

Figure 5 Unemployed women aged 16-74³ as a proportion of those who are economically active by ethnicity

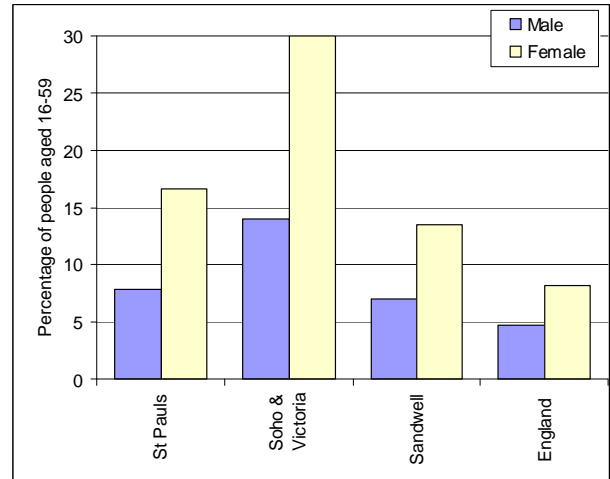


Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Almost 1 in 3 women of working age in Soho and Victoria, and 1 in 7 women in St. Pauls, claim Income Support (Figure 6). This represents over 1,100 women in the locality.

³ Data at ward level by ethnicity are only available for women aged 16-74.

Figure 6 Income Support claimants



Source: DWP August 2003 and 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Against the national trend, between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of women of working age who were economically inactive increased in St. Pauls (from 40% to 46%) and in Soho and Victoria (from 46% to 50%). In Sandwell the figure remained constant at 35%, and in England it decreased, from 32% to 29%⁴.

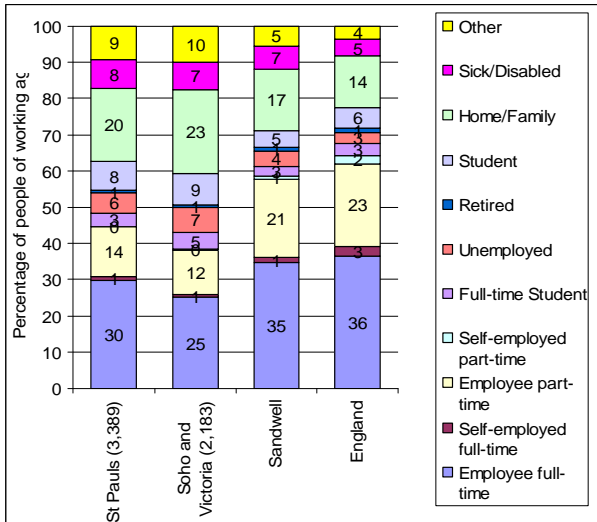
In line with national trends in unemployment figures, between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of women who were unemployed fell from 16% to 11% in St. Pauls and from 20% to 13% in Soho and Victoria. The figures for Sandwell were 10% to 7%, and in England 7% to 4%⁴.

A high proportion of unemployed or economically inactive women in the two wards had last worked in low skilled jobs. 49% of unemployed and economically inactive women in St. Pauls had last worked in elementary jobs or as process, plant and machine operatives. In Soho and Victoria the figure was 42%, compared with 42% in Sandwell, and 26% nationally.

A high percentage of working age women in these wards were looking after their home and family full-time. Almost a quarter of working age women in Soho and Victoria, and a fifth in St. Pauls, were looking after their home and family full-time, considerably above the national average of 14%.

⁴ Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003, 1991 Census LBS, Crown Copyright 1993.

Figure 7 Women's economic activity status



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

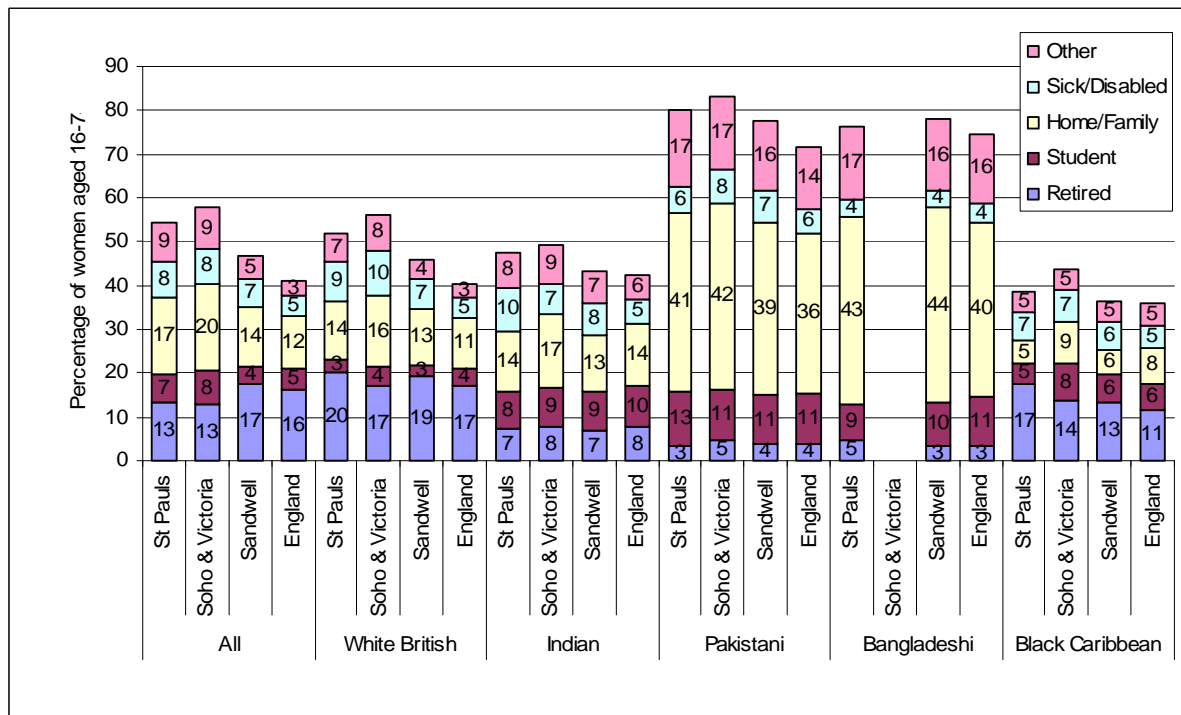
The reasons for economic inactivity amongst women varied across ethnic groups, as Figure 8 shows. The level of economic inactivity amongst Pakistani women in both wards arising from looking after their home and family was high (41%

in St. Pauls, and 42% in Soho and Victoria), compared with the same group of women nationally (36%).

A high proportion of women in both wards have no formal qualifications. For example, 34% of women aged 16-24 in Soho and Victoria, and 28% in St Pauls have no qualifications, compared with 24% in Sandwell and 16% in England. For women aged 25-34, 41% in Soho and Victoria and 36% in St. Pauls have no qualifications (compared with 27% in Sandwell and 14% in England).

A high proportion of women without qualifications are not in paid work. While women with degree level qualifications were almost as likely to be in employment in St. Pauls (74%) and Soho and Victoria (72%) as nationally (79%), among women with no qualifications only 34% in St. Pauls and 38% in Soho and Victoria were in employment. This compares with 50% in England as a whole.

