

Addressing Women's Poverty in Newcastle: Local Labour Market Initiatives

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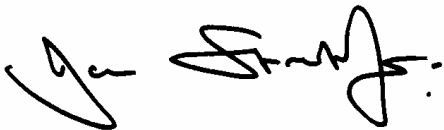
Foreword

Gender Equality

Newcastle City Council 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, Newcastle City Council is better 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.



Ian Stratford
Chief Executive



Peter Arnold
Leader of the Council

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Focus group participants

We would also like to thank the women who participated in the focus groups. Lively discussions took place in two focus groups held at Wor Hoose (a community venue in the East End of Newcastle). The participants provided detailed qualitative material about their experience and understanding of their community and the barriers and opportunities they face in the local labour market. Together with the local community activists who recruited and organised the groups, they enabled the researchers to enrich the local evidence contained in this report.

Members of the GELLM Team contributed as follows

Statistical Analysis	Lisa Buckner, Gerard Poole
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Key findings

This study has identified the scale and experience of women's economic disadvantage in East Newcastle. It also examined the barriers to paid employment and the extent to which current regeneration and labour market initiatives have supported women's employment opportunities.

Women's poverty and economic disadvantage in Byker, Monkchester and Walker wards

- The area has a relatively stable population, with a similar mix of ages to the rest of Newcastle.
- Almost half of dependent children live in families with no working adults.
- A higher proportion of female lone parents are unemployed or economically inactive than in the city as a whole.
- A high level of women receive Income Support.
- Among men and women of working age, poor health and limiting long-term illness is high.
- There is a mix of housing types and two-thirds of residents in the area rent homes from the council.

Women's position in the local labour market

Compared with women in Newcastle and England as a whole, women in the three wards are:

- Less likely to be in full-time but more likely to be in part-time employment.
- More likely to work in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs and less likely to be in professional or managerial occupations.
- If they have caring responsibilities, less likely to work either full-time or part-time.
- More likely to be unemployed.
- More likely to be economically inactive.
- Much more likely to work closer to home (within 5 km).

Low qualification levels and limited job opportunities are reducing women's employment prospects:

- 40% of women of working age living in the neighbourhood have no educational qualifications and only 8% have degree level qualifications.
- The shift to service sector employment has resulted in many low paid and poor quality jobs.
- Local organisations and women living in the area feel local residents are not benefiting from employment opportunities, including

higher skilled and better paid employment opportunities available in Newcastle.

Barriers to labour market engagement

Local women and local organisations identified important barriers to employment:

- Lack of formal qualifications and breaks in employment.
- The tax and benefit system.
- The availability and cost of childcare. Although childcare is improving for pre-school children, it remains limited for women seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market. Childcare services for local school aged children before and after school and during holiday periods are inadequate.
- Inflexible working practices among some employers.

Area-based regeneration

Analysis of regeneration policies, delivery plans, and economic and employment targets showed that:

- Women's economic disadvantage in the local labour market was partially addressed as a specific issue.
- There were few explicit requirements to consider the position of women and men separately in interventions to reduce economic inactivity.
- Data used in regeneration documents on the locality, including output data, were not disaggregated by gender and ethnicity.
- Evaluation approaches adopted in existing regeneration initiatives took little account of the key differences in women's and men's economic position and experience of living in the locality.

Services to support local women

Many service providers, including Newcastle City Council, could do more to assist women by:

- Developing a clearer understanding of the employment and training needs of women living in the locality.
- Working more strategically on labour market initiatives with local services and community-based organisations.
- Ensuring that the steps to integrate local services which assist women in overcoming barriers to employment are developed and enhanced.
- Targeting resources which support community based training and workforce development initiatives at women in low paid employment.

- Developing support tailored to the needs of economically inactive young women, women who wish to re-enter the workforce and women from diverse ethnic minority origins.
- Extending childcare provision which reflects the differing childcare needs of lone parents and other low income households in the area.
- Working with agencies and employers to tackle low pay.

Impact on women's economic disadvantage

Labour market policy and regeneration initiatives have had limited impact on women's disadvantage:

- Public and private investment in the area has created employment, but many of the jobs are poorly paid.
- SureStart and Jobcentre Plus initiatives have been successful in engaging local women in child care and early years courses.
- The potential for classes held in community centres involving women in developing skills, including ITC, is constrained by short-term funding.
- Local government, education and health services working with community based initiatives offer an effective route to paid work and career development for local residents.
- Further work with local employers, building on the work of the City Council, to address recruitment practices, job flexibility, hours, pay structures and in-house training for women wishing to enter the labour market is needed.

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to identify how effective regeneration strategies and initiatives have been in addressing economic disadvantage among women living in three wards in Newcastle. The research was also designed to inform future regeneration strategies undertaken by Newcastle City Council and partner organisations, to ensure that the specific needs of men and women living on low incomes are directly addressed.

The research was undertaken between January and December 2005 and used a variety of methods including: statistical analysis of ward level data; documentary analysis of regeneration strategies and evaluations; interviews with local organisations; and focus groups with women living in the selected wards.

This report presents research undertaken as part of the GELLM research programme (Appendix 1). Parallel studies were also conducted in five other English local authorities; a synthesis report of the findings from all six areas is also available (Escott et al, 2006). The *Gender Profile for Newcastle's Labour Market* (Buckner et al 2004) provides the district-wide statistical evidence and context for the study.

Women's poverty and economic disadvantage

In the UK, women are more likely than men to live in poverty. Poverty amongst women remains a persistent feature of some local labour markets, despite recent policy changes. Women's poverty is often hidden, and is exacerbated by widespread assumptions about their financial dependence on men and about their role being primarily as mothers and carers rather than as wage earners. These assumptions contribute to the low pay of many women who enter the labour market and to the low incomes of those who remain outside it. Although there is a relationship between economic inactivity and poverty, employment does not necessarily provide an escape from poverty for women. Women in the labour market face the risk of low wages, insecure work, occupational segregation and lesser access to promotion than men, in jobs that are often fitted around domestic responsibilities.

It is important to recognise the ethnicity dimension of women's poverty, as some ethnic minority women face a particularly high risk of poverty (WBG 2005). Poor health and low self esteem, often associated with the stress of managing poverty has also been highlighted in other recent research (Bradshaw et al 2003; Yeandle et al 2003).

Regeneration initiatives

Over the past 30 years, national, regional and local initiatives, under the broad heading of local economic development or 'urban regeneration', have sought to tackle disadvantage in areas of economic decline. Local authorities and others have invested considerable resources in these initiatives, and private sector urban renewal developments and investment have also been heralded as bringing prosperity to declining economies. This study focuses on area-based economic initiatives and developments, and

explores their impact on women and on their participation in the local labour market. It was carried out in the context of a broader understanding of regeneration, including Oxfam's research on community engagement, which concludes that regeneration policies often fail to take into account differences between men and women in their experiences of a range of local services including education, transport, care provision and economic development (Oxfam, 2005).

Existing research does not explain why so many women living in communities where there has been significant public and private investment continue to experience economic disadvantage. This study explores how local economic and employment structures continue to disadvantage women, and considers how women can be assisted by future initiatives.

National and regional regeneration policy

The Government has a number of policy initiatives which are directly relevant to this study.

- The national target to engage more women and men in employment (DWP, 2004).
- A skills strategy which ensures fair access to training and jobs, including barriers between welfare and work (DFES, 2005).
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001) to improve the quality of life in the most deprived areas of the country.
- The recognition that deprivation can be highly concentrated in neighbourhoods, requiring tailored approaches to providing services, work incentives and promoting self-employment (SEU, 2004).
- The target to significantly reduce the difference between the employment rates of disadvantaged groups and the overall rate by spring 2008 (NRU 2005).
- The target to increase the employment rates for lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, those with the lowest qualifications and those living in local authority wards with the poorest labour market position (NRU 2005).

To help address these policy issues in Newcastle this study offers a more detailed understanding of the local labour market in which women living on low incomes are located. To date, public policy evaluation and academic research assessing the success or otherwise of regeneration initiatives has only rarely adopted a gender perspective. While targeted regeneration projects are known to have differing impacts on women and men, and

some focus on lone parents and ethnic minority groups, most fail to highlight gender issues. In addition, key differences in the experience of particular groups of women facing economic disadvantage, for example, young women, older women and women with disabilities, are often overlooked in the analysis. Stereotyping and problematising the issues facing women, for example through initiatives focusing on teenage pregnancy, are an added concern.

A further rationale for this study is the contribution it can make to the evidence base for labour market policy at regional level. The policy direction of *Regional Development Agencies*¹ and *Regional Assemblies* and, at sub-regional level, of *Learning and Skills Councils* is increasingly important for economic regeneration, employment and training. Regional Economic Strategies and related sub-regional plans are expected to include 'equalities' as part of their policy framework, but the requirement to improve economic competitiveness and to promote economic development has rarely been enhanced by local analysis which informs the promotion of gender equality.

Newcastle City Council's agenda

The Byker, Monkchester and Walker wards², located to the east of the city centre, were selected for the study by Newcastle City Council which identified them as areas suffering from relatively high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity. Newcastle City Council noted that many local residents who had traditionally worked in shipbuilding and manufacturing jobs were still affected by the results of economic restructuring. Job growth in the city did not appear to be benefiting local residents, many of whom live on very low incomes, whether or not they are in work. Poverty levels were identified as particularly high among lone parent households and recently arrived ethnic minority groups.

A number of area based regeneration initiatives have supported schemes in the area. SRB³ funding from 1995-2003 targeting East

¹ The Regional Development Agency is ONE North East

² During the boundary change in 2004 Monkchester ward was incorporated into Byker and Walker wards, and therefore it no longer exists.

³ SRB2 is the Single Regeneration Budget Round 2 programme which provided funds for regeneration initiatives between 1996-2003.

Newcastle, included much of the area covered by the study. The programme of regeneration included objectives designed to address high levels of poverty and unemployment and a low skills base. Additional funds were gained through the European Regional Development Fund. The seven year scheme invested £84m in a wide range of projects including labour market initiatives. Some of these, including Byker Community Education and the Learning@Brinkburn projects, have been taken forward in the East Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Programme⁴. A Working Neighbourhoods pilot⁵ supported by the DWP operates in part of Monkchester ward.

