

Connecting Women with the Labour Market in Wakefield

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Foreword


Changing, improving, and sustaining progress

Wakefield MDC 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)*.

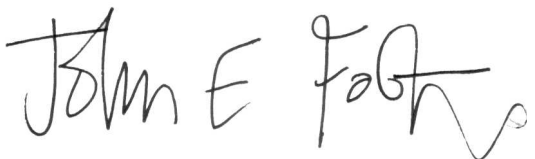
In participating in this project the Council has made a firm commitment to disseminate and implement the research findings by engaging with key stakeholders during all stages of the project. The Council is keen to take forward both the research and the outcomes from the local research studies.

We will use this learning to inform reviews of key strategic and service plans. This will help us to meet the:

- ❑ **Changing** legislative requirements around gender through the public sector duty on sex equality
- ❑ Council's commitment to continuous **improvement** and **sustainability**



Cllr. Peter Box
Leader of the Council



John E Foster
Chief Executive

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Members of the GELLM Team contributed as follows:

Statistical Analysis	Lisa Buckner; Gerard Poole
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Key findings

This study has explored the situation of unemployed and economically inactive women in the Wakefield district, 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 Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood wards of Castleford were examined in depth.

Women's circumstances in the three wards

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

- Working age women were much less likely to be in paid employment, especially in Ferry Fryston
- A high proportion of women worked 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
- High percentages of working age women were claiming Income Support, especially in Ferry Fryston
- In contrast to the trends nationally, and in Wakefield overall, levels of economic inactivity amongst women remained static in Glasshoughton and Whitwood
- 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 in Ferry Fryston
- Lone mothers were more likely to be economically inactive in Ferry Fryston and Glasshoughton

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
- A complex mix of personal problems
- An unwillingness to travel to work
- 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
- A willingness to travel to work in some cases
- A perception that jobs with flexible and school hours were not available
- A lack of well-paid jobs
- The difficulty of securing work when aged under 18
- The negative impact of absences from work on their skills and confidence
- The importance of support, guidance and practical help 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 practical help
- 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 approach to the changing labour market
- Allocating local strategic responsibility for raising local levels of employment
- Tackling low pay, in partnership with local employers
- Providing affordable, good quality childcare
- Raising young women's labour market aspirations

Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the potential for establishing projects, based in Wakefield, 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 March 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 Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood wards of Castleford.

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; Sandwell and Thurrock. 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, Wakefield, 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. In Wakefield as a whole, and in Glasshoughton and Whitwood, there are also around 1 in 3 women of working age outside paid employment, while in Ferry Fryston nearly 1 in every 2 women are 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 Wakefield, 29% of economically inactive women wanted paid work, and with the district's unemployment rate in 2004 at 2%, this means there were almost 7,300 women in Wakefield 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.

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

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

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 the Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood wards in Castleford, Wakefield

Looking across the three wards, there is considerable variation in women’s circumstances and their relationship to the labour market.

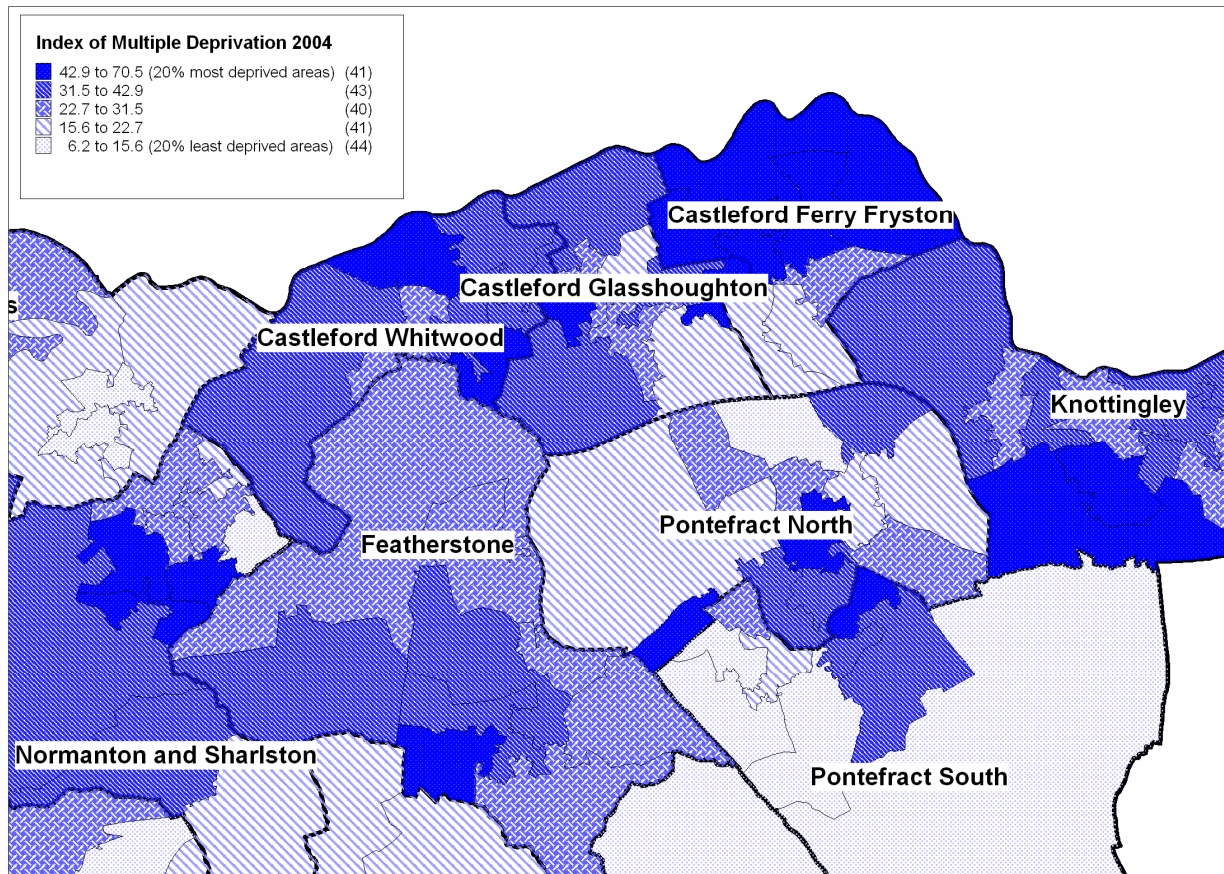
If we consider levels of deprivation, parts of the Castleford wards, particularly in Ferry Fryston and Glasshoughton, are among the most deprived

neighbourhoods in Wakefield and England. The wards are located to the north east of Wakefield, bordering on Leeds and Selby (Figure 1).

The age profile across the wards varies. For example, the population in Ferry Fryston ward was relatively young in 2001 compared with the other two wards, Wakefield and England as a whole. 23% of the people in this ward were aged 0-15, compared with 20% in Wakefield and 18% in England. In Whitwood 18% of the population were aged 65 or over, compared with 16% in both Wakefield and England.