Figure 8 Economic inactivity by reason by ethnicity (for selected ethnic groups) - proportion of women aged 16-74



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Note: Missing data are due to the very small number of Bangladeshi women in Soho and Victoria

In the two wards women who have unpaid caring responsibilities⁵ were less likely to be in paid employment than in Sandwell or nationally. This is particularly marked in Soho and Victoria, as Figure 9 shows. Only 30% of women with caring responsibilities were in paid work, compared with 47% in Sandwell and 52% in England.

Figure 9 Economic activity and provision of unpaid care by women aged 16-74



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Lone mothers in these wards were much more likely to be economically inactive than lone mothers in England. 61% of lone mothers in both wards were economically inactive, compared with 53% in Sandwell and 46% England.

Changes in the labour market

The two wards focused on here, and parts of the wider Sandwell area, have experienced significant changes in industrial structure and job opportunities over the past 30 years. These changes have had important outcomes for women. Large scale manufacturing was an important source of local employment, and also made the area a magnet for migrant workers in the 1950s and 1960s. But the decline of manufacturing has left the local population facing a range of job opportunities for which many lack skills and experience. In the past, many local women worked in textile and other local factories. Interviews with local organisations suggest that

⁵ These are people who look after or give support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental illness, disability, or problems related to old age (excluding anything people might do as part of their paid work).

the jobs in the coming decades are likely to be in retail, distribution, health and social care, administration and specialised engineering.

These changes in the labour market have had a significant impact on the two wards and the people living within them. Many families are living in poverty, and the changes have left large numbers of working age women out of work or unable to engage easily with the newly developing labour market. The rest of this report is concerned with these women: women who have been made redundant; women who have never worked but want to work; and women who have taken a break from work and now want to return but who are finding returning to paid work a difficult process.

Women outside paid work

Organisational views

To build a picture of local women who are currently not working we talked to representatives of voluntary and statutory organisations who provide employment programmes and support. Their perception of local women is important, as it can shape local policy responses. These organisational representatives identified the following key barriers facing local women:

Local organisations were acutely aware of local women's limited skills and qualifications, already highlighted in our statistical evidence.

We did some work with community groups and provided some soft skills training so that people could take up opportunities coming up, and what came out is that people's basic skills are really, really low...so when they came to filling out forms they still struggled.

Organisations also felt that some local women lacked aspirations, whatever their level of skill.

These are women with degrees in Business Administration. But when you look at the jobs they want to do, they say 'anything'; they have no direction, no goals.

A further concern was that some young women with qualifications are drawn into unpaid family care work before they have an opportunity to establish a place in the labour market. When these women try to get work later they are disadvantaged because they lack the experience which employers look for.

A lot of women in the area are carers for elderly parents. Some have been long-term carers. They start caring when they leave school at 18. Then when they try to get jobs it's very difficult.

Organisations also highlighted the language difficulties faced by some local women, for example, women of Indian origin in their 40s and 50s who previously worked in textile factories where there was no requirement to speak English. When these factories closed, these women found it difficult to find new jobs. Their lack of fluency in English and their lack of qualifications, are barriers to employment, although some pick up jobs in small textile factories, or as cleaners and packers in warehouses, where the pay is low and the prospects limited. Others accept casual work:

With the older ones, that have come from textiles - they really want to work ... Some get jobs as cleaners or in the laundries, but a lot have ended up on Incapacity Benefit.

There's a coach comes at the top of the road, every night. It takes women out to the farms where they work as night workers.

Some organisations were concerned that local women lacked knowledge about the kinds of jobs available in the contemporary labour market and the new opportunities that are opening up. Others argued that women lacked the confidence to engage with the labour market and the services associated with it.

We had women on our course who said, 'I never knew I didn't have to work full-time.' They immediately thought 9 to 5 or shift work, 2 til 10 or 6 til 2, that kind of thing. They didn't realise they had this choice of working part-time.

They don't seem to feel very comfortable talking about employment, talking about not being able to access jobs and training. I think people see that as something individual to them.

As is widely recognised, the poor availability of affordable childcare was also a concern to some local organisations. This was highlighted in our earlier report (Buckner et al 2004), which showed that some areas of Sandwell have no day nursery provision.

Childcare facilities, that's one of the main problems. It's too expensive.

Finally, local organisations felt that the combination of low pay in the local jobs available to the women living in the two wards, and the

workings of the benefit system, left women trapped outside the labour market.

This is the fear for most people, you know, 'Will I lose my benefits if I start work. How will I manage?'

If you are getting Job Seekers (Allowance), you are getting your rent paid, you are getting Child Benefit in your hand...If you get a job at £200 a week and they take a quarter of that in tax, why should you work for that, it's a disincentive. That's the way they see it: 'I won't be any better off working'. And 90% of local people are looking at very low wages.

Local women's views and experiences

All of the issues referred to in the interviews with representatives of local organisations emerged also in the discussions with local women. However, our discussions with women helped to deepen our understanding of the circumstances of local women and their relationship to the labour market.

The women who took part in the discussion were mostly women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. The views and experiences of other groups of women might add further dimensions to these findings.

The discussions with women uncovered the high value local women place on paid work, but also the ways in which the transition to paid work can be a process fraught with difficulties and setbacks. The discussions also revealed the kinds of organisational and personal support women wanted and needed to successfully enter paid work.

We met with two groups of women: women aged 25-49 and women aged 16-24. Some similar themes emerged across the age groups, but there were differences also. We therefore set out here the views of the two groups separately.

Women aged 25-49

Many of the women who took part in the focus group discussions had had paid employment in the past. Thus experience of paid employment was common. But most women lacked recent work experience. Some women had worked in low paid jobs in factories or in retail and childcare jobs, but others had held jobs at supervisory and management level and in high skilled jobs, such as accountancy.

Women explained that they placed a high value on paid work because it brought them a sense of achievement not available from other situations.

I worked as a secretary for a (community centre). I really loved my old job and I'd love to go back to work...it gave me that fresh air in my mind.

I think it is important to have a job of your own, a car, to live for yourself. A job is important at any age.

And a high value was placed on paid work because of the example it set to children.

If you don't work, the children will say, 'Why didn't you do anything with your life mum?' Our mums didn't think about studying or anything like that. We knew it affected us. We don't want it to affect our children.

Being out of work was largely viewed as a negative experience. Women spoke of their low self esteem, loss of confidence and boredom because of a lack of interaction with other people. Some women were depressed because they were out of work. Others felt that other people failed to respect them and that they lacked control over household finances. Some felt left behind by former work colleagues.

Last week I went to see my old manager and he was saying I was so good at my job, I could have done a degree in it...the others stayed behind and climbed the ladder. I'm just frozen - or I went backwards.

These are women who want to work.

Despite the desire to work, the process of looking for work was often a fairly depressing experience. Trying to secure relevant experience was one of the major hurdles women faced.

If you could have something like a training scheme where you can put us in different (work)places so that we can get more experience, that would help us.

Trying to improve qualifications was expensive and required considerable personal resources and time, but without qualifications women felt very disadvantaged.

It's very difficult to get a job these days. You need qualifications...If you haven't got qualifications they are not going to take you.