Part of the area is now subject to the Walker Riverside Masterplan (2004) which focuses on housing-led regeneration. The area is also included in the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder for Newcastle-Gateshead. The expectation is that the strategies '*will deliver real benefits to the community*' (Places for People Group, 2004) and work with local agencies to deliver high quality services to the local area, including education improvements. Sure Start has been operating locally since 2001, and Family Centres have been established with the support of the City Council and involving other agencies, including Barnados. There have been a number of private sector retail investments linked to labour market initiatives supporting local residents who have not been in paid work to enter employment.

Aims and objectives of the study

This study has assessed how far area-based regeneration initiatives have addressed women's economic disadvantage and poverty. Its specific objectives were:

- To identify and analyse the nature and extent of women's poverty and economic disadvantage in the Newcastle wards of Byker, Monkchester and Walker.
- To develop an evidence base about the relationship between poverty, gender and local labour markets in the neighbourhood.

⁴ Neighbourhood Renewal provides public services and communities in the 88 poorest local authority districts with extra funds to tackle deprivation.

⁵ This Working Neighbourhoods Pilot commenced April 2004 in 12 deprived neighbourhoods to test a new approach of offering intensive support to local residents to help them overcome barriers to employment and access to jobs.

- To examine relevant area-based public and private sector initiatives and their impact within the wards on women's labour market opportunity.
- To assess local service provision and to identify the service needs, including unmet needs, of women living on low incomes in the locality.
- To make policy recommendations of relevance to Newcastle City Council, and its local partners, including the Local Strategic Partnership, and to regional and national policy makers.

Women's poverty and economic disadvantage in Newcastle: evidence from three wards

The study used a multi-method approach (see Appendix 2), combining qualitative and quantitative data:

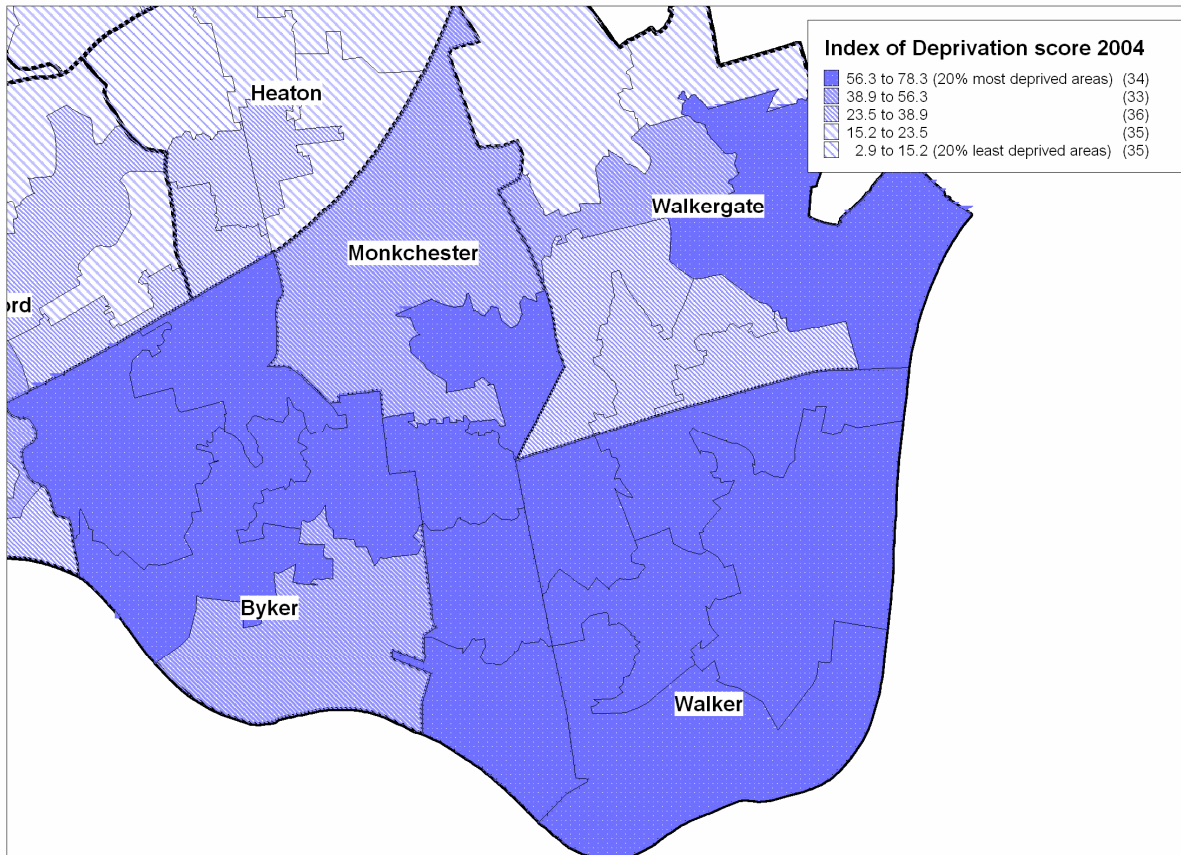
- Ward/district level data from the 2001 Census.
- Documentary analysis of council reports and policies.
- Interviews with local organisations.
- Evidence from focus group discussions at three community based meetings.

Women's poverty and economic disadvantage in the neighbourhood ⁶

Byker, Monkchester and Walker are among the most deprived wards in Newcastle. This is evident from the labour market and economic indicators presented below. Figure 1 shows the three wards, with the Index of Deprivation 2004 scores for the areas within them. The majority of local residents live in semi-detached or terraced homes, rented from the City Council. In Byker almost a third of residents live in purpose-built flats or tenements, double the rate for the city as a whole.

⁶ Data in this section is from the 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2004 except where specified.

Figure 1 Index of Deprivation: Byker, Monkchester and Walker Wards in Newcastle



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

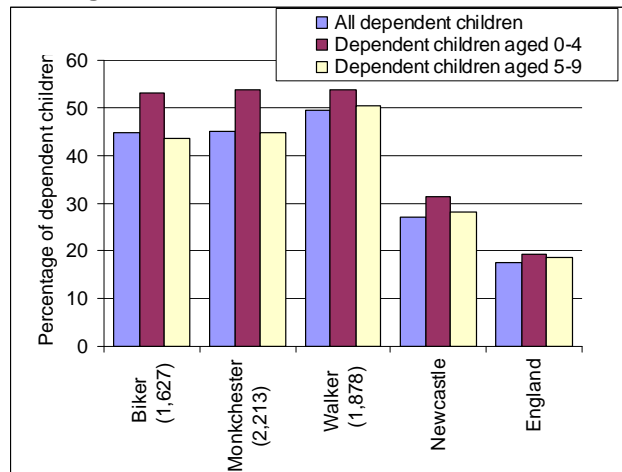
Note: this map shows the neighbourhood, together with the Index of Deprivation 2004 scores for the areas within them. The index includes seven domains which cover: Income, Employment, Health Deprivation and Disability, Education, Skills and Training, Barriers to Housing and Services, Crime and Disorder and Living Environment. In the Living Environment domain (which includes quality of housing, air quality and road traffic accidents).

Low income households⁷

Many women live on low incomes whether they are in work or not; if they are in paid work it tends to be low paid. People get by, but only just.^A

Almost half of dependent children live in families with no working adult, considerably more than in Newcastle, or in England as a whole (Fig 2). Of the three wards, Walker is the most deprived on this indicator, with 50% of households having no working adult. In all three wards the figure is even higher for dependent children aged 0-4.

Figure 2 Dependent children in households with no working adult



Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Table, Crown Copyright 2003.

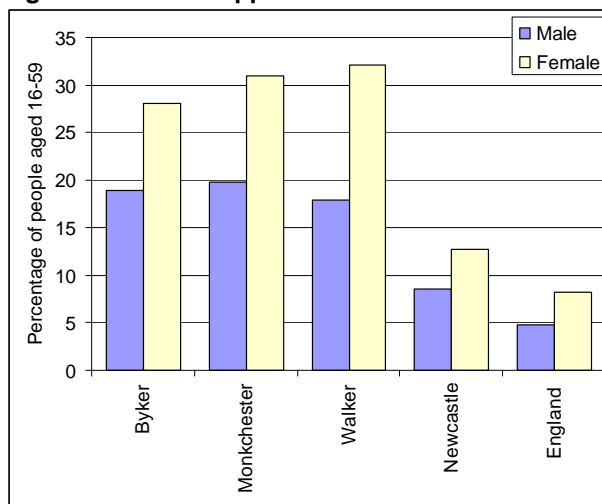
⁷ Quotes in this and following sections are either from interviews with local organisations (marked A), or from focus group participants (marked B).

There are high rates of unemployment and economic inactivity among female lone parents (1,400 in 2001) in these wards. In Monkchester and Walker wards 8% said they were unemployed. They are as likely to work part-time, but less likely to work full-time, than those in the city as a whole. In Walker and Byker only 9% of female lone parents were in full-time employment, well below the rates for Newcastle (16%) and England (22%).

Limiting long-term illness among women of working age is higher in all three wards than in Newcastle or England as a whole. A quarter of women of working age in Walker, 22% in Byker and 17% in Monkchester reported high levels of poor health. Lower proportions of women of working age who provide unpaid care to others are in paid employment than in Newcastle or England as a whole.

Over 3,315 people living in the locality (62% of them women) claim Income Support⁸. A much higher proportion of women of working age in the locality claim Income Support than in Newcastle or England. In Walker and Monkchester, a third of all women of working age claim income support (Figure 3). This reflects a high dependence on low paid employment among women living in the area.

Figure 3 Income Support claimants



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

Ethnicity

As we showed in the *Gender Profile of Newcastle's Labour Market* (Buckner et al, 2004) 9% of Newcastle's female population is from ethnic minority groups. The ethnic mix of the locality is less diverse than the district. Less than 4% of women living in Monkchester and Walker are from ethnic minority groups. In Byker almost 6% of women are from ethnic minority groups, the largest of which are people of Pakistani and 'White Other' origin.