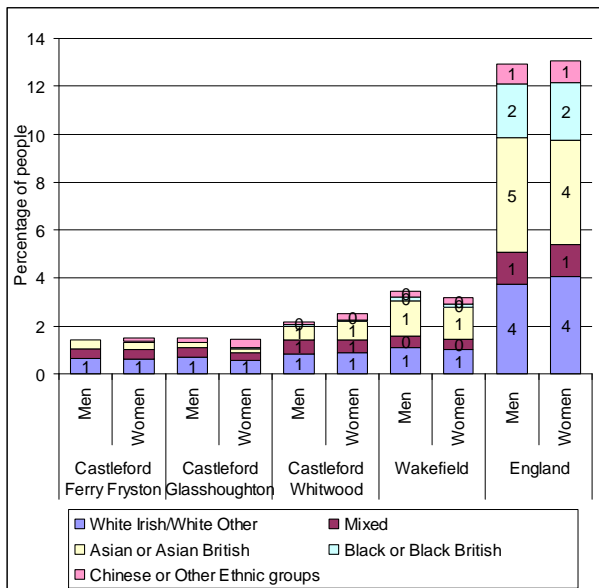
A low proportion of the population in these wards is from ethnic minority groups (Figure 2). Less than 3% of women living in these wards are from ethnic minority groups, compared with 13% of England’s female population.

Figure 1 Pattern of deprivation: Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood 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 2 Ethnicity in Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood wards



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 had a limiting long-term illness (LLTI): 20% of women in Ferry Fryston and 18% in both Glasshoughton and Whitwood, compared with 16% of women in Wakefield and 8% in England.

Women's employment ²

The patterns of women's employment varied across the three wards. Women of working age in Ferry Fryston ward were less likely than women nationally to be in paid employment. In this ward, only 55% of women of working age were in employment, compared with 64% in both Wakefield and England. Thus employment rates for women in this ward fell below the 60% employment rate target. In the other two wards women of working age were almost as likely to be in employment as women nationally.

Levels of part-time working amongst women in the wards was high, as is the case in Wakefield as a whole. Many women who want to combine caring with paid employment prefer to work part-time or in jobs with flexible working patterns. In Glasshoughton 30% of women were part-time employees, in Ferry Fryston 26% and in Whitwood 27%, compared with 27% in Wakefield and 23% nationally.

Full-time working amongst lone mothers in Ferry Fryston and Glasshoughton wards was at a very low level (just 14% in both wards) and few lone mothers in Ferry Fryston worked part-time. Although part-time employment can be particularly helpful for lone mothers, in Ferry Fryston just 23% of lone mothers worked part-time, compared with 32% in Whitwood, 29% in Wakefield and 26% in England as a whole. In Glasshoughton 32% of female lone parents were in part-time work.

Women workers in the three 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 Wakefield or England. Almost a third of women in Ferry Fryston, and over a quarter in Glasshoughton and Whitwood, worked in elementary jobs or operative positions. This is about double the national figure of 15% (Figure 3).

At the same time, only 7% of women workers in Ferry Fryston and 8% of women workers in Glasshoughton and Whitwood worked as managers or senior officials, compared with 11% nationally.

Women workers in the three wards were particularly concentrated in certain industrial sectors (Figure 3). A third of the women in the three wards worked in wholesale, retail, hotels and restaurants, compared with a quarter in England as a whole, while only 12% of Glasshoughton women worked in the finance and real estate sector, compared with 18% nationally. A high proportion of women in the three wards worked in manufacturing jobs compared with England as a whole.

Many women workers in the locality worked close to home. 63% of women workers in Glasshoughton, 60% of women in Whitwood and 58% in Ferry Fryston, 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. 24% of women in both Glasshoughton and Whitwood walked to work, compared with 11% in Ferry Fryston, 16% in Wakefield and 13% in England.

² Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure 3 Main occupations and industries of women in employment

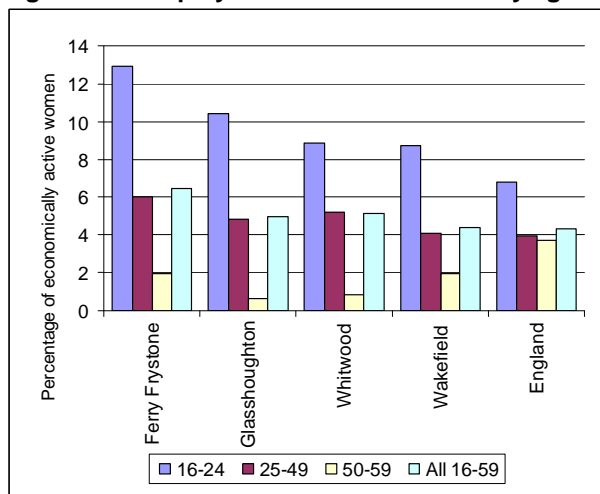
	Ferry Fryston	Glasshoughton	Whitwood	Wakefield	England
Occupation					
Managers, senior officials	7	8	8	9	11
Professionals	3	3	3	7	10
Associate professionals & technical occupations	9	9	7	12	14
Process, plant and machine operatives	9	7	7	4	3
Elementary occupations	21	19	20	17	12
Industry					
Manufacturing	14	13	13	10	9
Wholesale, retail, hotels and restaurants	32	33	34	28	24
Health and social work	16	18	17	20	19
Finance and real estate	14	12	14	14	18

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Women's unemployment and economic inactivity³

A high percentage of working age women in the three wards were either economically inactive or unemployed in 2001. In Ferry Fryston, 43% of working age women were either economically inactive or unemployed. In Glasshoughton the figure was 35% and in Whitwood 37%, above the figures for Wakefield (34%) and England as a whole (33%). This represents over 4,000 women in these three wards.

Figure 4 Unemployment rates for women by age



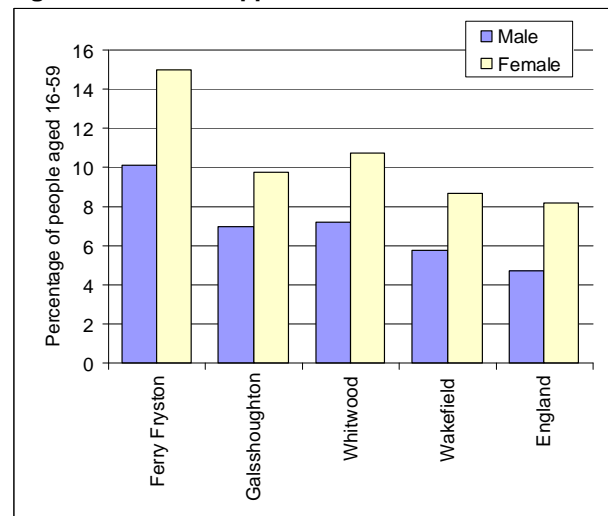
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Levels of unemployment amongst women were high in the three wards across all age groups (Figure 4). The level of unemployment was very high for young women in Ferry Fryston (13%) and

Glasshoughton (10%) compared with Wakefield (9%) and England as a whole (7%).