Moreover, the qualifications required for the jobs women desired were constantly changing. Having qualifications which were currently recognised was the key, but it was often not possible to find or afford suitable training courses.

The lack of qualifications and experience was not the only barrier to work referred to by the women. Some of the women believed that employers discriminated against them because of their religion.

It's going to be hard for us because we're Muslim. We wear the hijab, we always have our heads covered, we wear long dresses. They don't want you to be like that. Whatever level you are doing, it's going to be hard for a Muslim because of the news.

Because women often lacked skills and experience, the jobs market they faced was limited. Many local jobs paid the minimum wage and some even less.

I know some friends, they came from Bangladesh and they are educated, but they can't speak English. That's why they're getting only £3 an hour...you can't talk back to them and say, 'Why are you only giving me £3 an hour?' ...they'll say, 'leave the job.'

Some women were disappointed by the limited availability of part-time jobs and jobs with flexible hours of work. These women argued that part-time employment would offer them an opportunity to combine work and childcare, a situation that was desirable.

The availability of local jobs was important to some women. But many of the group were prepared to travel into the city centre or further.

Yes, I'd go into Birmingham, my friends work a long distance from home. Some go by train to Coventry and some to Leicester even.

The key issues facing these groups of women were often the consequences of a long absence from the labour market. Many of the women had quite large families, of four or more children, so the time spent away from work could be 10 or more years. In this period technology at work had changed, qualifications held were no longer relevant, and confidence about doing paid work had slipped away.

In the past, in some families, marriage had brought an end to paid work. There was an expectation, particularly from in-laws, that women would leave work on marriage and devote themselves to domestic work.

For the Asian woman, you have to be a practical housewife, you know, bring the kids up...We had that knowledge about the world outside...but we had to do the work at home, looking after the guests, the family, the children...It was expected.

Many women were unhappy that this has happened to them.

When you married you had difficult times with your in-laws. You want to go back to work, but they don't really understand it. I spoke to my husband about it, he understood, but your in-laws don't. They don't realise you want your freedom. But I said to them, 'I've had enough, I want my space', so I went to work. I would love to go back to work now, but I've got a 2 year old daughter, and it's hard for me to get someone to look after her.

Despite their experience in the past, all the women were clear that views and expectations amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi families were changing.

Now we can make a choice if you want to work, or study or anything.

Husbands were generally supportive of women going to work, but there was a lot of catching up for women to do in terms of skills and qualifications.

All the Asian women, they are behind in their knowledge and about working outside rather than at home. ...I'd like to stand on my two feet, but it's hard to go back (to work).

For women whose first language was not English, there were further barriers to the labour market. Many of the women in the group were well-educated in their home countries to A Level or Degree Level standard. While reading and writing skills in English were often fairly well developed, and levels of understanding were high, ESOL courses had not been successful in giving women the confidence to speak in English. One woman argued that the best way to develop confidence in the spoken language was to get a job, any job.

I was studying for a BA in English in Bangladesh, but I got married and didn't complete the degree. When I came here I struggled at first with the language, but then I got a job and that speeded things up...I used to talk to different people at work and I learned English that way.

Sometimes the demands of family life pulled women back from their focus on securing paid work.

I'm doing a computer course at the local college and I was doing an ESOL course. But because of the pressures at home, and the responsibilities at home, I found it difficult to commit 100% to the courses. But this is something I really want to do for myself.

Women aged 16-24

All of the young women wanted to find work but, as with older women, their search had been disappointing.

I've applied for vacancies but I didn't get anywhere at all...I'm looking for basic retail work at the moment, normal basic shop work, but I can't get a job. Because I've been unemployed for three years, that's maybe why I can't get a job at the moment.

Some young women also felt that discrimination was why they were not in work.

I think the main reason may be because we're Asians. With all that's been happening and things you can see on the television. It's not the main one, but it can be a reason.

Others felt they lacked labour market experience:

People require more experience nowadays. They want you to be properly qualified before going for a job.

Many of the young women appeared to have quite limited horizons in relation to the labour market. Most were looking for work in the retail industry or in childcare. But they feared they were competing in a crowded labour market.

The courses that most of us are doing, everyone is doing the same thing, like NVQ Level 1, everyone is doing childcare.

The only thing I can think of is retail.

Young women without work were feeling depressed.

You feel let down. In three years I'm getting nearly nowhere - and just sitting at home, doing nothing. It gets me down so much.

Young unemployed women could find themselves sucked into caring and domestic work for their families, particularly in large families where there were young children or elderly relatives.

I've been looking after my younger brother, so I'm like a single parent really.

Most of the women were looking for work in Birmingham and none felt that they faced any restrictions on their search for work from parents or other family members, including young married women.

I'd rather go to Birmingham anyway, because you can't find work here in the local area.

Using employment services

We asked both groups of women about their experiences of using employment and job brokerage services. Some women had looked for help in making the transition to work. But women's experience of using job search or brokerage services was not always positive. Women were particularly critical when agencies simply point to job vacancies, but offer no further support.

When you go to the Job Centre they say, 'just go on the machine', it's not that helpful.

They've shifted the boundaries. So the burden there is not on the advice work, it lies with you. It's making people responsible for their own actions, to encourage people to do things for themselves. But what they don't understand is people need additional support.

But the local voluntary sector job link service was praised for providing a wider range of services, including preparation for job interviews and an understanding of their situation as women and as Asian women.

Some women, however, were unaware of any local employment services or of where they could turn to get help in accessing work.

If we knew where to get advice, then I'm sure we'd use it.

In part, they wanted an employment service based on the range of issues facing them. The idea of a mentor was widely supported; a person to build confidence and offer guidance.

A lot of people have an idea of where they want to be. It's just getting there. If they had a mentor who could coach them, give them 1:1 advice. That would really help.

They also wanted support founded on an understanding of them as women in the labour market:

Getting a job is so difficult that on your own you don't know which way to turn.

I've made a resolve that I want to get a job - but how do I go about doing it?

Thus many local women who are outside paid work want to work, and local women place a high value on paid work, both for their own self-esteem and enjoyment of life, and as an example for their children.

The expectation in the past that women would devote themselves entirely to family work has led to long absences from the labour market for some women in these neighbourhoods. This will make the transition to paid work a process requiring considerable support, guidance and advice. Women would welcome greater support to help them update and extend their labour market skills, experience and qualifications. Some of the employment services used by local women have not fully addressed their needs in the labour market.

Low pay is also a significant barrier to the labour market, and there are concerns that discrimination affects local women's opportunities to secure employment.

Local employment projects

Some local projects and programmes have been established to help local people into paid employment. Here we outline the kinds of approaches taken by some of these projects.

Local job brokerage projects seek to place local people who are out of work into jobs. Such projects are prepared to try to place people in 'any job, anything.' They are based in the community, and provide a range of services to individuals who approach them for help in finding work, including knowledge of community languages and an understanding of the lives of local people. They are prepared to help anyone who walks through the door, and base their service on a deep understanding of the circumstances of local people. They are aware that there are no easy solutions to the barriers some local people face in accessing jobs, and this can mean offering clients a long term commitment.

You have to work with some people for 14 months. People don't necessarily understand the detail of what we do. There are a lot of problems. There is no easy fix.