Our interviews highlighted some awareness of the level of economic disadvantage among ethnic minority groups living in the area. It was observed that asylum seekers had been located in the area and that there were increasing numbers of new arrivals whose training and employment needs were not being clearly addressed. They had been housed in one area which had caused some problems.⁹

Residents' views of the neighbourhood

Our focus groups revealed a strong sense of 'community'. Participants felt the existing community infrastructure was an essential starting point for future improvements. There was a long history of local involvement by residents, the creation of *Wor Hoose* community project one of several examples.

Many people, including those with higher level qualifications and paid employment, wish to remain living in the area. Byker was identified as a vibrant area with more local services, including shops and better public transport, than Walker and Monkchester. Walker is largely residential and it was felt that this area had suffered from under-investment in recent years. Local retail and transport provision was regarded as poor in Walker and Monkchester. The impact of economic and social deprivation on households was highlighted through several references to problems of domestic violence in the area.

It is linked to the situation of families living in poverty and now we have the highest level of incidences in the city.^A

⁸ Source: DWP, 2003

⁹ The circumstances of these groups of Newcastle's residents are also discussed in Stiehl et al (2006)

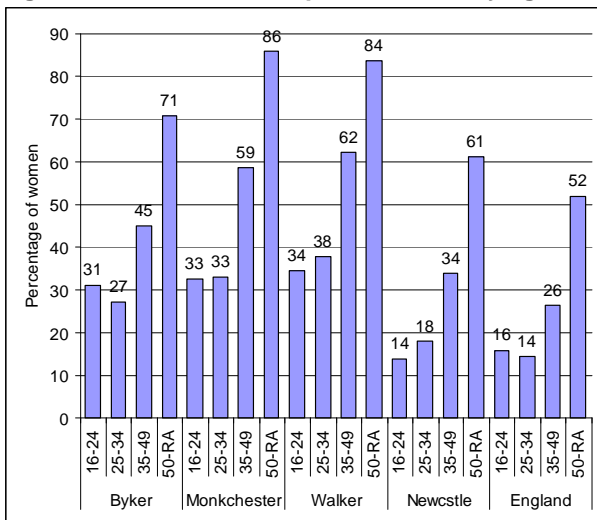
Women's position in the local labour market

We reported elsewhere (Buckner et al 2004, Grant et al 2005) the large increases in part-time employment affecting both sexes between 1991 and 2002. In these years, there was a large fall in the share of employment in manufacturing, a small increase in employment in banking, finance and insurance, and a growth in part-time employment in public administration, education and health for women living in the district.

Qualifications and skills

A higher proportion of women and men in the three wards have no qualifications than in Newcastle and England (Figure 4). This is particularly marked among the older age groups. Over 80% of women aged 50-59 in Walker and Monkchester have no qualifications. Similar rates are found in Byker. Younger age groups are also less qualified than in Newcastle and England as a whole. Over 30% of young women aged 16-24 are completely unqualified, more than double the rate for the city as a whole.

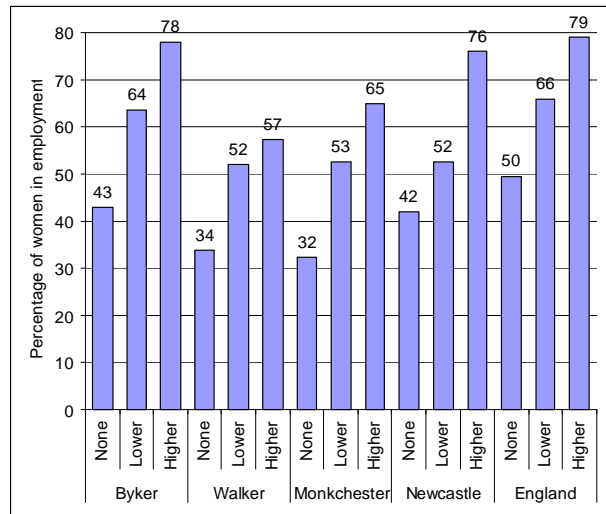
Figure 4 Women with no qualifications, by age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

As elsewhere, those with higher qualifications are most likely to be in employment. However, only 10% of women living in Walker and Byker and 5% of women in Monkchester have a degree, while 40% of women have no qualifications. 52% of women in the three wards have lower range qualifications (equivalent to A level).

Figure 5 Women in employment, by level of qualification



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

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

Women with degree level qualifications in Walker and Monkchester are less likely to be in employment than in Newcastle or nationally (Figure 5), while in Byker 78% of these well qualified women are in employment – a similar rate to Newcastle and England as a whole. By contrast, among women with no qualifications only a third are in employment, compared with 42% for this group in Newcastle and 50% in England as a whole.

Women's employment patterns

Women in the three wards are less likely than women nationally to be in full-time employment. While female employment rates in Newcastle are lower than nationally, the level of part-time working among local women is relatively high. This is especially true in Walker, where female employment rates are very close to national levels (Figure 6). Of the three wards, Monkchester has the lowest employment rate amongst women. Almost a quarter of women in Monkchester and 17% in Byker look after their home and family full-time, considerably higher rates than the city national average. By contrast just 13% of women in Walker are in this category, reflecting relatively high levels of labour market participation among women and men in this ward.

As at national, regional and district level, there is a gendered pattern in men's and women's jobs (Figure 7). Women in the three wards are even more likely to work in lower level jobs, and less

Figure 6 Economic activity for women of working age

per cent

	Byker	Monkchester	Walker	Newcastle	England
Economically Active	58	51	69	63	71
Employee full-time	27	20	33	32	36
Self-employed full-time	1	1	1	2	3
Employee part-time	21	22	26	19	23
Self-employed part-time	1	1	1	1	2
Unemployed	3	3	3	5	3
Student	5	5	4	3	3
Economically Inactive	42	49	31	37	29
Retired	1	0	1	1	1
Full-time student	6	5	4	12	6
Looking after home or family	17	22	13	13	14
Permanently sick or disabled	12	13	9	7	5
Other	7	8	4	4	4

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure 7 Main occupations and industries of women in employment in the locality

per cent

	Byker	Monkchester	Walker	Newcastle	England
Occupation					
Managers, senior officials	7	4	7	9	11
Professionals	6	3	3	13	10
Associate professionals & technical occupations	9	7	6	14	14
Administrative and secretarial occupations	21	18	17	20	23
Elementary occupations	24	29	28	15	12
Industry					
Manufacturing	7	5	4	5	9
Wholesale, retail, restaurants and hotels	28	30	29	23	24
Finance and real estate	17	15	14	15	18
Public administration, defence, social security	9	6	8	8	6
Education	8	7	8	13	12

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

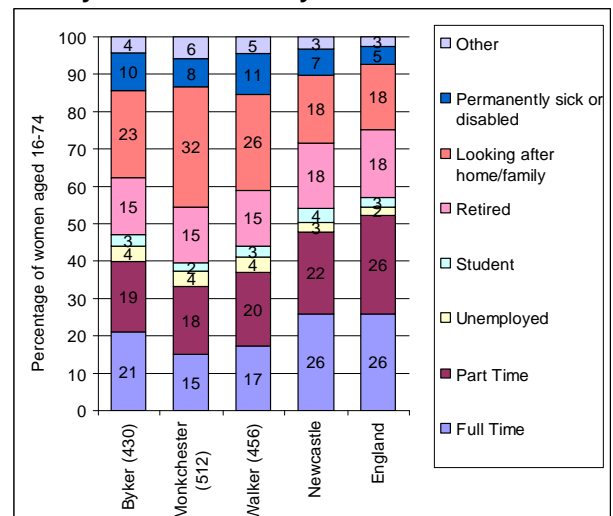
likely to be in skilled, technical, professional or managerial occupations than at other levels.

Almost a third of local women work in elementary jobs or operative positions (Figure 7), double the national rate. There are also higher employment rates in personal service occupations. Only 3% of women in Monkchester and Walker and 6% in Byker work in professional jobs, compared with 13% in Newcastle and 10% nationally.

Local women are also particularly concentrated in certain industrial sectors (Figure 7). Almost 30% of women work in the wholesale, retail, restaurants and hotels sector, compared with a quarter in Newcastle and England as a whole. Fewer than 1 in 8 local women work in education, compared with 13% in the city as a whole. A relatively high proportion of women in Byker work in public administration jobs.

Caring responsibilities

Figure 8 Women aged 16-74 who provide unpaid care by economic activity



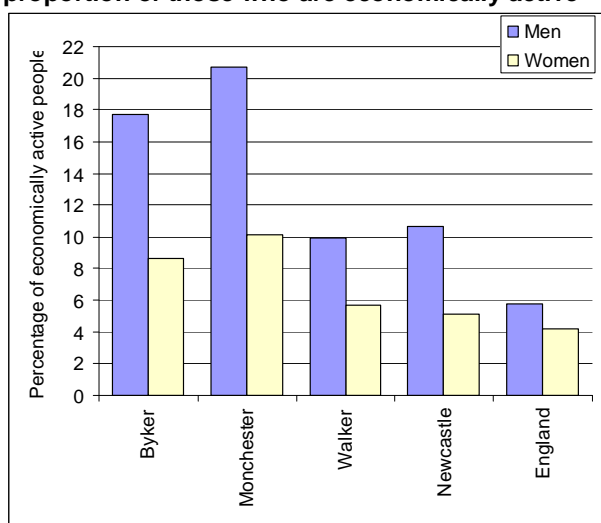
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Women who have caring responsibilities in the locality are less likely to be in paid work than in Newcastle or nationally. This is particularly marked in Monkchester and Walker (Figure 8), where over a quarter of women who provide care to others also look after their home and family. The proportion of these male and female carers who are themselves permanently sick or disabled is also higher than the city and national average. In the three wards, fewer women who provide care are themselves retired when compared with Newcastle and England as a whole.

Unemployment and economic inactivity

Local unemployment rates are considerably higher for both men and women than in Newcastle and nationally (Figure 9). Of the three wards, Monkchester has the highest rate of female unemployment (10%). Women who had become unemployed or economically inactive tended to have previously worked in elementary jobs.

Figure 9 Unemployed people of working age, as a proportion of those who are economically active



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Between 1991 and 2001, economic inactivity decreased across the country. It remains higher for women than men. By contrast, economic inactivity amongst women in both Byker and Monkchester increased.

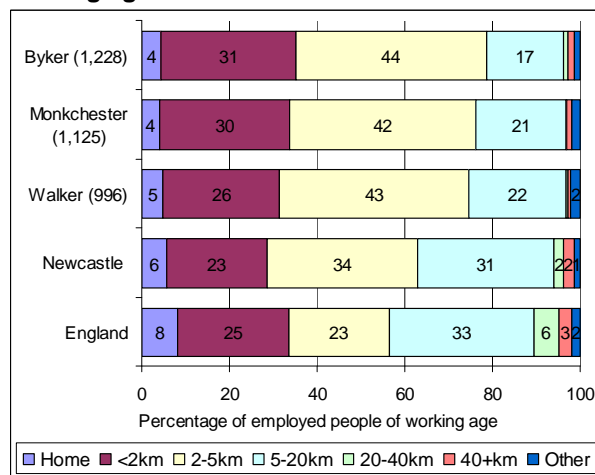
Transport and travel to work

Many residents in the locality live and work in close proximity, and this is particularly true for women. 74% of women in Byker, 72% in Monkchester and 69% in Walker travel less than

5km to work, well above the city figure of 57% and the national figure of 48% (Figure 11).

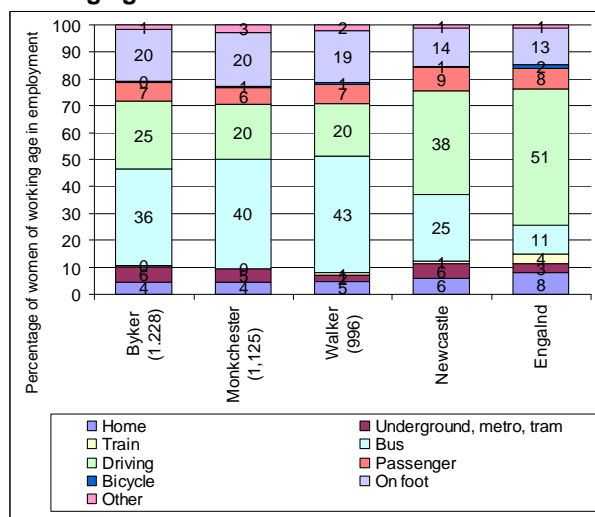
Associated with this, a high proportion of women in the neighbourhood walk to work (Figure 12). Fewer women travel to work by car or van. Bus and metro use is higher among women living in the three wards than the national rate, but lower in Monkchester and Walker than in Newcastle.

Figure 11 Distance travelled to work by women of working age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure 12 Travel to work by men and women of working age



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Views of the labour market

City and regional level changes have impacted adversely on many households living in the neighbourhood. Much of the area was developed to accommodate workers in heavy industries linked to the river including coal, iron, chemical

works, ship building and related engineering activities. Our interviewers reported that some aspects of the physical state of the area had improved in recent years, but unemployment and low pay remained serious problems for large sections of the community.

Traditionally men would have worked full-time and women may have had a part-time job. This was the bedrock of employment, but it has gone. This is why you get into the benefits trap. Is it worth someone doing a part-time job?^A

I don't know whether it is a locality thing, but I think women take more responsibility for household bills, managing the money.^B

The majority of employment opportunities were in female dominated services such as finance, hospitality and retail. The City Council remains an important employer in the area, along with the Department of Work and Pensions. It was felt that the growth of call centre and retail employment in East Newcastle had limited benefits for local women. Wages and conditions were poor, often offering only the minimum wage. The qualification requirements were regarded as high for the type of employment on offer. Call centres often require ICT skills, for example, and some women felt that they inevitably miss out.

You've got to be skilled, you've got to have lots of qualifications. You can't get experience until you get qualifications. It's a vicious circle.^B

The quality of what is on offer to local people is very poor, and we have been trying to attract higher quality employment.^A

Focus group participants confirmed this view of the local economy. The two groups felt that there were few permanent jobs and limited opportunities for high quality, part-time jobs. Local companies did not encourage family friendly policies such as job sharing.

There's nothing permanent anywhere. If you're working for a lot of these firms the conditions are terrible, and the wages are terrible, and who can afford to put in for a pension?^B

You have very little what I call real jobs in the area, if you go to work in a shop, it's part time.^B

Barriers to labour market engagement

Barriers to employment include a number of constraints, including aspects of the tax and benefits system, which can only be resolved at national level. Others relate to the economic, social and physical infrastructure of the locality under study which can be influenced by regional and local agencies as well as by central government and private investment.

There are so many obstacles in front of you, it can be soul destroying.^B

Tax Credit and the benefits system

Local workers understood the levels of poverty in the area and explained that most people would never choose to live on benefits:

This woman lives on £56 a week and, yes, she doesn't pay her rent and council tax, but I couldn't live on that. I spend more than twice that on food each week.^A

However to move from benefits to paid employment was a major challenge, involving support and confidence in looking at options. Focus group participants felt they would notice little change in household income if they were in paid employment.

Everyone likes to have a job. But it's no good going to work unless you're making it worthwhile.^B

The financial support provided to those moving off benefits into work was regarded as important, but insufficiently flexible.

Job Centre services involving outreach work in the locality provided important support. Concerns were expressed by local organisations that positive initiatives to support those wishing to enter the labour market were limited by insufficient financial and staff investment.

Job Centre Plus doesn't get to know the 'customer' and it's a shame because that person keeps going round the system and they get different advisors every time and their problems are not really addressed.^A

Households needed detailed advice on the tax credit system.

Economically it often does take two full-time wages to make it viable to come off benefits.

People with skills and experience expect to get a job on about £400 a week, and that's just not going to happen.^A

An overly complicated benefits system, especially in the case of working tax credits can cause stress. This system was criticised for poor quality and inaccurate advice from some mainstream service providers.

Some focus group participants demonstrated extraordinary budgeting skills in running a household on a tight budget, effectively living hand to mouth.

Say you're going to go for a job for this much an hour. By the time I've paid everything back like rent, council tax, I'll be £14 better off than I am on Income Support. I can't wait to get back into work, but the incentive is not there.^B

I know a few girls in my position whose marriage has broken down. They work as dinner ladies in the school, because it's when their kids are at school. They've got no problem with childcare, but there's a list as long as your arm to get one of these jobs.^B

It's just as bad to go from working into benefits as it is benefits into working. Most jobs now are monthly pay, its terrifying.^B

The transition from benefits to work was a key concern for women. Changes in the way household finances are managed and an increase in expenditure/bills and possible monthly pay cause anxiety.

As a result of the low pay economy many women felt reliant on benefits and particularly cautious about losing benefits through employment, especially as many jobs are part-time and short-term. Focus group participants argued that the benefit system needs to take into consideration the short-term transitory nature of employment, as the length of time needed to apply for benefits can leave women short of income.

Respondents suggested that some of the regulations regarding working tax credits should be relaxed. The 16 hour threshold¹⁰ to Working Tax Credit, combined with childcare responsibilities, gave little incentive to seek employment. The system was regarded as over complicated.

¹⁰ Entitlement to Working Tax Credit is only available for those working at least 16 hours a week.

Gender differences in the household structure impacted on employment and benefits. Respondents felt that although employment in the traditionally male manufacturing sector has declined, the traditional view of the man going out to work and the woman staying at home with the children still prevailed.

Childcare

The main burden of care responsibilities tended to fall on women living in the locality. The reluctance of some families for others to care for their children meant SureStart was slow to take off as a service. It is now gaining ground as trust is established.

Not having the childcare is worse, more difficult than not getting a job. You can get a job, but you can't get childcare.^B

Many depend on family to care for their children, and lone parents were identified as a particular group who required much more preparatory support in order to consider returning to paid work.

Interviewees stated that whilst the area had seen an improvement in childcare for pre-school children there were a number of problems:

- The cost of childcare was prohibitively expensive for those in low paid and part-time occupations.
- There was a paucity of childminders in the locality.
- Help and recognition was required for family members caring for children; the importance of the extended family was emphasised.
- More flexible childcare provision was needed, which took into account shift work requirements.
- Childcare provision was poor for school age children.
- School holiday periods posed a major problem for women in paid employment.
- Employers in the locality were generally not regarded as flexible employers in relation to hours of work, training, childcare and school holidays.

SureStart, and the work of Family Centres, was regarded as important since there were now more opportunities for women with children, particularly lone parents, who wished to be involved in activities offered by the centre. Some local residents had also found employment in SureStart.

If you had kids and you're not up with the times, there's nothing to really help you get back into work or anything like that. I got my job because I do volunteering for Sure Start.

It was felt that the Family Centre model allowed services to be more responsive to local needs by involving women in educational activities while their children are cared for on the premises. The co-location of services policy aims to provide more targeted work with those who have traditionally been socially excluded.

Information and support services

Local services and community initiatives in the area were felt to be poorly promoted. Focus group participants felt that they were over-reliant on word of mouth. Residents often found out about meetings/projects too late, and felt that there was a 'lack of coordination'. Basic information needs to be clearer.

If you don't know somebody who's involved with it, you don't get to know. Not everybody buys the Evening Chronicle.^B

Many women want to work but cannot see how.^A

Focus group participants felt that those with English as a second language were likely to struggle to understand some of the leaflets and materials about local services.

Focus group participants were aware of the advisory services through the Job Centre, the local authority and Connexions, but did not always find these services relevant or appropriate to their needs.

Job advertisements were considered complex, involving unnecessary technical language, often implying that higher qualifications and training were required than practically necessary.

Work related training and skills

Many training schemes had been promoted, but interviewees questioned their success in assisting women into work. Whilst local education provision was a valued service, interviewees felt that there should be better integration of training provision.

There are bits and pieces all over the place. Once women get confidence from community level provision there needs to be some assistance in making the transition from informal to formal training.^A

Courses offered by Newcastle College were considered to be too distant and not sufficiently relevant to women living in this locality.

Focus group participants felt that courses preparing them to return to work would be useful, but that childcare costs had to be met. The participants suggested courses designed to assist in interview techniques and writing applications.

Confidence building, because when you apply for the job and get the application, it's really nerve wracking. Sometimes it's just the way things are worded, the phrases that people use.^B

Transport

Proximity to work was a key factor in considering employment. Transport choices for women in the locality depend on wages, time, car ownership and public transport. Inadequate public transport and distance from schools hindered efforts to seek employment out of the immediate locality.

Byker's the furthest I'd go. You've got to get your kids to school, go to the childminder before you get there and then collect them on the way back. If you haven't got a car you can't travel that far away.^B

Transport links from Walker were felt to be quite difficult as it is more geographically distant from the city centre than Byker. Low car ownership and the expense and time to travel by public transport outside the neighbourhood were particularly important barriers for local women. Few considered travelling to North Shields or south of the river. The east – west access was easier, but cost remained prohibitive for many.

You don't have to travel very far for it to be quite a lot of money, and if you are not on a big wage it is a barrier.^B

Aspirations and expectations

Aspiration varied according to age and experience. Many women with children have high expectations for their families, but are themselves constrained by limited opportunities. They live on a low income and several household members may be unemployed.

It's not that they lack aspiration as such, it's that they are scared about it.^A

They (women) get up in the morning for their children. They battle for their kids, even those women with depression.^A

Young women were also influenced by limited opportunities.

Younger women don't see themselves as having any skills. They don't really know what aspiration is. They live day to day with nothing much to look forward to or think about.^A

There is an inability to see and understand that they actually do have an ability to make decisions, and that those decisions can impact on the quality of your life.^A

Household pressures were considered important to women's views of paid employment.

Women often worry about everyday needs. The money, the bus fare, the day's shop for milk and bread.^A

I think there is a lot more pressure on women to do the housework, to keep food in the cupboard, the children clothed.^A

Focus group participants identified a series of barriers including:

- Lack of suitable employment opportunities
- Care responsibilities
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Limited of qualifications and continuous employment
- Lack of flexible employment
- Partial information on available courses and employment opportunities

The complex needs of women in the locality meant that advisors and support workers recognised the need for long term, integrated support services to operate more effectively in the area.

Area based regeneration: gender perspectives

The equalities dimension of regeneration strategies was examined through stakeholder interviews and documentary analysis¹¹.

This found that equalities and gender were mentioned in relation to capacity building, with targets such as improving community safety and childcare, reducing teenage pregnancy and domestic violence. However, there were few policy developments, delivery plans or economic

and employment targets which specifically addressed women's economic disadvantage in the labour market.

While policy aims and objectives were clearly geared to addressing neighbourhood problems, they were generally weak on the economic strategies which are required to tackle the unemployment, economic inactivity, low pay and financial hardship faced by particular groups of women (including lone parents, young women with few qualifications, women who are in part-time and/or casual employment and ethnic minority women who may be doubly disadvantaged). In practice, the local Learning Projects were those most clearly relevant to starting to meet women's needs for labour market support.

Baseline data used in regeneration projects identified some aspects of women's employment situation specifically. For example, unemployment statistics were disaggregated by gender, but not by gender and ethnicity. The intended SRB2 beneficiaries included young people and the unemployed living in the area, and support was targeted at women, girls, parents and disabled women. Targets in the succession plan did identify gender awareness by highlighting the number of women using facilities.

Many of the project delivery outputs were training and education criteria designed to provide adult basic skills in the neighbourhood and workplace. However, there was no disaggregation of gender issues from wider themes relating to labour market opportunities and capacity building.

The Walker Riverside Masterplan includes objectives to maximise social inclusion, including working alongside SureStart. Apart from the commitment to improve childcare facilities there is no identifiable gender focus in the proposed interventions to regenerate the physical state of the area and reduce economic inactivity. The research did not reveal specific targets to reduce unemployment and worklessness.

Evaluation approaches adopted for the regeneration initiatives which are currently investing in the area took little account of the complexity of challenges facing women living in the locality.

A number of targeted projects, funded through SRB and NRF programmes had assisted. Women had clearly been beneficiaries of many education

¹¹ The documents evaluated in Newcastle are listed in the appendix. The full versions of the evaluation have been made available to Newcastle City Council.

and learning projects in the area. The difficulties of measuring 'success' were highlighted in the discussions around community learning and the transition to employment.

Local views of regeneration and labour market initiatives

Retail developments in the area had resulted in new employment at Morrisons supermarket on Shields Road and, more recently, at the Fossway. Considerable resources were channelled through East to Work which involved Job Centre Plus, the City Council's Employment Development team and the East End Partnership to support 150 local residents in preparing for potential employment at Morrisons. The scheme involved a pre-employment programme helping people with CVs, application forms and interview skills. Drama workshops were used as part of the confidence building approach. Nearly 100 local residents gained employment through the scheme. Post-employment support was considered important, but local organisations felt that it was harder to guarantee longer term benefits, as employers often did not put in sufficient support structures.

Similar resources have not been available for other local developments. Partnership work with local employers is being promoted to identify education and training needs in the East End in sectors such as social care, health, retail and construction. Local labour market initiatives such as the Warm Zones energy project had primarily attracted men because of the sector and types of job available.

Future initiatives are likely to focus on the North East Marine and Off Shore cluster involving local businesses. It is predicted that if successful, there will be skills shortages in construction and engineering related jobs. There were concerns that local people may not benefit from this investment. Longer term skills training for local residents is planned through a college centre based in the East End which aims to prepare local residents for employment. This strategy has been developed in the light of

many years where many people trained for training's sake.^A

There are an awful lot of people out there that want to work, but they haven't got the skills to enter the world of work. There is a big job to be done.^A

The proposed housing redevelopment brought with it potential employment opportunities in the locality, but interviewees were not convinced that the link to potential labour market benefits had been identified and planned for.

Physical improvements alone won't work, so there has to be a social and economic dynamic. You can build as many new houses as you like, but if you don't work with the community, the opportunity will be lost.^A

Future priorities for local organisations included addressing the economic agenda alongside tackling health problems and building a skills base, but many felt that this was a long term project. A strategic approach which brings together different public service providers was felt to be an important part of future initiatives. Education, health and care¹² were identified as sectors which will require staff over the coming years.

Focus group participants had played an important role in improving the local community. The presence of *Wor Hoose*, a community project in a renovated council property, was felt to have significantly improved the locality. Hexham Avenue now has full occupancy and *Wor Hoose* acts as a community venue for advice sessions.

Enormous frustration was felt by local women about broader regeneration plans for their area and the prospect of losing houses close to the river. There was a feeling that negative stereotypes of Walker residents influenced the regeneration strategy.

Voluntary work was common amongst the focus group participants who had a strong history of community involvement. Volunteering had in some cases led to paid employment. Jobs in the voluntary sector tended to be short term, based on funding for particular projects and posts.

It attracted me because it was working in the area where I grew up, and you feel passionate about your area, don't you? And you want to make things better not for yourself, but for your kids who grow up here.

¹² The importance of recruiting new staff in social care is emphasised in another of the *Gender and Employment in Local Labour Market* studies in Newcastle (Yeandle et al 2006)

Local services and support

In the interviews and focus groups we discussed the types of services available to economically disadvantaged women living in the three wards. There was a general concern about the lack of public investment in the area, though schools had improved and a new health centre had recently opened. The close proximity of schools to residential areas was a positive aspect of the locality. Locally based, integrated services where several agencies were co-located, and assisted local residents on a broad range of service needs, were felt to be important. Several interviewees stated that this approach was more likely to be successful in the long run for women who had not been in paid work for a long period.

Interviewees from local agencies considered that initial work with benefits recipients, engaging women and men who are not economically active in training and education initiatives, was sometimes more effective on a one-to-one basis.

Addressing the needs of ethnic minority women

Several interviewees stated that there was limited understanding about the origins of asylum seekers who had been housed in the area. Recent arrivals included Eastern Europeans, Russians, Sri Lankans and Africans. There has been relatively little outreach work locally; some of the most valuable work was done through the Family Centre.

where they feel safe and it's breaking down barriers, so we can help them overcome language barriers.^A

The fact that Sure Start only works with families with children up to the age of 4 meant that wider provision was key to supporting this group.

Some ethnic minority groups were well qualified, and their lack of English speaking was seen as a key barrier to training and employment. Further ESOL classes targeted at families living in the area were suggested as an area of specific provision required in the locality.

Employer initiatives

The employment and recruitment practices of public service agencies were important in the area, as many residents work in manual and administrative council jobs. Further work needed to be undertaken with organisations and employers to develop and enhance employment

practices more suited to women's needs. Health and social care employment were both felt to be important for the locality, providing a further opportunity to provide a more stable workforce and increase qualification levels.

Workfinder, supported by the City Council, had some success in supporting local residents into work. Workers there found the employment practices of local employers to be a serious constraint for women who wished to earn sufficient income, but did not want to work full-time hours.

Impact of initiatives on women's employment

Measuring the employment impact of area-based regeneration in a locality is notoriously difficult. This study has examined qualitative evidence to consider whether women living in the three wards have benefited from local initiatives.

Supporting women

The limitations of traditional approaches were highlighted. Job Centre services provided through disparate offices were often not relevant to local needs. Fragmented services which involved advice centres, training agencies and the college could be confusing for local service users.

People need to take ownership of their own learning, and services need to reflect that.

A community education forum in the area is one way of coordinating services and supporting those who have been out of education and training for long periods.

The Working Neighbourhoods project, one of 12 Job Centre Plus national pilots funded (April 2004-March 2006) by the DWP, is targeting households in Monkchester reliant on Incapacity Benefit. The service provides one to one support which is often not funded through mainstream providers. Funding is orientated to the needs of the individual, to provide specific support in assisting in the transition from benefits into paid work.

It's really a mentoring service aimed at giving people confidence to help themselves.^A

Detailed support was recommended.

Standard services just don't help them, because if someone has complex needs and is severely depressed, they don't want to talk to several agencies about the detail.

This approach required intensive resources and community based workers with local understanding and detailed knowledge of the types of support available from a range of agencies.

Interviewees felt that short term funding has limited the potential impact of many employment-related projects. Long term sustainability was an ongoing concern.

Community education and learning projects

Community projects and services provide essential support in the locality. Arts projects have successfully engaged women in the locality, particularly those who are very distant from the labour market. They uncover skills and abilities which have often been submerged through the formal education system.

Family learning projects have attracted mothers living in the three wards and supported them in overcoming fear and anxiety about employment opportunities. Several stakeholders argued that this provision should be mainstreamed as a core service to ensure that these approaches are adequately funded. Byker Community Education project has attracted women, including recently arrived asylum seekers, to a range of courses and activities, including ICT. The key skills required for tutors working with women who are some distance from the labour market was highlighted. The project is now offering NVQ 3 training for early year crèche workers and classroom assistants.

Young women are coming back to do these courses. They don't see themselves as having the skills at first, but it is a clear route into work.

It was noted that whilst younger women with children were involved in learning opportunities through SureStart and the Family Centres, it was harder to engage women in their 40s and 50s who did not have a particular focus for involvement. It was felt that courses for women without young children could be advertised in more imaginative places that are likely to attract their attention.

Funding of non-accredited courses and adequate resources for tutors who develop close links with the local community was highlighted in the context of longer term support for local women. College provision was distinguished from community education and local learning centres

who provided a different type of service to local residents.

It was felt that disparate adult education services, funded through the Learning and Skills Council, were sometimes not providing longer term support for women in the area. The nature of these services and the physical (and psychological) distance of Newcastle College led many to argue for mainstream provision to be located in the wards under study.

Regeneration project managers in Newcastle highlighted the education attainment gap between the three wards and the rest of the city. A proposal to locate a college centre in the area was widely supported. The key challenge will be to engage local residents, particularly young people, into further and higher education. A bursary scheme aimed at supporting those who had left school with few or no qualifications was suggested, recognising that the financial barriers need to be addressed in this context.

New approaches

Linking work-based learning with community projects was considered an effective approach in supporting local residents into employment. Many public sector jobs which were traditionally viewed as lower skilled now require higher qualifications, for which local residents can be given training and support, followed by the potential to progress to higher paid jobs within the workplace.

The Learning@Brinkburn project based at the old Byker Library had been set up using UK online services supported by TUC Learn Direct, as a drop-in centre for the community, as well as a resource for council staff living in the area. This model, supported by UNISON, is unusual in that it draws together funds which enable it to combine and promote work-based and community-based learning. Support in the form of advice and guidance to council manual workers and access to free IT courses has in practice attracted more men than women. However, part-time women workers from sectors such as homecare have accessed the services, and support has been given to those staff progressing to NVQ qualifications. Staff explained that women have to fit their training round shifts, and are constrained by childcare commitments and a high dependence on public transport and walking. A feasibility study to build a crèche is underway to encourage more family learning and more women to participate in the centre. The council's

employment outreach work is also important in attracting under-represented groups into council jobs, and for those in low paid posts to progress into higher paid work, for example, administrative and supervisory jobs. Advice and guidance, including identification of qualification needs and skills development, is part of the support necessary for these groups.

Newcastle City Council has also promoted schemes aimed at achieving a better work-life balance for employees in care services where 24 hour care is required for service users (see also Yeandle et al 2006). Shift patterns allow parents to work either early or late shifts so that they can be involved in taking and /or collecting their children from school. Staff working weekends have several days off during the week. This has been negotiated with UNISON to tie in with re-grading and new qualification requirements. The service has a good record on staff retention, but still faces recruitment problems. Managers agreed that further promotion among potential applicants of the benefits of such employment was necessary if the workforce in these services was to be enhanced across the city. This depends on Adult Education's work on confidence building and basic skills training, with support to undertake NVQ qualifications, flexible shift patterns, and promotion of the benefits of council employment. Proposals to develop apprenticeships in services such as care and education were part of a longer term strategy to address skills shortages in this field.

The council's Neighbourhood Services experience difficulties in recruiting cleaners and catering staff and has a relatively high staff turnover. The tax and benefits system was partly to blame, as was the competition from retail jobs which, while at lower pay rates, offered hours during the school day and discounted shopping. Managers felt restricted in offering contracts over 16 hours. Workforce development activity across a number of services was being implemented with the support of union learning representatives, with staff supported to gain additional skills and reach NVQ levels 2 and 3. Promoting such jobs at the community level, and providing progression routes to higher level jobs, was considered a crucial part of a longer term strategy to attract more staff into the service.

It was recognised that health sector services and employment opportunities were also important for the locality. A *Healthy Living Network* had been

established with local people employed in community development, and support targeted to particular groups including young women and asylum seekers.

Focus group participants were keen to see a more flexible, but supported, route into work. Employer-led changes, including workplace crèches and child friendly hours, were also popular with local women.

For the employers to provide more child friendly hours, like your shifts starting from 7:30 to 12 o'clock.^B

Not every job can be flexi-time, this is where you have to have the childcare.^B

Future possible areas for employment initiatives identified by focus group participants included work experience schemes with a more practical and vocational approach for school age children, attaching value to apprenticeships and to manual employment. Jobs were felt to be more sustainable in the long term if training and support was provided in-house.

For local residents to be skilled and ready for future employment opportunities, a strategic approach building on the lessons of community based-education and labour market initiatives which went beyond the recruitment stage, and assisted them once in employment, was required. Financial support for local residents who wished to raise their educational attainment and to work in the longer term would be a key factor in this approach. Confidence-raising was also key to support for women, particularly young women and lone mothers.

Conclusions and policy recommendations

This section provides policy messages and practical suggestions for service providers, including Newcastle City Council, Jobcentre Plus and other local and regional agencies, responsible for public service delivery and regeneration investment in the locality. Some recommendations have a wider remit, as they are the concerns of central government departments, including those related to the tax and benefit systems.

Women's economic disadvantage

The relative economic position of women living in the wards is considerably worse than in the city as a whole. Strategies encouraging more women to gain paid employment need to recognise and understand the scale of women's non-participation and distance from labour market opportunities in the city. Appropriate action is required to address low incomes among many groups of women. These problems are also a key challenge for the district's economy. Local employers will need to be able to access the experience and skills of women living in the area, and to retain staff and fill job opportunities in the coming decades. Women in the neighbourhood need specific support to improve their education and skills levels to enable them to access jobs and improve their employment potential.

Understanding local labour market barriers

Employment strategies and project development need to tackle the barriers women face in the locality. These include limited training and employment opportunities, variable support services, lack of affordable childcare, low pay and inflexible recruitment and employment practices amongst many employers.

- *Raise awareness and improve information on education, training, childcare support and employment initiatives, using a range of media in local community venues to women living in the three wards.*
- *Create employment projects which bring together training provision, childcare, and work experience, supported by effective local services.*
- *Recognise the different needs of women at different life stages and develop strategies accordingly.*

- *Address low pay, progression routes and inflexible employment practices through work with local employers.*

Regeneration initiatives

The question of whether women have benefited from regeneration investment is difficult to answer, since baseline data, and the monitoring and evaluation systems were not gender sensitive. Our qualitative research shows that women are the beneficiaries of some community regeneration initiatives.

- *Strengthen working relationships between senior policy makers, community based organisations and regeneration agencies in the locality.*
- *Establish explicit employment targets for public and private sector schemes designed to enhance job opportunities for local residents.*
- *ONE North East and Newcastle City Council need to ensure gender equality is taken into account in commissioning regeneration programmes.*
- *Introduce gender impact assessment forms part of all future regeneration and area-based initiatives.*

Delivery of area-based projects

Labour market projects undertaken in the area did not always target women as an identifiable and diverse group. The practical delivery of regeneration and labour market initiatives, including those administered through Newcastle City Council and ONE North East, needs to ensure that differences between men and women's position is reflected in local projects.

- *Integrate gender equality measures in regeneration policy making and delivery programmes.*
- *Use statistical evidence and qualitative information from those who work and live in the area to maintain and improve understanding of the neighbourhood.*
- *Identify baseline data and project delivery targets, including outputs and outcomes, in terms of their specific impact on women and men.*
- *Include measures which are directly aimed at addressing women's poverty in the locality in monitoring and evaluation of regeneration schemes.*

Taking advantage of employment potential

In the context of inward investment in the district and region, many women living in the wards aspire to be trained for new employment opportunities. This needs to be taken into account in planning for local employment.

- *Develop explicit support for young women and women who wish to return to paid employment in regeneration objectives.*
- *Link community learning and work experience to future opportunities in the care, education and health sectors. The higher NVQ qualifications required for many jobs require further community based learning initiatives if women in the area are to be beneficiaries of the opportunities.*
- *Maintain employment sites in areas of housing redevelopment to prevent the further loss of manufacturing and service employment in the locality.*

Supporting women with care responsibilities

Services are required at the neighbourhood level which address the specific needs of women who provide unpaid care to dependents. Childcare provision is improving, but remains particularly difficult for those mothers whose children are at school.

- *Invest in pre-school, after-school and holiday care services.*
- *Build on good practice found in employment and family projects operating in the locality.*
- *Ensure that the success of SureStart and community based family services are maintained and developed in targeting disadvantaged women living in the wards.*
- *Integrate family services with labour market projects.*
- *Build in preparing for job interviews and information on childcare support.*
- *Develop more targeted work with different age groups and women from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.*
- *Mentoring individual women may be an important approach in making the transition to paid work.*

Employer responsibilities

Interviewees stated that greater flexibility in working practices amongst local employers would benefit women living in the area. More work to convince employers that job sharing and other flexible modes of employment are mutually beneficial is needed.

- *Engage employers in labour market projects with clearer routes to paid work for women in the locality.*
- *Enhance the role of public sector service providers (local government, health, education and related agencies) as local employers in the area, and review their recruitment strategies.*
- *Identify public, private and voluntary sector employers facing skills shortages and problems in recruiting and retaining qualified and skilled staff in the locality and wider district.*
- *Provide resources and long-term project development to support women to engage in non-traditional and higher paying sectors.*
- *Encourage local employers to reconsider new ways of advertising and recruiting local jobs.*
- *Encourage flexible working arrangements to accommodate women in the workplace. This will require greater responsiveness by employers to vary their patterns of work, introduce annualised hours and explore the potential for term-time only working.*

Qualifications, skills and advice

Low levels of formal qualifications among women in the locality need to be addressed. Strategic approaches should include:

- *Mainstreaming successful skills and employment initiatives into the work of statutory services and other agencies operating in the area.*
- *Closer working between skills partnerships including funding agencies (LSC, Job Centre Plus, Further Education) and voluntary sector training providers, with schools and community based organisations.*

Initiatives to assist local women should include:

- *Clearer guidance for women returners on training options, preparation for job applications, confidence building for job interviews.*

- *Targeted education, skills initiatives, apprenticeship schemes and support for young women.*
- *ESOL classes for ethnic minority women living in the locality as a stepping stone to further training and employment initiatives.*

Limited post-19 careers advice is a constraint for women in the locality.

- *Target careers advice at the needs of women of different ethnicities and ages with differing care responsibilities.*
- *Introduce work experience schemes, including placements, which are clearly planned and supported.*
- *Support women returners, building on their previous employment and experience, through access courses and job-related schemes.*

Promote and support schemes which:

- *Link work-based and community-based in learning models.*
- *Encourage women in the locality to consider access courses and degree level qualifications through higher education initiatives.*
- *Introduce bursaries and other forms of financial support to access further and higher education for targeted groups of women living in the locality.*

Working at the neighbourhood level

Community-based projects have proven success in working with women from a range of backgrounds and ages.

- *Develop accreditation for voluntary work and community based involvement which can be used in job applications and CVs.*

In-work benefits and incentives

Further work on state benefits and greater understanding of the key financial barriers to work were central concerns among local organisations. Simplification and greater flexibility in the tax and benefits system were considered crucial. In-work costs include childcare and transport. A particular issue for lone parents and families on low incomes is the increase in childcare costs when moving into work.

- *Introduce better financial incentives for women returning to work and improve in-work incentives through the tax credit system.*
- *Develop greater flexibility in the benefits system for those women moving into work and for those taking a break from employment.*
- *Encourage greater take up of Tax and Child Credits through support services.*
- *Improve information and advice for women living in the locality.*

The local authority and Job Centre Plus are key agencies in awareness-raising and delivering locally based advice and support.

- *Introduce further community based services, in order to assist those households facing a benefits trap.*
- *Analyse Job Centre monitoring data by gender and ethnicity, and use at local and regional level to inform strategies and local project work aimed at assisting claimants.*

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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

The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research techniques:

1. Statistical analysis to assess the nature and extent of women's poverty and economic disadvantage in the selected geographical areas using Census 2001 and other relevant sources. Including:

- Background information - age-sex profile, health, deprivation, workless households
- Economic activity - full-time/part-time employment, unemployment, reasons for economic inactivity, Income Support
- Local labour market information - occupation, industry, travel to work, qualifications

2. Documentary analysis including:

- A review of relevant academic and other policy literature
- Assessment of existing evaluations for the identified local regeneration initiatives in relation to women's economic circumstances
- An equalities and gender proofing template was used to facilitate the desk based exercise. The template identified equalities and gender sensitive approaches

3. Semi-structured interviews lasting an hour or more were held with twelve representatives from local initiatives including East End Partnership, Job Centre Plus, UNISON and Newcastle City Council. The interview schedule included questions organised under the themes of:

- Social and economic conditions in the locality
- Women's experiences of living on a low income
- Locality based regeneration and employment projects
- Addressing women's disadvantage in the locality
- Local services
- The local labour market
- Unemployment and economic inactivity

4. Views of local women through focus groups attended by 15 women living in the area. The group ranged in age from 23-64 and included mostly White British women. The majority had been in paid employment at some point in their lives but were not currently in paid employment. Most women participants were seeking work or were involved in residents' groups and community organisations. Over half the group had some formal qualifications. The discussions held in local community venues included questions on the following themes:

- Views about the neighbourhood – services, job opportunities, childcare, service improvements and regeneration projects
- Experiences of work and unemployment – types of job available, levels of income, opportunities and barriers, problems
- Aspirations for themselves and families
- Ideas and solutions

Appendix 3 Additional data for Byker, Monkchester and Walker in Newcastle

General Information

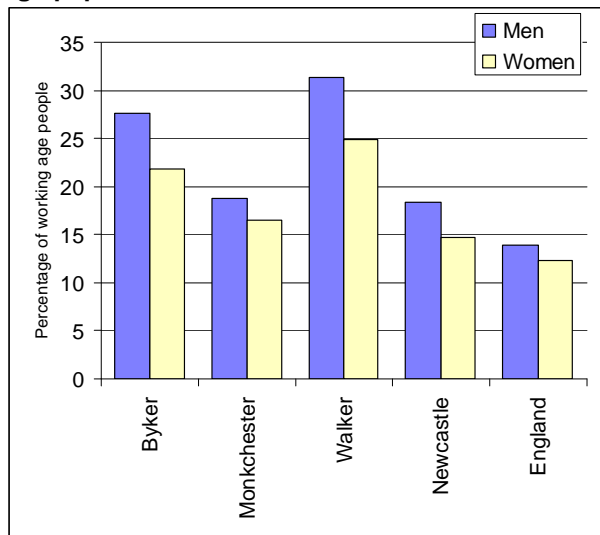
Figure A1 Age of resident population, by sex

per cent

	Byker	Monkchester	Walker	Newcastle	England
All males (numbers)	4,002	9,589	3,799	125,466	23,922,144
0-15	19	25	24	20	19
16-24	12	11	11	16	13
25-49	37	32	33	35	36
50-64	18	19	17	16	18
65-74	8	8	10	8	8
75+	6	5	5	6	6
All females (numbers)	4,203	10,928	3,930	134,060	25,216,687
0-15	18	23	20	18	18
16-24	11	11	11	15	12
25-49	33	32	33	34	35
50-64	16	13	15	15	17
65-74	10	13	10	9	9
75+	13	9	11	9	9

Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

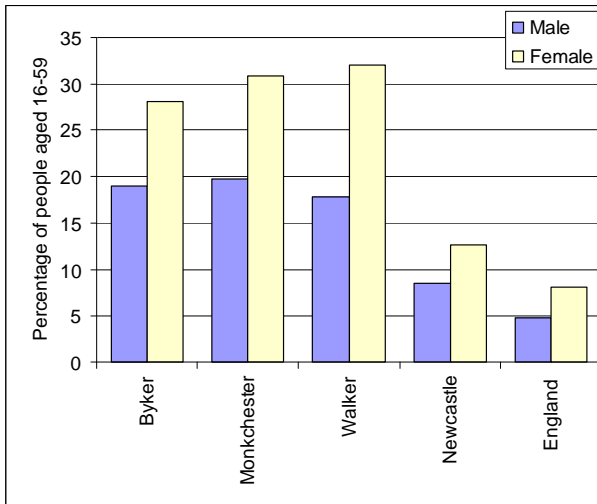
Figure A2 Limiting long-term illness in the working age population



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

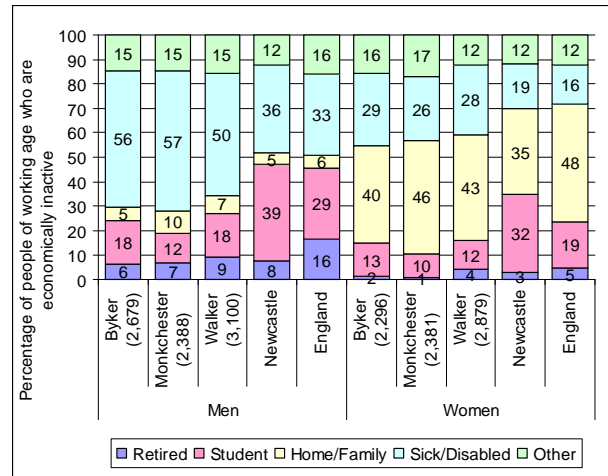
Unemployment and economic inactivity

Figure A3 Residents claiming Income Support



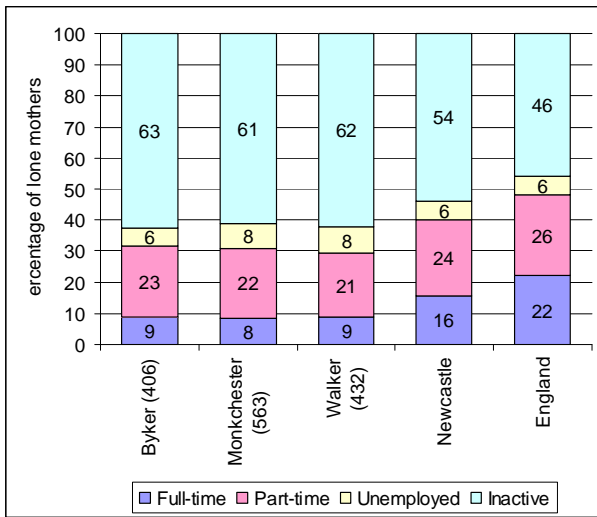
Source: DWP August 2003 and 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A4 Economic inactivity, by reason



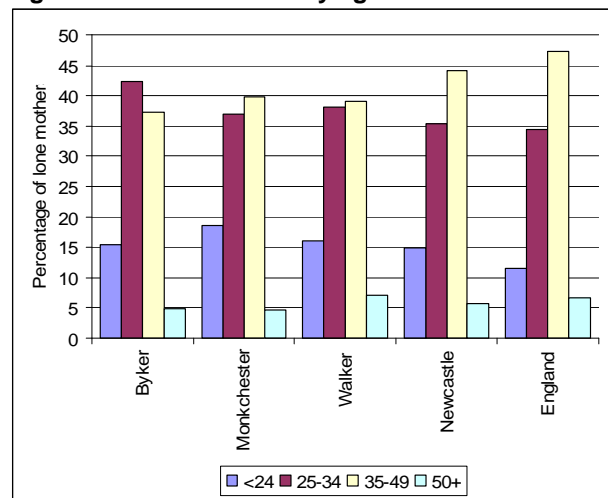
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A5 Lone parents by economic activity



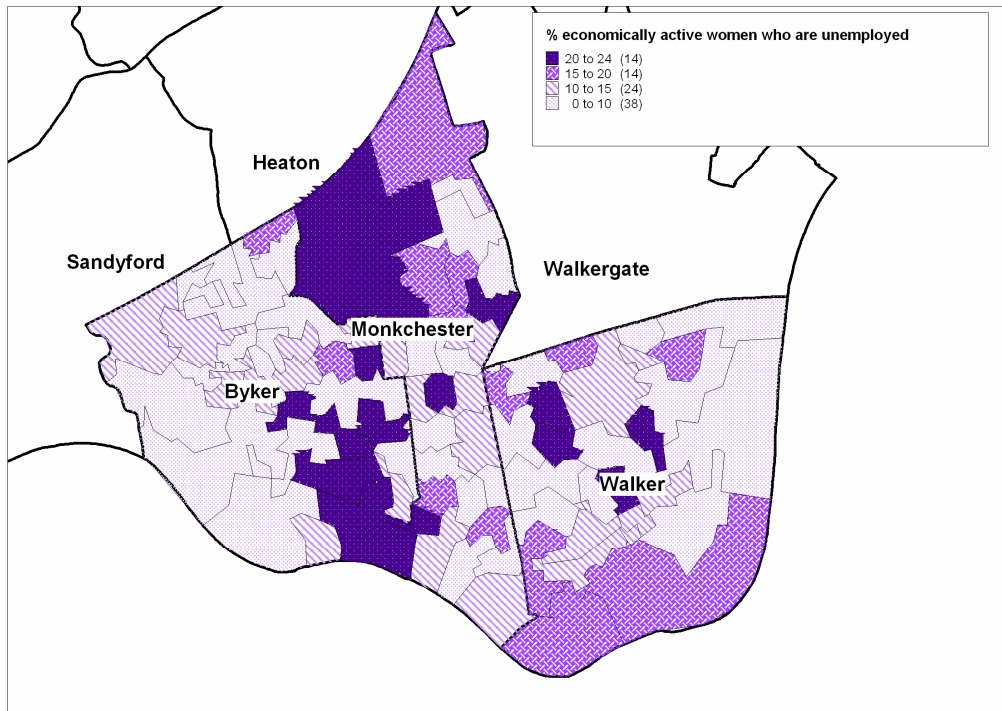
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A6 Lone mothers by age



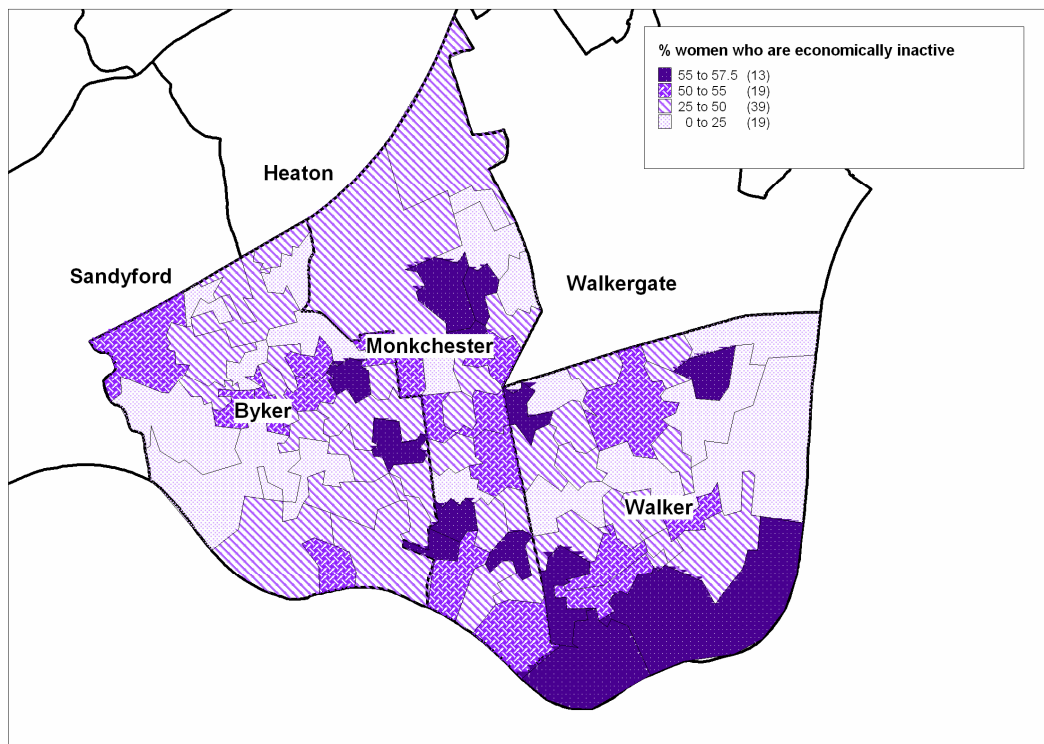
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A7 Geographical distribution of economically active women who are unemployed: Newcastle



Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables and 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 A8 Geographical distribution of women of working age who are economically inactive: Newcastle



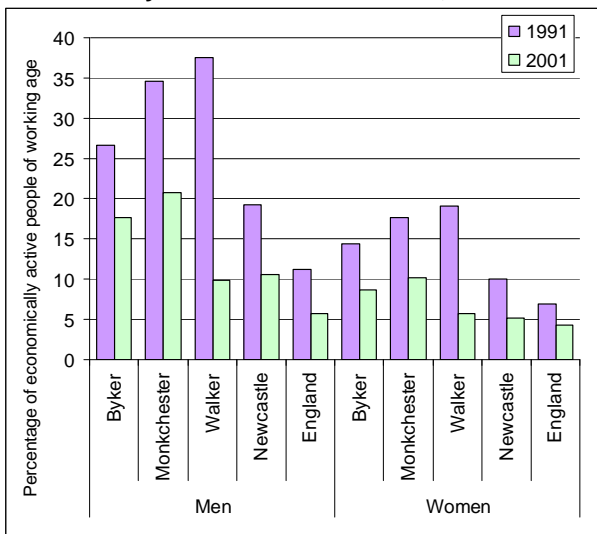
Source: 2001 Census Standard Theme Tables and 2001 Census Output Area boundaries, Crown Copyright 2003. This work is based on data provided through EDINA UKBORDERS with the support of the ESRC and JISC and uses boundary material which is Copyright of the Crown

Figure A9 Former occupations and industries of unemployed and economically inactive women

	Byker	Monkchester	Walker	Newcastle	England
Occupation					
Managers, senior officials	4	5	4	4	7
Professionals	3	1	1	6	6
Associate professionals & technical	4	3	4	7	9
Process, plant and machine operatives	2	4	4	3	5
Elementary occupations	36	38	37	29	21
Industry					
Manufacturing	8	6	7	6	11
Health and social work	19	19	15	16	16
Finance and real estate	11	12	15	13	15
Wholesale, retail	21	27	23	22	22
Hotels and restaurants	18	17	16	17	10

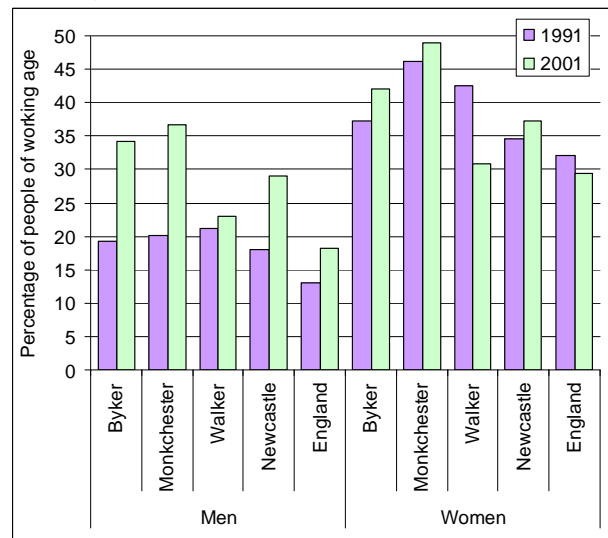
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A10 Unemployment rates as a proportion of economically active men and women, 1991 - 2001



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

Figure A11 Economic inactivity rates for men and women, 1991 and 2001



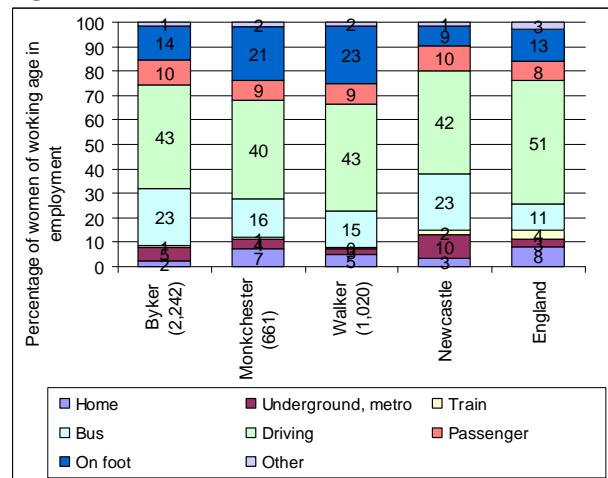
Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003. 1991 Census LBS, Crown Copyright 1993.

Work travel to work data - travel to work data for women who work in the area but may live elsewhere
Figure A12 Method of travel to work: women



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

Figure A13 Distance travelled to work: women



Source: 2001 Census Standard Tables, Crown Copyright 2003