15% of women of working age in Ferry Fryston, 10% in Glasshoughton and 11% in Whitwood, claim Income Support (Figure 5). This represents over 1,300 women in the Castleford wards.

Figure 5 Income Support claimants



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

In line with the national picture, the proportion of economically active women in Ferry Fryston decreased between 1991 and 2001, from 44% to 38%. It nevertheless remained at a high level. In contrast, in Glasshoughton and Whitwood the proportion of women of working age who were economically inactive remained static at 32% and 33% respectively. In this period, economic inactivity amongst women decreased in Wakefield

³ Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

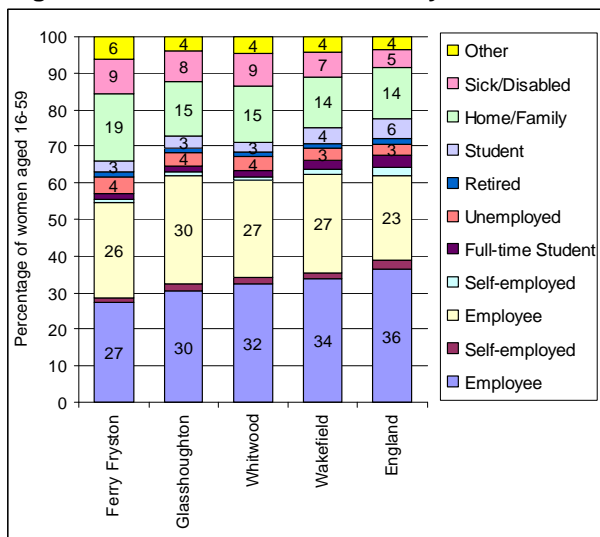
from 34% to 31%, and in England from 32% to 29%⁴.

In line with national trends in unemployment figures, between 1991 and 2001, the proportion of women who were unemployed fell from 9% to 7% in Ferry Fryston, from 7% to 5% in Glasshoughton and from 7% to 6% in Whitwood. The decline in Wakefield was from 7% to 5%, and in England from 7% to 4%⁴.

A high proportion of unemployed or economically inactive women in the three wards had last worked in low skilled jobs. 45% of unemployed and economically inactive women in Ferry Fryston had last worked in elementary jobs or as process, plant and machine operatives. In Glasshoughton the figure was 43% and in Whitwood 42%, compared with 39% in Wakefield, and 26% nationally⁵.

A high percentage of working age women in Ferry Fryston ward were looking after their home and family full-time. In all three wards a relatively high percentage of women were permanently sick and disabled, 8-9% compared with just 5% nationally.

Figure 6 Women's economic activity status



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

A high proportion of women in the wards had no qualifications. For example, 29% of women aged 16-24 in Ferry Fryston, 24% in Glasshoughton and 23% in Whitwood had no qualifications,

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

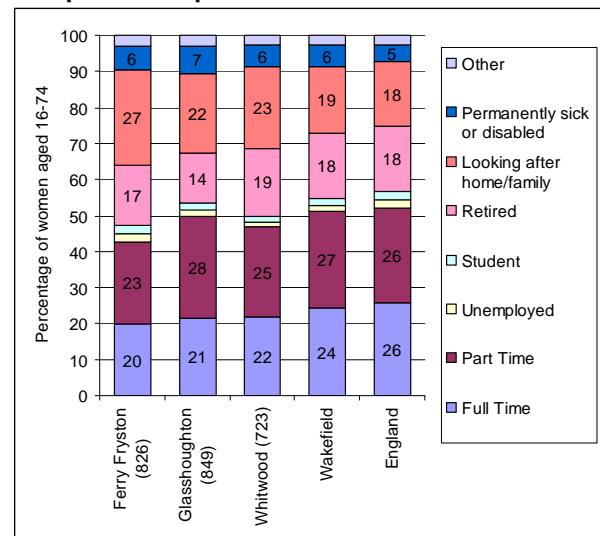
⁵ Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

compared with 22% in Wakefield and just 16% in England. For women aged 25-34 the percentage of women with no qualifications was also high. 37% of women aged 25 - 34 in Ferry Fryston had no qualifications, 30% in Glasshoughton, and 27% in Whitwood, compared with 24% in Wakefield and just 14% in England.

A high proportion of women without qualifications were not in paid work in Ferry Fryston. Only 44% of women with no qualifications in Ferry Fryston were in employment. This compares with 49% in Whitwood, 50% in Glasshoughton and 50% in England as a whole. On the other hand, women with degree level qualifications were more likely to be in employment in Ferry Fryston (81%) and Glasshoughton (80%) than women nationally (79%).

In the three wards women who have caring responsibilities⁶ were less likely to be in paid employment than in Wakefield or nationally. This is particularly marked in Ferry Fryston, as Figure 7 shows. Only 43% of women with caring responsibilities were in paid work, compared with 51% in Wakefield and 52% in England.

Figure 7 Economic activity of women aged 16-74 who provide unpaid care



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Lone mothers in some of the wards were much more likely to be economically inactive than lone mothers in England. 55% of lone mothers in Ferry

⁶ These are people who look after or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental illness, disability, or problems related to old age (this excludes anything people might do as part of their paid work)

Fryston, and 52% in Glasshoughton were economically inactive, compared with 46% in Whitwood, 47% in Wakefield and 46% England.⁷

Changes in the labour market

The three wards focused on here, and parts of the wider Wakefield area, have experienced significant changes in industrial structure and job opportunities over the past 30 years. These changes have had important outcomes for women.

Buckner et al (2004) showed that in Wakefield between 1991 and 2002 there was a marked decline in women's employment in manufacturing, in both part-time and full-time jobs. This was offset by an increase in women working in distribution, hotels and restaurants, transport and communications and in public administration, education and health.

These changes in the labour market have had a significant impact on the three 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 aware of some local women's limited skills and qualifications, already

highlighted in our statistical evidence. Organisations also felt that some local women lacked aspirations, whatever their level of skill. This was a particular concern in relation to young women.

The under 20s seem to have no aspirations at all. They have got very low confidence, even the ones who have got skills don't believe in those skills themselves...I don't think they get the best advice in schools. They seem to be advised to go for low paid jobs. Their horizons are set very low by schools.

The importance of the differences in women's circumstances across the three wards was frequently emphasised.

Moving up the hill in Castleford takes you into Airedale and Fryston village and they are relatively more isolated, experiencing more concentrated deprivation than Whitwood at the bottom of the hill.

In those neighbourhoods where unemployment levels were high the problem of low aspirations was felt to be particularly acute, although with support women's aspirations can begin to change.