The job brokerage approach is a vital service in the local community. It provides a supportive service in which local people feel comfortable.

The voluntary sector job brokerage approach draws no distinctions between different groups of people who are out of work. 'There is no one group to focus on. Worklessness is worklessness, regardless of background.' By comparison, the

statutory sector job brokerage approach is more focused on specific client groups claiming working age benefits: lone parents, people claiming incapacity benefit, the over 50s, black and minority ethnic people and people living in deprived wards. This service helps claimants into jobs on an individual basis.

A range of local voluntary sector organisations provide training courses in skills such as IT, ESOL, sewing, textiles, food hygiene, volunteering skills, and childminding. These are often run as taster sessions or short courses and, apart from childminding, are not linked to a specific job or the requirements of a specific employer. Women join these courses through their contact with community centres or Sure Start.

Some community organisations have run short courses for women in job interview preparation. This occurred particularly in conjunction with the opening of a large ASDA store in the locality.

There are a number of local ILM projects focused on construction jobs and care work, with other ILMs being considered in retail and the public sector. These are not specifically focused on women, although it is mostly women who have been attracted to the ILM in care work.

The targeted use of neighbourhood renewal funding has involved setting targets to close the gap in employment rates between the most disadvantaged wards and Sandwell. This has meant that, for example, Jobcentre Plus has devoted additional resources, and supported funding bids, which are designed to assist claimants of working age benefits in particular wards, including Soho and Victoria. The local authority and the Local Strategic Partnership are also committed to these targets.

In our discussions with representatives of local organisations there were mixed views, and some critical comments, on the effectiveness of local approaches to the problems of unemployment and economic inactivity. We outline here some of these perspectives.

One of the most critical issues raised in our interviews with organisational representatives concerned the pressing importance of determining who has the responsibility for the strategic overview and delivery of a local employment strategy to address the needs of the

changing local labour market. There was a concern that there were too many small-scale projects which were uncoordinated and not linked to an overall strategy.

There is no co-ordination, no overall strategy and there are lots of people doing so many little bits of things and a lot of semi-independent organisations. So we need to focus. There is so much that needs to be done.

To overcome this it would be necessary to take a dispassionate look at existing projects and approaches, and re-focus spending and future funding in a way which addressed the future employment needs of the area. Most importantly, there was a need to allocate responsibility for addressing unemployment and economic inactivity in the locality.

Alongside the concern about a lack of strategic direction and responsibility for labour market issues, some interviewees referred to the way local projects often competed for clients in an effort to meet their targets for 'people into jobs'.

We're all competing for the same client groups, so we are all seeking to cut each other's throats. We are all trying to secure funding to keep ourselves in existence, so we are fighting over a pot that won't cover everybody. They call it a partnership, but they are all going behind each other's backs.

Interviewees linked this to the lack of overall co-ordination and thus the duplication of local work. And target setting, it was claimed, was too often simplistic and numbers-based. Organisations referred to others being prepared to 'cut throats' to meet their targets and of the ways in which the current approach militated against genuine partnership working.

Voluntary sector and community groups were also hampered by problems created by short-term and limited funding for employment projects. This left them unable to plan services and to offer the kind of long term support that unemployed people often required.

We understand the local community, but we are never sure whether we can survive. Funders don't cover our core costs, they will only fund projects. We need mainstream funding. Every year we have to stop everything to apply for more money to keep going.

Concern was expressed that some organisations operated with only a limited understanding of local people and their needs. Support for people

into employment needed time and a good knowledge of the local community. This was especially important in a diverse community with a variety of different circumstances and labour market barriers.

I try to talk to people in the council about what it's like locally, but I am not sure they understand the detail. If we are going to help people into work they have to recognise how difficult it is to place people and how much support they need.

It was argued that the focus on certain groups of people was sometimes because they fitted into a particular claimant group (e.g. lone parents, claimants of Incapacity Benefit), but this did not lead to a focus on who they were as individuals, in terms of their work history and their specific support and personal needs. The same generic service was delivered, regardless of the unique circumstances of the person.

There was some criticism that training courses lacked a clear focus on contemporary labour market and employer needs. Many organisations offered short courses in a variety of skills, but these did not always prepare people to apply for specific jobs or for expanding areas of employment.

Instead, the key was to get employers on board so that training was linked to the requirements of real jobs.

I think we have to offer something more like a work environment than a training environment, and you've got to get the employers on board. I mean, anyone who wanted to train on anything in Sandwell - I bet you could find a course. There are buckets of it. It's much more about being clear about the jobs coming through. We've got to focus on what's coming through, so that we get local people into the new jobs.

Whatever the scope and value of local projects, there was a concern that too many local people who were unemployed or economically inactive were not making use of them. Many employment services were reliant on individuals themselves making contact. More needed to be done to reach out to people in the places they have contact with, like local schools, health centres and community centres as a means to draw them into using services.

It's not about what we provide, it's about how we get people to take it up. You've got to build up trust. It's like a journey over a period of time and you've got to do community outreach.

There were no local projects specifically focused on women, and this was a concern to some local organisations. There was an acceptance that women faced a specific set of circumstances in their relationship with the labour market. There was support for the idea of projects targeted on women.

Building successful employment projects: recommendations

This research has been concerned to understand how best to support women who want to work into paid work.

Our interviews with local women and our examination of the statistical data show that there are many local women who want to work. Local women place a high value on paid work, both in terms of their own lives and those of their children. However, there are some significant barriers to be overcome in order to fulfil women's desire to work.

The research has also explored whether the model provided by Intermediate Labour Market-type employment projects would be appropriate to help local women in their transition to work and whether it would appeal to them. Moreover, we have considered whether there are other measures that might assist local women into work.

Based on our research, we set out below some of the key principles that we regard as essential aspects of employment projects if women from deprived communities are to make the transition into paid work. We also make some recommendations regarding the wider policy context.

We have found that basing projects on the key principles associated with ILM-type employment projects (paid work experience, the opportunity to gain qualifications and personal support and guidance from a project co-ordinator) would be beneficial to unemployed and economically inactive women. But projects need the engagement of a range of local employers willing to offer women paid work experience.

The key starting point is to accept that many women living in disadvantaged communities who are not currently working want to work. To assist their transition to paid work it is important to

understand the features of women's lives that can prevent them from engaging in paid work.

Women in their 30s and 40s who have taken long absences from work lack up-to-date skills and experience of the labour market. They also lack confidence in their value as potential workers. This makes it difficult for individual women to make the transition to work without support, advice and guidance.

Younger women, in their teens and 20s, can also lack experience of work and in deprived communities they do not always have the qualifications and confidence to engage successfully with the labour market. As a result they often set their horizons in terms of work at a low level.

Many women of all ages have children, and they are searching for ways to combine caring for their children with paid work. Yet the jobs available to them are often very low paid and this takes childcare costs beyond their reach, even if they qualify for Childcare Tax Credit. And part-time jobs are not widely available, especially good quality part-time jobs.

Successful projects will need to accept and respond to these aspects of women's lives.

Many deprived neighbourhoods are characterised by diverse communities, with people from a wide range of backgrounds in terms of ethnicity. There are different needs and circumstances across these communities, and we can only begin to understand this by talking and listening to local people from different communities.

