



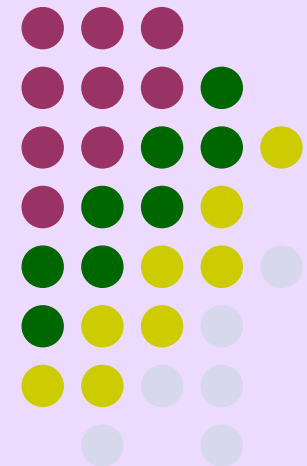
# Gender Equality: why women's voices matter

**Sue Yeandle**

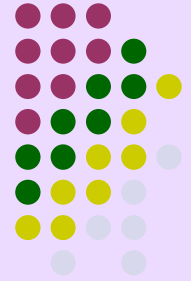
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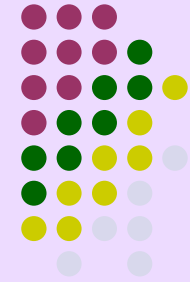


# The labour market is **STILL** highly gendered



- In **what** men and women do
- The **sectors** in which they work
- **How** they engage with paid employment
- The **rewards** they get from their jobs
- Large differences between local labour markets
- 2.8m women ‘working below potential’

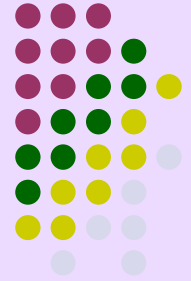
# Many women are stuck outside employment - but wanting to work



- **Many employers report labour and skill shortages.....but.....**
- **1.4 million** women in England cannot find a job
- **Major problem in poorer communities**
  - In some wards women's unemployment rates are **4 times** the national average
  - For some ethnic groups **8 times higher**
- **Women care deeply about this:**
  - *I feel terrible about not working. I'm very conscious of it. I really do feel it. It would be nice to provide for myself and my children.*

Source: Escott, K and Buckner, L (2006) *Addressing Women's Poverty: local labour market initiatives* Sheffield: Centre for Social Inclusion [www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/research/circle](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/research/circle)

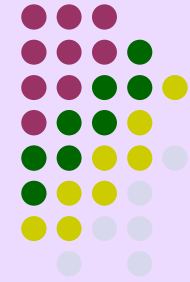
# Ethnic minority women: changing lives but persistent inequality



- Rapidly becoming **better qualified**
- Still concentrated in particular **labour market segments**
- Facing a '**concrete ceiling**' in terms of career advancement
- High levels of **unemployment** in some Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities
- Many ethnic minority women report **disadvantage, discrimination, harassment**

Source: Yeandle, S, Stiell, B & Buckner, L (2006) *Ethnic Minority women and access to the labour market*  
Sheffield: Centre for Social Inclusion [www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/research/circle](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sociology/research/circle)

# Regeneration policies often fail to help the poorest women



## Schemes had not targeted women, even where:

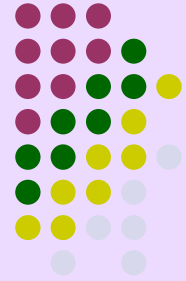
- 2 in 3 Income Support claimants were women
- Sickness among women was double the national level
- Over a third of children were in workless households
- More than half women aged 35-49 had no qualifications

## Often local job opportunities were very poor:

*“Some contractors treat their staff very badly and people on low wages often don’t know their rights.”*

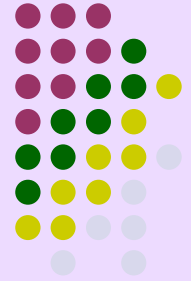
## Women in poor communities said

- they were not listened to
- their aspirations and ambitions were not taken seriously
- they did not get a say in local decision-making



## New policy context...

- *Women and Work Commission* report (2006)
- *The Commission for Equality and Human Rights* (2007)
- *Public sector duty* to promote gender equality (*Equality Act 2006*)
- **National/local labour market challenges:**
  - Skills, education and employment – meeting global challenges
  - Care, pensions and health – sustaining a changing population amid demographic change
  - Transport, regeneration and the environment



# Engaging women.....

- Active in their communities
- Supportive of each other
- Linked into informal networks of friends and relatives
- Capable and resourceful
- Practical and focused
- Co-operative and adaptable
- Skilled in communicating and problem-solving