In Castleford people seem to be more proactive in finding work. In Ferry Fryston and Airedale it is more acceptable to be not actively seeking work and not to aspire to have a job at all. There are very low aspirations, and low aspirations for the children... Survival is the biggest thing...But with support you can see changes. You see people feeling better about themselves and starting to realise they can do something.

There was also a concern that the circumstances of some women meant that there were many aspects of their lives which would need to be addressed in order for them to engage with the labour market.

In 1997/98 it would be two or three things that were keeping people from the labour market, maybe lack of experience or lack of qualifications. Nowadays it will be a lack of experience, lack of qualifications plus difficult families to manage, health issues, disability issues.

On the other hand, there were women who did have qualifications and skills but who were unable to find jobs which would use these skills, particularly if they wanted to work part-time.

There are women who want to retrain but they can't get experience and many of the jobs available are low paid. They can work as cleaners but they've been managers in the past. It's a total waste of their brains.

⁷ Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Organisations expressed a concern that some women might be unwilling to travel far to work.

They wouldn't travel far for work. Of course, some people do and break the mould but many wouldn't travel very far at all.

As is widely recognised, the poor availability of affordable childcare is an important barrier to women in the labour market and this 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 Wakefield have no day nursery provision.

Whatever job a person is looking for, if they have childcare responsibilities it undermines the viability of taking up that post, particularly if that person has few skills.

Finally, local organisations felt that the combination of low pay in the local jobs available to the women living in the three wards, and the workings of the benefit system, left women trapped outside the labour market.

They've got no aspirations because they've got such low skills. They would only earn the minimum wage doing horrible jobs. So it is a risk to come off benefits...It's quite understandable why it's difficult to break the cycle.

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 White British 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 level in the past.

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

It's not that you're lazy. It's not that you don't want to work to help yourself. I've always worked. I loved my jobs.

I feel my time is wasted. You can't get this time back.

It's important to have something for yourself. A job gives you that. You need a bit of space. If you've got a good job you can do more things.

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

It doesn't look good for my daughter, me sat at home. I've been sat at home for 5 years. So when she's 16 she'll think, 'me mum's been able to sit at home all my life, I don't need to get a job'. It's me she looks to as a role model. I'd willingly go to do anything.

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. Being out of work often meant it was hard to make ends meet.

I live on £100 a week at the moment and I have got 3 kids to support. I've got no support from anywhere else. We really struggle. I can't have treats because we can't afford it. All my money goes on things I need to pay out at home.

The majority of these women 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.

Sometimes employers make it very difficult. They want continuous experience. When you go with that broken CV it creates some doubt in your ability to do a job. They put too much on experience.

Many of the jobs, they want experience. If you're a woman and you haven't worked for a while, where would you get that experience? It's not easy. They say, 'Have you done this before?' you say, 'No, but I am willing to try', but that's not good enough.

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

That holds me back. I feel let down by my school. They pushed me down. I was in a classroom full of people who didn't want to learn. So, I'm trying to build up my qualifications now.

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

Qualifications get out of date very quickly and some courses you have to pay for them and that makes it very difficult.

Because women often lacked skills and experience, the jobs market they faced was limited. Many local jobs paid the minimum wage or only a little more.

Jobs are no more than 12 grand, 14 grand and when you've got three kids and you've got to pay your childcare you can't do it... You do get tax credits but it's still not worth it. When I work it out I'm better off not working. If there's two of you it might seem a lot but when it's just you... You get 70% childcare costs through the tax credits but you've still got to find the rest yourself.

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

There's not much flexibility around here. Most shifts are 6 to 2, and 2 to 10, and childcare, you're paying £3 an hour and you are working for £5 an hour so it's not worth it.

I've worked in sewing factories and in distribution centres. But now I'm on me own there isn't anything during the day where I can drop them at school and pick them up. I can't even get a basic job because of the hours.

Employers should help, they should be accommodating with the hours for women with children. But they say, 'if you can't do it, leave it, we can't help you'.

I've got a qualification to work as secretary but it's not easy to find a job as a secretary because you've got the hours problem. Who's going to take your child to school, where are you going to leave her? You can't keep asking your Mum.

The availability of local jobs was important to some women. Although some women were prepared to travel into Leeds or Wakefield, others were not because this would increase the time away from children.

You can get a train to Leeds and because it's a city that's where the good jobs are. But there's the time to get there and back, another hour in the day.

There was an acceptance amongst the group that there were jobs available locally. But an important issue was that women wanted to do the kinds of jobs they were interested in, not simply any job. Many of the available jobs were seen as very low paid and not worthy of their skills, labour market experience or aspirations.

It's easy to get a job, but it's any old job. Cleaning, packing, picking, they're rubbish jobs. Everybody knows what they're capable of.

I don't want to do factory jobs and cleaning. Now I've seen this teaching assistant job and I'm really hopeful. It's voluntary to start with but I'll be doing something I want to do not just what I have to do... It's time for me to do what I want to do.

The problem of low pay was also an important issue. Women argued that there were too few well paid jobs and that often the wages did not reflect the nature of the job on offer.

I always look in the paper and I always look at council jobs. We want better paid jobs, jobs in the council, in the fire service, those kinds of jobs... With the jobs around here the money they offer doesn't seem to match the job they want you to do. You read the description of the job and they are only offering the minimum wage.

And there were even local jobs paying less than the minimum wage.

I've been to places where they pay under the minimum wage.

Women aged 16-24

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

Since I've left school I've filled in lots of application forms and not got anywhere. I did work experience at a pharmacist. I enjoyed that. I look in the papers, I go to Connexions but I'm not getting anywhere. When I left school I worked in a bottle factory. I only lasted one day. Since then I've been filling in application forms, sending them in, but no-one's got in touch with me.

It's hard to get jobs. You apply and nobody gets back to you.

Some young women felt that lack of experience stood in their way of getting work.

I've not done much since I left school. I've looked for work and you've either got to be 18 or they want experience... They say, 'we'll ring you back', but they never do.

I've been applying for jobs and they're just not getting back to me or, if they do, they say, 'you haven't got enough experience.'

Others felt that an important barrier was that they were under 18.

In Ferry Fryston there's a care home and they are desperate for care assistants but when you say you're 16 they say, 'I can't take you'. I don't know why you have to be 18 to care for somebody.

The low pay typically associated with the kinds of jobs they might secure locally was also a key issue. The young women felt that the very poor levels of pay on offer to them as young women was exploitative and not worthy of their abilities.

There are lots of jobs at £3 an hour but I'm not doing that, it's wrong. You are trying your hardest to work and show that you are willing to work, and they just think, 'just give her few quid, she'll be alright'. They should treat everyone the same. As soon as you are 18 it goes up. What's the difference between being 17 and 18.

It's ridiculous. It's cheap labour. When I worked at --- it were 3 quid an hour, 9 to 5...I was there for a year and they get you doing everything. I got half an hour dinner but I didn't get paid for that...I even had to clean the toilets.