Sometimes myths and assumptions about women from ethnic minority groups develop, and these can stand in the way of the development of constructive solutions to help unemployed women. For example, some people hold the view that local women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds do not want to work, or face family pressure to work close to home. Yet women themselves refute these assumptions. It is important to discard such views and instead to listen to women themselves.

Local community centres with knowledge of local people can provide an excellent starting point in exploring the reality of women's lives. Some existing projects are helping local women to access employment, but more needs to be done to make a real difference in the employment rates

for local women. Here we set out some of the key elements that should be incorporated into employment projects.

Targeting projects on women

As we argue above, women face a distinct set of issues in relation to the labour market. Successful projects for women should be informed by an understanding of women's lives, as well as the differences between women in terms of age and ethnicity. For this reason it is important to develop projects targeted on women.

Incorporating work experience

Women who have been absent from the labour market and young unemployed women usually lack work experience. Without experience most employers are not willing to offer them work. And without work experience women's confidence in relation to work remains low.

Projects need to offer women a substantial period of work experience, for at least 6 months.

Up-dating and extending qualifications

Women who are trying to find work often lack either up-to-date qualifications or sufficient qualifications. Employment projects should not simply be about getting women into jobs but also about improving their employability, thus laying the basis for subsequent progression at work.

Employment projects need to provide opportunities for women to gain qualifications which provide a stepping stone to progress at work.

Providing support, guidance and mentoring

Many women who want to make the transition into work will find it difficult without support. Simply providing women with lists of vacancies is often not enough. We need to understand women's situation, re-build the confidence lost, and offer guidance so that women can extend their horizons. Mentors may be helpful and supportive.

Employment projects should offer personal support to women, guide them into the labour market and, in some situations, use mentors to help build their confidence and aspirations.

Offering a range of services

Employment projects should aim to provide a range of services to women. Women may have different needs, from training needs, to help with building confidence, interview techniques, filling out forms and preparing CVs.

Employment projects should be funded so that they can provide a wide range of services tailored to women's needs.

Reaching out to women

To connect women with available services it will be important to make contact with them in the places they visit day to day. We can make contact with women in schools, and in community and local resource centres. If we are to tackle high levels of worklessness amongst women and help women who want to work in the transition to work it will not be enough to wait for women to make contact with employment services.

Employment projects must reach out to women.

Getting employers on board

There are a range of community-based projects which offer training courses in skills such as IT, food hygiene and sewing. However, courses are often disconnected from real jobs, and the skills and qualifications needed for them, and thus are not sufficient, in themselves, to ensure women get jobs. For this reason, employment projects need a link to employers and employer support.

Getting employers involved with employment projects means that training and qualifications can be geared to specific jobs with specific employers. This will put women in a much stronger position to gain employment.

Encouraging employers to 'take a risk'

If employers are to commit themselves to employment projects for women in disadvantaged communities they have to be persuaded to take a risk. The potential recruits may be different from the kinds of people who normally apply for their jobs, and they may take time to re-adjust to the rhythms and demands of paid work. But for many employers being prepared to take on the kinds of women who have taken part in this research can be a genuine advantage. In many jobs a knowledge and understanding of local communities is a real asset, and for many employers achieving a more diverse workforce is an unachieved goal.

Understanding the changing labour market and identifying appropriate jobs

Successful employment projects are based on an understanding of real labour market conditions and the changing jobs market. Links with employers are vital, along with an understanding of which types of jobs are expanding and may appeal to local woman.

One area of employment growth in which knowledge of local communities will be an asset is in para-professional jobs, such as health care assistants and teaching assistants, and jobs in childcare services. Our research shows that these kinds of jobs also appeal to some women.

Employment projects must understand their local labour market and combine this knowledge with an appreciation of the interests of women.

Engaging partnerships of local employers

However, women are interested in a range of job opportunities. Some of the women interviewed were interested in para-professional jobs in health, care and education. Others had different employment aspirations. The way forward may be to establish partnerships of local employers willing to offer women paid work experience and the opportunity to gain qualifications.

The partnership approach can be linked with a project co-ordinator who would offer trainees personal support and guidance.

Tackling issues in the wider labour market: recommendations

Alongside our recommendations with respect to employment projects, we also recommend a fresh look at the wider labour market context and the policy approach to it.

A strategic approach

Some key local stakeholders are not confident that current arrangements locally provide for a strategic overview and responsibility for raising local employment levels and for ensuring local people are equipped with the skills and knowledge to engage with the changing labour market.

At present there are a range of small-scale employment projects, alongside statutory employment services for people claiming working age benefits. Regardless of the effectiveness of these services, it is important that they are located within a wider employment strategy which seeks to elevate employment levels and engage all working age people locally, including women who are not claiming benefits, who want to work. There is a view that local authorities could assume this strategic responsibility, within the context of a wider partnership.

Tackling low pay

A key barrier to work for women is the low pay associated with many of the jobs in which women typically engage. At present tax credits do not always raise income levels sufficiently to prevent low pay being a barrier to employment, particularly for lone mothers.

We know from one of our other studies (Grant et al 2005) that many employers increase pay in line with their competitors, year on year. Employers are reluctant to break out of these pay norms. Nevertheless, the problems created by low pay will need to be addressed if worklessness is to be comprehensively tackled.

There may be a role for local authorities to address this issue with local employers as they engage with them as partners in a local employment strategy.

At the national level, a more generous minimum wage and an increased value for tax credits would also be beneficial.

Challenging discrimination

In certain areas some people from ethnic minority groups perceive that racial, religious or postcode discrimination could be a factor in preventing them from getting a job. The much higher levels of unemployment amongst some ethnic minority groups, and in certain neighbourhoods, suggest that discrimination persists.

Local authorities could do more to explore and challenge discrimination and unfair practices in the local labour market. At the same time, local people would value a clear commitment to address discrimination.

Extending childcare

Existing childcare can be too expensive for low paid women - and local women are not always confident about the quality of the care provided. Childcare must be affordable, and local women need to be reassured that their children will receive the highest quality care and attention. Unless they have this assurance they will not be confident to use the services provided.

Local authorities could review the availability and affordability of childcare services and research local women's views and experience of using it.

Reviewing ESOL courses

An important barrier facing some local women is a lack of fluency in the English language. Yet English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses do not always succeed in raising language skills amongst all the women who want to work.

Part of the problem is the frequency of courses. Often classes take place only once a week, and more can be forgotten in the intervening week than learnt. The content of courses is also more about dealing with everyday situations, such as shopping and going to the post office rather than with the demands and requirements of paid work.

Local authorities could review the scope and frequency of language courses, and consider whether new approaches to language teaching are required to address the language needs of local women.

Conclusion

This study has considered how to connect women who are outside paid employment, and who want to work, with the labour market. The research has shown that many local women have a strong desire to work. They regard paid work as important for their standard of living and quality of life, essential for their self-esteem, and an example to children. Yet local women face difficulties in acquiring up-to-date qualifications and work experience, and they sometimes lack confidence about paid work, especially after long absences from the labour market.

Much could be done to enable local women to connect with the labour market, but employment programmes must be based on an understanding

of the diverse circumstances of women's lives and should reach out to women. Successful projects will provide women with paid work experience and training, and secure the engagement of employers. Women also need personal support and guidance as they make the transition to work. Employers must be encouraged to take a risk. To this extent, the key principles underpinning Intermediate Labour Markets (ILMs) should be adopted if women from deprived neighbourhoods are to be connected with the labour market. The ILM model can be adapted to fit local circumstances, as long as these key principles are embedded in employment projects for women.

Women are searching for a range of jobs, but many of the women expressed an interest in jobs as childcare workers and as classroom assistants. It will be important, however, to ensure that projects focus on areas of employment in which there will be real jobs in the future for which local women can apply. The involvement and commitment of employers in the development of projects is vital if women are to secure real jobs in the future.

Finally, tackling women's unemployment and economic inactivity must be integrated within the wider employment strategy, aimed at raising levels of skill and employment in the local labour market.

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Appendix 1 Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets

The *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Markets* project was funded, between September 2003 and August 2006, by a core European Social Fund grant to Professor Sue Yeandle and her research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion*, Sheffield Hallam University. The award was made from within ESF Policy Field 5 Measure 2, 'Gender and Discrimination in Employment'. The grant was supplemented with additional funds and resources provided by a range of partner agencies, notably the Equal Opportunities Commission, the TUC, and 12 English local authorities.

The GELLM project output comprises:

- new statistical analysis of district-level labour market data, led by Dr Lisa Buckner, producing separate **Gender Profiles** of the local labour markets of each of the participating local authorities (Buckner, Tang and Yeandle 2004, 2005,2006) - available from the local authorities concerned and at www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi
- 6 **Local Research Studies**, each involving between three and six of the project's local authority partners. Locality and Synthesis reports of these studies, published spring-summer 2006 are available at www.shu.ac.uk/research/csi. Details of other publications and presentations relating to the GELLM programme are also posted on this website.
 1. *Working below potential: women and part-time work*, led by Dr Linda Grant and part-funded by the EOC (first published by the EOC in 2005)
 2. *Connecting women with the labour market*, led by Dr Linda Grant
 3. *Ethnic minority women and access to the labour market*, led by Bernadette Stiell
 4. *Women's career development in the local authority sector in England* led by Dr Cinnamon Bennett
 5. *Addressing women's poverty: local labour market initiatives* led by Karen Escott
 6. *Local challenges in meeting demand for domiciliary care* led from autumn 2005 by Professor Sue Yeandle and prior to this by Anu Suokas

The GELLM Team

Led by Professor Sue Yeandle, the members of the GELLM research team at the *Centre for Social Inclusion* are: Dr Cinnamon Bennett, Dr Lisa Buckner, Ian Chesters (administrator), Karen Escott, Dr Linda Grant, Christopher Price, Lucy Shipton, Bernadette Stiell, Anu Suokas (until autumn 2005), and Dr Ning Tang. The team is grateful to Dr Pamela Fisher for her contribution to the project in 2004, and for the continuing advice and support of Dr Chris Gardiner.

The GELLM Partnership

The national partners supporting the GELLM project are the Equal Opportunities Commission and the TUC. The project's 12 local authority partners are: Birmingham City Council, the London Borough of Camden, East Staffordshire Borough Council, Leicester City Council, Newcastle City Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Somerset County Council, the London Borough of Southwark, Thurrock Council, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and West Sussex County Council. The North East Coalition of Employers has also provided financial resources via Newcastle City Council. The team is grateful for the support of these agencies, without which the project could not have been developed. The GELLM project engaged Professor Damian Grimshaw, Professor Ed Fieldhouse (both of Manchester University) and Professor Irene Hardill (Nottingham Trent University), as external academic advisers to the project team, and thanks them for their valuable advice and support.

Appendix 2 Research Methods

This research was conducted in 2005-6 using a variety of methods, including: analysis of statistical data, including the 2001 Census; interviews with key informants with knowledge of the circumstances of local women's lives, local employment projects and the local labour market; and two focus groups with local women.

The interviews with key informants explored: the activities and priorities of their organisation; local social and economic conditions; the nature of the local labour market for men and women; the social and economic circumstances of local unemployed and economically inactive women and men; local services; local employment projects; and views about, and experience of, the Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) model.

The focus groups with women covered the following topics: work history; experience of looking for work; labour market support and advice; reasons for not working; views about not working; aspirations in relation to paid work; views about the ILM model.

Two focus groups with local women were held; one group of women aged 25-49 and another group of women aged 16-24.

- 11 women participated in the group aged 25-49. Their characteristics were as follows:
 - 6 were aged 25 - 30; 4 were aged 31- 35, 1 was aged 36+.
 - 9 had dependent children, with family size ranging from families of 5 children to families with 1 child
 - 9 of the women were of Bangladeshi origin and 2 were of Pakistani origin
 - English was the first language for 5 of the group
 - 7 out of the 11 women had worked in the past
 - 9 of the women were currently looking for work
 - 6 of the women had qualifications: 1 had a NVQ Level 3; 3 were educated to GCSE level; and 2 were educated to A Level. Some of these women had reached this educational level in study abroad.

- 10 women participated in the group aged 16-24
 - 4 were aged 16-20; 6 were aged 21-24
 - 2 had a dependent child
 - 7 were of Pakistani origin; 3 were of Bangladeshi origin
 - 7 had had paid work in the past
 - 8 were looking for work
 - 2 were educated to A Level; 4 were educated to GCSE level; the remaining 4 had no qualifications

Appendix A3 Ward profile for St. Pauls and Soho and Victoria in Sandwell

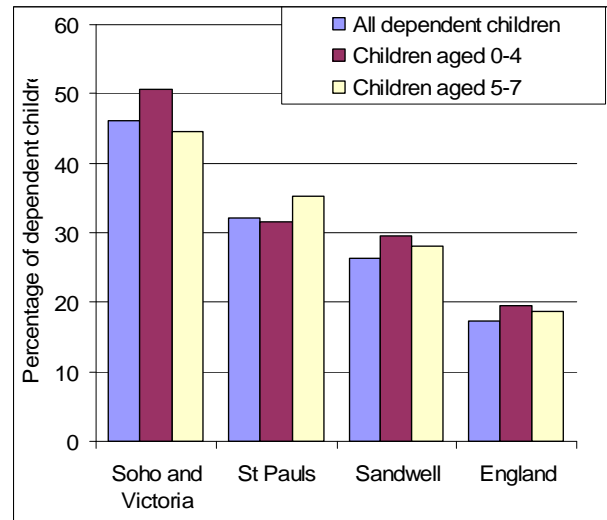
General information

Figure A1 Population profile – proportion of people in each age group

	St Pauls	Soho and Victoria	Sandwell	England
All males (numbers)	5,598	3,395	136,495	23,922,144
0-15	28	30	23	19
16-24	15	13	11	13
25-49	34	33	35	36
50-64	13	13	17	18
65-74	6	7	8	8
75+	4	5	6	6
All females (numbers)	5,876	3,929	146,408	25,216,687
0-15	25	28	21	18
16-24	14	13	10	12
25-49	35	34	35	35
50-64	13	11	16	17
65-74	7	7	9	9
75+	6	6	10	9