I started a job at £5.05 an hour and then, in the second week, he said, 'how old are you?' When I said I was 17 he said, 'it's 3 quid then'.

Some 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. Others were willing to consider 'anything' and some wanted clerical jobs.

Some of the women were looking for work in Leeds or Wakefield, others wanted work closer to home. But the desire to work close to home was often because of childcare or other caring responsibilities.

Being out of work was a depressing experience for these young women.

It just does your head in. You feel you are just being made out to be an idiot because you're not 18 and you've got no experience. What's the point of living really? Nobody's helping you, nobody's giving you no money from nowhere. What is the point? It's nice to talk to someone who will sit and listen.

The lack of independence was felt sharply.

You can't go out. You are dependent on your Mum and Dad. You feel shit. You've got no money so you have to keep begging.

And despite their efforts to find work they felt that society blamed them for being unemployed.

They're always complaining about teenagers being lazy but they won't give us a job. They blame it on us.

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.

You go on to a screen and jobs come up but no-one talks to you at the Job Centre.

Some of the older group of women felt they didn't receive sufficient information about how their benefits would be affected by taking up work.

They told me that they wouldn't work out my benefits until I got a job.

The young women were disappointed with the employment services available to them. Many felt that they were being pressured into considering jobs they were not interested in and this made them feel that they were not being listened to.

You tell them what you want to do but they try to persuade you to do something else and the jobs they want you to do are, like, £80 a week.

But women in the older group had had similar experiences.

Last time I went to the Job Centre they said, 'are there any courses you'd like to do?' I said, 'yes, I'd like to be an HGV driver, do they do courses in that?' And they just laughed at me. And I've got my fork lift driving licence. They are not going to help me to get there. I'd have to pay for it myself.

The Connexions service for young people was criticised for not being able to help young women who had qualifications to find work or to find jobs with higher wages.

They say, 'you're over-qualified'. I've got 9 A to Cs and all the jobs that come in there aren't for someone with qualifications. A lot of them are voluntary jobs.

They send you for jobs at £70 a week but that's no good because I've got my own place.

And there was a widespread concern that often services were not listening carefully enough to the women.

When I first went I wanted a job or maybe to go on a training course but I didn't want to go to college and I said I didn't want to go to college. But she put a Wakefield College brochure in my hand. She wasn't really listening to me.

They should make a documentary about us so they can hear what we're saying.

And for those young women without qualifications opportunities to re-start GCSEs appeared limited.

I keep saying, 'can I do my GCSEs again?' But they haven't got back to me. ...They think, 'oh, she's only just left school, she had her chance at school'. You've probably got to wait til you're 30 to re-do your GCSEs.

The group of older women wanted an employment service based on the range of issues facing them. They wanted support founded on an understanding of them as women in the labour market, or as women bringing up children alone. This meant that they needed advice on benefits

and practical help and guidance on how to re-enter the labour market.

It would be good to have someone who you can say to, 'I want to do this, how do I get to be that.'

Greater financial support for re-retraining would also be welcomed.

If the government can give people who are made redundant re-training, why can't they give people like us re-training?

For the younger women, access to someone who 'listens to what I want to do', was very important.

It's ridiculous. We're not babies. We just want to talk to someone and no-one is helping us to do anything.

And young women also wanted a service which provided more practical help.

I'd like a place where you could go and they say, 'here are the jobs, we'll help you. We'll phone them for you. Just to be a bit friendly. They don't make you feel welcome or that you are doing your best to find a job. If they could give us some help with interviews and help with CVs.

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.

But the transition to paid work is a process requiring considerable support, guidance and practical help. 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 the perceived lack of jobs with flexible working hours 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.

A range of local organisations and community centres provide training courses in skills such as IT, ESOL, childcare, sewing, textiles, food hygiene, and first aid as well as GCSE courses. Some of these are run as taster sessions or short courses and are usually not linked to a specific job or the requirements of a specific employer. Women join these courses through their contact with community centres. Many courses are provided free of charge and some centres offer free childcare.

Many of the centres were opened in response to the closure of the local pits and its impact on local communities.

Centres were developed for people who were unemployed or low skilled and who wanted to train to or to find work...which is why a lot of our day provision in centres like that is provided free at the moment to local people who are unemployed.

Some community organisations run short courses for women in job interview preparation.

There are also a range of job brokerage services, providing help and advice for people with job search and completing application forms.

Over the past seven years there has been an extensive ILM programme in Wakefield which, once fully established, offered 50 job placements a year in community and voluntary organisations. These ILMs focused on a range of jobs in areas such as administration, childcare, catering, and environmental improvement and paid the minimum wage to recruits. More recently ILMs have focused on people living in specific neighbourhoods and on jobs where there are skill shortages, such as childcare and construction. There has also been a small scale ILM in the field of public health. These ILMs have not been specifically focused on women, although many local women have taken up ILM opportunities and subsequently secured permanent posts. Funding for these ILM programmes has come from a range of funders including the European Social Fund (ESF), the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) 5 and 6, Neighbourhood Renewal and

Coalfield Regeneration Funding. ESF funding has been a substantial element of ILM funding.

Recently a new project called *Health Learning Works* has been set up by Jobcentre Plus. This is open to unemployed economically inactive people who are not necessarily claiming benefits. The project offers a 26 week placement in the Health Service, in a range of jobs including Health Care Assistant. People joining this project who are in receipt of benefits continue to claim their benefits during the 26 weeks. Most have moved into full-time positions in the health service on completion of the 26 weeks training and work experience period.

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 concern was that despite the wide range of centres and organisations providing training courses, some people tended to take one course after another but without taking the step into work.

What we've found is, because local people become familiar with a centre they tend to re-cycle themselves quite a bit...people keep coming back...so they don't move on to a job.

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.

Part of this issue was also about ensuring that courses succeed in raising people's confidence sufficiently for them to enter work. In some neighbourhoods people's confidence was at a very low level and a lot of intensive work was necessary for people to recognise their potential.

It's about making people believe they can do it. As it is they never reach their full potential.

But even with confidence raised, people were often concerned about the financial implications of giving up benefits and moving into work.

People are reluctant to give up benefits and the security of having a regular income. It's a big step to take if you are unsure about a job.

And some people required a considerable amount of personal support in order to prepare for applying for jobs and to overcome the barriers to work.

You have to deal with all their issues and it has to be done in a gentle, kind and supportive way.

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.

And while local projects tend to run for 6 or 12 months, some unemployed and economically inactive people locally who want to work may require support and guidance over a longer period.

Is 12 months enough? Employers often want two years' experience and if you really want to improve people's skill levels a year isn't enough...there are often lots of issues to deal with

There were differing views on the key principles which should inform projects which seek to connect women with the labour market. For example, some argued that projects will only succeed if people are allowed to train and gain their work experience whilst continuing to claim benefits. But others argued that this encouraged people to move from one 'scheme' to another, without taking the step into work. This is why the large ILM programme referred to earlier offered recruits a contract of employment and a wage.

The big plus was paying a wage and people said this to us. A lot of people have been on schemes and we worked very hard to say, 'this is not a scheme, it's a job'...We try to make it as much like a proper job as possible.

Whether people receive a wage or remain on benefits, a crucial issue with any employment project was to ensure that recruits could apply for and move into real jobs on completion of the training period. To achieve this employers' support was necessary. Unless real jobs were available, expectations were being raised to no avail.

This works as long as there are valid jobs at the end. It can't be 'thank you and goodbye' at the end. There must be jobs...I worked with a project where there was no job offered at the end and it seemed quite cruel. It felt they were offering the world and then it was taken away.

But even with employer support there was a concern that many employers are not prepared to take a risk and employ the kinds of people who join ILMs and other training programmes, who may have been outside work for a long period or who may have other problems. In other words, they are not the kinds of recruits that employers might normally consider.

Employers tend to want to work with people who are job ready, middle class people, or aspirational middle class people, who won't have difficult habits or difficult families or difficult circumstances.

And it isn't simply employers who need to take a risk. As new para-professional jobs develop in the public sector, in the health service, social care and in education, the professionals working in these fields, as well as the trade unions, need to adopt a different perspective and welcome people making the transition from an employment project into work.

You get everything signed up until you start employing people and then the professionals go up in arms because it's not their vision of how they want to work. You can also get difficulties with the unions...You can iron these things out, but these are the barriers which have to be worked through.

There can also be problems with childcare. Training centres and projects often offer free childcare but once women move into a real job the childcare support is withdrawn. This makes it crucial to review childcare provision locally – its cost and availability and whether local women feel confident about using it.

We need to look at childcare issues and costs. There are a lot of parents who don't want to consider childcare because of a lack of trust. We have to look at how to overcome that and that means looking at the quality of the childcare available.

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 and training 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.

You have to take people physically to a centre of learning because they haven't always got the confidence to walk through the door.

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.

There was, then, a range of views about the detailed approach to employment projects. But there were also concerns about the wider context in which employment projects developed.

One of the most critical issues raised in our interviews with organisational representatives concerned the 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. Although there was considerable commitment to employment issues locally and there was a growing emphasis on partnership working around employment issues, without the clear allocation of responsibility there was a danger that funding opportunities would be overlooked. This was regarded as a key role for the local authority.

I think the council could look at wider sources of funding. There are a lot of funding streams out there and bids have to be done properly. The council in Wakefield have made an important contribution but Leeds have masses of funding. They get money from everywhere. Perhaps they could share their knowledge. Sometimes in Wakefield we feel like a poor relation. I think the council have a bigger role to play than they have in the past.

There was also a concern that whilst there were good projects there was scope for a more co-ordinated approach, linked to an overall strategy.

There are good projects but they are dislocated. We have to get things right. There is a lot more that could 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.

This was particularly important in the context of the decline in the sources of funding that had supported projects in the past, particularly the decline in the amount of ESF funding available. The ILM projects in the past were effective but also very expensive. Thus, as well as tapping into the full range of statutory funding sources it would be necessary to encourage local employers to offer financial support to projects.

There are ways we could look more creatively first at mainstream funding...In addition we have only just started scratching the surface in terms of employer contributions to these projects. But fundamentally I think we need to start thinking about getting much more of the cost of programmes from employer contributions.

The key is having the employer on board. We can come up with the bright ideas, it's having the employer on board, who will open up a placement and give their staff resources...It needs that extra effort because you've got people who are not used to working and not the usual recruits.

There was also scope to do much more work in schools, particularly to raise the aspirations of young girls and encourage them to see beyond opportunities in low paid sectors such as childcare, retail and social care.

We should start in school. There should be time set aside – not some tired old careers person – but someone that can actually show them what's out there. Encourage them and plant ideas in their mind. Not just when they get to year 10 and 11, it's too late then. They've got to be trying from year 7.

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, practical help 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 while part-

time jobs are widely available in Wakefield, good quality part-time jobs with school hours are hard to find.

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

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 and longer in some cases.

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 practical help

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 and practical help 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 first aid. 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 enable training to be linked not only to job requirements in the current labour market, but also to those jobs which will develop in the future labour market. 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 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.

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.

Raising young women's aspirations and opportunities

Young women sometimes set themselves low horizons in the labour market and they can lack knowledge of the full range of jobs that might be open to them. Some women complain that employment services are not listening when they express their real choices in the labour market. Because of this they are often drawn into, or forced into, some of the lowest paid jobs in the labour market, as these are jobs typically held by women.

Schools should seek to extend girls' labour market horizons and encourage girls to pursue careers in a much wider range of jobs. Employment services should ensure that they listen to women's choices.

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. Some of the women expressed an interest in jobs as childcare workers and as classroom assistants but others wanted higher paid work and more flexible working patterns. 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 Stiehl
 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 Stiehl, 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.

- 8 women participated in the group aged 25-49. 6 of the women provided details of their circumstances. Their characteristics were as follows:
 - 2 were aged 25 - 30; 2 were aged 31-25; and 1 was aged 36+
 - 5 had dependent children, with family size ranging from families with 3 children to families with 1 child
 - 4 of the women described themselves as White British; 1 as Black African; 1 as Black
 - 6 of the women had worked in the past
 - 3 were currently looking for work
 - 6 of the women had qualifications: 1 had a degree gained abroad; 5 were educated to GCSE level and some women held additional qualifications such as ECDL, CLAIT and NVQ 2/3

- 13 women participated in the group aged 16 - 24. 11 of the women provided details of their circumstances. Their characteristics were as follows:
 - 11 of the women were aged 16 - 20
 - 1 woman had a dependent child
 - 11 of the women described themselves as White British
 - 9 of the women had worked in the past
 - 11 were currently looking for work
 - 6 of the women had formal qualifications. All 6 were educated to GCSE level, although some held additional qualifications such as NVQ Level 2 and RSA

Appendix A3 Ward profile for Ferry Fryston, Glasshoughton and Whitwood in Castleford, Wakefield