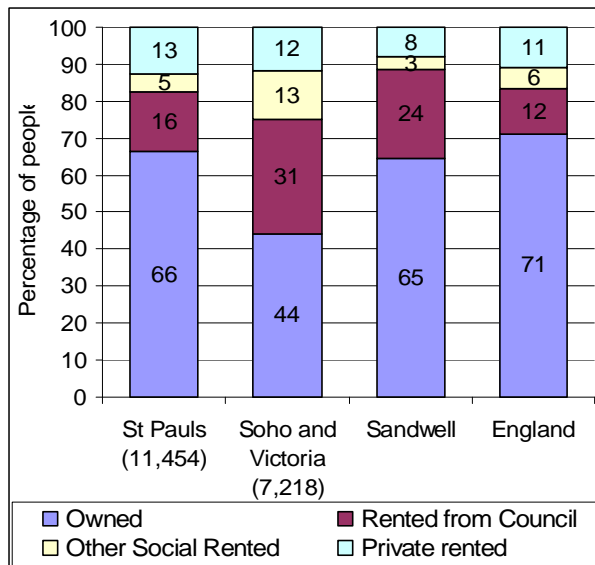
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A2 Dependent children in families with no working adults



Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A3 Tenure



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Travel to work

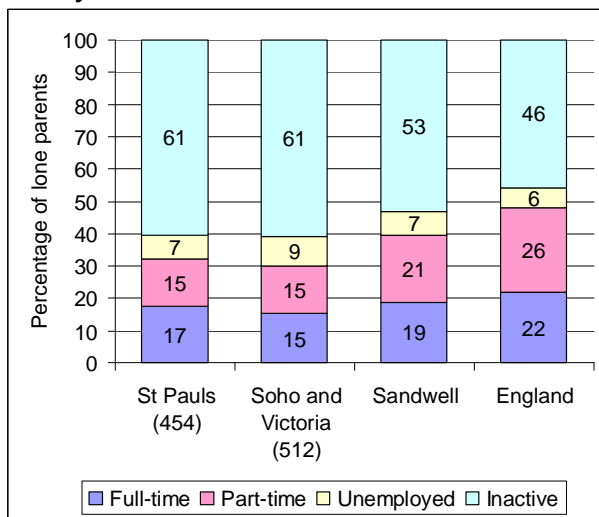
Figure A4 Method and distance travelled to work

People of working age (%)	St Pauls		Soho & Victoria		Sandwell		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Method								
Works mainly at or from home	11	8	8	7	8	6	10	8
Underground, metro, tram	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	3
Train	3	4	2	2	1	2	5	4
Bus; minibus; coach	12	24	18	36	10	21	5	11
Driving a car or van	54	34	52	28	62	45	58	51
Passenger in a car or van	6	10	4	8	6	10	5	8
On foot	9	17	10	16	7	14	7	13
Other	4	2	5	2	5	1	7	3
Distance								
Works mainly at or from home	11	8	8	7	8	6	10	8
0-2km	22	27	20	26	16	26	15	25
2-5km	25	31	31	43	30	33	18	23
5-20km	33	31	33	21	36	32	34	33
20-40km	3	1	2	0	3	1	9	6
40+km	3	1	1	2	3	1	7	3
Other	4	1	5	1	5	1	7	2

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

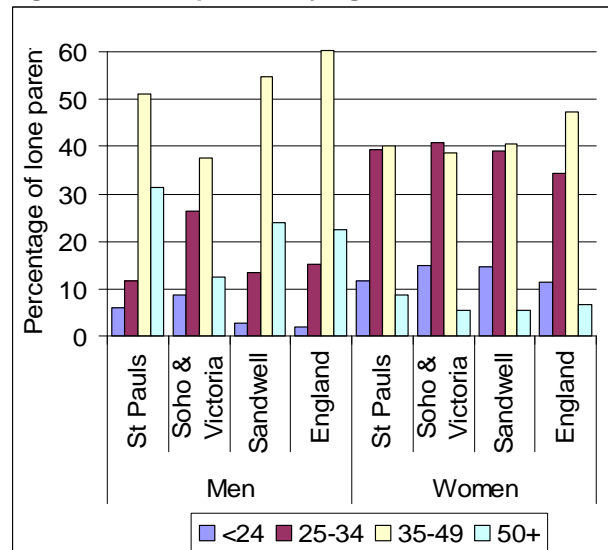
Economic inactivity and unemployment

Figure A5 Female lone parents and economic activity



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A6 Lone parents by Age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A7 Economic inactivity and unemployment in the wards

	St Paul's		Soho & Victoria		Sandwell		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Working age (WA) population (16-64/59)	3,449	3,389	1,971	2,183	86,226	81,514		
Employment rate								
Proportion of people of WA	60	45	51	38	70	58	74	64
Proportion of EA people	82	83	74	77	87	89	91	91
Unemployment rate								
Proportion of people of WA	11	6	14	7	8	4	5	3
Proportion of EA people	14	11	21	14	10	7	6	4
Economic inactivity rate - Proportion of WA	26	46	31	50	20	35	18	29
Economic inactivity rate by reason - Proportion of WA								
Retired	2	1	2	1	2	1	3	1
Student	8	8	8	9	4	5	5	6
Looking after home/family	2	20	3	23	2	17	1	14
Permanently sick/disabled	8	8	10	8	8	7	6	5
Other reason	7	9	8	10	6	6	3	4
Economic inactivity rate by reason - Proportion of Econ. inactive								
Retired	6	2	7	2	11	3	16	5
Student	30	17	27	17	21	14	29	19
Looking after home/family	8	44	9	46	8	48	6	48
Permanently sick/disabled	30	17	33	15	42	19	33	19
Other reason	25	20	25	20	19	16	16	12
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Change in economic inactivity - proportion of WA								
1991	16	40	17	46	13	35	13	32
2001	26	46	31	50	20	35	18	29
Change in Unemployment rate - proportion of WA								
1991	17	10	25	11	14	4	10	5
2001	11	6	21	14	8	6	5	3
Change in Unemployment rate - proportion of EA								
1991	21	16	30	20	16	10	11	7
2001	14	11	21	14	8	7	6	4

Source: 2001 Census Standard Statistics, Crown Copyright 2003

Census definitions:

Economically Active	All people who were working in the week prior to the census are described as economically active. In addition, people who were not working but were looking for work and were available to start work within two weeks were also included. Full-time students who were economically active are included but identified separately. This question was only asked of people aged 16-74.
Economically Inactive	Specific categories of Economic Inactivity are: retired, student (excludes students who were working or who were in some other way economically active), looking after home/family, permanently sick/disabled and other. This also include people who are looking for work but is not available to start within two weeks. This question was only asked of people aged 16-74.
Unemployed	A person is defined as unemployed if he or she is not in employment, is available to start work in the next two weeks and has either looked for work in the last 4 weeks or is waiting to start a new job. This is consistent with the International Labour Office (ILO) standard classification.
Working age	Working age is defined as 16 to 64 for males and 16 to 59 for females.

Figure A8 Percentage of women of working age who were unemployed

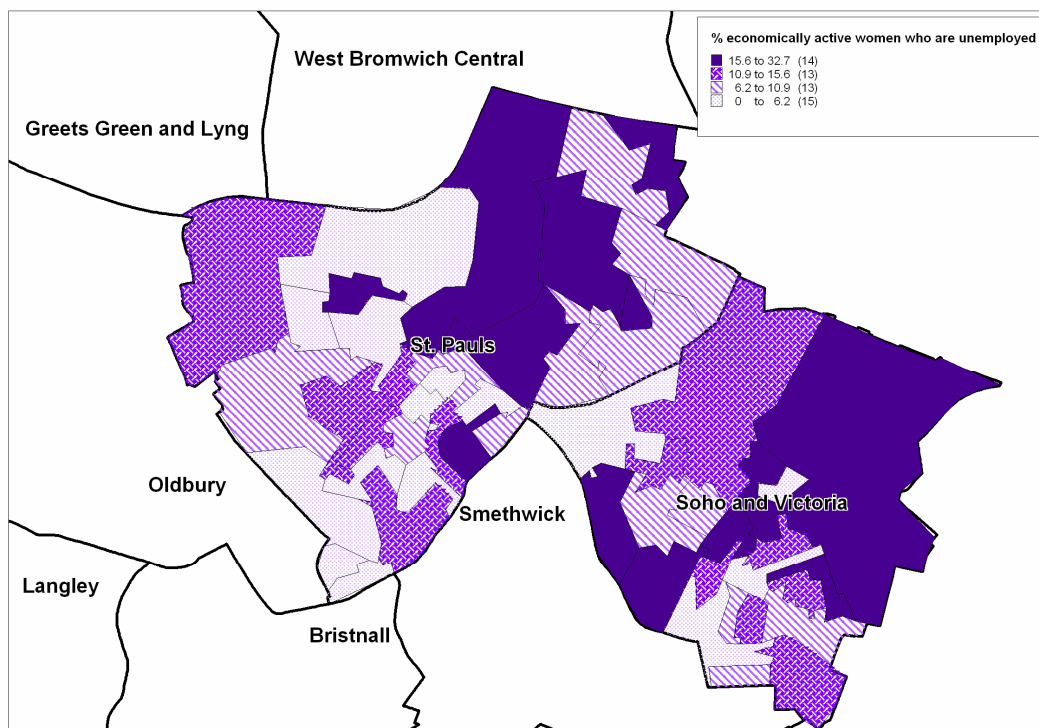
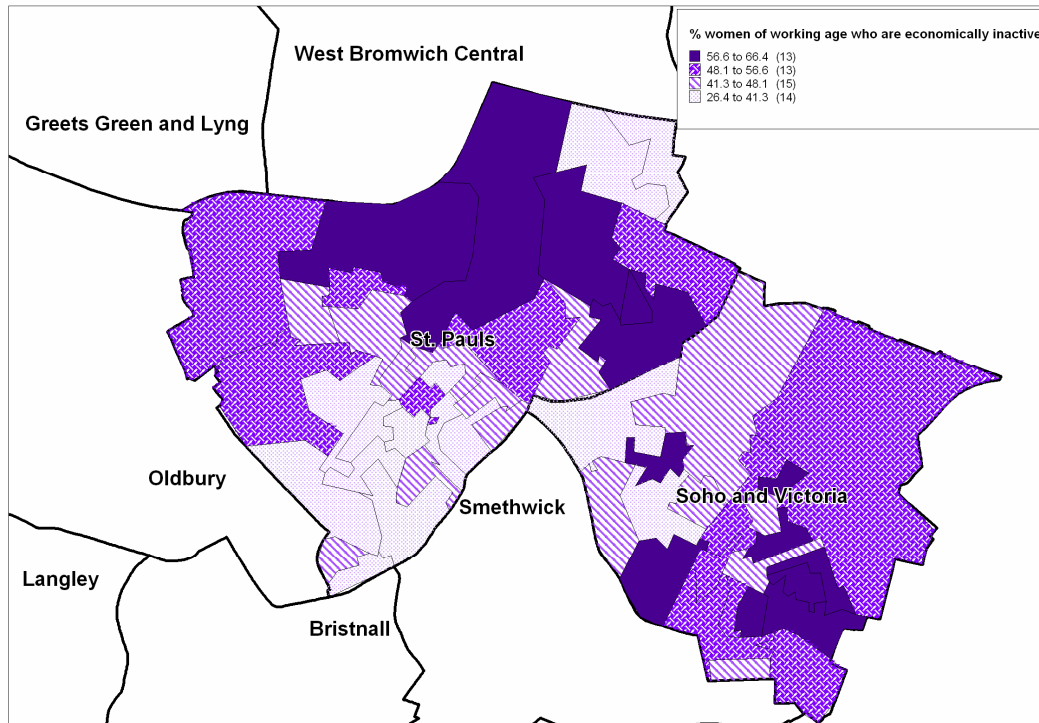


Figure A9 Percentage of women of working age who were economically inactive



Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003. 2001 Census Output Area boundaries, Crown Copyright 2003. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown

Note: These maps shows the percentage of economically active women (aged 16-59) who are unemployed, and the percentage of women (aged 16-59) who are economically inactive in each sub-ward area, with the total number of areas in each category in brackets

Figure A10 Unemployment rates for men and women from different ethnic minority groups in the wards

	St Paul's		Soho & Victoria		Sandwell		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Unemployment rate								
Proportion of people aged 16-74*								
All	10	5	13	6	7	4	4	2
White British	9	4	13	6	7	3	4	2
Indian	8	6	10	6	8	6	5	4
Pakistani	12	5	15	6	13	6	9	4
Bangladeshi	14	4	**	**	12	5	10	4
Black Caribbean	11	5	16	6	11	5	10	5
Unemployment rate								
Proportion of economically active people aged 16-74								
All	14	10	20	13	10	7	6	4
White British	13	8	20	14	9	6	5	4
Indian	12	11	13	12	10	10	6	6
Pakistani	19	23	25	34	21	25	14	15
Bangladeshi	21	17	**	**	18	22	16	17
Black Caribbean	17	7	27	10	16	7	15	8

Source: 2001 Census Standard Statistics, Crown Copyright 2003

Note * These data are not available by age group

** Missing values are due to the small size of the Bangladeshi population in Soho and Victoria

Figure A11 Qualifications by age and employment

	St Paul's		Soho & Victoria		Sandwell		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
People with no qualifications (%)								
16-24	30	28	30	35	30	24	19	16
25-34	39	36	36	41	31	27	17	14
35-49	53	59	57	57	48	45	29	26
50-64/59	81	81	81	81	78	75	56	52
People in of working age in employment (%)								
No qualifications	57	34	44	38	62	45	65	50
Lower level	61	63	54	58	76	66	76	66
Higher level	75	74	68	72	83	81	85	79

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Note: Lower level qualifications were equivalent to 'A' level and below and higher level qualifications were equivalent to first degree and above

Figure A12 Former occupations and industries of unemployed and economically inactive women

	St. Pauls	Soho & Victoria	Sandwell	England
Occupation				
Managers, senior officials	3	3	4	7
Professionals	2	2	4	6
Associate professionals & technical occupations	3	4	6	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	20	16	19	5
Elementary occupations	29	26	23	21
Industry				
Manufacturing	26	19	22	11
Health and social work	13	20	15	16
Finance and real estate	13	10	11	15

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003