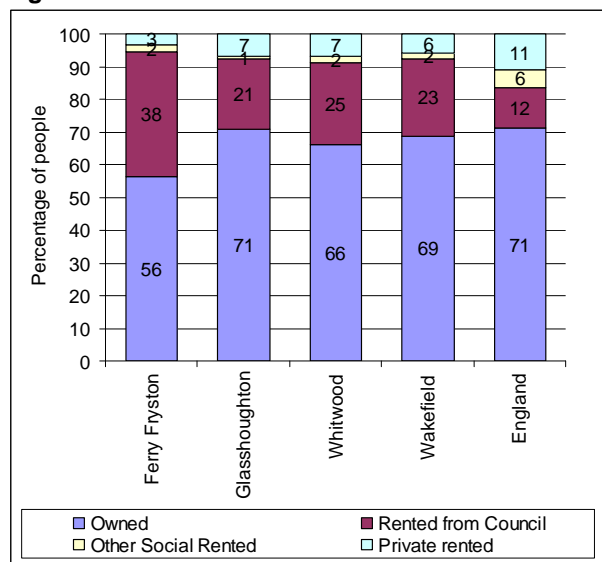
General information

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

	Castleford Ferry Fryston	Castleford Glasshoughton	Castleford Whitwood	Wakefield	England
All males (numbers)	6,066	6,550	6,035	153,207	23,922,144
0-15	24	22	20	21	19
16-24	10	10	9	10	13
25-49	34	38	37	36	36
50-64	18	19	18	19	18
65-74	9	7	8	8	8
75+	5	6	7	5	6
All females (numbers)	6,579	7,006	6,227	161,964	25,216,687
0-15	22	20	18	20	18
16-24	10	9	9	10	12
25-49	36	36	35	35	35
50-64	17	17	17	18	17
65-74	9	8	9	9	9
75+	8	9	11	9	9

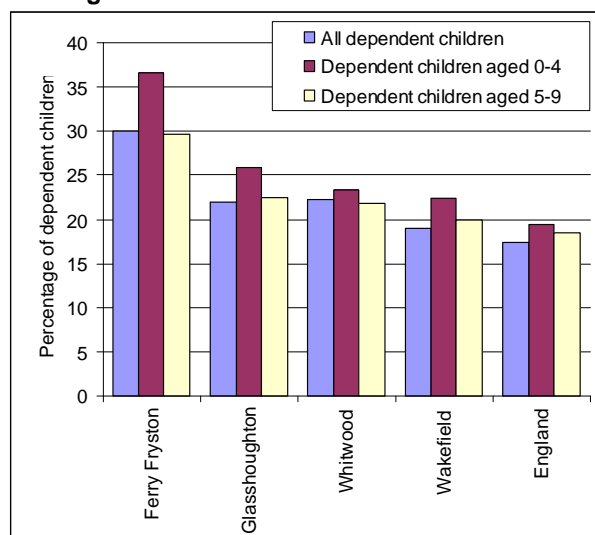
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A2 Tenure



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A3 Dependent children in families with no working adults



Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

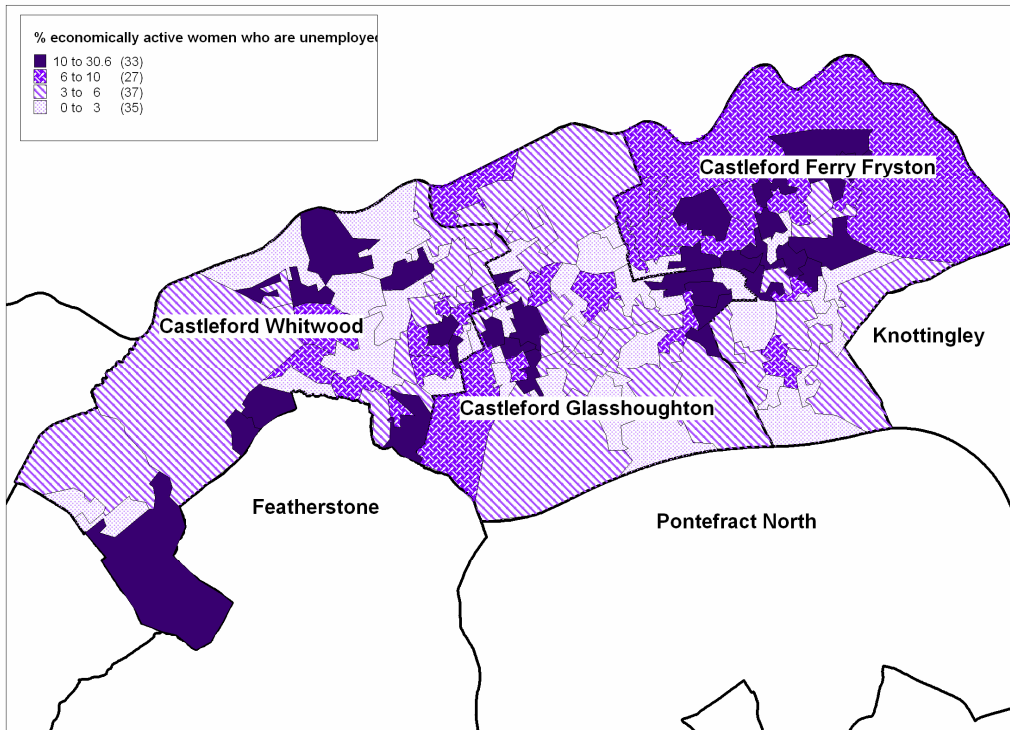
Economic inactivity and unemployment

Figure A4 Economic inactivity and unemployment in the wards

	Ferry Fryston		Glasshoughton		Whitwood		Wakefield		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Working age population (16-64/59)	3,739	3,679	4,285	4,057	3,898	3,494				
Employment rate										
Proportion of WA	65	55	72	63	70	62	72	64	74	64
Proportion of EA	90	90	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	91
Unemployment rate										
Proportion of WA	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	5	3
Proportion of EA	8	7	6	5	7	6	6	5	6	4
Economic inactivity rate										
Proportion of WA	28	38	22	32	23	33	21	31	18	29
Economic inactivity by reason										
Proportion of WA										
Retired	4	1	3	1	3	1	3	2	3	1
Student	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	4	5	6
Looking after home/ family	2	19	2	15	1	15	1	14	1	14
Permanently sick/ disabled	16	9	12	8	13	9	10	7	6	5
Other	3	6	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	4
Economic inactivity by reason										
Proportion of economically inactive										
Retired	13	3	14	4	12	4	16	5	16	5
Student	9	7	9	10	10	9	16	13	29	19
Looking after home/ family	7	48	7	48	6	46	6	46	6	48
Permanently sick/ disabled	58	24	57	27	56	28	48	23	33	16
Other	12	16	12	12	16	13	15	13	16	12
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Economic inactivity										
Proportion of WA										
1991	21	44	15	32	18	33	16	34	13	32
2001	28	38	22	32	23	33	21	31	18	29
Unemployment										
Proportion of WA										
1991	16	5	12	5	12	5	11	4	10	5
2001	6	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	5	3
Unemployment										
Proportion of EA										
1991	20	9	14	7	14	7	13	7	11	7
2001	8	7	6	5	7	6	6	5	6	4

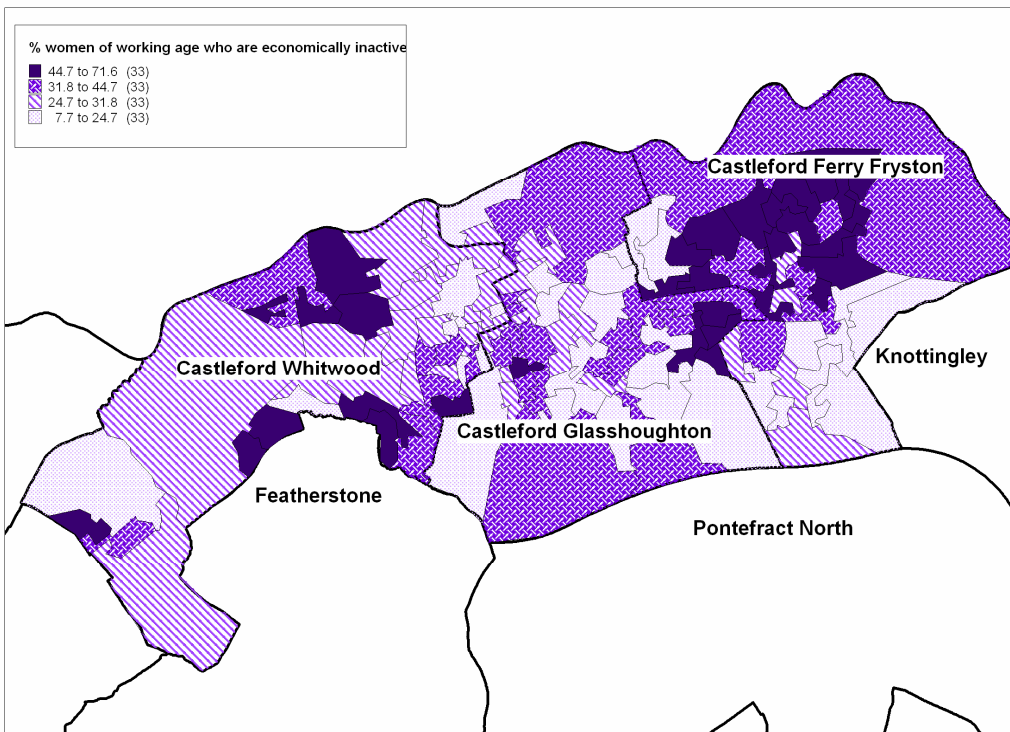
Source: 2001 Census Standard Statistics, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A5 Percentage of women of working age who were unemployed



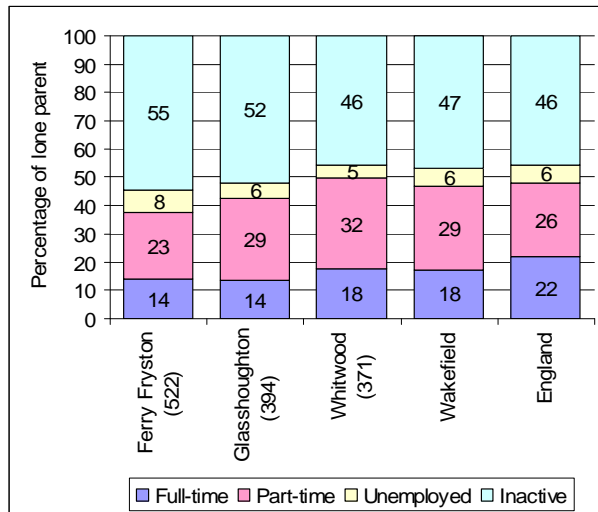
Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables, Crown Copyright 2003. 2001 Census Output Area boundaries, Crown Copyright 2003. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown.

Figure A6 Percentage of women of working age who were economically inactive



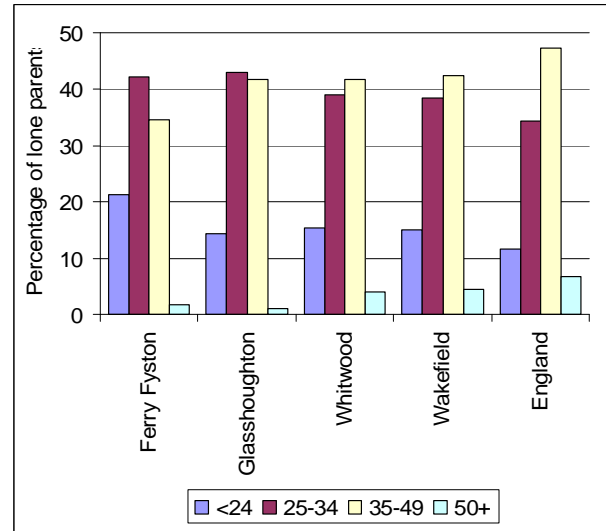
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Figure A7 Female lone parents and economic activity



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A8 Female lone parents by age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A9 Qualifications by age and employment

	Ferry Fyston		Glasshoughton		Whitwood		Wakefield		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
People with no qualifications (%)										
16-24	35	29	30	24	32	23	27	22	19	16
25-34	36	37	32	30	33	27	28	24	17	14
35-49	51	51	51	47	54	52	42	39	29	26
50-64/59	82	78	82	77	82	78	69	66	56	52
People of working age in employment (%)										
No qualifications	53	44	62	50	60	49	62	50	65	50
Lower level	78	65	83	73	82	71	79	69	76	66
Higher level	85	81	81	80	80	76	85	83	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 A10 Former occupations and industries of unemployed and economically inactive women

	Ferry Fyston	Glasshoughton	Whitwood	Wakefield	England
Occupation					
Managers, senior officials	4	6	6	5	7
Professionals	2	1	1	3	6
Associate professionals & technical occupations	2	3	3	5	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	14	13	10	9	5
Elementary occupations	30	30	32	30	21
Industry					
Manufacturing	20	16	15	11	20
Wholesale, retail, hotel, restaurants	31	28	26	26	22
Health and social work	15	15	15	15	16
Finance and real estate	9	10	13	12	15

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003.

Travel to work

Figure A11 Method and distance travelled to work

People of working age (%)	Ferry Fyston		Glasshoughton		Whitwood		Wakefield		England	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Method										
Work mainly at /from home	6	4	8	5	7	5	8	6	10	8
Underground, metro, tram	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Train	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	5	4
Bus; minibus; coach	7	18	7	12	8	14	6	14	5	11
Driving a car or van	70	48	65	43	61	40	66	51	58	51
Passenger in a car or van	8	16	7	11	8	12	7	10	5	8
On foot	3	11	8	24	9	24	6	16	7	13
Other	5	1	5	2	5	1	5	2	7	3
Distance										
Home	6	4	8	5	7	5	8	6	10	8
0-2km	6	19	20	43	23	42	15	27	15	25
2-5km	24	39	20	21	19	18	18	23	18	23
5-20km	46	32	37	27	35	31	41	36	34	33
20-40km	9	4	8	3	7	2	9	5	9	6
40+km	4	1	3	1	4	1	4	1	7	3
Other	5	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	7	2

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright