

WARWICK INSTITUTE *for*
EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH



Improving the Participation of Women in the Labour Market: Coventry and Warwickshire

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RESEARCH REPORT - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW AND KEY MESSAGES

After three decades of equal opportunities legislation and policy, the participation of women in the labour market remains different and unequal from that of men (Bimrose et al., 2003).¹

The Learning and Skills Council, Coventry and Warwickshire, with funding from the European Social Fund, commissioned the Warwick University Institute for Employment Research to undertake research on improving the participation of women in the sub-regional labour market. The research project has produced:

- a targeted review and analysis of research on gender discrimination in employment at a national (UK), regional (West Midlands) and sub-regional (Coventry and Warwickshire) level;
- a review of the dissemination of gender and employment related research relevant to the sub-region (presented in a separate report);
- an Action Plan (presented in a separate report).

This document is an Executive Summary of the main research report, namely the targeted review and analysis of research into gender discrimination in employment. This Executive Summary outlines the content of the report and identifies the main research findings, which are underpinned by the following key points:

- women's participation rates in the labour market are **increasing**;
- women do not constitute a homogeneous group: they have **diverse** labour market experiences; and
- women are slightly **outperforming** men in compulsory and post-compulsory education in the majority of subjects.

However:

- women dominate in **part-time work**, which tends to be low paid, has few promotional prospects and has limited training opportunities;
- the **gender pay gap** is persistent and even widening;
- gender segregation means women are **under-represented** in many occupational sectors, including manufacturing and construction – important to the sub-region;
- sexual **harassment** in the workplace is a strong and recurrent theme in women's employment, but is often regarded as not being a significant problem.
- educational subject choices are still influenced by **gender stereotypes** and there is significant gender segregation in government training schemes;
- a key issue is women's **caring responsibilities**, but employers in the sub-region appear to have limited awareness of Work-Life Balance policies;
- there are **structural explanations** of gender inequality in employment but women's participation in the labour market may also be affected by their **choices** about paid employment and caring responsibilities;
- women's employment experience is also affected by dimensions of **ethnicity, disability** and **age**.

¹ Bimrose, J. et al. (2003) *Improving the Participation of Women in the Labour Market: Coventry and Warwickshire*. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

The research report contains 12 sections, as follows.

1. Introduction to the Research Report

Section 1 of the report sets out in detail the background to the research (section 1.1), the scope of the project (section 1.2) and the data sources examined. These include the Labour Force Survey, Regional and Local Employers' Surveys, the West Midlands Household Survey, Social Trends, the Census of Population and national and international academic studies (section 1.3).

2. Employment in the region: setting the context

Section 2 sets the overall context of the research project by focusing upon employment trends in the West Midlands region (section 2.1), the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region (2.2) and workplace equal opportunities policies in the sub-region (section 2.3). Key findings are:

- Employment rates for women are increasing, whereas for men they are decreasing
- The economic activity rates of the population of working age for both men and women in the West Midlands are similar to the UK rates and have remained relatively stable from 1996 to 2001
- Women are, on average, five times more likely to be in part-time employment than men
- Reflecting the ageing of the population and the rise in female participation rates, the potential supply of labour in Coventry and Warwickshire increasingly tends to be female and from the 50 plus age group
- In Coventry and Warwickshire, a markedly higher than the national average percentage of men are employed in production and this industrial sector employs the lowest average percentage of women
- In Coventry and Warwickshire, women are concentrated in small and medium sized organisations
- In Coventry and Warwickshire, 42 per cent of employers have a written equal opportunities policy.

3. Women's participation in the labour market

Section 3 examines trends in women's participation in the labour market at national level (sections 3.1 and 3.2), regional level (section 3.3) and sub-regional level (sections 3.4 to 3.6). Explanations of trends are discussed (section 3.7). It is demonstrated that:

- Women's participation in the labour market is increasing at a faster rate than that of men
- Women dominate in part-time work that is low paid, has few promotional prospects and has limited training opportunities
- In Coventry and Warwickshire the percentage of women in full-time and part-time employment is 49 per cent and 51 per cent respectively
- At national, regional and local levels women are less likely to be unemployed than men
- The presence and age of a dependant child continues to have a marked effect on the employment rates of women
- A new trend is the fact that there are larger numbers of women, particularly among the highly educated, who are postponing childbearing

- This is coupled with the trend among successive cohorts of women to take shorter periods out of work for childbearing and child rearing.

4. Gender segregation

Section 4 focuses upon gender segregation in the labour market. It begins by defining segregation (section 4.1), examining trends (section 4.2) and considering segregation in relation to part-time work (section 4.3). Explanations of gender segregation are reviewed (section 4.4) and the extent of segregation in three sectors (construction, engineering and social care) is highlighted along with some initiatives introduced to combat gender stereotyping (section 4.5). Key findings are:

- Gender segregation is a recognised structural feature of the UK labour market
- This segregation impacts on the occupational opportunities and earnings of women and represents differences in the status and pay of men and women
- These divisions can be seen as intrinsically linked to the sexual division of labour
- One key explanation proposes that women are satisfied with or prefer jobs which fit with their childcare and domestic arrangements (*Human capital theory*)
- One other key explanation claims that gender segregation is an intrinsic part of organisational culture which constrains women's choices (*Social process theory*)
- Marked patterns of gender segregation across different occupational groupings (e.g. engineering is male dominated and hairdressing is female dominated) are reflected at a national, regional and sub-regional level
- The number of women registered with the Engineering Council has dramatically increased since 1984, but still only 6 per cent of engineers and technologists are women
- In 2002 only nine women were recruited in the West Midlands to the Modern Apprenticeship scheme in construction
- In sectors where women dominate (e.g. social care) there can still be vertical segregation whereby women are under-represented at senior levels
- Suggestions for addressing gender segregation in the labour market include the introduction of flexible working practices, on-the-job training for female part-time employees and the adoption of equal opportunities practices.

5. Employment patterns and commitment

Section 5 presents research evidence regarding women's commitment to employment. This includes a definition (section 5.1) and explanation of commitment (section 5.2) and an examination of employment commitment in terms of individual preference (section 5.3) and as a reflection of life-stage (section 5.4). Specific attention is given to evidence relevant to the region (section 5.4). Key findings are:

- It is important to avoid regarding women as an homogeneous group
- Definitions of commitment based on working long hours and sacrificing personal life for work are biased in favour of men because they ignore women's caring and domestic labour
- Women's commitment to employment has been viewed first in terms of individual preferences and secondly as a reflection of life stages:
 - The individual preference approach defines two distinct groups within the labour market: 'career orientated women' and 'domestically orientated women'
 - Women's attitudes to employment can be argued to be a reflection of their life-stages: such as pre-marriage, family formation and the final phase of working life
- These theories suggest different policy responses for different groups of women.

6. Gender pay differentials

Section 6 reviews current evidence of the pay gap between women and men. It begins with relevant legislation (section 6.1), evidence at the national level (section 6.2) and the issue of job evaluation (section 6.3). Regional evidence is then considered (section 6.4). Findings include:

- At national level there is a very large quantity of data showing the persistence of the gender pay gap
- Despite the fact that women's earnings have increased over the last two decades women continue to earn less than men and the most recent data show the pay gap growing
- Full-time employed women's hourly rates and weekly gross pay are significantly less than those of men working full-time
- Women working part-time also earn significantly less than men working part-time
- Women are less likely than men to receive other elements that constitute 'earnings', such as bonuses, pension schemes and medical insurance
- There are significant pay differentials between men and women working in the evening or at night - men are generally compensated for working unsociable hours but women are in most instances not
- The gender pay differential is slightly higher at regional than national level
- There are significant differences in earnings amongst women e.g. a woman graduate without children is estimated to earn twice as much over her lifetime as a woman with no qualifications and no children
- The amount of earnings forgone by mothers varies by number of children and the skill level of the woman
- Factors affecting the gender pay gap include:
 - discrimination
 - occupational segregation
 - women's predominance in part-time work
 - the unequal impact of women's caring responsibilities.

7. Flexible working practices

The focus of section 7 is on flexible working practices. The starting point is the UK context (section 7.1), definitions (section 7.2) and employers' interest in flexible working (section 7.3). Levels of flexible working are reviewed (section 7.4) along with organisational steps towards flexible working (section 7.5), problems of implementation (section 7.6) and employers' perceptions of the business case for flexible working (section 7.7). The section concludes by considering actual costs and benefits (section 7.8), overcoming obstacles (section 7.9) and examples of good practice (section 7.10). Key findings include:

- Flexible working practices have been implemented in some instances as an attempt by employers to address skill shortages
- Flexible working practices are particularly prevalent in larger organisations, in public sector organisations, in firms which have strong equal opportunities policies and in organisations that have large proportions of female employees
- The implementation of flexible working practices can be viewed as problematic because:
 - employers may not understand the business case
 - traditional forms of working may be embedded in the organisational culture
 - the implementation of such practices may be constrained by the organisational structure

- research has shown that the introduction of flexible working practices is not costly and the benefits (e.g. significant improvements in productivity, reduced absenteeism and increased retention) are often greater than expected
- there are many examples of good practice but there is evidence that employers in Coventry and Warwickshire have limited awareness of Work-Life Balance issues.

8. Recruitment, training and professional development

This section begins with a general introduction (section 8.1) and a discussion of recruitment in relation to gender (section 8.2). Consideration is then given to the spectrum of training and professional development (section 8.3), policy approaches (section 8.4), performance and experience (section 8.5) and regional trends (section 8.6). Findings include:

- Gender discrimination in recruitment is illegal, but still exists
- Practices such as word of mouth recruitment reflect and reinforce gender segregation in the labour market
- Although women have increased their levels of education and training, there are notable differences in the training of men and women, with men still receiving more training than women
- There are significant differences in the training received by women working full-time and part-time
- Women educated to degree level are more likely to receive training than those with fewer qualifications
- In educational settings women and men are now performing equally in most subject areas, but there are significant gender differences in the subject areas studied by men and women:
 - with the exception of biological sciences where women dominate, men dominate science subjects
 - women are over-represented in education and humanities, and men are over-represented in engineering and technology
 - at degree level, the subjects studied by men and women are similar to those chosen at A/AS
- Modern Apprenticeship schemes evidence prominent gender segregation
- At a regional level, women undertake more training related to their personal development than men, whereas men participate in more taught training courses related to their current or previous employment than women
- Consequently, women are more likely to undertake training within a college and pay for it themselves, whereas men are more likely to undertake training at work, which is funded by their employer
- Significantly more women than men are unable to participate in education and training courses because of their caring responsibilities.

9. Sexual harassment in the workplace

Section 9 reviews national and international research evidence on sexual harassment in the workplace as one barrier to women's equal participation in the labour market. The review begins with defining sexual harassment (section 9.1), the national context (section 9.2), legislation (section 9.3) and identifying harassment (section 9.4). Frequency (section 9.5), consequences (section 9.6) and explanations (section 9.7) are then examined.

- It is estimated that 50 per cent of women experience harassment during their working lives
- Sexual harassment is rarely accepted as a significant problem

- Young women who have been employed for less than a year, or who are in a low paid job, are most likely to suffer sexual harassment
- Sexual harassment has a negative impact even if the frequency of the behaviour is low
- The two dominant responses to sexual harassment are denial and ignoring the event.

ETHNICITY, DISABILITY AND AGE

Sections 10, 11 and 12 of the report consider women's participation in the labour market in terms of the interaction with dimensions of ethnicity, disability and age respectively. Key points are:

Ethnicity

- The position of women from ethnic minority groups in the labour market is markedly different and unequal to that of men
- Some ethnic groups display distinctive patterns of segregation by occupation and industry – for example, the concentration of Asian women in the distribution sector
- Some Black women are strategically choosing careers such as nursing and social work that are considered to be gendered because these jobs offer a greater possibility of entry to courses, access to employment opportunities, qualification and promotion
- Young Asian from Muslim groups have a low participation rate in employment, education and training
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have a higher risk of being economically inactive and are the most disadvantaged.

Disability

- One in five of the working age population in the West Midlands is disabled
- Disabled people are more likely to have no qualifications, face unemployment, to work part-time and be under-represented in senior positions than the non-disabled
- There are significant differences in the economic activity rates of men and women with disabilities
- 45 per cent of disabled women are in employment
- Disabled women in the region are twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled women
- Employed disabled people have lower average hourly earnings than the non-disabled and this pay gap is increasing
- Research has shown that there is too much emphasis on disabled people changing to accommodate employers rather than employers changing to accommodate disabled people.

Age

- Compared to the UK age structure, Coventry has a higher number of young people, and Warwickshire has a higher number of people aged 35-64 years
- For both Coventry and Warwickshire there is a projected increase in the female population aged 50-69 years over the medium-term
- For the female 20-24 year and 25-34 year age groups economic activity rates and employment rates rise, and peak in the 35-49 year age group
- The economic activity and employment rates of the female 25-49 year age group in the Coventry and Warwickshire LSC area are higher than those recorded regionally or nationally

- In the 50-retirement age group economic activity rates and employment rates in Coventry and Warwickshire are similar to the regional and national averages
- Nationally, women's employment rates decline steeply after the age of 45 years
- Educational attainment is a key factor in underlying variations amongst women participating in the labour market within the same age group.

CONCLUSION

The research findings inform the development of an Action Plan for the Learning and Skills Council, Coventry and Warwickshire. Further issues have been identified in the review of the dissemination of gender and employment related research relevant to the sub-region, which is presented in a separate report. The key findings to inform the **Action Plan** are:

- 1) Significantly more women are in part-time employment than men, and women dominate in part-time work that is low paid, has few promotional prospects and has limited training opportunities.
- 2) Women are under-represented in manufacturing and construction. The gender pay gap is persistent - particularly in industries dominated by men. Educational subject choices are still influenced by gender stereotypes, and there is prominent gender segregation in government training schemes, reflecting gender stereotypes.
- 3) Local employers appear to have limited awareness of Work-Life Balance policies. However, even where a policy exists, it does not necessarily ensure good practice.
- 4) For women, a significant barrier to training is their caring responsibilities. Men undertake more training and more hours of training than women.
- 5) White women are more likely to be working part-time compared to their ethnic minority counterparts. Young Asian women have low participation rates in employment, education and training. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have a high risk of being economically inactive.
- 6) Disabled women are more likely to be unemployed and to work part-time, are more likely to have less qualifications, and less likely to have qualifications higher than NVQ level 4 and above.
- 7) Sexual harassment in the workplace is a strong theme in women's employment but is often not regarded as a significant problem; those affected are more likely to be young women who have been employed for less than a year.
- 8) The older female working population is increasing in importance; given the ageing of the population, a key challenge is to maintain higher economic activity and employment rates in the older age groups
- 9) There is a need for specific (primary) research within the sub-region. There is a need for effective sub-regional 'signposting' and dissemination of relevant research and evaluation findings. Evaluating the impact of work being undertaken within the sub-region as to the impact on women's participation in the labour market is of great importance.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nearly three decades after equal opportunities legislation was first implemented, the participation of women in the UK labour market remains different and unequal from that of men. The Equal Opportunities Commission (2000a: 1) highlights continuing problems in women's employment: 'Overall, women remain disadvantaged compared to men, as occupational segregation means they are concentrated in lower skilled and lower paid jobs with less access to vocational training and education'. Research evidence from varied sources on this particular aspect of the labour market is presented below and research that has particular relevance to Coventry and Warwickshire is also focused upon.

1.2 Scope of the research

This report comprises of a targeted review and analysis of research into gender discrimination in employment on a national (UK), regional (West Midlands) and sub regional (Coventry and Warwickshire) basis (a separate report examines the dissemination of findings relevant to the sub-region). Where relevant, reference is made to international evidence. Its specific focus is on what is currently known about gender segregation and related issues. As well as exploring gender differences between industrial sectors and occupational groups, the research will take account of the effect of factors: such as stages in the life-cycle, family/household context, age, ethnic origin and disability status.

The *aims* of this research are to:

- examine issues related to gender discrimination in employment in Coventry and Warwickshire; and
- compare the findings locally with regional and national data.

The *key objectives* are:

- to review sub-regional (Coventry and Warwickshire), regional (the West Midlands) and national research data on gender discrimination in employment including segregation, pay, recruitment and training;
- to identify research gaps for the sub-region (that is, for Coventry and Warwickshire);
- to examine the extent and effectiveness of dissemination strategies for the findings of local research (presented in a separate report);
- to produce an action plan based on emergent issues (presented in a separate report).

1.3 Data sources

Data analysed for this research were collected for varied purposes and are from diverse sources. This report brings together information from written sources with secondary data analysis in a regional context. The data sources vary in terms of coverage, method of data collection, frequency and spatial disaggregation. Key sources used include:

- Labour Force Survey;
- Annual Business Inquiry (ABI);
- West Midlands Household Survey;
- Census of Population;
- British Household Panel Survey;
- Workplace Employee Relations Survey;

- Regional and Local Employers Surveys;
- Social Trends;
- Population Trends;
- New Earnings Survey.

1.4 Structure of Report

The report begins with an executive summary, emphasising the main findings. The research findings are presented in thirteen sections. Each section considers national (international, where relevant) trends, and introduces comparisons with regional and sub regional data – wherever this is available. Key findings are highlighted at the end of each section in the summary.

Section 2 sets the overall context of the investigation by focusing upon employment trends in the region.

Section 3 examines women's participation in the UK labour market. It presents a summary of gender trends nationally that are related both to employment and unemployment and presents a detailed analysis of particular gender trends in the West Midlands. Specifically, it reviews female employment both by broad industrial sectors and occupation, and then presents a discussion of trends in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Section 4 focuses upon gender segregation. In addition to reviewing national evidence and reviewing explanations for this persistent feature of the labour market, it includes two specific examples of the extent of segregation in two occupational sectors (construction and engineering) and describes some initiatives introduced to combat gender stereotyping in these sectors.

Section 5 presents a discussion of women's employment patterns and research evidence on their levels of their commitment to employment. This section examines employment commitment in terms of individual preference and as a reflection of life-stage.

Section 6 reviews current evidence of the pay gap between women and men.

Sections 7 and 8 present summaries of the research findings on flexible working practices, and recruitment and employment practices.

Section 9 reviews national and international research evidence on sexual harassment in the workplace as one barrier to women's equal participation in the labour market.

Finally, sections 10, 11 and 12 consider women's participation in the labour market in terms of the negative interaction of particular social variables with gender; ethnicity, disability and age respectively

2. EMPLOYMENT IN THE REGION: SETTING THE CONTEXT

2.1 West Midlands

Figures from the Labour Force Survey analysed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that in 2000 the West Midlands (Coventry and Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Hereford and Worcestershire, the Black Country and Birmingham, and Solihull Local Skills Council areas) had a population of 5,335,000. The same source indicates that the Metropolitan County (Coventry, Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall, and Wolverhampton) had the largest local population that stood at 2,619,000 in 2000. The economic activity rate of the population of working age at a sub-regional, regional and national level is displayed in Table 2.1a below. The figures show that the 2002 activity rates for Coventry and Warwickshire (men 83.7 per cent, women 75.7 per cent), and the West Midlands (men 84.4 per cent, women 72.0 per cent) are similar to the national activity rate (men 84.3 per cent; women 73.2 per cent).

Table 2.1a Economic activity rates of the population of working age by sex

Percentages									
COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE			WEST MIDLANDS			ENGLAND			
All			All			All			
Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	
1996	85.8	70.1	78.6	85.7	70.3	78.4	85.2	71.7	78.8
1997	84.0	73.4	79.2	85.5	69.9	78.1	85.0	71.8	78.7
1998	87.7	73.8	81.4	85.7	71.3	78.9	84.6	72.0	78.6
1999	86.5	73.6	80.4	84.7	72.7	79.1	84.9	72.6	79.1
2000	81.9	74.2	78.3	83.3	72.1	78.0	85.0	73.1	79.3
2001	86.1	75.1	80.9	84.1	71.5	78.1	84.4	73.0	79.0
2002	83.7	75.7	79.8	84.4	72.0	78.6	84.3	73.2	79.0

At Spring each year.

Source: Labour Force Survey Quarterly, from NOMIS

Data obtained from the 2002 edition of the Region in Figures (Causser and Williams 2002) gives a general picture of the classification of business sites in the West Midlands Region. These data show that the region has a relatively high percentage of workplaces involved in distribution, hotels, catering and repairs. Business sites operating in these activities accounted for 30 per cent of all (208,000) business sites in the region (UK economy 28.6 per cent). Financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities accounted for 23 per cent – slightly lower than the figure for the UK (UK economy 26.6 per cent). Full data and comparative data for the Region are reported in the Tables 2.1b, 2.1c and 2.1d. Specifically, Table 2.1b provides key statistics on the West Midlands, compared with the UK, including employment rates for people of working age; ILO (International Labour Office) unemployment rates; and gross weekly earnings for males compared with women in full-time employment. Table 2.1c provides a classification of business sites at a

national, regional and sub-regional level using Learning and Skills Councils areas in the West Midlands. Finally, Table 2.1d provides a breakdown of full-time compared with part-time employment by sex and Learning and Skills Councils areas.

Table 2.1b Key statistics for the West Midlands

	WEST MIDLANDS	UNITED KINGDOM
Population, 2000 (thousands)	5,335	59,756
Percentage aged under 16	20.7	20.2
Percentage of pension age or over	18.2	18.1
Standardised Mortality Ratio, 2000	102	100
Gross Domestic Product, 1999 (£ per head) ¹	11,900	12,972
36 month survival rate for businesses registered in 1997 (percentages)	63.1	65.1
Economic activity rate for people of working age, Spring 2001 (percentages)	78.1	78.4
Employment rate for people of working age, 2000-2001 (percentages)	73.2	74.1
ILO unemployment rate, Spring 2001 (percentages) ²	5.1	4.9
Average gross weekly earnings: males in full-time employment, April 2001 (£)	462.1	488.2
Average gross weekly earnings: females in full-time employment, April 2001 (£)	340.9	365.5
Average gross weekly household income, 1998-2001 (£)	462	480
Average household expenditure, 1998-2001 (£)	353.20	365.80
Average dwelling price ³ , 2001 (£)	97,542	122,005
Recorded crime rate ⁴ , 2000-01 (recorded crimes per 100,000 population)	10,961	9,814

1 Provisional.

2 Seasonally adjusted averages for Spring (March to May) each year based on those aged 16 or over.

3 Data relate to England.

4 Data relate to England and Wales.

Source: Office for National Statistics; Department of Trade and Industry; HM Land Registry; Home Office

Table 2.1c Classification of business sites by LSC areas, 2001

	Agriculture, hunting and forestry	Mining and quarrying	Manufacturing	Electricity, gas and water supply	Construction	Wholesale/ retail trade; repair, etc	Hotels and restaurants	Transport, storage and communication	Financial intermediation	Real estate, renting, business activities	Public admin/ defence; social security	Education	Health and social work	Other community, social/ personal service
ENGLAND	6504	2592	161314	1776	169346	442132	131358	89654	40253	532131	20481	47227	88972	178493
WEST MIDLANDS	620	195	21252	255	16951	46152	12563	9087	3487	42409	1922	4957	8664	14605
Birmingham/Solihull	40	13	4163	45	2903	9504	2305	1710	1105	10022	329	983	2164	3113
Coventry/Warwickshire	84	23	2884	50	2575	6861	2304	1405	191	8229	280	990	1368	2542
Herefordshire/Worcestershire	214	39	3057	47	3048	7075	1908	1345	451	7280	239	750	1276	2514
Shropshire	144	26	1505	35	1650	4158	1323	904	269	3482	198	478	192	1255
Staffordshire	113	71	3911	43	3786	9115	2439	1971	555	7090	616	923	1580	2839
The Black Country	25	23	5732	35	2989	9439	2284	1752	613	6306	260	833	1484	2342

This dataset records 'data units'. It excludes MAFF/Scottish Executive data held in SIC92 class 0100.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Workplace Analysis, from NOMIS

Table 2.1d Full and part-time employees by sex and LSC areas, 2001

	MALE			FEMALE		
	Full-time	Part-time	All males	Full-time	Part-time	All females
ENGLAND	9700294	1607766	11308060	5609911	5139131	10749042
WEST MIDLANDS	1048062	154545	1202606	555319	555839	1111158
Birmingham/ Solihull	261164	36191	297355	151670	129740	281410
Coventry/ Warwickshire	166578	25719	192298	86891	87775	174666
Herefordshire/ Worcestershire	125511	21741	147253	66952	83651	150603
Shropshire	81172	12453	93626	41714	44346	86061
Staffordshire	181131	28772	209903	95136	109167	204304
The Black Country	222023	28193	250215	109853	99664	209517

This dataset excludes MAFF/Scottish Executive data held in SIC92 class 0100. The data for the LSC areas are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis, from NOMIS

2.2 Coventry and Warwickshire

Demographic trends and changing patterns of labour force participation mean that the labour force available to employers in Coventry and Warwickshire has been changing. The population of Coventry and Warwickshire grew by 2.3 per cent to 813,000 between 1991 and 2001. Amongst those who were of working age (16-60 years) the number of people in all age groups below 35 years decreased over this period, while the number of people in the older age groups increased. Overall, the workforce has become, on average, older while more women were working and fewer men (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: 11).

Within this working age population, the proportion of people seeking, or in work, increased slightly from 64.3 per cent to 64.9 per cent. This overall change masks the fact that the activity rates of men and women were moving in opposite directions. The activity rate of men was falling (from 75.4 per cent to 73.0 per cent) while that of women was increasing (from 53.7 per cent to 57.1 per cent). Amongst men, the reduction in activity rates was most marked in the 16-24 year age group (because of increased participation in further and higher education) and in the 50 plus age group. Amongst women, a similar fall in the activity rates of those aged 16-24 can also be observed (for the same reasons as men). Nevertheless, large increases in activity rates were observed amongst women of all age groups.

The potential supply of labour available to employers in Coventry and Warwickshire has, therefore, increasingly tended to be older and female. While the male labour force of the area remained the same size in 2001 as in 1991, the overall size of the

female workforce increased by around 15,000 over the period. The number of women aged 45-59 and economically active increased by around 13,000.

Figures reported from the Annual Business Inquiry in the Coventry and Warwickshire Employer Survey (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: xiv) show that around 375,000 people were employed in Coventry and Warwickshire in 2000 of which:

- 51 per cent were women (47 per cent in the UK)
- 25 per cent worked part-time (25 per cent UK)
- 38 per cent of female employment was part-time (43 per cent UK)
- 92 per cent of workplaces reported their workplace was comprised of people from the white ethnic group (national Labour Force survey data show that 95 per cent of the UK workforce is from the white group).

Whilst there are no official measures of the number of people working in different occupations in Coventry and Warwickshire, Hasluck *et al.* (2002) estimate that just six occupational groups account for more than half of all jobs. These are:

- corporate managers and administrators;
- administrative and clerical occupations;
- sales occupations;
- skilled metal and electric trades;
- process plant and machine operatives; and
- elementary clerical and related service occupations.

Disregarding those in self-employment, women accounted for around 51 per cent of employees in Coventry and Warwickshire. Female employees were almost equally divided between full-time and part-time jobs (almost 49 per cent in full-time and 51 per cent in part-time jobs). Men (who made up 53 per cent of employees) were predominantly in full-time jobs. Just under 12 per cent of men were employees in part-time jobs. Table 2.2a sets out these employment shares alongside comparable figures for Coventry and Warwickshire, the West Midlands, England and the rest of Great Britain. The differences between Coventry and Warwickshire and the regional and national averages were, in most cases, small. Nonetheless, the table does suggest that men were slightly more likely to be employed in full-time jobs in Coventry and Warwickshire and women more likely to be employed in part-time jobs than was the case in the West Midlands and Great Britain.

Table 2.2a Employee shares by employment status and area, 2001

	Column percentages		
	Men	Women	All employees
Full-time employment			
Coventry and Warwickshire	87	50	69
West Midlands	87	50	69
England	86	52	69
Great Britain	86	52	69
Part-time employment			
Coventry and Warwickshire	13	50	31
West Midlands	13	50	31
England	14	48	31
Great Britain	14	48	31
Total employment			
Coventry and Warwickshire	100	100	100
West Midlands	100	100	100
England	100	100	100
Great Britain	100	100	100

The Coventry and Warwickshire figures are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis, from NOMIS

Table 2.2b shows the relationship between gender and part-time employment in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Table 2.2b Employment status by gender: Coventry and Warwickshire, 2001

column percentages

	Total	Percentage of total in employment	Percentage of total females in employment	Percentage of total males in employment
Women				
full-time	86891	23	50	n/a
part-time	87775	23	50	n/a
Men				
full-time	166578	45	n/a	87
part-time	25719	7	n/a	13
Total				
full-time	253469	69	n/a	n/a
part-time	113494	31	n/a	n/a
Women	174666	48	100	n/a
Men	192298	52	n/a	100
Total in employment	366964		n/a	n/a

The Coventry and Warwickshire figures are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis, from NOMIS

A large share of female employment was part-time (38 per cent compared to 12 per cent for men). Although the changes are modest, since 2001, the part-time employment rate of men appears to be increasing (from 8 per cent in 2001) whereas that of women has decreased (from 41 per cent in 2001).

Table 2.2c gives a more detailed picture of the distribution of part-time and male/female employment. Key findings include:

1. The percentage of the workforce comprised of women falls as the number of employees increases. Aside from the arithmetic problems of looking at percentages in the smallest workplaces, the relationship stems in part from the fact that the largest workplaces tend to be production plants. The percentage of the workforce comprised of women in this industry is much lower than in all other industries;
2. Warwick Local Authority District (LAD) had workplaces that employed, on average, the lowest proportion of women whereas Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby had the highest proportions;
3. the percentage of the workforce that was part-time tended to be lower in the largest workplaces and in the production sector. This accounts for the relatively low percentage of women also found in these sectors of the local economy;
4. Rugby and Nuneaton also had the lowest percentage of part-time employment – a finding consistent with their share of female employment.

Table 2.2c Employment by gender and part-time status by size of workplace, industry and LAD

	average percentages			
	Average percentage female employment	Average percentage male employment	Average percentage part-time employment	Average percentage full-time employment
Number of employees				
1-4	55	45	30	70
5-10	54	45	32	67
11-24	58	42	35	65
25-49	54	46	31	69
50-99	55	45	27	73
100-249	49	51	19	81
250-499	40	60	24	76
500-999	54	46	28	72
1000 or more	32	67	2	98
Industry				
Production	27	72	6	94
Distribution	57	43	42	58
Transport and communication	46	53	21	79
Finance/Business Services	50	50	16	84
Public Administration, <i>etc</i>	74	26	37	63
Other	54	45	39	60
LAD				
North Warwickshire	52	48	26	74
Nuneaton and Bedworth	59	41	36	64
Coventry	46	54	20	80
Rugby	60	40	37	63
Stratford	56	44	28	72
Warwick	45	49	23	77
Regeneration Zone	56	44	31	69
Rest of Coventry and Warwickshire	48	52	23	77
Total	51	49	25	75

Base: All employers

Source: Coventry and Warwickshire Survey of Employers 2002 (IER/IFF)

Table 2.2c also shows that:

- the highest level of female employment occurs in Public Administration;
- the lowest levels of female employment occurs in Production.

This pattern is reversed for men; the highest levels of male employment are in Production and the lowest levels in Public Administration. The highest levels of part-time employment, of which women have the highest share, occurs in distribution.

The rate of part-time employment is fairly evenly spread across Coventry and Warwickshire.

The incidence of part-time employment is such that it affects the total volume of employment in the local economy. It is possible to estimate full-time equivalent employment by weighting each full-timer by one, and each part-timer by a half. On this basis, full-time equivalent employment stood at approximately 330,000 people compared to 375,481 total employment.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Employers Survey reports that workplaces in the area are principally involved in manufacturing, wholesale/retail, and business services. The area has a relatively high percentage of workplaces engaged in manufacturing, but on the whole the industrial structure of the area is broadly the same as that for the UK (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002).

The same report states that workplaces in Coventry and Warwickshire employed an average of approximately 13 people. Most workplaces – 92 per cent – employed less than 25 people, and 64 per cent employed between 1 and 4 people (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: 13). These data indicate that the local economy is dominated by small workplaces. This trend is typical of the UK economy as a whole (Bevan, *et al.* 1999), while the local economy is dominated by small workplaces. It is important to note that small workplaces represent a small percentage of total employment in Coventry and Warwickshire. While the majority of workplaces employed less than 250 people, only 37 per cent of total employment was found in these establishments. A relatively small proportion of large employers provided a large share of employment. For example, 30 per cent of employment was in workplaces with more than 250 employees but these represented only 1 per cent of workplace (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: 13). The local industry and employment structure are more fully discussed in sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below.

2.2.1 Workplace equal opportunities policies: Coventry and Warwickshire

Data from the 2002 Coventry and Warwickshire Survey of Employers showed that 42% per cent of employers had written equal opportunities policies (EOP) (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002). It is not known if these policies supported extended maternity pay or leave. The Coventry and Warwickshire Employer Survey has been undertaken for the last ten years. It offers scope for an interrogation of change in the provision of EOP over time. Further research is required to establish whether or not the EOP data has been collected on a regular basis.²

The Coventry and Warwickshire Employers Survey also collects data on the ethnicity and disability of employees. (It is possible that a break down by size of firm could be undertaken and a more detailed picture of the provision of EOP in firms with high levels of women, women from ethnic groups and people with a disability could be obtained).

² Research to date has located an audit of regional Employer Surveys (Wilson, *et al.* 2003). This audit shows that several of the region's Learning and Skills Councils are conducting surveys. This research will report on the potential of using other regional Employer Surveys to build a profile of women's experience of the West Midlands labour market.

2.3 Summary

The economic activity rates by gender in the West Midlands reflect a national trend, with a slight decline in male employment rates and a slight increase in female employment rates. In Coventry and Warwickshire, manufacturing, wholesale/retail and business services represent the main workplace involvement, with 37 per cent of total employment found in workplaces employing less than 250 people and 30 per cent of employment in workplaces with more than 250 employees.

3. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

3.1 Employment trends: National

Women's participation in paid employment has traditionally been substantially lower than that of men. However, a recent review of national trends recorded by the Labour Force Survey shows that, over the past decade, there has been a continuous improvement in the position of women in the UK labour market – both in terms of their level of participation in paid work and in the range of occupations available to them (Twomey 2002).

The number of women in the labour force rose from 10.0 million in 1971 to 13.2 million in 2001. The number of men rose more slowly from 16.0 million to 16.3 million. Roughly speaking, three quarters of British women of working age had paid jobs at the turn of the millennium, compared with around four-tenths in 1950. Women represented 44% of the working age labour force in spring 2001, an increase of nearly one-and-a-half percentage point over the past decade (Twomey 2002).

In spring 2001, the employment rate for women of working age was 69.3 per cent, which is the highest figure on record, though women continue to have a lower employment rate than men. In spring 2001, the employment rate for working age men was 79.3 per cent. Additionally, women were more likely to work part-time than men in 2001. This trend is linked to the incidence of childbearing and/or care of dependants (Dex, Joshi and Macran 1996). In spring 2001, around 43 per cent of women of working age in paid employment were located in part-time jobs compared to 8 per cent of men (Twomey 2002).

3.2 Unemployment trends: National

Unemployment statistics in Britain, both the International Labour Office (ILO) and Claimant Count, show women less are likely to be unemployed than men. In spring 2001, there were 539,000 ILO unemployed women of working age in the UK, which translates to an unemployment rate of 4.3 per cent. The equivalent rate for men stood at 5.3 per cent (Twomey 2002). Attempts to explain this gender difference have shown that it is partly due to differences in the composition of men and women's unemployment (age and education differences contribute to this) (Dex, Coussey and Scheibl 2001). However, it is also likely to be due to women's lower propensity to register as unemployed than men, or think of themselves as unemployed, especially if they are working part-time (Dex 1996). It should also be noted that the Claimant Count figures also underestimate the long-term unemployment of older men and that countries with different ways of counting (or registering) the unemployed find that women are usually more likely than men to be unemployed (Dex, Coussey and Scheibl 2001).

3.3 Employment trends: West Midlands

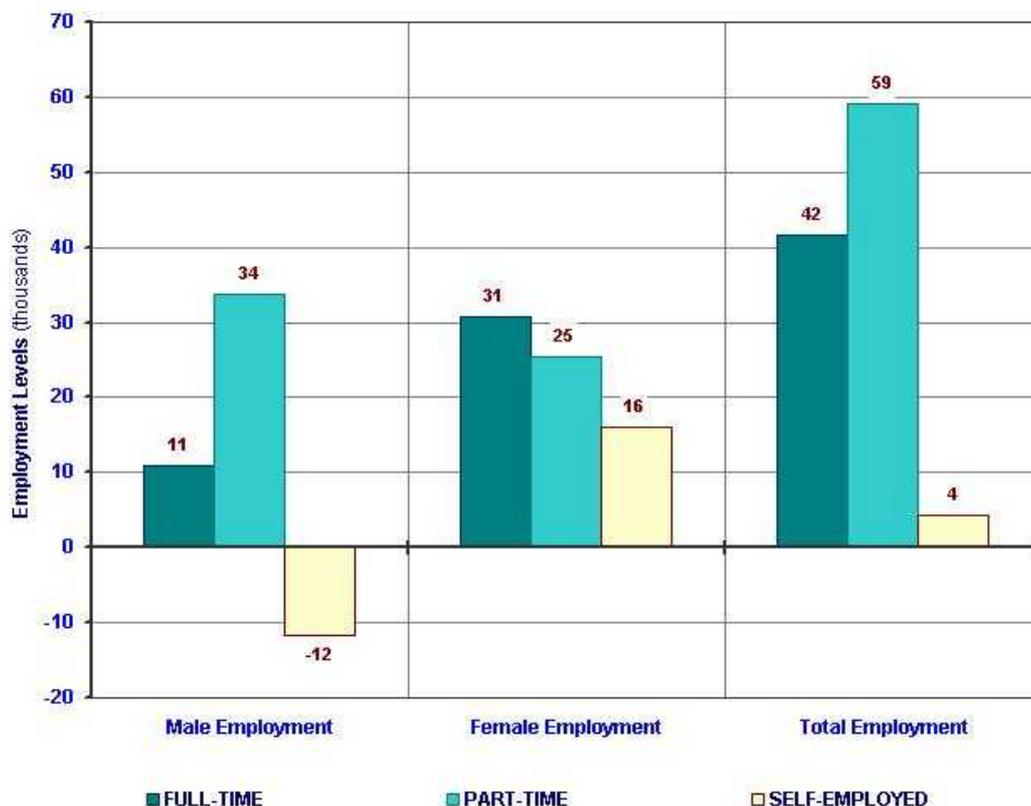
This section of the report provides an overview of regional employment change during the 1990s and presents medium-term projections of employment change over the period from 1999 to 2010.³ First, information is presented on changes in employment by gender and employment status. Second, the distribution of female employment by broad sector is outlined. Third, changes in female employment by occupation in the West Midlands are described, and finally the occupational structure of female employment is outlined.

³ The projections from the Institute for Employment Research and Cambridge Econometrics were commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills and are available via the Skillsbase website <<http://www.skillsbase.dfes.gov.uk>>.

3.3.1 Changes by gender and employment status

1991-1999: Figure 3.3.1a shows changes in employment by gender and employment status in the West Midlands between 1991 and 1999. Over this period there was an increase in full-time employment of 42,000, a larger increase in part-time employment of 59,000, and a modest 4,000 increase in self-employment.

Figure 3.3.1a Change in employment status by gender: West Midlands, 1991-1999

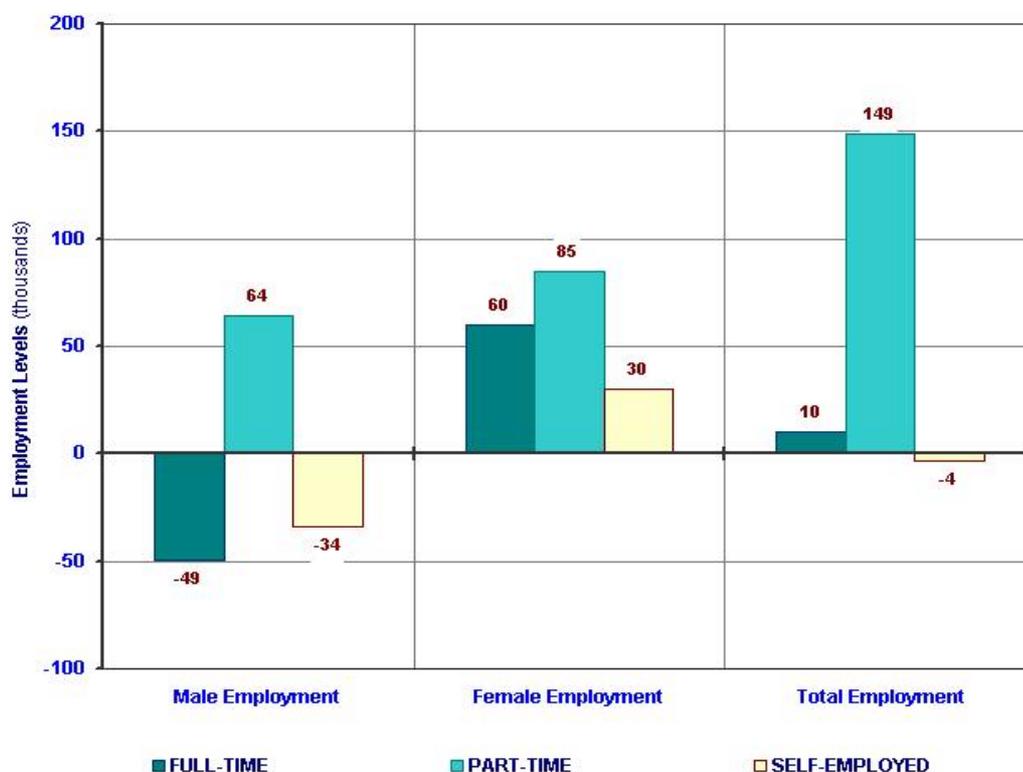


Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

The 72,000 gains in female employment outstripped that for males. Females accounted for three-quarters of the increase in full-time employment, and for all of the increase in self-employment. The growth in female part-time employment was lower than those in female full-time employment, and also below the increase in male part-time employment (from a low base).

1999-2010: Figure 3.3.1b shows projected change in employment by gender and status in the West Midlands from 1999 to 2010. As in the 1990s, growth in female employment is expected to be greater than for males, where increase is confined to part-time employment. Gains are projected for female full-time and part-time employment, and also for self-employment. However, the projected increase in part-time employment for females exceeds the expected gain in full-time employment, which is a sharp contrast to the pattern of change for 1991 to 1999. Indeed, across the West Midlands region as a whole virtually all of the growth in employment is accounted for by part-time employment. For males, the projected 64,000 increases in part-time employment are insufficient to counterbalance the forecast decline of 49,000 for male full-time employment and 34,000 decreases in male self-employment.

Figure 3.3.1b Change in employment status by gender: West Midlands, 1999-2010



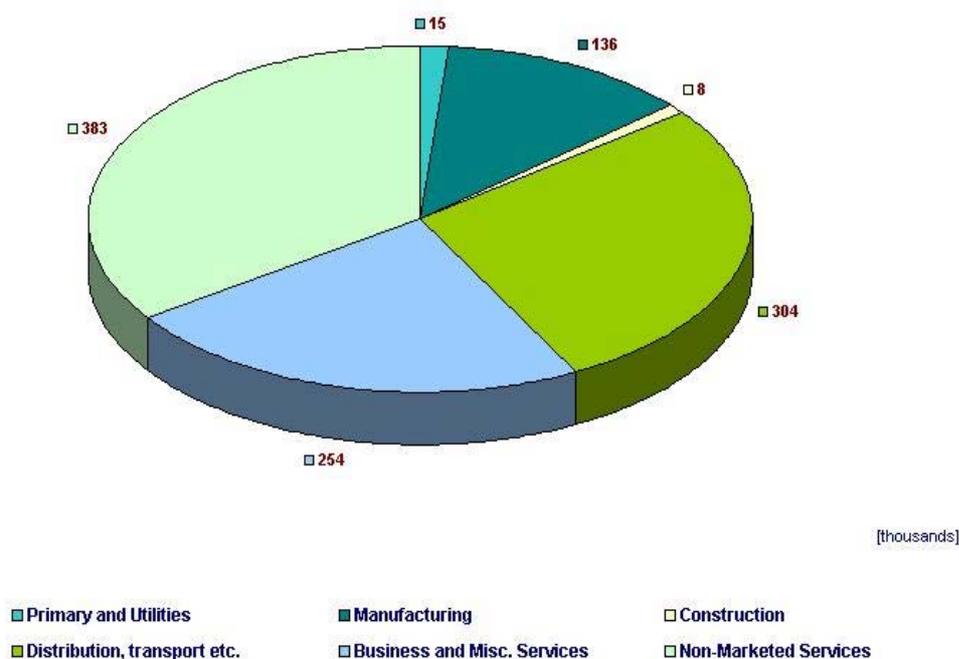
Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

3.3.2 Female employment by broad industrial sector

Figure 3.3.2 shows the distribution of female employment by broad industrial sector in 1999. Overall, approximately 1.1 million females were in employment in the West Midlands in 1999. Of these 383,000 (35 per cent of the total) were employed in Non-marketed services. A further 304,000 (nearly 28 per cent of the total) were engaged in Distribution, transport, etc, and 254,000 (23 per cent of the total) were in Business and miscellaneous services. Hence, 86 per cent of all female employment was in services. Of the remainder, 136,000 (12 per cent of all females in employment) were employed in Manufacturing and a mere 8,000 (less than 1 per cent of all females in employment) were in Construction. The remaining 15 thousand were engaged in Primary industries and utilities.⁴

⁴ More detailed information on the industrial distribution of female employees is available from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

Figure 3.3.2 Female employment by broad industrial sector: West Midlands, 1999



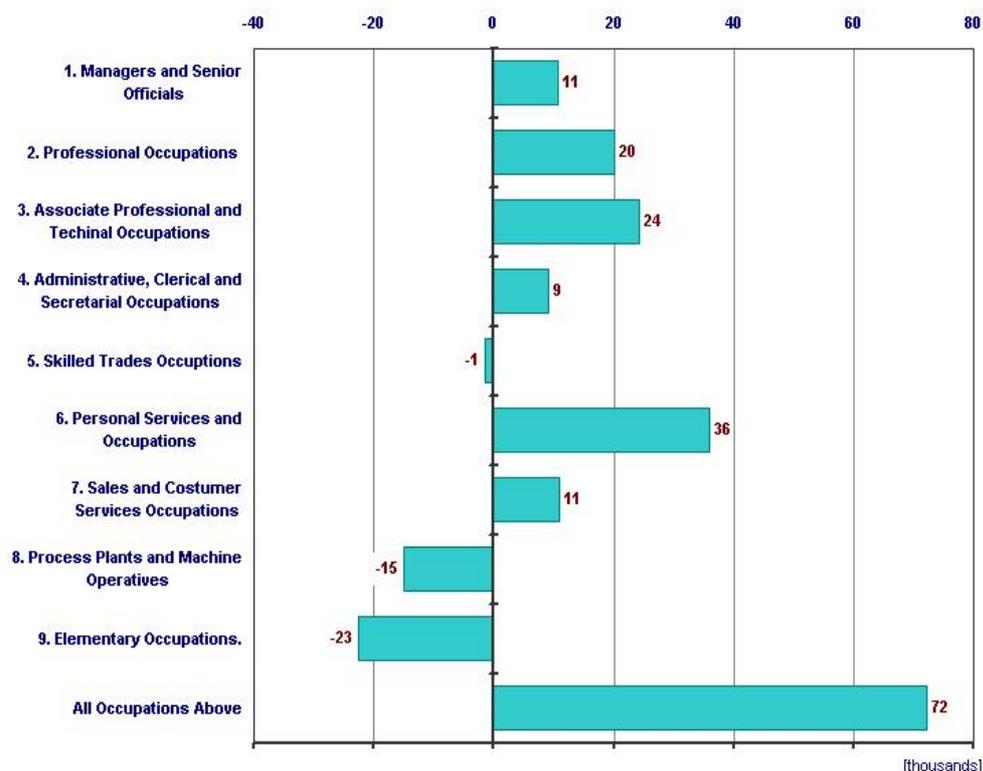
Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

3.3.3 Changes in female employment by occupation

1991-1999: Figure 3.3.3a shows changes in female employment by occupation in the West Midlands between 1991 and 1999. Over this period the largest single increase in female employment occurred in personal services occupations (36,000). The next largest increases were recorded for associate professional and technical occupations (24,000) and professional occupations (20,000). There was an 11,000 increase in employment for females in the managers and senior officials group. Employment increases in these managerial, professional and associate professional occupations are indicative of the professionalisation of employment generally, and of the increase of women in such jobs. Employment increases of 11,000 and 9,000, respectively, were recorded for sales and customer services occupations and for administrative, clerical and secretarial occupations.

Employment losses were confined to elementary occupations (23,000), process plant and machinery operatives (15,000) and skilled trades occupations (1,000). This picture of occupational employment change is indicative of a decline in manufacturing employment in the West Midlands, and an overall shift from manual to non-manual occupations.

Figure 3.3.3a Change in female employment by occupation: West Midlands, 1991-1999

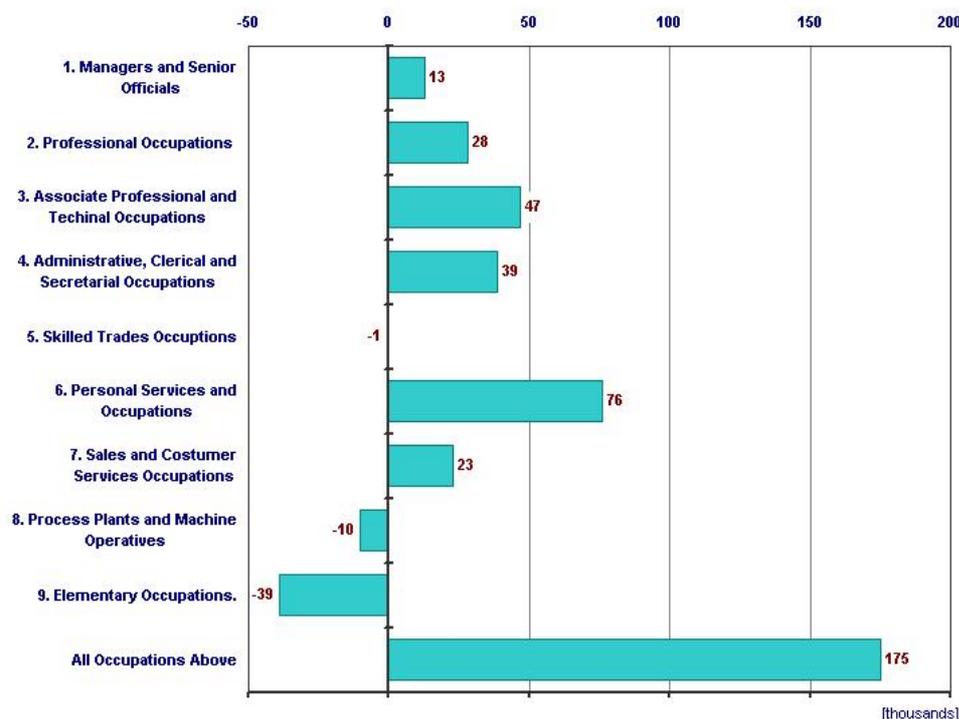


Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

1999-2010: The general picture of projected female employment change by occupation over the period to 2010 is not dissimilar to that for the period to 1999. Figure 3.3.3b shows that, once again, elementary occupations, process plant and machine operatives and skilled trades occupations dominate expected employment losses. The largest decrease (39,000) is projected for elementary occupations, as females bear the brunt of overall job losses in this occupational group in the West Midlands (IER 2001). Female employment levels in skilled trade occupations are projected to remain stable over the period. However, it should be noted that the picture of occupational change presented in Figure 3.3.3b represents 'expansion demand', and that retirements, occupational mobility and other employment changes associated with 'replacement demand' means that there will be continuing job openings for females in skilled trade occupations.

As in the period from 1991 to 1999, the single largest employment increase (76,000) is projected for personal services occupations. It is likely that many of the jobs in these occupations will be part-time. Further substantial increases in the level of female employment are projected for associate professional and technical occupations (47,000), administrative clerical and secretarial occupations (39,000), professional occupations (28,000), sales and customer service occupations (23,000), and managers and senior officials (13,000).

Figure 3.3.3b Change in female employment by occupation: West Midlands, 1999-2010

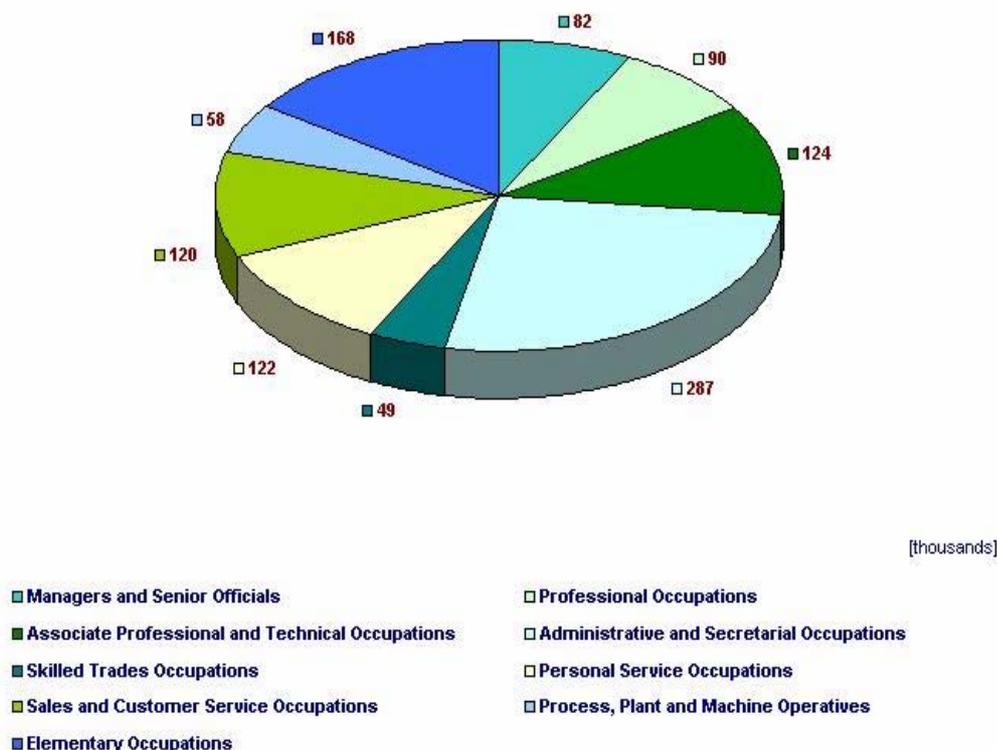


Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

3.3.4 Female employment by occupation

Figure 3.3.4a shows the distribution of female employment by occupation in 1999. Of the 1.1 million females who were in employment in the West Midlands in 1999, 287,000 (26 per cent of the total) were in administrative and secretarial occupations. This occupational group was easily the largest single group for females. Elementary occupations accounted for 168,000 females in employment in the West Midlands (15 per cent of total females employment). The next largest occupational groups were associate professional and technical occupations, personal service occupations, and sales and customer service occupations, each accounting for slightly more than 120,000 females in employment (11 per cent of total female employment). Professional occupations and managers and senior officials accounted for 90,000 (8 per cent) and 82,000 (7 per cent) of female employment, respectively. Together process plant and machine operatives and skilled trade occupations accounted for less than 10 per cent of total female employment in the West Midlands. The latter occupational group, in particular, is overwhelmingly male dominated.

Figure 3.3.4a Female employment by occupation: West Midlands, 1999



Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

Females in full-time employment and in part-time employment are not evenly distributed across occupational groups. Figure 3.3.4b shows the distribution of female part-time employment by occupation in 1999.

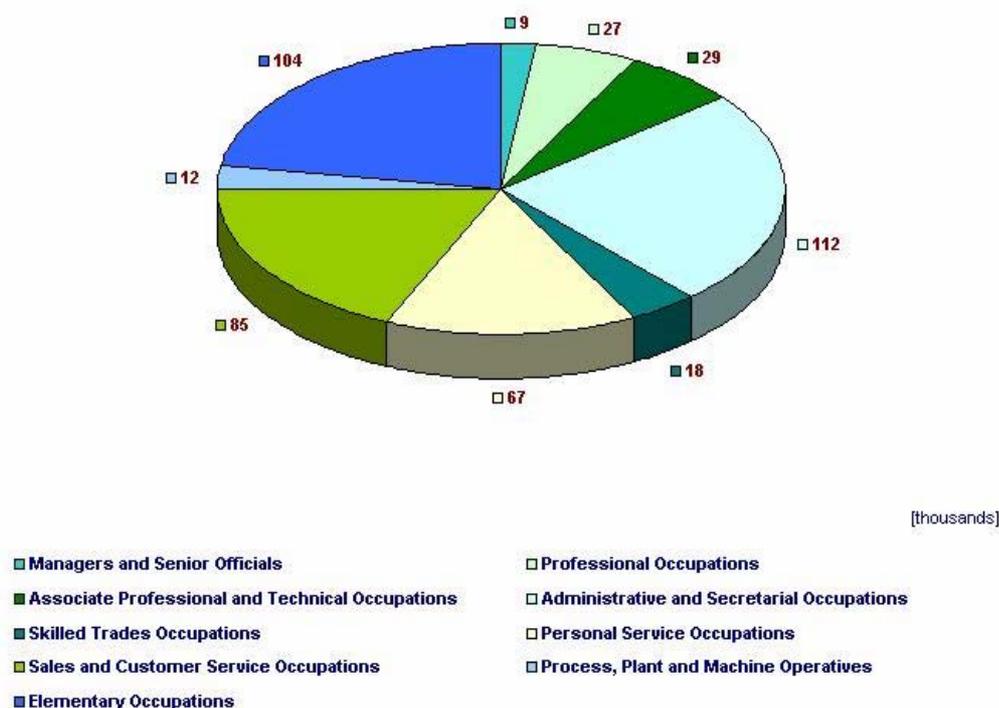
As for total female employment, administrative and secretarial occupations account for approximately one-quarter of females in part-time employment. However, elementary occupations (again the second largest occupational group) account for 22 per cent of females in part-time employment compared with 15 per cent of all females in employment. Other occupational groups in which females in part-time employment account for a greater share than all females in employment include:

- Sales and customer service occupations (accounting for 18 per cent of females in part-time employment, compared with 11 per cent of all females), and
- Personal service occupations (accounting for over 14 per cent of females in part-time employment compared with 11 per cent of all females).

By contrast, females in part-time employment account for relatively small shares of females in employment in associate professional and technical occupations, managers and senior officials and professional occupations. Together these three higher-level non-manual occupational groups account for 14 per cent of females in

part-time employment, but for 27 per cent of all females in employment in the West Midlands.

Figure 3.3.4b Female part-time employment by occupation: West Midlands, 1999



Source: IER/CE Estimates, via Skillsbase

3.3.5 Women's part-time work

'While men are overwhelmingly concentrated in full-time work, large numbers of women work part-time' (EOC 2000a: 1). This growth of women in employment has been linked to the availability of part-time work and this, in turn, relates to childcare responsibilities (Coyle and Skinner 1988). Clearly, female participation has risen because of the demand-side increase in part-time work. In the 1980s, employers were also introducing strategies such as job retention schemes in an attempt to encourage women back to employment. This was an attempt to prepare for the expected demographic decline in school leavers in the 1990s. McRae's (1996) analysis of employer practices suggested that they make a big difference to women's job opportunities following childbirth. It is not surprising, therefore, that part-time jobs were more likely to be filled by women (90 per cent) than full-time jobs (71 per cent) (see Joshi and Paci 1998, Tables 2.2a and 2.2b).

The proportion of employed women who work part-time in 2000 was around 43 per cent. In Britain, part-time employment has had a distinct life-cycle aspect; women have started to work part-time when they return to employment after childbirth. Taking a part-time job has been seen as a way of combining employment and the responsibility for childcare. A woman may choose the part-time option to structure her job around the availability of her partner or a close relation to provide childcare free or for low cost. Childcare is then affordable despite the low earnings, which most part-time jobs offer.

Many women have suffered a downgrading of their occupational status by taking a part-time job after childbirth a consequence of which is reduced earnings (Brannen, *et al.* 1994). However, childcare provision has increased substantially in Britain in the 1990s and initiatives like the Working Families Tax Credit have made childcare more affordable for some parents. The full effects of these developments are, as yet, unclear.

Part-time work is the largest category for employed women of what has become known as flexible work or non-standard contracts of employment. Flexible work means a variety of different things, but at its most basic, it is a description of a change in the distribution of labour market jobs, away from standard full-time permanent employee contracts, and towards a growth in various types of non-standard employment forms. In addition to part-time employment, other types of employment that can be categorised in this way are; self-employment, freelancing, outworkers, tele-workers, home-workers, seasonal employment, casual contracts, fixed-term contracts and other temporary workers. More recently a new form, zero hour contracts have been growing in frequency, although it is not clear by how much. In this arrangement individuals must stand by in case required, but are only paid for the hours actually worked. Estimates have suggested that 38 per cent of people in employment (27 per cent of men and 52 per cent of women) were part of the flexible workforce in 1998 (Dex, *et al.* 2000).

Whilst there are some positive advantages to workers from flexible jobs, it is also the case that there are often disadvantages in flexible jobs. For instance, flexible workers are less likely to receive fringe benefits or training, or have entitlement to occupational pension schemes (Rix, *et al.* 1999). There is a pay penalty associated with part-time hours as noted above. Also, in some of the very low hours jobs, individuals do not contribute to the state pension scheme (for a review of the evidence on these issues see Dex and McCulloch (1997)). It is also the case that women hold a disproportionate number of these jobs and are thereby disadvantaged. Case law has gradually been improving the rights of part-time workers. For example, in 1994, a European Court confirmed that part-time workers has the right to join occupational pension schemes, on the condition that their exclusion could be proved discriminatory on grounds of sex in a court hearing. There is still a long way to go for part-time workers, and most of the rights and conditions attached to other types of flexible jobs remain unchanged.

More, less or all the same? The difference midlife care-giving for women's adjustments of work hours Spiess and Schneider – 2001

This study uses European Community Household Panel study to assess the association between changes in care-giving and weekly work hours for women aged 45-59. Loaded down from IISER BHPS web page.

Fertility and Female Labour Supply Lacovou 2001 ISER working paper 19.

This paper reports on the negative relationship between the number of children and female labour supply. The paper shows that heterogeneity in preferences among females may account for the effect of number of children on female labour supply. A similar effect in female hours of work is also demonstrated. (The paper is also relevant to the sections on labour supply in household context and commitment and employment patterns).

3.3.6 Regional trends in women's hours of work

Data from the *Region in Figures* (Causer and Williams 2002) show that men work the longest hours across the region and are more likely to perform over-time. Table 3.3.6, below, shows that there are no significant regional differences in the number of hours worked by men or women. The hourly rates for men and women were similar to the UK

average across the region. We might note that men in the Black Country had the highest level of working hours and over-time for the whole region.

Table 3.3.6 Average weekly hours by sex and LSC areas, 2002

	MALE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES		FEMALE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES	
	Total weekly hours		Total weekly hours	
	Including overtime	Overtime	Including overtime	Overtime
GREAT BRITAIN	40.9	2.4	37.5	0.7
ENGLAND	40.9	2.4	37.5	0.7
WEST MIDLANDS	41.1	2.5	37.5	0.8
Birmingham/Solihull	40.1	2.1	37.1	0.7
Coventry/Warwickshire	40.7	2.2	37.5	0.7
Herefordshire/ Worcestershire	41.6	2.7	37.9	1.0
Shropshire	41.5	2.8	37.7	0.9
Staffordshire	41.5	2.6	37.7	0.8
The Black Country	41.9	2.9	37.6	0.9

The female full-time figures for the regional and sub-regional areas are either based on a sample of less than 30 or their coefficient of variation exceeds 5%.

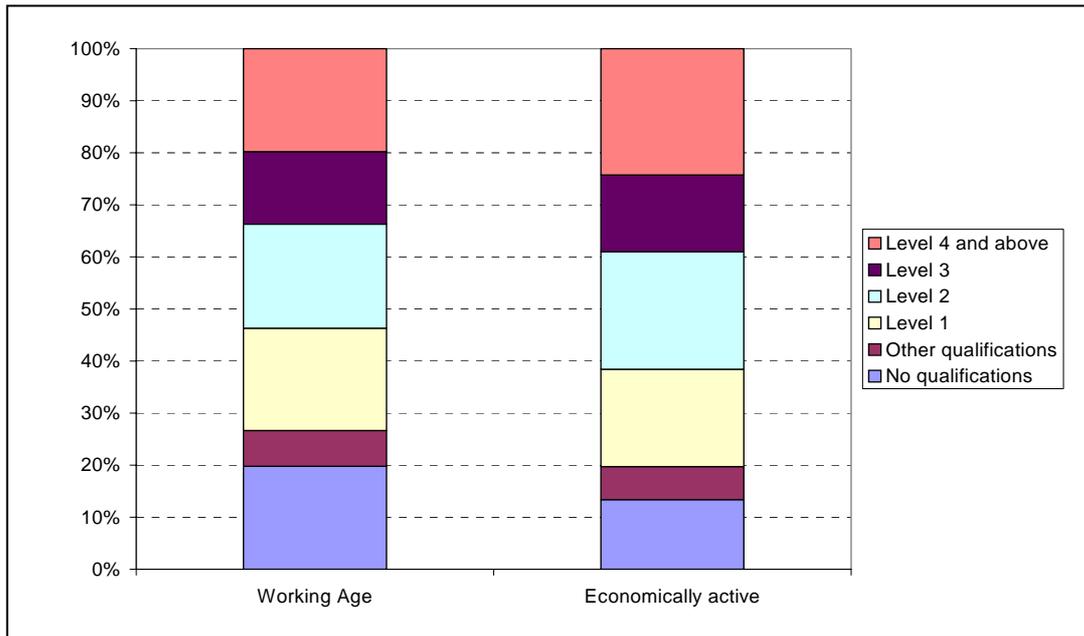
Source: New Earnings Survey - Occupation, from NOMIS

3.4 Economic activity in Coventry and Warwickshire

Data from the Annual local area Labour Force Survey provides a reasonably up-to-date picture of economic activity in Coventry and Warwickshire. In 2001-2002 the economic activity rate for women of working age in Coventry was 72.3 per cent (compared with 83.3 per cent for men) and the employment rate was 69.4 per cent (compared with 77.2 per cent for men). In Warwickshire 77.8 per cent of women of working age were economically active (compared with 86.3 per cent of men). At 74.5 per cent, the employment rate for women of working age in Warwickshire (compared with 83.1 per cent for men) was higher than that in Coventry.

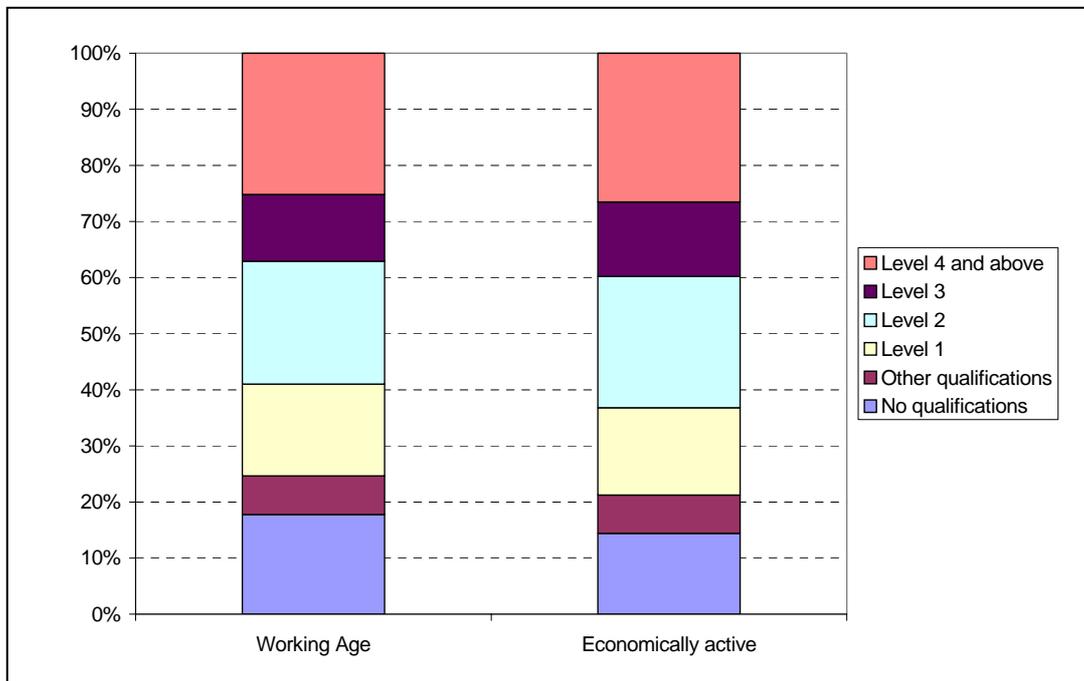
On average working age women with no qualifications are less likely to be economically active than their counterparts with higher-level qualifications (see Figures 3.4a and 3.4b). In Warwickshire, for example, in 2001-2 17.8 per cent of women of working age had no qualifications, but women with no qualifications formed 14.4 per cent of the economically active. Conversely, women with higher-level qualifications represent a slightly larger share of economically active women than of all women of working age.

Figure 3.4a Highest qualification of working age and economically active females: Coventry, 2001-2002



Source: Annual local area Labour Force Survey data

Figure 3.4b Highest qualification of working age and economically active females: Warwickshire, 2001-2002



Source: Annual local area Labour Force Survey data

3.5 Employment trends: Coventry & Warwickshire

The Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) is the most detailed source of information on the industrial distribution of employees⁵ at local level. Table 3.5a shows that in 2000 there were 358,000 employees in Coventry and Warwickshire. Of these, 168,000 (47 per cent) were female. This represents a slightly lower share than regionally (nearly 48 per cent of all employees in the West Midlands are female) and nationally (where 49 per cent of employees are female).

3.5.1 The uneven industrial distribution of female employees

Females are particularly concentrated in some service sectors. They account for the majority of employees in Coventry and Warwickshire in:

- Health and social work (85 per cent of total employees, compared with 84 per cent regionally [see Table 3.5b] and 83 per cent nationally (see Table 3.5c);
- Education (72 per cent of total employees, the same proportion as at regional level, compared with 71 per cent nationally);
- Hotels and restaurants (63 per cent of total employees, the same proportion as at regional level, compared with 59 per cent nationally);
- Financial intermediation (60 per cent of total employees, compared with 59 per cent at regional level and 54 per cent nationally);
- Other community, social/personal service (52 per cent of total employees, compared with 51 per cent at regional and national levels);
- Public administration/defence; social security (52 per cent of total employees, compared with around 48-49 per cent regionally and nationally);
- Wholesale/retail trade; repairs (50 per cent of total employees, compared with 51 per cent at regional level and 52 per cent nationally).

Hence, the industrial concentration of female employees in Coventry and Warwickshire is similar to that at regional and national levels, although a tendency is apparent for a slightly greater concentration of female employees in those sectors in which females are most concentrated (with the exception of Wholesale/retail trade; repair; etc.) in Coventry and Warwickshire than regionally or nationally.

Conversely, female employees account for only 17-18 per cent of total employees in Coventry and Warwickshire in the Construction and Engineering sectors. The proportion of female employees in Construction in Coventry and Warwickshire is slightly greater than the regional and national averages (14-15 per cent), whereas in Engineering female employees are less well represented, regionally and nationally (where females account for nearly 21 per cent of employees). It is possible that these differences could be accounted for by different detailed industrial profiles of the engineering sector locally, nationally and regionally. Yet Engineering accounts for over 15 per cent of total employees in Coventry and Warwickshire, compared with 12 per cent across the West Midlands and 6 per cent nationally. Females also account for less than a third of total employees in Coventry and Warwickshire in Transport, storage and communication; Electricity, gas and water supply; and Other Manufacturing. Females account for a quarter of employees in Primary industries nationally.

⁵ Note that the ABI does not cover the self-employed.

3.5.2 Female employees by full-time / part-time status

According to the 2000 ABI in Coventry and Warwickshire, 84.9 thousand female employees (just over half of all female employees) worked on a part-time basis.⁶ 83,400 females in Coventry and Warwickshire worked as full-time employees. By contrast, across the West Midlands and Great Britain as a whole female full-time employees out-numbered female part-time employees, accounting for around 53 per cent of total female employees. Female part-time employees out-number female full-time employees in Coventry and Warwickshire in:

- Hotels and restaurants (where female part-time employees account for 65 per cent of all female employees);
- Education (female part-time employees account for nearly 64 per cent of total female employees);
- Health and social work (female part-time employees account for 60 per cent of all female employees);
- Wholesale/retail trade; repair (nearly 57 per cent of female employees work on a part-time basis);
- Other community, social/personal service (55 per cent of female employees work part-time).

In all sectors associated with public services sectors, part-time employees account for a greater proportion of total female employment in Coventry and Warwickshire than nationally.

Of nearly 10,000 females employed in Engineering in Coventry and Warwickshire, fewer than 1,500 (around 15 per cent) work on a part-time basis. This is a slightly smaller proportion than regionally and nationally. Likewise, in other manufacturing sectors female full-time employees easily outnumber their part-time employee counterparts. 55 per cent of female employees work on a full-time basis in Construction.

Overall:

- As at regional and national scales, females are concentrated in certain service sectors. The degree of concentration of female employees in sectors where females predominate is slightly greater in Coventry and Warwickshire than regionally and nationally.
- Although Engineering accounts for a larger share of total employees in Coventry and Warwickshire than across the West Midlands or Great Britain as a whole, females are under-represented locally relative to the national average share.
- Female part-time employees in Coventry and Warwickshire are disproportionately concentrated in public sector services.
- In those sectors (such as Engineering and Other manufacturing) where females account for less than half of total employees, the majority of female employees work on a full-time basis.

⁶ 'Part-time' is defined as less than 30 hours per week.

Table 3.5a Employees in Coventry and Warwickshire, 2000

Industry	Persons	Female	Female (% of total)	Female full-time	Female full-time (% of total female)	Female part-time	Female part-time (% of total female)	Male
Primary industries	4393	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Engineering	54939	9806	17.8	8357	85.2	1449	14.8	45133
Other manufacturing	19098	6161	32.3	4453	72.3	1708	27.7	12937
Electricity, gas and water supply	2385	569	23.9	541	95.1	29	5.1	1816
Construction	12135	2110	17.4	1150	54.5	960	45.5	10026
Wholesale/retail trade; repair, etc	63180	31861	50.4	13837	43.4	18024	56.6	31318
Hotels and restaurants	23958	15072	62.9	5321	35.3	9751	64.7	8886
Transport, storage and communication	21693	5121	23.6	3875	75.7	1246	24.3	16572
Financial intermediation	11248	6723	59.8	5004	74.4	1719	25.6	4525
Real estate, renting, business activities	50851	24558	48.3	13066	53.2	11492	46.8	26293
Public admin/defence; social security	13075	6768	51.8	4333	64.0	2435	36.0	6307
Education	33749	24255	71.9	8845	36.5	15410	63.5	9494
Health and social work	31719	26982	85.1	10883	40.3	16099	59.7	4738
Other community, social/personal service	15888	8271	52.1	3701	44.7	4571	55.3	7617
Total	358310	168256	47.0	83366	49.5	84891	50.5	185661

Notes: 1. 'Primary industries' encompass SIC92 sections 1-3; 'Engineering' is defined as SIC92 divisions 28-35; 'Other manufacturing' is defined as SIC divisions 15-27 and 36-37.

2. These figures are missing.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2000 (via Nomis)

Table 3.5b Employees in West Midlands, 2000

Industry	Persons	Female	Female (% of total)	Female full-time	Female full-time (% of total female)	Female part-time	Female part-time (% of total female)	Male
Primary industries	23053	6437	27.9	4545	70.6	1892	29.4	16612
Engineering	272632	56567	20.7	46151	81.6	10417	18.4	216065
Other manufacturing	222166	69186	31.1	53834	77.8	15352	22.2	152981
Electricity, gas and water supply	15923	4543	28.5	3979	87.6	564	12.4	11380
Construction	90783	13284	14.6	7653	57.6	5631	42.4	77499
Wholesale/retail trade; repair, etc	406190	206548	50.9	83982	40.7	122566	59.3	199641
Hotels and restaurants	128507	81386	63.3	28719	35.3	52668	64.7	47121
Transport, storage and communication	131159	31665	24.1	24712	78.0	6953	22.0	99494
Financial intermediation	70488	41414	58.8	30408	73.4	11007	26.6	29073
Real estate, renting, business activities	282727	137002	48.5	75296	55.0	61706	45.0	145725
Public admin/defence; social security	102331	49538	48.4	34497	69.6	15040	30.4	52793
Education	202670	145922	72.0	60250	41.3	85672	58.7	56748
Health and social work	233256	196298	84.2	86939	44.3	109359	55.7	36958
Other community, social/personal service	103975	53252	51.2	24407	45.8	28845	54.2	50723
Total	2285859	1093043	47.8	565371	51.7	527672	48.3	1192813

Notes: 'Primary industries' encompass SIC92 sections 1-3; 'Engineering' is defined as SIC92 divisions 28-35; 'Other manufacturing' is defined as SIC divisions 15-27 and 36-37.

Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2000 (via Nomis)

Table 3.5c Employees in Great Britain, 2000

Industry	Persons	Female	Female (% of total)	Female full-time	Female full-time (% of total female)	Female part-time	Female part-time (% of total female)	Male
Primary industries	315607	80364	25.5	54263	67.5	26101	32.5	235198
Engineering	1595548	329776	20.7	269417	81.7	60359	18.3	1265772
Other manufacturing	2204297	715975	32.5	547854	76.5	168121	23.5	1488321
Electricity, gas and water supply	100535	29980	29.8	25667	85.6	4313	14.4	70555
Construction	1126627	168101	14.9	92916	55.3	75186	44.7	958527
Wholesale/retail trade; repair, etc	4404712	2305031	52.3	918434	39.8	1386597	60.2	2099679
Hotels and restaurants	1605537	953020	59.4	316609	33.2	636412	66.8	652518
Transport, storage and communication	1525496	411583	27.0	312494	75.9	99089	24.1	1113914
Financial intermediation	1065268	577930	54.3	433666	75.0	144264	25.0	487339
Real estate, renting, business activities	3887161	1832908	47.2	1103325	60.2	729583	39.8	2054259
Public admin/defence; social security	1343983	653156	48.6	467355	71.6	185800	28.4	690828
Education	2070192	1458205	70.4	647605	44.4	810599	55.6	611988
Health and social work	2635475	2185251	82.9	991198	45.4	1194053	54.6	450224
Other community, social/personal service	1260131	641041	50.9	305398	47.6	335643	52.4	619092
Total	25140570	12342321	49.1	6486201	52.6	5856120	47.4	12798212

Notes: 'Primary industries' encompass SIC92 sections 1-3; 'Engineering' is defined as SIC92 divisions 28-35; 'Other manufacturing' is defined as SIC divisions 15-27 and 36-37.

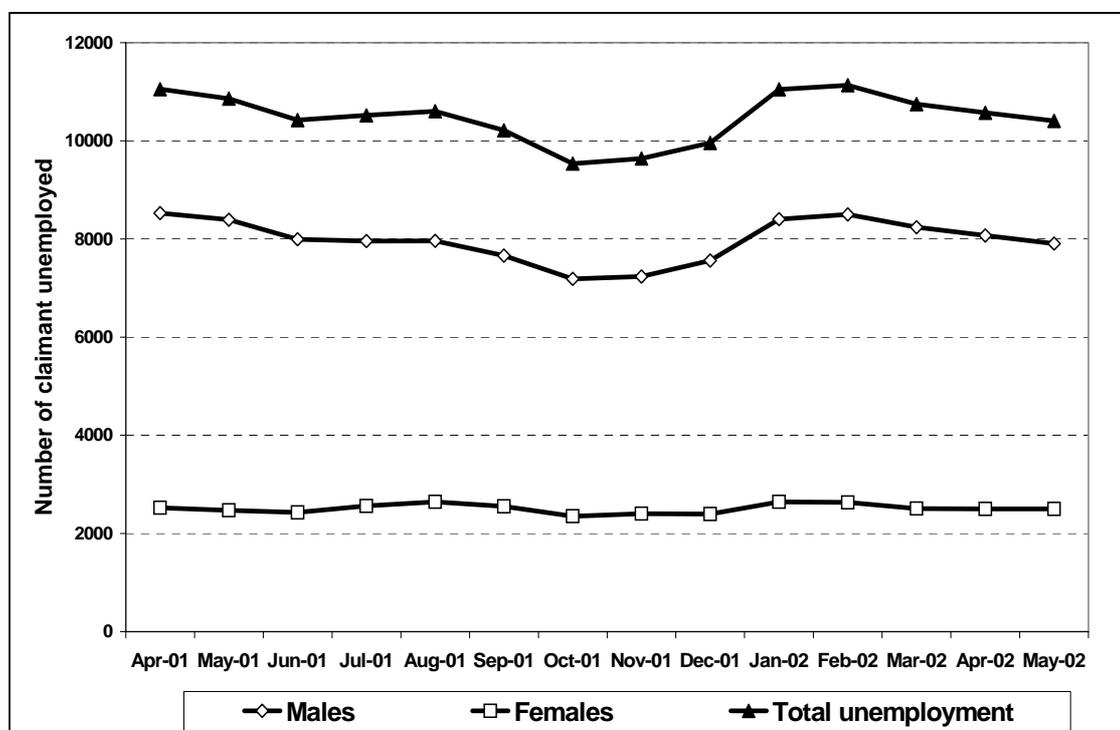
Source: Annual Business Inquiry, 2000 (via Nomis)

3.6 Unemployment trends: Coventry and Warwickshire

Not all of those who wish to work are able to obtain a job. The unemployed represent a pool of potential recruits from which employers can hire to do jobs. Previous research has indicated that employers differ greatly in their attitudes to recruiting the unemployed (Hasluck 1999). While many employers recruit extensively from the unemployed, others see unemployed people as lacking the personal qualities and the skills they are seeking. The latter group of employers recruit mainly from new entrants to the labour market and from people already in employment.

The number of unemployed claimants in Coventry and Warwickshire was around 30,000 in 1991, but has fallen by two thirds to just under 10,000 in December 2001. Since the start of 2002 the number of unemployed has increased again and by April 2002 stood at 10,408. Much of the recent increase has affected male jobseekers, as can be seen in Figure 3.6, below.

Figure 3.6 Claimant unemployment: Coventry and Warwickshire, 2001-2002



Source: claimant unemployment data (via Nomis)

3.7 Explaining the trends

The general increases in women's employment are explained by a number of factors (Dex, Joshi and Macran 1996):

- increases in their educational qualifications;
- increases in their earnings potential derived from increased education and increased work experience and equal pay legislation;
- demand side increases in part-time working opportunities;
- larger wage dispersion for men and increasing insecurity in men's incomes;
- changes in attitudes towards combining work and motherhood;
- a growth in home ownership and mortgage liabilities; and
- an increased willingness and ability to buy child care in the market.

Increasing divorce rates may also have encouraged more women into the workplace.

At the same time, men's participation rates have tended to decline, especially at the upper age bands. Partly as a result of industrial restructuring, many men over 50 have left the labour market since the 1970s, although a large number have also become long-term sick rather than unemployed (Dex, Coussey and Scheibl 2001).

It has been argued that the largest single factor in Britain explaining the historical trend for lower participation rates and concentration in part-time employment among women has been the presence of a youngest child of pre-school age (Dex, Coussey and Scheibl 2001). This trend is showing some signs of change. In the 1950s and 1960s an increasing number of women started to return to work, after a break, firstly to part-time jobs and later, in some cases, back to full-time work. However, the presence and age of a dependant child continues to have a marked effect on the employment rates of women; women with a child under five years of age have the lowest employment rate at 54 per cent while women with dependant children aged 16-18 years have the highest employment rate at 80 per cent (Twomey 2002).

A new trend is the fact that there are larger numbers, particularly among the highly educated, who have been postponing childbearing (Dale and Egerton 1995). In spring 2001, 85 per cent of highly qualified women of working age were in paid employment compared to 45 per cent of 'unqualified' women (Twomey 2002). This is coupled with the trend among successive cohorts of women who take shorter and shorter periods out of work over their childbearing years and return when their children are at younger ages (Dex, Joshi and Macran 1996). The introduction of statutory maternity leave in the 1970s helped to provide women with a route back into full-time jobs after childbirth, and a growing number have taken this opportunity. After the mid-1980s, a small minority of women were returning in increasing numbers, after very short breaks for maternity leave, to full-time jobs.

3.8 Summary

Women's participation rates in the UK labour market have continued to grow over the 1980s. National research indicates it was the employment of mothers with young children which grew fastest, from 27 per cent of all mothers of children under 5 in 1980 to 41 per cent in the 2000 Labour Force Survey - an increasing percentage being full-time. Another important factor is that fewer women have become mothers in their twenties. At the younger end of the spectrum, the proportion of a cohort becoming teenage mothers has changed less. Of the women born in 1958:

- 15 per cent of mothers were teenagers at the birth of their first child compared with 19 per cent of women around 1947;
- 12 per cent of mothers had their first child when they were over 30 years old compared with 6 per cent of mothers who were born around 1948 (Dex, Joshi and Macran 1996).

In Coventry and Warwickshire, demographic trends and changing patterns of labour force participation mean that the labour force available has been changing. On average, it has become older, while more women are working and fewer men. Women now account for the majority (51 per cent) of the workforce. Around 38 per cent of the women were working in part-time jobs, in contrast to the small number of men (though this number has increased sharply in recent years). Women with higher-level qualifications are more likely to be economically active than those with no qualifications.

This section has also highlighted that women's participation rate in certain industrial sections is low in Coventry and Warwickshire, and the West Midlands. The sections identified include:

- engineering;
- utilities (electricity, gas and water supply);
- construction; and
- transport, storage and communication.

The participation rates in these industries are comparable to those identified for Great Britain. The reasons for these low participation rates are discussed in later sections.

4. GENDER SEGREGATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

4.1 Definition and effect

This section examines occupational segregation in the UK labour market along gender lines, which is now generally recognised to be a structural feature of the labour market. The terms 'horizontal' and 'vertical' segregation are used to describe the tendencies of women to be employed in a restricted range of occupational areas compared with men (horizontal segregation), and at lower levels than men in organisations (vertical segregation) (Hakim 1979).

The effect of occupational gender segregation has been at the heart of many debates about gender inequality over the last thirty years (Jarman, *et al.* 1999). Commentators have often argued that segregation has a negative impact on the occupational opportunity and wages of women (Bradley 1989; Reskin and Roos 1990). Clearly, differences in occupations between men and women would not be important if these differences did not represent differences of status and pay with women being disproportionately in the less favoured categories. The links between occupational segregation and pay were reviewed and examined in Millward and Woodland (1995). Their study demonstrated a considerable establishment-level (i.e. firm) male wage premium associated with male concentration and a depressing effect on earnings of female concentration within occupational groups. Recent research has argued that the prevalence of segregation is inextricably linked to the sexual division of labour within the household and the complexity of wider community and family relationships (Greene, Ackers and Black 2002).

4.2 General trends in the pattern of segregation

Research studies have long noticed the existence of occupational segregation (also referred to as 'ghettoisation') with men's jobs and women's jobs fairly clearly demarcated. The EOC (2002a) reports that there has been some convergence between the participation of women and men in paid work. For example, women have increased their proportions in professional and managerial higher paid jobs. However, the EOC (2002a) points out that despite this convergence there are still marked and enduring differences by gender.

A marked gender difference can be observed in horizontal segregation. This translates into a pattern of gender segregation across different occupational groupings. For example, engineering remains heavily male dominated while hairdressing remains a mainly female industry. Furthermore, the new high-tech industries do not show many signs of change (EOC 2002a).

An analysis of Labour Force Survey data by Twomey (2002) show that female employment remained concentrated in a narrow range of occupations including:

- administration and secretarial (24 per cent);
- personal service of occupations (14 per cent); and
- sales and customer service occupations (12 per cent).

By comparison, these three occupational groupings accounted for only 12 per cent of employed men.

The data reviewed above from 'Region in Figures' (Causer and Williams 2002) and the Coventry and Warwickshire Employers Survey (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002) show that women are concentrated in small and medium sized firms, and that a large share of their employment is part-time. These trends are similar to those observed in national data.

4.3 Gender segregation and part-time employment

A particular problem is the concentrations of women in part-time jobs, which are most often low paid, have few prospects for promotion or access to training (Dex, Coussey and Scheibl 2001). Recent figures from the Labour Force Survey (Twomey 2002) indicate that out of an estimated 12.1 million working-age women employed in the UK, 43 per cent were in part-time employment compared to 8 per cent of men. The trend for part-time working among women has been increasing; since spring 1991 there has been a 13 per cent increase in part-time employment of women, compared with only a 7 per cent increase in full-time employment. An increase in the part-time employment of men has also occurred over the same period particularly over the period 1991-1996 when there was an increase of 46 per cent. The growth in male part-time employment is offset by the fact that the rise started from a base of only 5 per cent of employed men in 1991.

4.4 Explaining gender segregation

Policies and practice introduced to address gender segregation in employment are likely to reflect different beliefs about why this exists and has survived as such an enduring aspect of the UK labour market. Are women predominantly to be found in part-time low-status jobs through choice, or are women's choices in some way constrained by structures and systems? If the predominant belief is that women's labour market position is a matter of choice, then policies and practices to change this situation will be focused on changing attitudes and values at the level of the individual. In contrast, if it is believed that women are constrained to take certain jobs, then responses will need to focus on changing the structures of employment. The two main explanations of gender segregation are summarised below and it should be noted that conclusive evidence does not yet exist to support either one.

4.4.1 Human capital explanations of gender segregation

Commentators have argued that occupational choice plays some part in explaining why women are located more predominantly in certain occupations rather than others. Research provides substantial support for the human capital explanation of occupational segregation by sex. The main proposition is that the majority of women are satisfied with low paid jobs because they fit with childcare and domestic responsibilities (Hakim, 1991, 1996).

For example, Hakim (1998: 221) used the 1% SAR⁷ to study pharmacy, which she termed 'an integrated occupation', namely, one 'with roughly equal numbers of men and women holding a pharmacy qualification and/or working as pharmacists'. This was also an occupation 'that has been expanding and has escaped the constraints of recession' (ibid). The results show that male pharmacists were around 8 times as likely to work in small firms as female pharmacists (32 per cent and 4 per cent respectively), and that male pharmacists were twice as likely to be employers/managers as female pharmacists (13 per cent and 6 per cent), but the latter were around 10 times to work part-time (30 per cent and 3 per cent). Although the two groups were little different in terms of educational qualifications, social class status, age, marital status, ethnicity, having dependent children, housing tenure, the male pharmacists spent more hours on paid work than the female pharmacists: only 4 per cent of the former, but 44 per cent of the latter worked less than 36 hours per week. These patterns allow for an assessment of the idea that occupational segregation is caused by discriminatory practices and not by women's own work preferences for part-time or lower grade jobs. Hakim (1998: 233) argues in favour of the latter point, saying 'Differences in work orientations lead to faster promotions for men and thus vertical job segregation within the profession, which again remains

⁷ Samples of Anonymised Records from the 1991 Census.

invisible in most occupational classifications'. Hakim (1998: 234) concludes that an 'insistence on paid work being fitted around familial responsibilities and a preference for convenience factors over high pay mean that women will generally be concentrated in the lower grades of professional and management occupations, even in the absence of sex discrimination, while men will continue to take the lion's share of higher grade jobs'.

So, segregation is explained by using the preferences that women have for a 'homemaker' career, in which work is seen as a peripheral activity. Hakim (1991) has reviewed a vast range of data and her findings indicate that small proportions of women are committed to work as a central life goal. On this model occupational segregation is reproduced by women's own orientations to work and their life priorities. This leads Hakim (1991: 110) to argue that women actually 'colluded in their own imprisonment in unpaid work in the home and low-paid low status jobs in the workforce'.

4.4.2 Social process explanations of gender segregation

In contrast to the 'preference' explanation, recent qualitative case studies have demonstrated that segregation and discrimination are deeply entrenched in the 'way of life' of the shop floor or organisational culture (Greene, Ackers and Black 2002; Jenkins, Lucio and Noon 2002). These studies examined the impact of organisational change in the national postal service (Jenkins, Lucio and Noon 2002) and the effects of restructuring programmes, which aimed to create new 'un-gendered' jobs in two manufacturing firms in the West Midlands (Greene, Ackers and Black 2002).

Jenkins *et al.* (2002) studied the impact of different systems of work organisation in the processing function of Royal Mail: a mechanised system of processing mail and a high-tech system of processing mail. The study reported that the power relations between Union and management sustain women's disadvantage in postal work. This was found to be true of sites using the mechanised system of mail processing and the high-tech system of mail processing. The study found that the introduction of new forms of high-tech work organisation did not themselves provide a context for the eradication of discrimination or women's disadvantage. For example, Union representatives were found to defend the allocation of work in the new high-tech site on the basis of (male) seniority rather than ability. Furthermore, the increased use of flexible forms of labour, which were attached to the high-tech system of work organisation, perpetuated segmentation along gender lines; women were typically located in part-time jobs while men were situated in full-time jobs. The authors observed that these processes perpetuated the assumption that women work only for 'pin money'. One positive finding was that discourses of sexual harassment were weakened at the high-tech site, although some undercurrent of resentment towards women remained in the form of a preference for 'male breadwinner' jobs. However, the authors found that 'gender and identity became a symbol of unity against workplace change in order to resist management change and maintain the identity of the workplace as a full-time, male preserve, workers and some of their trade union representatives articulated discourses of gender exclusion' (Jenkins, Lucio and Noon 2002: 101). The study concluded that relations between management and union officials perpetuated the postal service as a sex-segregated and gendered occupation.

Greene, Ackers and Black (2002), in a study of the manufacturing firms in the West Midlands, reported that both men and women resisted changes proposed by management. The authors argue that the women's opposition to 'liberating and emancipatory' changes proposed by management and union officials were 'bound up with wider gendered occupational family and community identities' (Greene, Ackers

and Black 2002: 282). Overall, the changes were seen as a threat to established occupational identities, which carried female and male distinctions. Greene, Ackers and Black (2002: 268) concluded that 'gender occupational segregation is more than just a feature of workplace organisation structures or payment systems' and is connected to structures and social interaction rule-making both within and outside of the workplace'. Ultimately, the authors rejected explanations of segregation which explained the persistence of gender segregation in terms of individuals' rational self interest or choice (see for example Hakim 1991, 1996) to argue that gender segregation is reproduced in the context of wider family and community rule making and social process.

4.5 Gender segregation by occupational sectors

4.5.1 Construction

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) is the National Training Organisation (NTO) for the construction industry and provides strategy, research information and policy advice. Concern about gender representation in the industry is expressed on its website:

'Notwithstanding an encouraging trend towards diversity, the number of women and Black and Asian people employed in construction remains disproportionately low' (CITB 2002).

It reports that whilst the number of women in the industry has risen from 8.8 per cent to 9.8 per cent since 1999, they remain significantly under-employed in all construction occupations. In manual trades, women have remained at around 1 per cent for at least 5 years. Although there is an upward trend in women studying for construction degrees, they still represent no more than 20 per cent of undergraduates. Once in the industry, women represent only 2 per cent of the professions. Because of this under-representation, CITB is aiming for a 10 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of female New Entrant Trainees (NET). Their research team is currently 'pulling together current local benchmarking data on equal opportunities for the CITB Local Labour Market Reports'.

The Education and Careers Department within the CITB has researched interest in construction as a career and found that both genders and all ethnic groups have an equal interest in these careers until the age of twelve. After this, young Black and Asian people and women start to drop out of construction-related career sessions more than their white male counterparts. CITB's response to these findings is to focus careers sessions on the 13-14 age group.

The Business Case for diversity in construction:

The CITB (2002) website sets out the basic business case for seeking to recruit from a more diverse pool of labour:

- The industry needs to recruit and retain over 74,000 new people year-on-year for the next five years. It is already in competition with other industries for non-traditional entrants.
- As a core industry that underpins all others, construction needs to access a wider pool of talent in order to recruit and develop a high quality workforce that is motivated and skilled.

- Women make 80 per cent of consumer decisions in the home (domestic builds represent 45 per cent of the market). They are managers at clients such as housing associations (25 per cent).
- The impact of equal opportunities legislation on the private sector is set to increase. Only contractors who acknowledge the demands of this customer base can expect to prosper.

Construction in the West Midlands

It is claimed that construction is vital to the economy of the West Midlands (CITB 2002). Construction output has remained fairly consistent over the past ten years and in 2000, stood at just over £5 billion. This output is forecast to grow at a yearly rate of 1.7 per cent until 2006 – just below the national average of 2.6 per cent.

Between 1996 and 2000, employment figures in the West Midlands remained fairly constant, peaking in 2000 at 172,000. This equates to approximately 6.5 per cent of the economically active population as a whole working in construction. The percentage of unemployed has been continually decreasing, reaching a low rate of six per cent in 2000.

The construction industry is characterised by its large number of small businesses, both nationally and regionally. Of the 14,076 construction firms in the West Midlands, 51.5 per cent are sole traders and only one per cent employs more than 50 people (CITB 2002).

The West Midlands is forecast to need some 28,000 new recruits between 2002 and 2006, which translates into 5,600 each year. Overall, 77 per cent of companies in the region said that they had experienced difficulties in recruiting skilled staff in the previous six months. Additionally, 42 per cent of employers in the West Midlands said they were unable to bid for a contract due to shortage of skilled staff, which is considerably higher than the national figure of 24 per cent (CITB 2002).

Modern Apprenticeships

A telephone interview (20th November, 2002) with a Diversity Manager at the Regional Office revealed that only nine women were recruited across the West Midlands to the Modern Apprenticeship scheme in construction.

Positive Action

The report from the Women in Construction Conference 2001 (CITB 2002) contains numerous recommendations, ranging from educational provision, to careers promotion and policy implementation.

4.5.2 Engineering

Men still hold over 90 per cent of engineering jobs in the UK, even in the field of software engineering (EOC 2001a). In manufacturing, 75 per cent of employees are men and 25 per cent women (EOC 2002b). In 1999, 5,728 women were registered with the Engineering Council as Chartered Engineers, Incorporated Engineers or Engineering Technicians. This compared with only 478 in 1984, representing a twelve-fold increase. Nevertheless, women still comprised only 2 per cent of registered engineers and women made up just 6 per cent of new entrants to the register in 1999. Overall, only 6 per cent of engineers and technologists are women.

Automotive industry

Compared to engineering generally, the male to female ratio in the automotive industry is 86 to 14 (EMTA 2002). Although, therefore, the proportion of women in

the workforce is one of the highest of all the engineering sectors, the automotive manufacturing industry is still predominantly male. There are also more women than men part-time workers, but the overall figure is low as just 3 per cent of the workforce are part-time employees.

Engineering in the West Midlands, and Coventry and Warwickshire

The 2002 Coventry and Warwickshire Employer Survey noted that a distinctive feature of both the West Midlands, and Coventry and Warwickshire has been the above UK average of employment in manufacturing, particularly engineering. However, a number of different factors have had a detrimental effect on the performance of manufacturing in the region and Coventry and Warwickshire have not been immune to such trends. The number of employing establishments in manufacturing in Coventry and Warwickshire has fallen in recent years but this has been compensated for by the growth of establishments in transport and communications and banking, finance and insurance, which help to redress the previous over-dependence on the automotive sector.

The National Training Organisation for Engineering (EMTA 2002) found that for the industry, employment is concentrated in the West Midlands, which accounts for 20 per cent of all companies and 26 per cent of the total workforce. The traditional concentration of the automotive and components industries in the West Midlands still remains strong, but much new foreign investment has been channelled into areas like South Wales and the South East. Rolls-Royce/BMW's new Goodwood plant in Sussex reflects this trend.

Traditionally the West Midlands and Coventry and Warwickshire have had a strong manufacturing base. However, only 19 per cent of workplaces were engaged in manufacturing and construction in 2002, while 65 per cent engaged in traded services. With respect to the number of employees, the importance of the manufacturing/construction base is much more apparent since it employs around 27 per cent of the Coventry and Warwickshire workforce.

Industrial structure varies across Coventry and Warwickshire. Manufacturing and construction accounted for around around 20 per cent of workplaces in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and North Warwickshire, but only around 15 per cent of workplaces in Warwick. In Warwick, business service and finance accounted for 36 per cent of all workplaces compared to 23 per cent in North Warwickshire. Table 4.5 below, demonstrates the importance of manufacturing for the job prospects of people in Coventry and Warwickshire

Table 4.5.2 Importance of manufacturing to Coventry and Warwickshire

Manufacturing	Men	Women
Great Britain	21.5%	8.5%
Warwickshire	28.2%	9.1%
West Midlands (Metropolitan. County)	31.5%	10.5%

Source: Region in Figures West Midlands (Causer and Williams 2002)

What the above table also illustrates is how manufacturing, including engineering and the automotive sector are all strongly gender segregated, with women under-

represented. This begins with relevant vocational training. Vocational Qualifications (NVQ/SVQ) awards for 1999/2000 by major occupational groups show:

- that there were 10,900 women and 93,900 men in the craft and related groups; and
- for plant and machine operators there were 1,300 women; and 11,400 men (EOC 2002b).

Vocational Qualifications:

While the overall numbers of young women and men entering Modern Apprenticeships are now almost equal, the numbers accessing particular occupational sectors differ greatly, with young women moving into Modern Apprenticeships in traditional female sectors and young men entering traditionally male sectors (EOC 2002b). For example, of the Modern Apprenticeship starts in 2000/2001:

- in engineering manufacturing at foundation level, 9 per cent were women (men 91 per cent) and at advanced level 3 per cent were women (97 per cent men);
- in the motor industry, just 1 per cent women (99 per cent men).

In terms of full-time undergraduates in engineering and technology in higher education institutions in 1999/2000, there were 11,100 women and 61,300 men, and of part-time students there were 500 women and 6,900 men (EOC 2002b). Gender segregation in relation to choice of educational subjects, and the under representation of women in engineering and technology is discussed further in section 8.

Positive Action

The fact that engineering, generally, is failing to attract women has been the long-standing concern of various organisations. For example:

1. Women into Science and Engineering (WISE), which is supported by the Engineering Employers Federation and EMTA, aims to raise awareness of the possibilities of science, engineering and technology (SET) for girls and women.
2. A similar aim is being pursued by the Women's Unit in the Office of Science and Technology (see www.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/pset4w.htm).
3. A third relevant organisation is the Women's Engineering Society (see www.wes.org.uk) which:
 - promotes the education, training and practice of engineering among women;
 - increases public awareness of the contribution women can make to engineering;
 - provides a forum for the exchange of opinions and experience respecting education, training and employment for women with interests in engineering;
 - sustains contacts with women engineers on career breaks and facilitates their return to paid employment by keeping them informed of progress within the profession;
 - ensures the voice of women engineers is heard during the deliberations of Government and policy-making institutions; and

- raises the profile and effectiveness of women engineers by forming links and networking with other women's organisations.

One activity organised by WES is the creation of 'Local Circles'. In 2002, a local circle was set up by a woman engineer at Jaguar in Coventry, approximately 50 female engineers are involved, but the group is very much in its infancy.

4.5.3 Social care

Overview

Social care is examined in depth as it is an important sector of the labour market which is expanding and employing large numbers of women. The social care workforce is estimated to be around one million nationally or five per cent of the overall workforce. Social care includes fields such as residential care, domiciliary care, day care and social work provided by local authorities or private sector organisations, which might be heavily dependent on public funds. Two thirds of the workforce work in the independent sector.

In domiciliary care (comprising about one fifth of the social care workforce) there has been a shift in the provision of care from the public sector to the independent sector following the implementation the 1990 NHS and Community Care Act. In 1993, the independent sector delivered 2 per cent of local authority funded domiciliary care compared to 60 per cent in 2001 (DoH 2002a). These changes also impacted on the workforce as many independent sector providers passed on the business risks to their staff in the form of zero hour contracts.

Social care is currently undergoing substantial change following the publication of the 1998 White Paper on "Modernising Social Services" and subsequent legislation, entitled the Care Standards Act 2000. The White Paper was calling for promoting user independence, more user-centred services, more regulation and a better qualified workforce to improve the quality of care.

The social care workforce has a high share of employees with no relevant qualifications, but it also encompasses occupations requiring a degree level education, such as social work and occupational therapy. The White Paper stated that 80 per cent of the workforce engaged with vulnerable people has no recognised qualifications or training. In response to the White paper the first national training strategy was developed by the newly established Training Organisation for Personal Social Services (TOPSS) and work on national occupational standards is ongoing. Recently the Department of Health has issued National Minimum Standards for domiciliary care, amongst others, setting targets for the qualification of the domiciliary care workforce to be achieved by 2008.⁸

In recent years, recruitment and retention problems in social care have increased, to the extent that it seems to endanger the achievement of national targets for social services (SSI 2001). The TOPSS report identifies skill shortages in fields such as part-time frontline staff in several areas, approved social workers, managers at all

⁸ The National Minimum Standards require that 50 per cent of all personal care provided by an agency is delivered by care workers with an NVQ in Care (level 2 or 3) by 1st April 2008. Newly appointed unqualified care workers have to register within 6 months of employment and unqualified care workers employed after the 1st of April 2001 by the 1st of April 2005 at the latest. Care workers have to complete their NVQ training within 3 years of their registration (DoH 2003). Furthermore, managers need to obtain a nationally recognised management qualification equivalent to NVQ level 4 in management by 1st of April 2008. The regulation will affect public services as well as private service providers (DoH 2003).

levels and occupational therapists (TOPSS 2000). A recent social services workforce survey indicated that recruitment problems in social work and domiciliary care have intensified (SHCWG 2002). Low pay⁹, low status and a booming economy are among the main reasons blamed for recruitment and retention problems in social care, particularly in domiciliary care.

Horizontal segregation

In contrast to engineering and construction, social care has traditionally been a female dominated area with a high share of female part-time employment. Annual Business Inquiry data for social work activities in England indicate that in 2001 85 per cent of employees were female, with 58 per cent of the female employees working part-time, compared to 32 per cent of men. As Table 4.5.3a shows, social care in Coventry and Warwickshire has a slightly higher share of female employees and – in line with the West Midlands - a higher share of part-time working women (and men). The situation in social services for England is fairly similar to social care as a whole (see Table 4.5.3b).

Table 4.5.3a Social work activities in Great Britain, England, West Midlands, and Coventry and Warwickshire, 2001

	Percentages			
	GREAT BRITAIN	ENGLAND	WEST MIDLANDS	COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE
Percentage of female employees	84.6	84.6	85.8	87.1
Mode of work among females				
Full-time	42	42	39	38
Part-time	58	58	61	62
Mode of work among males				
Full-time	68	67	66	61
Part-time	32	33	34	39

Source: Annual Business Inquiry 2001

⁹ It should be noted here that, it is generally expected that job evaluations in local authorities, agreed as part of the single status agreement, will lead to a pay increase in social care. Yet currently just one in five local authorities have completed this process due to a number of reasons (Briscoe and Nolda in Kingsmill 2002). The increase may be substantial, but social care will remain a low paid job.

Table 4.5.3b Social Services in England, West Midlands, and Coventry and Warwickshire, 2001

	Percentages		
	ENGLAND	WEST MIDLANDS	COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE
Percentage of female employees	83.8	84.3	86.6
Mode of work among females			
Full-time	38	38	54.4 ¹
Part-time	62	62	45.5
Mode of work among males			
Full-time	74	72	77
Part-time	26	28	23

¹Data for Coventry are similar to those for England, but Warwickshire data display a different pattern.

Source: DoH 2002b (Statistical Bulletin, spreadsheets and own calculations)

In section 5 there is a general discussion on women's commitment to work. Yet, it is worth mentioning here that according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey 81 per cent of those working in care occupations did not want a full-time job, 14 per cent could not find a full-time job and 5 per cent indicated indirectly that they could not commit themselves to more hours because they were in education, ill or disabled (Almond and Kendall 2000). The decision to work-part-time may be the result of a number of factors, including personal preferences, child care costs, availability of affordable and good quality child care facilities, pay differentials between partners, and possible difficulties for men in arranging flexible working hours, including part-time work.

Vertical segregation

Compared to other occupations social care has a high share of female employees in managerial positions. But, in line with other occupations, the relative number of females drops as the position becomes more and more senior. For example, 88.3 per cent of the local authority residential care workforce in England were female, but only 77.5 per cent were managers or officers in charge in 2001 (see Table 4.5.3c). The situation does not seem to be much different in the independent sector, as table 4.5.3d indicates (more recent data covering the independent sector social services workforce are expected to be published at the beginning of 2003).

Table 4.5.3c Employees in residential care for adults in local authority social services departments by position and gender: England, 2001

Position	Total number of staff	% who are females
Managers and officers in charge	1,690	77.5
Deputy officers in charge	2,220	83.1
Other supervisory employees	5,485	85.9
Care employees	35,105	89.3
Other support services employees	12,725	89.0
Total	57,230	88.3

Source: SHCWG 2002, Appendix B (and own calculations)

Table 4.5.3d Employees in independent sector residential and dual registered homes by position and gender: England, 1996

Position	Total number of staff	% who are females
Managers/supervisors	39,000	80.9
Nursing staff	14,300	91.0
Care assistants	120,900	92.0
Other care staff	6,300	81.1

Source: LGMB 1997

How can these differences in achieving senior positions be explained? The results of a longitudinal study among employees working in social services departments in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland suggests that this is not the result of direct discrimination. Rather the differences can be attributed to the number of full-time years in social care and, depending on the area of work, the educational level or the professional qualification (Ginn and Fisher 1999).

4.6 Summary

There is pervasive evidence to suggest that gender remains a major deterrent of individual economic prosperity, over and above individual skill and ability. This tendency creates inflexibility in the labour market and inhibits women from realising their full potential. It also means that employers must recruit from a more limited pool of labour (Dex, Cousey and Macran 2001). The 2002 Coventry and Warwickshire Employers Survey (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002) legitimate skills shortages. The persistence of discriminatory employment practices means that employers who face skill shortages or recruitment problems could resolve these difficulties if they adopted fully-fledged equal opportunities practices. Examples might include introducing more flexible working practices, which have been demonstrated to improve retention and recruitment (Dex and Scheibl 2001). Opening up more on-the-job training programmes to female part-time employees could also help to resolve skill shortages.

5. EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND COMMITMENT

Any recommendation for improving women's participation in the labour market will need to take account of current patterns of employment and evidence, which relates to employment commitment. This section reviews current relevant knowledge from the UK.

5.1 Definition

A review of the research literature shows that the employment pattern in the UK most often recognised is the linear unbroken career typical of the male work-pattern (Dickens 1998; Scheibl 1996; Hakim 1991). There are, however, several different ways of defining work commitment. These are reviewed briefly below:

Work ethic or value focus

Here, commitment is treated as a type of orientation to work. For instance, an attitude that is built upon the moral value which employees have about employment. Central to this idea is that the work ethic can be observed or measured as a non-financial orientation to work. Specifically, a preference for being employed even if the need to earn an income was removed (Fagan 1998: 10). In some versions of this definition, commitment is treated as a component of working time preferences (Fagan 1998).

Psychological disposition

Commitment is linked with occupational drive or ambition and a strong personal identification with the job. It focuses on the psychological dispositions of the employee and how they obtain their self-esteem in the workplace (Oliker 1995).

Career focus and Human capital

A third approach proposes that commitment relates to the importance that the individual gives to their career. Measures used to assess commitment under this definition distinguish between the attitudes 'work is a necessary evil' and 'work is the most important thing in my life and I will pursue it even if it gives me a little while to be with friends' (Morrow 1983: 489). The human capital definition assumes that commitment is demonstrated by the effort employees have put into training for work (Oliker 1995).

Financial or Instrumental

In contrast to the work ethic definition, the financially committed worker is assumed to work only to secure the reward of an income or some other benefit such as a pension (Healy 1996). This 'instrumental orientation' has been identified among men (Goldthorpe, *et al.* 1968) and among women (Brannen and Moss 1991; Martin and Roberts 1984; Healy and Kraithman 1991). This form of commitment is not widely discussed or explored in the literature. When it is discussed in relation to women it is often inverted against the work ethic definition to imply that women are not as committed to work because they would give up the job if they did not need the money.

A mixed bag of attachments

The idea that commitment is made up of a variety of attachments has been advanced at regular intervals in the literature (Haller and Rosenmayer 1971; Recichers 1985; Coopey and Hartly 1991; Healy 1996). This approach argues that individuals are motivated by a range of factors including a work ethic; psychological disposition; financial reasons; career as a central life interest; and occupational or professional commitment (see Healy 1996). Equally, individuals might be motivated by a sense of loyalty to social groups within the organisation that they work for, or feel connected to

the place of work because a relative or sibling works with them (Reichers 1985; Haller and Rosenmayer 1971).

Organisational Commitment

'Commitment' is emphasised in Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies. This model proposes that organisational commitment can reduce turnover and boost employee performance. It operates on the assumption that investing in employees through personnel policies, and training and development can stimulate commitment. This clearly reinforces the view that commitment is shaped by job design and work experience, rather than personal characteristics.

A number of research studies have drawn attention to the fact that men (who can rely on the services of wives) are better able to fulfil employers' expectations that '*committed*' employees will; place the interests of the company before their personal interests; work long hours; sacrifice personal life for work; work weekends; and put in 'face-time' on a daily basis (Hopfi 1992; Buswell and Jenkins 1994; Daly 1996; Dickens 1998). Inevitably, women are less able to meet these gendered expectations of committed behaviour because more of their personal time is consumed by domestic labour (Dickens 1998).

5.2 Explaining commitment

The majority of explanations of commitment tend to have a strong practical aspect and feed directly into the development of Human Resource Management practices and policies that aim to develop guidelines for managers to build a committed workforce. A summary review of the main contributions follows:

Investment theory

Farrell and Rusbult (1981) put forward the idea that where the work activity allows the employee to realise their personal (self-actualisation) needs, then they will commit to work. This theory stresses the psychological needs of the employee, which can be seen to tie the worker to their occupational role (see for example Casey 1995).

Exchange theory

Mottaz (1986, 1988) differentiates between the intrinsic and extrinsic work values and reward systems as determinants of commitment. In this formulation, work values are defined as what the worker wants, desires or seeks to attain from work and work rewards are the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits that workers receive from their jobs (Mottaz 1986, 1988). Worker's 'wants' are sub-divided into three groups: ***Intrinsic***, denoting task autonomy, task significance and task involvement; ***Extrinsic social***, incorporating supervisory and co-worker assistance; and ***Extrinsic organisational***, denoting working conditions, salary, promotional opportunity and fringe benefits.

Side bet theory

Becker (1960) and Layder (1993) argue that employees accumulate 'career valuables' over the passage of time, which keeps them tied to the job. Notable valuables include the pride and status that attach to the performance of their job and gaining promotion. Such valuables become a central means by which the employee reproduces their self-concept/identity. Alongside these positive valuables, employees encounter a set of negative constraints that arise from the costs and penalties involved in leaving the job. For example, employees risk losing pension rights if they change their occupation. This respects the central ideal of exchange theory i.e., that the occupational reward system ties the employee to the organisation over-time as they stand to benefit from company pensions, promotion and other intrinsic and extrinsic work related rewards.

Process theory

Mowday *et al.* (1982) argue that commitment is something more than an attitude or a specific behaviour. Commitment is a relationship that is reciprocal and develops over time through exchanges (of time, trust, effort, and reward) between the employee and the employer. The theory suggests that the conventional research interest in the (attitudinal and behavioural) determinants of commitment is of less relevance than understanding the *process* of commitment. The process of commitment can be subdivided into three phases: **Anticipation**, denoting pre-entry factors of personality, job choice and expectation; **Initiation**, indicating socialisation into commitment values during early employment; and **Entrenchment**, continuing development of commitment in the later stage of employment. As individuals spend some time choosing their job, it follows that they will have some feeling of commitment to it before they start the job. On this view the prior attitude of the employee is unlikely to predetermine a long-term attachment since subsequent work experiences and changes in domestic circumstances can act to strengthen or weaken employee commitment. In reality commitment is developed through self-reinforcing cycles of behaviour over-time through reciprocal influence of behaviour and organisational rewards (Mowday and McDade 1979). Employers' risk of losing an employee is highest during the initial phase of *Anticipation* when socialisation into the job is low. There is less risk of an employee leaving once the employee has been absorbed into the process of *Initiation*, or re-socialisation. The passage of time will solidify the employees' commitment and produce a situation of *Entrenchment*.

5.3 Women's commitment to employment

Women's commitment to employment has stimulated much research and debate in recent years (Hakim 1991, 1996, 2000; Ginn, *et al.* 1996; Scheibl 1999a; Healy 1999). Two opposing views on women's capacity for commitment to paid work have emerged. These are employee commitment as individual preference and as a reflection of life stage, both of which are detailed below.

5.3.1 Employment commitment as individual preference

This approach comes from the work of Hakim (1991) who argues that there are two distinct groups within the female working population:

- career oriented; and
- domestically oriented.

Women working full-time are assumed to be more committed to paid work than those who work part-time. This assumes that work preferences can be inferred from current work status (that is, full-time or part-time) and are fairly fixed over the life course.

5.3.2 Employment commitment as a reflection of life-stage

An alternative approach to understanding women's relationship and attachment to the labour market relates to the life-stage of women (Dex 1985, 1987) and is referred to as the 'life-course approach'. This basically accepts that commitment is a 'mixed bag of attachments' and recognises that women feel pressurised to work for various reasons such as, for example, financial reasons. This approach views attitudes to work, preference and commitment as characteristic of different life-stages. It distinguishes:

- the pre-marriage stage;
- the family formation phase; and
- the final phase of a female employee's working life.

The approach fails to recognise that not all women marry, enter partnerships and have children.

5.4 Women's attachment to the labour market: evidence from the West Midlands

The West Midlands Household Panel Survey (2002) measures women's labour market participation and takes in a wide range of employment contracts. It records employment activity and change in employment status over the previous 12 month period (Q72, Q73 on 2000 questionnaire). It also records employment 'preferences'. The survey asks if the woman currently unemployed (performing domestic labour/care) would like to work (Q1 subsection 10 2000 questionnaire). Q41 (2000 questionnaire) asks when the respondent wants to return – possible answers range from 'as soon as possible' to 'don't know'. These data could act as an indirect measure of women's commitment to (return) to work. National statistics show that there has been a big increase in female self-employment. The Coventry and Warwickshire Household Survey states that self-employed people were more likely to be senior managers and officials, and in Skilled trades occupations (Spilsbury 2002:29).

5.5 Summary

The review of the research on employment commitment shows that the committed worker is depicted as a person who exhibits a distinctive set of attitudes and behavioural characteristics. These are:

- low job turnover;
- continuous attachment; and
- a desire to work regardless of financial rewards (Meyer and Allen 1988).

Research also shows that this set of characteristics are linked with the pattern of work most often observed among women. This research challenges the idea of a polarisation of 'work' and 'home' centred commitments for women. Various studies point to the structural constraints influencing mothers' supposed 'preferences' regarding employment, notably:

- child care availability and costs;
- the demand of household labour on women's time;
- their weak bargaining position with employers; and
- the fluctuating rather than static nature of mothers' involvement in the labour market (for example Bottero 2000; Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996; Ginn, *et al.* 1996).

Drawing on the insights of previous research (which are summarised in Figure 5.5 below), this review highlights ideas that are useful for understanding factors that affect women's commitment to work.

Figure 5.5 Explanations of women's commitment to employment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference theory (Hakim 1991) 	<p><i>Women make their own choices in the workplace.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-Course Perspective (Dex 1985, 1987) 	<p><i>Motherhood precipitates a change in work priorities that are not permanent but place a constraint on choices.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constrained commitments (Crompton and Le Feuvre 1996) 	<p><i>Commitment to work is a constrained behaviour. Cultural expectations of workplace shape commitment.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Theory (Mowday and McDade 1979) 	<p><i>Commitment is emergent from, and reproduced within, the relationship between employee and employer over-time.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motherhood is a process of transformation (McMahon 1995) 	<p><i>Women's identity is a product of their experience - not fixed by gender role conformity. Women can find that motherhood increases or devalues their identity and status</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resourced / non-resourced returner (Stilwell 1996) 	<p><i>Women require a set of social and psychological resources to make the return to work following childbirth.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographical Context (Haller and Rosenmayer 1971) 	<p><i>Commitment cannot be analysed adequately if the social context in which work participation takes place is not taken into consideration.</i></p>

6. GENDER PAY DIFFERENTIALS

6.1 Legislation

The Equal Pay Act (1970) originally provided for women to be paid the same as men working for the same employer in two circumstances: where the woman and man are employed on 'like' jobs (Section 4) and where the employer has voluntarily carried out a job evaluation scheme which graded the woman's job and man's job as the same (Section 5.1). It was designed to cover all aspects of sex discrimination in the contract of employment and deals, therefore, not only with inequality in pay but also other terms and conditions of employment such as holidays, sick pay and fringe benefits.

The Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value amendment, which was introduced in 1984 to address the inadequacies of the original legislation, has had a limited effect.

6.2 The gender pay gap

The EOC (2003a) reported that in 2002 the national average gross hourly earnings for women working full-time was £10.22 compared to £12.59 for men – a difference of over £2 per hour. On a weekly basis the national average gross full-time wage for women was £383, but for men the figure was £514. The national average gross hourly earning of women working part-time was £7.42 compared to a figure of £8.82 for men working part-time. The national weekly earning of women working part-time was £144 and £165 for men working part-time. Women who work part-time earn just 59 per cent of men's full-time wages (EOC 2003a).

At a national level there has been a considerable amount of research over the last two years regarding the gender pay gap, principally commissioned by the Women and Equality Unit. Research reports of particular importance, providing a large amount of data and detailed examination of the causes of the gender pay gap are:

- 'Key indicators of women's position in Britain' (Dench, *et al.* 2002);
- 'Individual Incomes of Men and Women 1996/97 to 2000/01: A Summary' (Women and Equality Unit 2002a);
- 'The Kingsmill Review of Women's Pay and Employment' (2001);
- 'The Gender Pay Gap' (Anderson, *et al.* 2001); and
- 'Women's Incomes Over the Lifetime' (Rake, *et al.* 2000).

Using the New Earnings Survey (NES), Anderson *et al.* (2001: 13) demonstrate that in 1973 the mean hourly earnings of women working full-time were only 64 per cent of those for men in full-time employment, but by 2000 the figure had risen to 82 per cent, as noted above. The fastest rate of increase, when the ratio jumped from 66 per cent in 1974 to 74 per cent in 1976, was around the time of the introduction of the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the ratio stayed at around 72-73 per cent, only increasing at the end of the 1980s and through the 1990s, but at a slower rate than the 1974-76 period.

For women working part-time, the same source demonstrates an even less encouraging pattern. Between 1973 and 2000, the ratio of women's part-time hourly earnings to men's full-time earnings grew by only 9 percentage points from 52 per cent to 61 per cent (Anderson, *et al.* 2001: 14). Progress has been patchy, with the mid-1970s through to 1988 and the mid-1990s seeing the ratio decrease rather than increase. LFS data are seen as more reliable in relation to part-time work and using these data rather than the NES, the ratio of women's part-time hourly earnings to men's full-time earnings can be seen to have fallen between 1993 and 2000, from 68 per cent to 66 per cent.

In comparing the earnings of women part-time workers and men part-time workers, the LFS suggests the pay gap is narrowing, with women part-time workers earning 89 per cent of male part-time wages in 2000, compared to 79 per cent in 1993.

Differences in data sources and ways of calculating the gender pay gap (e.g. mean hourly earnings versus median hourly earnings) lead to some variation in statistical analyses, but the consistent finding is that there is a persistent and significant pay gap.

Anderson *et al.* (2001) and Warren *et al.* (2001) also highlight the fact that 'earnings' can consist not just of wages but other elements of a 'salary package', such as:

- bonuses;
- pension schemes; or
- medical insurance.

Data from the British Household Panel Survey for the 1990s show that all three of these additional rewards are more likely to be received by men than women (e.g. in 1999 38 per cent of men received a bonus but only 25 per cent of women), thus further widening the gender earnings gap. With regard to pension provision, women in full-time work are as likely as men to be in a pension scheme but only 37 per cent of part-time working women are members of a scheme (Dench, *et al.* 2002).

There are other very specific examples of difference in the way women and men are paid. For example, analysis of the Spring 2000 Labour Force Survey has shown there are important differences in the way that men and women are compensated for working in the evening or at night (Harkness 2002: 1). While men usually receive a wage premium for working in the evening or at night, women generally do not. The wage premium is particularly important for low-skilled men working full-time who can use night work as a strategy to avoid low pay. In contrast, women who work full-time are not less likely to be low paid if they work at night.

Anderson *et al.* (2001: 3) discuss theories explaining the gender pay gap. For example, human capital theory and the theory of dual or segmented labour markets are used to explain the gender pay gap. The report's conclusion is that discrimination may affect the gender pay gap through pay discrimination at an individual level, gender discrimination in employment opportunities and gender differences in pay rates which is a consequence of the gender composition of the job or skill. However, the research did not quantify the effect of discrimination on the gender pay gap. The conclusion was that the main characteristics influencing the gender pay gap are:

- human capital differences (notably gender differences in work experience);
- part-time working;
- travel patterns;
- occupational segregation; and
- workplace segregation.

If the above determines the gender pay gap, research also demonstrates large differences in earnings between women (Rake *et al.* 2000). For example, childless women over their entire lifetime are estimated to earn

- £ 518,000 with no qualifications;
- £ 650,000 if mid-skilled;
- £1,190,000 if graduates.

The amount of earnings forgone by mothers varies by number of children and, most importantly, the skill level of the woman. For example:

- Over £250,000 (60% of potential earnings) the low-skilled mother of two
- £140,000 for the mid-skilled; and
- under £20,000 (2 % of potential earnings) for the high-skilled.

(Please note: the latter two cases are likely to involve extensive use of day care for the children).

Women's differential experience of employment raises issues of a 'glass ceiling' whereby women face unequal access to promotion and rewards, but also 'sticky floors' where women become stuck at the bottom of the pay distribution experiencing long periods with very low pay (Rake, *et al.* 2000: 44). Other social dimensions, such as age, will be discussed later in this report.

A summary of the key findings from the Office for National Statistics derived from the Family Resources Survey (Women and Equality Unit 2002a) is as follows:

- The median total individual income for all men was more than twice that for all women.
- Median values of all three weekly individual income measures (total, net, and disposable) were lowest for women in pensioner couples.
- Median values of all three weekly income measures were highest for men in working age couples with dependent children.
- Median weekly total individual income for women relative to men was lowest for women in working age couples with children, at around one third of that for comparable men.
- Around 40 per cent of all women had total individual incomes of less than £100 per week compared with less than a fifth of all men
- Over half of all women had disposable individual incomes of less than £100 per week compared with just under a quarter of all men.
- Median individual incomes for single women pensioners showed small increases relative to those for men between 1996/97 and 2000/01 and this applied across all three-income measures.

The same report indicates that in 2000-2001, the median total individual income was £133 per week for women and £271 for men. The distribution of women's income had two notable peaks. At the first peak were married women over the age of 60 who had income levels of between £40 and £50 per week. The second peak for women occurred among women over the national retirement age; this group had typical individual incomes of between £70-£90 per week. The distribution of men's income had no distinguishable peak at the bottom of the total individual income distribution. The pattern in male income is more even. One notable feature is the number of men having incomes greater than £900 per week, which was more than five times higher than women in the same income band.

Further sources reinforce the findings of the research discussed. Even though the pay of women has risen since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, the 'pay gap' between men and women remains. In 1986 the hourly earnings of women working full-time in Great Britain were 74 per cent of those of men. By 2000, women's earnings had risen to 82 per cent of men's, but this increase may mask wider inequality. Women are more likely to be in non-manual occupations than men and this raises their overall average pay relative to that of men; the average hourly earnings of non-manual women is higher than that of men in manual work. However, in absolute terms, women in both manual and non-manual occupations are concentrated in lower paid occupations, which reduces their relative pay (ONS 2002).

A report by Dolton, Joshi and Makepeace (2002) analyses the pay gap between men and women in the two British birth cohort studies using the new data collected in 2000 when all subjects had reached the age of 30-42 respectively. The analysis focuses on hourly earning of full-time jobs, where the impact of the Equal Pay Act might be expected to be more complete. A focus on full-time work is also justified by the lack of male comparators for many part-time jobs. Taking the age 30 groups separately, Dolton, Joshi and Makepeace (2002) show that the crude wage gap closed during 1978-2000. They also pointed out that this effect can be explained due to improved human capital characteristics of women in full-time employment by age 30. In an examination of the men and women aged 33-42 in 2000 (the 1958 cohort), Dolton, Joshi and Makepeace (2002) found that men's real wage rose more than women's wages. The study reports that the gap was roughly equal due to widening differentials in characteristics and deteriorating rates of remuneration for women entering middle age. This trend was true for women who had been continuously in employment, than the 42-year old women with lower qualifications who had interrupted employment histories.

In October 2002 the Women and Equality Unit published an update on the gender pay gap (Women and Equality Unit 2002b). It reported that in 2001, women working full-time were paid, on average, 81.5 per cent of men's hourly earnings but this fell slightly in 2002 to 81.1 per cent. In 2002 women working part-time earned, on average, 59 per cent of men's hourly full-time earnings, with this being unchanged since 2001.

The same report noted that there are significant differences between men and women across various age and family status types. For example, comparing the weekly incomes of women of different ages with no children, it was found that

- aged 30-34 99 per cent of that of similar men;
- aged 35-39 75 per cent of that of similar men.

Comparing the weekly incomes of men and women working full-time in couples with children, women's income is on average 72 per cent of that of men's. For those in couples working full-time without children the figure is also 72 per cent.

In terms of further analysis of the gender pay gap, Harkness (2002) argues that women experience a large pay penalty for working part-time. Indeed, both men and women suffer a pay penalty for working part-time, but because women are much more likely to work part-time than men, it is an important factor affecting the gender pay gap. Harkness (2002) estimated that eliminating the part-time pay penalty would reduce the gender pay gap by about 4 percentage points.

The Equal Pay Taskforce (2001) argues that three factors contribute to the gender pay gap:

- discrimination in pay;
- occupational segregation; and
- the unequal impact of women's family responsibilities.

The Taskforce argues that pay discrimination amounts to 25-50 per cent of the pay gap and that it is feasible for the gender pay gap, due to discrimination in pay systems, to be reduced by 50 per cent over five years and eliminated entirely within eight years.

A further calculation of the pay gap has been undertaken by Walby and Olsen (2002). The gap between women and men's education is associated with 6 per cent of the pay gap through to the biggest component (29 per cent) being 'discrimination and other factors associated with being female'. The full analysis can be found in table 6.2, below.

Table 6.2 Gender pay gap

Component	Women's levels compared to men's	% of gap
Full-time employment experience	-7.7 years	26
Interruptions due to family care	+3.2 years	15
Part-time employment experience	+4.1 years	12
Education	-0.30 years	6
Segregation	3.4/7.0%*	13
Discrimination and other factors associated with being female		29
Total		100

Source: Walby and Olsen, 2002

(These figures are an index of the extent to which women and men work in male-dominated occupations. They show that women work in occupations that are 34 per cent male dominated, while men work in occupations that are 70 per cent male dominated.)

An EOC report (2000b) summarised the situation in concluding that unequal pay remains a major source of gender inequality, which affects women of all ages and classes. On average women earn 80 per cent of male hourly earnings and men's average income is almost twice that of women's. A consequence is that women have reduced economic independence and a higher risk of poverty in old age.

In the light of 'The Gender Pay Gap' report (Women and Equality Unit 2002b) the government has taken the key drivers behind the gender pay gap as being:

- differences in men's and women's work experience and qualifications;
- the predominance of women in part-time work;
- travel patterns due to childcare;
- occupational segregation; and
- discrimination

and has announced an extensive response including:

- leading by example (government departments and agencies are required to do pay reviews by April 2003).

- making it easier for women to get equal pay: (the Employment Act 2002, introduced a questionnaire procedure for use in equal pay cases); and
- making it easier for employers to pay fairly (the promotion of good practice).

The Employment Act 2002 also provides a right to request flexible working.

6.3 Job evaluation

Some firms have undertaken job evaluation schemes and reviewed their payment systems in order to avoid falling foul of Equal Value legislation (IRS 1992). Studies have identified a number of inhibiting factors that make it more difficult for equal pay and equal value claims to improve women's pay in the UK. The totally different pay scales which operate in men and women's jobs prohibits many equal value comparisons being made, especially since the law in Britain has only allowed comparisons within firms (Rubery 1992). Case studies of a range of employers found a very low level of awareness and knowledge of equality issues by personnel staff and by unions, especially at the local level (IRS 1992; Colling and Dickens 1989).

Job evaluation schemes have been used increasingly in the 1980s, although they are more common in larger establishments, and in manufacturing, and therefore they disproportionately cover men's rather than women's jobs (IRS 1991). Also, the stereotypes that underlie job evaluation schemes and the under-valuation of women's skills that are built in have often inhibited enhancements for women's jobs (Bevan and Thompson 1992; IRS 1991, 1992).

6.4 The regional picture

Anderson *et al.* (2001: 19) provide a regional analysis of the gender pay gap. In the West Midlands Government Office region, women's mean hourly earnings as a percentage of men's are:

- women working full-time compared to full-time men: 80.6 per cent
(this compares with a range of 76.7 per cent in the South East to 84.7 per cent in Yorkshire and The Humber)
- women working part-time compared to full-time men: 70.1 per cent
(this compares with a range of 64.1 per cent in the South West to 70.7 per cent in the East Midlands)
- women working part-time compared to part-time men: 94.6 per cent
(this compares with a range from 80.8 per cent in the South West to 96.5 per cent in London and Scotland)
- All women compared with all men: 77.5 per cent
(this compares with a range from 73.1 per cent in the South West to 79.5 per cent in London).

The gender pay gap in the West Midlands is therefore not as wide as in some regions, but is still very evident.

This report (section 4) highlights the importance of manufacturing to the West Midlands region and 'The Gender Pay Gap' report provides an analysis of the gender pay gap by industry (Anderson *et al.* 2001: 20). In manufacturing, women's mean hourly earnings as a percentage of men's are:

- women working full-time compared to full-time men: 78.5 per cent
(this compares with a range of 64.6 per cent in Financial intermediation to 88.0 per cent in Construction);
- women working part-time compared to full-time men: 71.7 per cent

(this compares with a range of 60.7 per cent in Financial intermediation to 88.0 per cent in Construction);

- women working part-time compared to part-time men: 85.8 per cent
(this compares with a range from 59.1 per cent in Public administration and defence; to 99.6 per cent in Transport, storage and communication)
- All women compared with all men: 77.2 per cent
(this compares with a range from 63.9 per cent in Financial intermediation to 88.0 per cent in Construction).

The gender pay gap in manufacturing is, therefore, not as great as in some industries, but is still wide.

Table 6.4 shows the average weekly earning of both men and women working full-time at a national, regional and sub-regional level. The data show very striking gaps in the percentage of women earning less than men. The data show that at a working women were less well paid at a regional and sub-regional level compared to the averages for England and Great Britain. It is evident that the gender pay gap is persistent at a regional and sub-regional level.

Table 6.4: Average gross weekly earnings by sex at a national, regional and sub-regional level, 2000

	MALES				FEMALES			
	Average gross weekly earnings total £	Percentage earnings under			Average gross weekly earnings total £	Percentage earnings under		
		£250 %	£350 %	£460 %		£190 %	£250 %	£350 %
Great Britain	453.3	16.6	41.6	64.2	337.6	13.8	35.7	64.2
England	459.2	16.2	40.9	63.5	341.5	13.4	34.8	63.3
West Midlands	425.3	17.3	45.6	68.9	311.2	15.8	41.4	70.1
Coventry and Warwickshire	459.9	13.7	39.3	62.5	314.9	13.5	40.6	70.3

Data based on full-time employees on adult rates whose pay was not affected by absence

Source: New Earnings Survey, Office for National Statistics

6.5 Summary

The gender pay gap in the UK is increasing. This reflects women's concentration in jobs, which offer part-time employment and are low status. Evidence for the region mirrors the national picture. Key themes identified are:

- The pay gap between men and women working full-time has narrowed over the last 30 years, but remains wide. The most recent data show the gap widening slightly.
- The pay gap between women and men working part-time has narrowed.
- The pay gap between women working part-time and men working full-time has not seen such improvement.
- Where there has been a narrowing of the pay gap, progress has fluctuated over time.
- The West Midlands region reflects national trends.

7. FLEXIBLE WORKING PRACTICES

7.1 The UK context

There has been increasing interest in the growth of flexible working practices in the UK and in other countries (Dex and McCulloch 1995). In some cases employers have introduced flexibility in order to survive in increasingly competitive environments. In other cases, flexibility has been introduced to address some of the problems employees face in attempting to reconcile the demands of work and family. Originally, these arrangements were aimed at helping the newer workforce of women with children, but gradually the needs of male employees with a wider range of responsibilities have been considered.

Action to enable men and women to reconcile the demands of work with the demands of their home life has been noted as a relevant and important issue for the European Union. It is undoubtedly the case that societies face a challenge if they are to balance paid work and caring needs (Daly 1996). It is here that flexible working arrangements may have a contribution to make.

7.2 Definitions

The language used to describe flexible working practices has been the subject of debate (Lewis and Taylor 1996). Moss (1996) suggested that the term 'reconciliation' is more useful than 'family-friendly' because it encompasses the conflict of interests between the employer and worker. Fletcher and Rapoport (1996) prefer the term 'work-life initiative' derived from the American literature. The term work-life balance is now common in Britain. The term 'family-friendly' has the advantage that it can be viewed as relevant to all employees, and not just those with children, at some point over their lifecycle. There is, therefore, an acknowledgement that not all flexible-working arrangements will be genuinely friendly to families and that the introduction of flexible policies has been for a variety of motives. It seems likely that working arrangements will have the best chance of being family-friendly in outcome if they have been developed in dialogue with, or in response to, employee concerns.

The wide range of policies that have been located under the heading of 'flexible working' precludes a concise definition. These policies are concerned with:

- employees' hours of work (e.g. job sharing, part-time work, flexi time);
- leave entitlements (parental leave, career break);
- financial assistance (child care, maternity pay); and
- particular responsibilities (e.g. elder care or child care).

There have also been various attempts to define 'flexible working' or 'family friendly' arrangements. The three main definitions are reviewed highlighting their advantages and disadvantages.

Simkin and Hillage (1992: 13) defined family friendly policies as, 'a formal or informal set of terms and conditions which are designed to enable an employee to combine family responsibilities with employment'. This emphasises the need to consider formal policies as well as more informal working practices and that employers need to have the motivation for helping their employees. Forth *et al.* (1996: 4-5) extended this definition, making the point that it is possible to distinguish between a 'focused' and 'unfocused' form of provision. A focused provision is directed toward helping the particular group of parents with young children, while an unfocused provision could benefit a wider range of employees with different needs, including the fulfilment of care for elderly relatives.

Finally, Harker (1996: 47) offered an abstract definition with a key theme being that flexible working policies are about balance, synergy and equity. The concept of balance is thought to be important because it reinforces the distinctive quality of the flexible work initiative, which is:

to provide employees with flexibility at the same time as providing some scope to cut costs for employers through staff retention and reduced turnover.

The issue of gender equity is clearly thought to be important, flowing in tandem with the EU directive on parental leave for both men and women to have the option to reconcile work and home. The notion of synergy is introduced to capture the idea that family-friendly policies may have benefits both for family life and for business although Harker's definition neglects to highlight the corporate impetus for the development of flexible working.

Flexible working arrangements can also be used by employers to meet the firm's demand for flexibility rather than as a direct policy goal of being family friendly (Purcell 1997). Forth *et al.* (1996) observe that family-friendly working arrangements should be distinguished from flexible working practices such as temporary work and over-time where flexibility is of most benefit to the employer (Casey, Metcalf and Millward 1987). In fact, some forms of flexibility, such as annual hours schemes and shift work, can obstruct family life (Hayes 1997; Purcell 1997: 25; Donaldson 1996).

7.3 Employers' interest in flexible working policies and practices

Flexible working provision in Britain is noteworthy because it represents a marked departure from the prevailing corporate norms of the twentieth century. The corporate interest in the adoption of an 'inclusive approach' to business has been highlighted and promoted in the UK by organisations such as the 'Centre for Tomorrow's Company' and is said to signify the ethos of the 'caring and sharing 90s'.¹⁰ However, this is not to say that companies fail to consider flexible working policies in the context of business, profits and market shares (Googins, Hudson and Pitt-Catsoupes 1995). It would appear that the strongest motivation for employers in recent years has been the concerns regarding skill shortages.

The much slower pace at which caring issues have been addressed in the UK compares unfavourably with Sweden, France and other parts of Europe. This has led some commentators to conclude that the market cannot deliver real reform (Kingston 1990). It has also been suggested that the reforms undertaken have been motivated by efforts to control labour supply which involved no more than a repackaging of traditional working practices under a new label appropriate for the modern age (Simkin and Hillage 1992: 31).

7.4 Levels of flexible working policies

The extent of flexible working arrangements can be measured both:

- through the extent of employees who benefit; and
- through the proportion of employers who offer them.

A cautious interpretation of the available information in the early 1990s suggested that flexible working policies and practices were not widespread among British

¹⁰ The Centre for Tomorrow's Company has highlighted research, which suggests that companies who have placed some value on the well-being of employees and other stakeholders have been the most profitable in the long-term (Guardian, 17/01/98).

employers and were most prevalent in the public sector and larger companies (Brannen, *et al.* 1994). This view has been supported by the findings of two nationally representative studies by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) (McRae 1991; Forth, *et al.* 1996). Whilst mothers were originally the focus of flexible working practices, over time there has been increased availability to fathers and other carers.

Taking working arrangements separately, nine out of ten employers in 1996 provided at least one flexible working arrangement; two-thirds provided two or more. These proportions were boosted considerably by including maternity and paternity-related provisions (Forth, *et al.* 1996). The most common provision was flexible or non-standard working hours with 71 per cent of employers having such arrangements. The same PSI study reported that voluntary provision of all four categories of family-friendly initiatives, defined as 'a model employer', (maternity benefits, paternity leave, childcare arrangements and non-standard working hours) and was found among just 5 per cent of employers. The model employer had a very clear profile, being large and unionised. While the private sector made a lower level of provision than the public sector, there was a slightly better level of provision when the private company was unionised and of a large size (Forth, *et al.* 1996: 152-155).

A more recent analysis of these and other datasets¹¹ undertaken by Dex and Smith (2001), confirmed the earlier findings reviewed above. Dex and Smith (2001) found that 'family-friendly' practices were more common in larger organisations and establishments, and in the public sector. These practices were common in organisations where:

- there is a lower degree of competition;
- unions are recognised;
- employees are highly committed as a result of management practices (for example human resource managers have used flexibility to build high levels of commitment among employees);
- employees are more involved in decision making ;
- stronger equal opportunities policies exist; and
- a large proportion of the workforce is female.

Similar findings are reported in a survey conducted by the Institute for Employment Research on behalf of the DfEE (Hogarth, *et al.* 2000)¹², which included micro business (five employees or less) and large firms. The study reports that 62% of workplaces permitted staff to vary their hours occasionally. This kind of flexibility was most likely in the public sector and least likely in the production sector. Provision was also more likely in large firms.

However, we should draw attention to the distinction between policy and practice. An organisation with family-friendly policies does not necessarily commit employers to promoting the practice of family-friendly employment. Culture and conditions in organisations can be such that employees do not ask to take up the provisions offered for fear that their career prospects may be affected. Equally, small organisations may not bother to enact policies but may engage in family-friendly

¹¹ WERS98, DfEE PSI Employers Survey of firms family friendly working arrangements, FTSE100 survey 1998 of Stock Exchange companies.

¹² This study administered three questionnaire surveys; a representative survey of 2500 workplaces with five or more employees; interviews with 250 head offices; a survey of 2500 persons in employment in firms with five or more staff.

working practices. Surveys have tended to enquire about policies rather than practices.

7.5 Organisational steps toward family-friendly and flexible working

An agenda for action within organisations to expand flexible working practices was developed by the United Nations during the year of the family in 1994. This agenda focused predominately upon organisational action and is summarised in Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.5 Steps toward family-friendly working

- monitor recruitment and retention
- develop work flexibility at all levels of hierarchy
- restructure pay and benefits to reward output not input of long hours
- train senior staff to support flexible working
- consult and gather information from other bodies
- provide clear information to staff
- remake organisational policy through a 'work-family lens'
- develop a mission statement
- promote and identify role models and mentors in the organisation
- monitor progress and disseminate reports
- publish externally
- create a family friendly environment - baby changing rooms/pushchair and wheel chair access
- develop links with local community groups

The United Nations agenda makes the insightful recommendation that 'managers should lead by example' and cut their own working hours as well as offering flexibility to staff. This highlights the fact that behaviour and expectations are set by the top layers of the hierarchy and should be the target for reform. Where changes are not made across all sectors of the organisation, women and men who use career breaks or reduced hours working do, in fact, risk being seen as taking time out from the 'fast track' (Marcus 1994). Under these conditions, men and women will remain very reluctant to take up flexible options on offer and the reconciliation of work and home will not be adequately realised.

7.6 Problems of implementing flexible working arrangements

Increasing the number of organisations that offer flexible working options may not be an easy task. It appears that there are three main levels at which employers may perceive obstacles to the introduction of flexible working policies:

1. Some employers may perceive that the business case is against it. This may or may not be true in their case.
2. Secondly, some employers may be committed to traditional ways of working because that is the culture of their organisation.
3. Finally, there may be structural constraints imposed by the size of firm, the labour market conditions or the social policy environment, which militate against introducing more flexible options.

The main barriers are summarised in Figure 7.6 below.

Figure 7.6 Summary of barriers to the implementation of flexible working arrangements

<p>Factors Internal to Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of replacements for career break places • Family friendly policies perceived as an 'efficiency wage' not an employees 'right' • Dominance of 'linear career' or male model of work • Linkage made between time, productivity and commitment in corporate culture • Perception among managers that FFP will cause disruption • Management Styles based on control and dependence • Size of firm <p>Factors External to Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tightness of labour market conditions • Ongoing process of competition and change in the business environment • Working time regimes specific to the industry and production process • Social policies and legislative framework
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7.7 Employers' perceptions of the business case

The Policy Studies Institute study (Forth, *et al.* 1996) reported that equal numbers of British employers saw advantages and disadvantages in providing flexible working arrangements. Employers were most likely to perceive benefits for improved staff morale and loyalty together with improved staff relations. The main disadvantages related to increased administration and the disruption through having to cope with staff absences (Forth, *et al.* 1996). This theme of increased administration through needing more workers or more cover is identified in other studies (see for example Bailyn 1993; Holterman 1995: 104; New Ways to Work 1993: 82). Alongside the view that there will be increased costs, employers who do not have flexible working arrangements have also been found to think that these policies will not give them any significant benefits (Forth, *et al.* 1996; Wilkinson, *et al.* 1997). The view that there will be increased costs may be related to the transition costs of moving from one sort of working arrangement to another, although this has not been researched.

A comparative review of flexible working in Europe that draws upon the findings of empirical studies suggests that costs are an obstacle for the wider introduction of career breaks (Schiersmann 1996). One major problem facing employers is the prospect that they will be unable to find replacement workers, and that any such replacement will be costly to train (Schiersmann 1996: 55). Holterman (1995) estimates that it takes on average six weeks to get a replacement up to the productivity levels of the outgoing occupant.

Schiersmann (1996) also noted that the duration of leave offered by the career break was a deterrent for employers because they believe that staff lost their human capital (i.e. lost their skills or lagged behind in skill development). The potential for the volume of parents on leave to expand rapidly, as a result of more generous policies, was also seen as an obstacle. An over-estimation regarding the number of workers who might want to use career breaks or part-time working can impede employer action. Managers interviewed by New Ways to Work (1993) had been able to overcome this fear of excessive demand; this finding demonstrates that much of the problem is perceptual rather than real. For instance one manager stated:

'I think sometimes that companies worry that if they offer flexible working 99 percent of their workforce are going to ask for it. In addition, they anticipate, wrongly, that it's going to be an unmanageable process. But the majority of people will continue to work full-time' (New Ways to Work 1993: 82).

Research conducted in the early 1990s indicated that corporations continued to perceive obstacles to the implementation of dependent care policies, benefits, and services (Shellenborger 1992). The main obstacles noted in a survey by Shellenborger (1992) of the Fortune 500 companies included:

- inadequate information about employees needs;
- the costs associated with many forms of support;
- concerns about equity issues; and
- insufficient evidence of the long term benefits derived from such supports.

There is also the matter of selling the issues to line managers even when headquarters or senior management has accepted the case for change (Thatcher 1996).

7.8 Actual costs and benefits

As noted above, employers' perceptions that the expansion of benefits would increase costs and reduce productivity may be inaccurate. Due to the potential for error on these issues, there is a growing awareness of the need to carry out cost-benefit studies for the particular organisation (Bevan, *et al.* 1999; Business in the Community 1993). The authors have carried out a separate review of studies on the Business Case for flexible working policies and have found a sizeable number of studies which have found evidence that implementing such policies has had definite improvements in business performance (Dex and Scheibl 1999); for example, on turnover, absenteeism, retention and productivity. Examples of gains seen are reported in Table 7.8 below.

Research suggests that employers' fears that they will be swamped by a deluge of requests for career breaks or part-time working are largely unfounded; very few workers with family responsibilities can accommodate reductions in income (Spearritt and Edgar 1994). Schiersmann (1996) further suggests that because women are most likely to take career breaks and have lower wage costs in relation to men, this cost barrier can be overcome for some employers.

A recent study by Dex and Smith (2001) corroborates the impact of a wide range of the factors discussed so far. The statistical analysis undertaken by Dex and Smith indicate that the following characteristics and the nature of organisations have an impact on provision:

- size of firm;
- traditions in certain industry sectors and the association with traditional workforce profiles;
- the nature of the job;
- gendered workforce profiles;
- market competition and constraints;
- human resource policies and links with overseas cultural approaches to HRM;
- workforce representation and involvement in decision-making.

Table 7.8 Gains reported to flexible working practices

Site	Source	Sample	Research Design	Measures	Outcomes
Multiple companies Case studies of Asda and Midland UK	Bevan, <i>et al.</i> 1997	20,000 employees at 10 firms 6 employers at large firms	Survey of employees and employers	Ask employers what prompted use of FW and benefits seen or expected	Asda expects costs cut and retention to be improved from term time working
Multiple companies U.K.	IRS 1991, 1992	71 employers	Survey of employers' reasons for using PT	Asked employers why used PT, What benefits are	Of 63 firms who used PT, 6% saw productivity gains. A further 6% said that part-time hours had cut costs. The majority (24 of 63) of companies said the rationale for the change to part-time hours was to meet the demand for this working practice from mothers returning to work.
Multiple companies and case study of Fel-pro U.S.A.	Spearitt and Edgar 1994	2000 employees at Fel-pro	Employee survey. Personnel records. Before and after design	Measured employees use of flexibility programmes and their productivity, relationships and work, absenteeism, and satisfaction with supervisors	72% of Fel-pro employees used the programme. Of this number 75% said that the benefits increased their productivity and improved their satisfaction at work.
Multiple Accountancy Firms UK	Boyer 1993	102 large firms	Employer and Employee Survey	Employer perceptions used as a measure of productivity gains.	Employers reported positive productivity gains as a result of reduced absenteeism.
Representative Survey of companies in UK	Forth, <i>et al.</i> 1996		Employer and Employee Survey	Employer perceptions of benefits and disadvantages	Various subjective evaluations noted in the text.
Multiple companies in the US	Hall and Parker 1993.	400 human resource managers	Survey of HRM	HRM perceptions of cost cutting impact.	50% of HRM surveyed thought that practices had effect of reducing costs.

Source: Scheibl (1999b)

7.9 Overcoming the obstacles

Leaving the issue of public policy and business cycle effects on one side, the extent to which organisations themselves are able to address the obstacles to implementing more flexibility for their workforce are considered. The review of the obstacles has shown that the following are genuine obstacles to the introduction of more flexible practices in organisations:

- perceptions about the business case especially in small and medium sized enterprises in view of additional disruption and administrative costs,
- organisational culture, and
- employee skill loss over career breaks.

We consider each of these in turn below with a view to assessing the extent to which the obstacle can be overcome.

Perceptions about the business case

That the introduction of flexible working policies will incur additional costs needs to be examined for each organisation. Unless the proposals are costed and set against any resulting savings this obstacle is unlikely to be overcome. A large number of case studies documenting the costs and benefits of provision are now documented by the DTI Work-Life Balance website (available at http://164.36.164.20/work-lifebalance/search_intro.html).

A study by Bevan *et al.* (1999) documented the costs and benefits of provision in a case study of 10 SMEs. Firms were encouraged to codify their decision making model and spell out how they made the business case. This procedure indicated that firms did see a return in terms of cost savings, staff retention and productivity gains. Another study by Dex and Scheibl (2001) indicates that SMEs have informal conceptions of the business case, which are operationalised by managers, and Human Resource Managers use various decision-making models when applications for flexibility are made by employees. The decision-making models were not written up in handbooks but formed part of a series of assumptions and ideas that managers and employers held about what kinds of working practices were possible within the context of the firm. The typical questions that managers and employers asked formed the general framework (for a full account of this decision-making model see Dex and Scheibl 2001). Typical questions asked were as follows:

Will any costs incur to the firm?

Whether cover can be obtained within the firm

Will the flexibility have the benefit of retaining a valuable staff member?

Have employees demonstrated a willingness to give to the firm in the past?

Size of firm

Is it realistic to expect small and medium sized organisations to adopt family-friendly policies? This issue is linked to the business case arguments as we noted above. It is undoubtedly the case that the active involvement of unions in large and public sector organisations has pushed them to consider flexible working policies. This is a push factor, which is largely absent in small organisations. However, an increase in such working practices will help to promote such arrangements amongst small and large firms as this increases the models available and reduces the transition costs of change.

The role of management

Woodall, Edwards and Welchman (1997) case study of corporate commitment to Opportunity 2000¹³ in three large corporations indicates that re-structuring and de-layering and the competitive nature of the business environment can force the flexible working practices issue down the list of priorities. Guest and Mackenzie Davey (1996) suggest that despite the rapid pace of restructuring, the traditional 'career structure' is still prevalent and remains the preferred mode of working for many leading companies. Managers continue to practice 'Taylorism' chaining people to their desks and just turning the wick up under them to get more out of them (Guest and Mackenzie Davey 1996). This suggests that workers' demands for flexibility may be out of synch with the expectations and demands of some management. Drawing on the findings from the Career Research Forum, (embracing 33 private sector companies including Hewlett Packard, Rover and ICL). Guest and Mackenzie Davey also suggest that companies are least likely to take on new ways of working while undergoing major changes. However, this contrasts strongly with the US research findings of Bailyn *et al.* (1996) who concluded that organisations are most likely to take on board flexible working initiatives while experimenting with more general organisational changes. The strong contrast in the reported findings of Guest and Mackenzie Davey (1996) and Bailyn *et al.* (1996) point to the importance of the organisational context - and most notably the presence or absence of support from senior management - influencing the development of flexible working.

A study undertaken by Coussey (2000) endorses the important role of management. Coussey reports from a set of 12 case study organisations that the main constraint on the adoption of flexible working practices is manager beliefs about the problems of accommodating flexibility with operation and business needs (Coussey 2000: vii). This exposes a lack of ability to think flexibility and work around the challenges posed by flexible working.

7.10 Examples of good practice

In March 2000 the Prime Minister launched the government's Work-Life Balance campaign which aims to convince employers of the economic benefits of work-life balance, by presenting real-life case studies, and to convince employers of the need for change (see the DTI's Work-Life Balance website at www.dti.gov.uk/work-lifebalance). Financial Support is available to employers from the Government's Challenge Fund which can be used to employ consultants to help companies develop work-life balance policies. However, publicising good practice case studies remains a central focus of the Government's campaign as confirmed in the January 2003 Treasury and DTI consultation document 'Balancing Work and Family Life: Enhancing Choice and Support for Parents' (available at <http://164.36.164.20/work-lifebalance/pdfs/choice.pdf>).

As noted above, the DTI's Work-Life Balance website contains extensive examples of case studies which can be searched by region, size of firm, sector or type of flexible working arrangement. The website for the campaigning charity 'Parents at Work' also contains case studies which can be searched by company, size of employer, sector or region (available at http://www.parentsatwork.org.uk/asp/awards/a_casestudies.asp). Both the DTI and Parents at Work websites contain good practice case studies from the West Midlands.

¹³ Opportunity 2000 has been renamed since this study was completed. The organisation is now known as Opportunity Now.

The Government's Work-Life Balance campaign is also being pursued at a local level and within the sub-region Warwickshire County Council has been active in promoting work-life balance policies among employers.¹⁴ In 2002 the Council ran an 'Employer of Choice' scheme in which companies could nominate themselves and awards were then made for those with flexible working policies and practices. This led to the identification of good practice within the sub-region and it is hoped that case studies will be posted on the Council's work-life balance web page (see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/23CDE3B5DA2E5A8280256A9D0038406B).

The following table of case studies is taken from the Treasury and DTI consultation document 'Balancing Work and Family Life: Enhancing Choice and Support for Parents', referred to above, and provides an illustration of the range of good practice examples that are available:

Figure 7.10 Work-life balance case studies

Asda, the supermarket chain, has had its work promoting flexible working and equal pay recognised by the Government through a Castle Award and by the company's own employees who voted Asda top of *The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For*. Asda provides a range of flexible working practices, including shift swapping and job share. Older staff can take a three month unpaid winter holiday. Asda also provides childcare leave, enabling parents to stop work for a short period during the summer holidays, returning later with continuous service and maintained benefits.

Boehringer Ingelheim, one of *The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For*, Boehringer is one of the world's top 20 medicine manufacturing and marketing companies. Some 45 per cent of staff at Boehringer work flexi-time, or from home. One member of staff said, "I am a single parent living 54 miles from the office but my company has made considerable efforts to ensure my working week is spread between working from home and in the office. They have provided me with office equipment at home and while I waited for this I was paid a special allowance to help with child-minding fees: this seems to me a loyalty which, in turn, I want to repay".

SAP Computer Software is the third-largest software provider in the world with 10 million users, and was one of *The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For* in 2002. Flexi-time and working from home are options and 95 per cent of staff say they are trusted to do a good job without management watching over them. The minimum holiday entitlement is 25 days but this increases with service, and workers can take five days of paid voluntary service a year or unpaid career breaks.

Secrets Hairdressing and Beauty Business has two salons employing some 44, mainly female, staff, and recruitment and retention are key issues. A number of employees are working mothers, or women who have returned to work after a break. Flexible hours of working and different arrangements between school holidays and term-time are vital if they are to manage domestic commitments. The Managing Director commented, "The last couple of years have really confirmed my beliefs about the importance of finding a personal balance between work and other aspects of your life. And I think we're showing that you can do that and still run a profitable business".

Source: HM Treasury and DTI (2003) *Balancing work and family life: enhancing choice and support for parents* (available at <http://164.36.164.20/work-lifebalance/pdfs/choice.pdf>).

¹⁴ Information about Warwickshire County Council was obtained in a face-to-face interview with the Council's Business Adviser (Work-Life Balance), on 13 January 2003.

The following, more detailed example, is of a manufacturing company in the West Midlands and is taken from the DTI Work-Life Balance website (http://164.36.164.20/cgi-bin/wlb/display_cs.pl?cs_chosen=1&source_file=/cgi-bin/wlb/search_results.pl&cs_region=West+Midlands&cs_company_size=Any&cs_sector=Any&working_arrangements=Any&submit.x=28&submit.y=9).

“For a rapidly growing business located in an area of minimal unemployment, you have to be good at attracting and retaining staff, especially since most of them have to be enticed away from other jobs. We had to be ahead of the game in offering work-life balance,” says Paul Hayden, Marketing and Commercial Manager at Automated Packaging Systems (APS), of Malvern, Worcestershire.

“We had a lot of *ad hoc* work-life balance initiatives in place. Essentially what we did in the Challenge Fund project was to bring them together as a coherent package and communicate them to staff,” Paul says.

APS also consulted with factory workers about the shift arrangements. “We explored with them all sorts of alternatives to the shift system we currently operated, including permanent shifts and rotating hours. But the end result was a unanimous decision to stick with the existing system,” Paul says.

APS did, however, introduce ‘banked hours’ across the company. In this scheme employees, including shift workers, could store up hours that could then be taken off to meet domestic or other commitments as necessary.

“APS have always been very adaptable and supportive when I have had family emergencies which have necessitated my having time off at short notice. The banked Hours Scheme has enabled me to work and store hours so that I can balance outside work commitments easier and without thinking that I am taking advantage of the company,” says Michael Prothero, Conversion Operative.

Another beneficiary of the banked hours scheme is Conversion Operative Bernard Brown: “The Banked Hours Scheme allowed me to have a much needed family break last year after I had used up my holiday allocation. I worked the extra hours in the week leading up to the break so I was paid for my time off.”

Other work-life balance benefits APS offers include flexible working hours for non-shift staff, childcare information packs for employees needing to find childcare facilities, help with childcare transport, time off for dependent care and subsidised RAC cover.

Dependent care was vitally important to Janice Todd-Wood, Marketing Co-ordinator. “The company allowed me to take five months off to care for my son who was receiving treatment for cancer; and as a single parent I felt that I was able to care for him without feeling any pressure to come into work or even having to consider leaving in order to give my son the full-time care that he needed.”

Starting a family meant that Frances Turner, Assistant to the General Manager, could no longer work full-time. “The company restructured my job and hours so that I could work around my childcare arrangements and also stay with the company,” she says.

Bringing these benefits together as a comprehensive package enabled APS to conduct a successful local PR campaign towards the end of 2001. It is too soon for hard figures to measure the impact, but “all the anecdotal evidence is that recruitment is becoming easier and costing us less,” says Paul. “We now have the employment agencies calling us because they have people asking if we have vacancies.”

The whole philosophy at APS – from top management to the factory floor – is to organise around high performing teams. “We treat people as adults. Everyone knows what they have to deliver – it is up to the teams to decide when and how they deliver it.” says Paul.

With an absenteeism rate of 1.5% in 2001 (down from 1.9% in 2000), high rates of staff retention and year on year growth in the company’s turnover it is a philosophy that works. “Our challenge is to keep it that way,” says Paul, “and the figures show we’re achieving it.”

The above demonstrates that there are several sources of readily available case studies showing good practice by employers regarding work-life balance policies. However, some caution is required as the extent that such policies are being adopted. For example, since 2000 the number of organisations to receive support from the Government’s Challenge Fund is just 226 (http://164.36.164.20/work-lifebalance/funding_challenge.html). Also, when Warwickshire County Council launched its ‘Employer of Choice’ awards letters were sent to 5,000 employers, but only 18 nominated themselves.

7.11 Summary

Research indicates that there is a need to promote employers’ investment in training managers to be able to work with flexible working practices and deal with employees’ work-family conflicts and needs more effectively. Managers’ commitment to such policies cannot be taken for granted. They must be supported and educated about workers’ needs (Woodall, *et al.* 1997). However, some forms of flexible working, such as annual hours schemes and shift work, can obstruct family life (Hayes 1997; Purcell 1997: 25; Donaldson 1996).

8. RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Introduction

This section examines recruitment, training and professional development in relation to women's participation in the labour market. It gives a resume of gender distinctions during the years of school, further and higher education, but it focuses primarily on adults and the opportunities for them to take part in training or development, which will enable them to further their careers. First, however, it considers matters concerning recruitment.

8.2 Recruitment

Gender discrimination in recruitment is illegal, with only some limited exemptions (for instance if a job needs to be held by a man to preserve privacy and decency, or a role in a performance needs to be held by a woman for reasons of authenticity)(Genuine Occupational Qualification). However, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) website contains examples of Employment Tribunal cases which have found direct and blatant discrimination against women in recruitment, including female jobseekers being refused an application form and being told that a vacancy is suitable for men only. Such direct discrimination, however, does not explain the much broader gender segregation and inequalities in the labour market. So, at a more general level, what can be said about recruitment and women's participation in the labour market?

Data on recruitment tend to be linked to assessments of skills needs and do not have a gender analysis. This is the case with the Employers Skill Survey, which discusses recruitment difficulties and skill gaps. Similarly, the Recruitment Confidence Index (RCI) is a quarterly index that has been developed by Cranfield School of Management as a way of measuring expectations of future recruitment activity but does not collect data relevant to gender. The RCI has undertaken some specific research concerning recruitment in human resource departments, but the gender dimension simply confirms that human resources is an area in which women are strongly represented (see the RCI website www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/rci/home.htm).

In terms of seeking to ensure that recruitment practices are non-discriminatory, equal opportunities policies are often seen as the answer (for example see the EOC <http://www.eoc.org.uk/> and The Equality Direct <http://www.equalitydirect.org.uk/> websites). Local government has taken a leading role in the development of equal opportunities policies since the 1980s. The outcome has been highly formalised methods of recruitment and selection characterised by:

- all vacancies being openly advertised;
- a focus on job analysis and job-related requirements, not personal characteristics;
- removing all but essential requirements from person specifications;
- using the same application form for all posts and excluding CVs;
- screening out any areas in the process which might be influenced by individual judgement;
- adopting a highly structured approach to interviewing based on asking the same questions to all candidates and avoiding deviation; and
- training all interviewers in structured interviewing techniques (Harris 2000).

Monitoring workforce composition and identifying under-representation of women within the company/organisation generally or in specific sections or grades, is a

further key element. A study of one local authority found that the use of these formalised recruitment methods led to women's representation in the council's workforce increasing from 29 per cent to 36 per cent between 1989 and 1997 (Harris 2000).

Equal opportunities policies are now a well-established feature of human resource management in many organisations. For example, the 1998 Workplace Employee Relations Survey found that 64 per cent of workplaces were covered by an equal opportunities policy. The survey demonstrated that workplaces with an equal opportunities policy were more likely to have practices in place to promote equal treatment, than were those without such a policy. However, even among employers with an equal opportunities policy, only 35 per cent had reviewed their selection procedures to identify indirect discrimination. Similarly, a survey of 500 private sector companies in Scotland with 25 or more employees found that 82 per cent had an equal opportunities policy, but just 34 per cent of those with a policy had a specific programme of action to counter discrimination (Commission for Racial Equality 2000). The implementation of equal opportunities policies and the consequent impact on recruitment practices would therefore appear to be limited.

A further issue is that of the relationship between chosen recruitment practices and possible gendered outcomes. The EOC, Equality Direct and other agencies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, advocate the use of open recruitment methods including advertisements in newspapers and jobcentres. A review of recruitment practices conducted in 1998 discussed recruitment practices in relation to the changing market for employment services (IER 1998). The review identified up to 17 different recruitment methods. There was, however, no analysis of preferred job search methods by gender nor gendered outcomes of different recruitment methods, although the continuance of word of mouth recruitment clearly has implications for entrenching labour market segregation. A recent discussion of recruitment problems in the Institute of Directors publication *Director* (Merrick and Stone 2002) cited the hospitality sector as an example of an industry, which is specifically targeting 'women returners'. Family-friendly policies and flexible working were cited as key factors in recruiting and retaining staff. There are, therefore, signs of awareness of gender in approaches to recruitment, and some apparent awareness of specific issues relevant to women in current debates about recruitment. Quantifying this, however, appears more problematic.

In the absence of quantitative data, qualitative studies have investigated recruitment practices in individual organisations. A common finding is that employers want new employees to 'fit in' with the existing workforce and use stereotypes to form judgements about people (Mason 2000). A recent study of 24 employers in the West Midlands (Orton and Ratcliffe 2003) found that while there was a wide variety of recruitment practices, different methods were in all but a small number of cases underpinned by implicit, and even explicit, views of whether a particular vacancy was suitable for a woman or a man. Such views were further reinforced by the emphasis on 'fitting in', with employers simply assuming that a requirement of fitting in to certain settings (e.g. a construction site) meant being male, while fitting in to a secretarial function meant being female. Even in companies where equal opportunities policies were being implemented, managers deployed stereotypes, for example that women make good electricians because they have small fingers.

Similar themes were identified in a study of 43 employers and 229 young jobseekers in Slough and Reading (Bowlby, *et al.* 2000). As in the study in the West Midlands, there were a variety of recruitment methods, but word of mouth remained prevalent.

Employers talked explicitly about gender and in some cases even expressed a preference for employing young women rather than young men. Young women were said to be more mature and responsible and more likely than men to possess communication and facilitation skills. However, negative stereotypes were also expressed, for example women were considered to be less confident and ambitious than men.

Bowlby *et al.* (2000) found that social networks of parents and friends were very important to young people in finding their first part-time job. These networks were usually focused around the neighbourhood and school. Using peer group contacts in searching for a job biased information flows since such contacts often share the same gender, ethnicity, class and neighbourhood. The researchers found some workplaces had become the preserve of a particular ethnic, gender and class group for part-time work. These biases in information about part-time jobs are of little significance to the careers of young people who continue their education and have access to associated careers advice or who take the modern apprenticeship route. However, for those who enter work straight from school such sources remain highly significant and constraining.

Bowlby *et al.* (2000) concluded that despite apparently widespread commitment to equal opportunities amongst the employers in the sample, racialised gendering was both explicit and implicit in the labour market practices, attitudes and outcomes of those in the research. This resulted in unequal access to the job market for some young men and women. These practices and outcomes included the lack of implementation of equal opportunities practice, word-of-mouth recruitment which limits job information to those within particular ethnic, social and gender networks and a lack of awareness of implicit notions of whiteness, class and gender embedded in employers' ideas of the 'good' employee.

In short, recruitment practices both reflect and at the same time reinforce gender segregation in the labour market.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Survey of Employers 2002 found that the principal recruitment method is word of mouth (64 per cent of workplaces, local press 53 per cent) although this is by workplace not the number of employees recruited (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: xiv). Also, employers in the sub-region had little awareness of the government's work-life balance campaign (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002: xvii).

8.3 The spectrum of training and professional development

It is possible to distinguish between different types of learning opportunities associated with people's work. 'Training' encompasses activities such as induction training, on-the-job-training, in-house training and 'just-in-time' training; it generally implies opportunities which are close to the job, even task-specific, having a largely instrumental purpose. Such activities may range from informal guidance given in a work context, to a one-off two-hour training workshop on-site to a longer-term structured course over weeks or months taking place off-site in a further or higher education institution or with a commercial provider. Vocational education and training and continuing vocational education are associated with the demonstration of competence, in proving what someone can do at work.

Professional development allows for possibilities beyond the immediate pragmatic needs of one's current post. Originally associated with the knowledge and expertise required of those qualified in the traditional elite professions, it may still be seen as the prerogative of the professional and associate professional occupations, though

the concept of 'profession' has been reformulated over time and is now used much more widely to encompass modern and emerging occupations (Middlehurst and Kennie 1997; Broadbent, Dietrich and Roberts 1997). A useful definition of continuing professional development (CPD) derives from Madden and Mitchell's (1993) research:

The maintenance and the enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers, according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employer and society.

The essential elements of this definition are reflected in most of the definitions used by the many professional associations which have in recent years introduced schemes which encourage or require their members to undertake CPD activity (Galloway 2000). Continuing professional development, then, can have many aims and many forms, but it sits alongside the late 20th century notion of lifelong learning.

This section considers the issue of women, training and development at a national level. It shows that women have increased their levels of training but there are major areas of difference both in comparison with men and between women in different kinds of work e.g. part-time/full-time.

Women have increased their levels of education and training enormously over the post Second World War period. These increases in qualifications are continuing, as many commentators have noted (Corti, *et al.* 1995; Dale and Egerton 1995; Crompton and Sanderson 1986). In 1991, a nationally representative survey found that 26 per cent of men aged 20 to 64 and 21 per cent of women had qualifications above A-level (Corti, *et al.* 1995). Young women have taken great strides such that they are now beating young men in the academic qualifications with which they leave school (EOC 1998; EOC 2002b). The percentage of women employees receiving job-related training increased from 8 per cent to 16 per cent from 1984 to 1997.

Men used to receive more training than women, but the amounts have become more equal. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) asks people if they have received training during the previous four weeks. An analysis of the 1994 LFS (Dex and McCulloch 1995) found that 19 per cent of women in full-time permanent jobs had experienced training, compared with 15 per cent of men. However, training varied greatly depending upon the type of employment status. For example, men and women in flexible jobs, but especially women, were less likely than those in full-time permanent jobs to have received training. This means that while 19 per cent of women in full-time permanent jobs had received training, only 10 per cent of those in flexible jobs had done so. The same analysis found that women in part-time employment experienced less training than those in full-time permanent jobs, but this was not the case for men. Men in part-time jobs received slightly more training than men in full-time permanent jobs. The jobs that held out the best training opportunities, for women and men, appeared to be fixed-term contract jobs.

A recent attempt to measure the extent of training provision generally (Clarke 2002) drew on the LFS, the Employers Skill Survey (which while being a survey primarily about recruitment difficulties and skill gaps, asks employers with one or more employees about their provision of off-the-job training) and the Learning and Training at Work Survey (which asks employers with five or more employees about the provision of both on-the-job and off-the-job training, and collects information about learning opportunities offered and employers' awareness of, and involvement with,

training initiatives). This gives a general overview of training provision, but limited information about women because of the three surveys used only the LFS asks about gender. The evaluation found that:

- around nine out of ten employers provided job-related training to at least some of their employees. The proportion of employers providing training increased with employer size;
- almost one in three employers helped employees learn things not directly connected with their job;
- the proportion of employees receiving off-the-job training in the four weeks before Spring 2001 was 16 per cent compared with 15 per cent in 1998 and 13 per cent in 1995;
- while there has been a rise in the proportion of employees participating in training there has been a fall in the average length of training; and
- as training episodes become more frequent but shorter in length there may be little change in the total volume of job-related training.

The distribution of training varies greatly by occupation and type of employment. Those employees with higher qualifications are much more likely to receive training. Around one in four (24 per cent) of those qualified at degree level or above received training in the previous four weeks, compared with around one in six (16 per cent) of those with qualifications at GCSE level (and equivalent), and only one in twenty (5 per cent) of those without qualifications. People in highly skilled jobs are more likely to receive training – those in professional occupations are nearly four times as likely to receive training as those who work as operatives. However, nearly a third of employees (30 per cent) have never been offered any kind of training by their current employers. Around 15 per cent of firms can be classed as 'low trainers' (no training or training only as a last resort), 55 per cent as 'tactical trainers' (training as necessary), and 30 per cent as 'strategic trainers' (taking a positive and systematic approach to training).

The above data do not reveal whether the training was induction training or opportunities to extend one's skills and enhance career development in the same job or with the same employer. Length of service and mobility are further factors which may interact in complex ways with women's training and their participation in employment in jobs which will offer sustained development. Looking at the wider context in which women may try to progress 'from novice to expert' (Dreyfus, Dreyfus and Athanasiou 1986; Benner 1985), it is useful to try to distinguish between different types of training at different levels, and recognise the part played by school educational achievement.

Clarke (2002) found that women are more likely to receive training than men (19 per cent compared with 14 per cent), but gender differentials in training are more complex than this, as demonstrated in the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) most recent review of the issue (EOC 1998). Beginning with educational achievement, boys and girls have improved their performance at GCSE, but girls' performance has increased more rapidly than boys'. Boys are performing less well than girls in most subjects. Men and women now perform as well as each other in most subjects but in those subjects where men continue to perform better than women, the gender gap is narrowing. However, with regard to youth training, similar proportions of men and women now participate in, complete their training, gain a qualification and find a job. But young women are more likely than young men to be working towards a lower level qualification, to be paid an allowance rather than a wage

and be on YT because they could not find a job or join a college course of their choice (EOC 1998: 4).

With regard to segregation, there are clear gender differences in the proportion of women and men studying particular subjects at A-level. Men, with the exception of Biological Sciences, which is dominated by women, dominate all Sciences. Whereas women dominate the Arts subjects. Gender stereotyping is as prevalent at degree level as at other qualification levels. Men are over-represented in Engineering and Technology whereas women are over-represented in Education and the Humanities. Further education is also heavily gender stereotyped. Young women are far more likely to study subjects allied to medicine, the social sciences or creative arts whereas young men are more likely to study mathematical sciences, agriculture, engineering or technology.

Modern Apprenticeships also display gender stereotyping of occupation:

Substantially more is spent on trainees in sectors which have a tradition of apprenticeships like construction and engineering where the trainees are mainly young men, than on trainees in the hotel and catering industry or local authorities where there is a more even gender balance.

Apprenticeships have always been gender segregated, and those in the Modern Apprenticeship scheme are no exception. Young people were encouraged into areas which already operated an apprenticeship scheme and as a result, traditional gender stereotyping has persisted. Many sectors are strongly gender biased including the two most popular sectors, engineering manufacturing and business administration (EOC 1998: 5).

The government training schemes as far back as YTS in the early 1980s incorporated attempts to provide training that broke down gender stereotypes about jobs. Newer government agencies on learning and training also involve a focus on equal opportunities. Yet recent research on Learning Partnerships (LP) suggests that only 44 per cent of LPs include a focus on equal opportunities (Cowen 2001).

With regard to learning, as opposed just to training, the Department for Education and Skills has conducted national surveys in 1997, 2000 and 2001. The 2001 survey (DfES 2001) results for women and men still show a gap in participation, with 73 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men having undertaken some learning. This gap is mainly due to the difference in the proportion of women and men reporting self-directed learning (54 and 66 per cent respectively), while there is virtually no gender difference in relation to taught learning. The 2001 survey, as with earlier ones, found that women were still less likely than men to have done some vocational learning (63 and 73 per cent respectively), but more likely to have done non-vocational learning (27 and 22 per cent respectively). There has been little change since 1997 in the respective proportions of women and men reporting some learning. While the gender gap has been narrowing slightly between 1997 and 2001, from eight to six percentage points, this is a very small change. Despite an overall increase in learning (from 74 to 76 per cent), participation levels are considerably lower than average among some groups, with one such group being those looking after the family for whom 52 per cent have not participated in any learning.

Callender and Metcalf's (1997) study of women and training included a comprehensive review of published research in the field, with 'training' including all vocational training provided by the public and private sector outside the education

system. These authors pointed to those groups of women who were most disadvantaged in terms of their access to job-related training:

- women with children
- women returners
- part-timers
- women with no or low level qualifications
- women at the base of the occupational hierarchy, and
- women in low paid jobs.

Lack of access to training was associated with a range of barriers: structural, organisational, institutional, and attitudinal, as well as women's own attitudes and the distribution of labour and finances within households.

An apparently high level of training among women was explained by the fact that, unlike men, they are concentrated in industries and occupations which have better training opportunities; it was not due to women *per se* being more likely to receive training (see also Taylor and Urwin 2001; Green, *et al.* 1995).

Factors which limited women's chances of training were

- being employed part-time
- being married or cohabiting, and
- having children under the age of five and especially under the age of two.

This report did not point to *general* discrimination against women in training provision, but highlighted limitations associated with the above factors. Otherwise, men and women seemed, by and large, to fare similarly in most industries and most occupations, irrespective of workplace size, and also taking account of similar types of qualification, being the same age, having the same length of service and ethnic background. These authors conclude:

However, the findings do suggest that over a lifetime, the average woman is likely to receive less training than a man in similar circumstances. This is due to most women marrying and having children (Callender and Metcalf 1997: iii).

Callender and Metcalf's (1997) secondary analysis of the Labour Force Survey highlighted the nature and quality of training. Women were more likely than men to be self-funded or receive training funded by the government. Their access to employer-funded training was affected by employment, family and personal characteristics. Women in services and public services were more likely to receive funding, as were those in higher occupational groups. Those in small companies had less training paid for by the employer. Part-time working was particularly disadvantageous.

In addition, having a child under the age of two reduced women's chances of employer-funded training, (although marital status and having children aged two to five had no effect on this). Black women were less likely to receive employer-funded training, and access to such training declined with length of service but rose with educational qualifications.

Reviewing the provision of publicly funded training in the early/mid 1990s, Callender and Metcalf found that women had been particularly disadvantaged in access to

Training for Work because of its eligibility criteria, funding arrangements and the limited childcare provision and part-time training opportunities. In the Youth Training programme also, the training received had been concentrated in a limited number of occupational areas considered typically female:

Consequently, their training tended to perpetuate occupational segregation by gender which in turn confined them to low skilled, low paid jobs in a narrow range of occupations when they entered the labour market (Callender and Metcalf 1997: v).

Key barriers to women's training in 1997 concerned:

- the acquisition and re-acquisition of skills
- the deployment of skills, and
- rewards for skills

Allowing for diverse understandings of 'equal opportunities', these authors considered that policies to combat such barriers should be assessed against their potential impact on:

- facilitating equal access in the acquisition and re-acquisition of skills
- changing the distributional effects of training in terms of occupational segregation, pay and occupational mobility, and
- how structures to meet women's specific needs are changed and redesigned so that women are at the core of policies.

There is a lack of easy solutions to some of the hurdles which have been recognised. Provision of access courses as a route into higher education has been one approach which has indeed helped many women to continue their education but Tight (1993, 1996) criticised such provision because:

- they are often unnecessary, since many of their participants are already well qualified;
- they are often over-elaborate and too long;
- they help to create and sustain ghettos, labelling their participants as 'access course' students;
- they overemphasise higher education as a destination;
- they sustain conventional perceptions of further and higher education, rather than seeking to change them (Tight 1996: 133).

Polarisation

The sustaining of areas where the (female/mature) student is at the margins in higher education while the centre is occupied by more fortunate/qualified/'mainstream' students has its parallel in the variety of experience of women in employment. This diversity is summarised as follows:

Whilst there has been a dramatic increase in female labour market participation rates across the social spectrum (particularly marked among women with young children) this has mainly been achieved through increases in low-paid part-time working; whilst there has been an improvement in the qualifications of women and an increase in the access of highly qualified women to higher level occupations there has also been an increase in women employed in low level, insecure and poorly paid jobs; whilst there has been a

narrowing of the pay gap between male and female workers, this has only occurred amongst full-time workers; whilst there has been a decline in occupational segregation in the full-time workforce, there has been a rise in occupational segregation in the part-time workforce; whilst a small, relatively advantaged group of women are in full-time and high-status work with participation maintained throughout the family-building period, the traditional 'female' pattern of discontinuous employment in low-level, low-paid jobs persists (Bottero 2000: 782).

In addition, the higher-level qualifications which younger women are more likely to have produced further distinctions within the female workforce:

Women are polarising between those, typically younger, educated and employed, who engage in new patterns of gender relations somewhat convergent with those of men, and those, particularly disadvantaged women, typically older and less educated, who built their life trajectories around patterns of private patriarchy. These new patterns are intertwined with diversities and inequalities generated by social divisions including class, ethnicity and region (Walby 1997: 2).

The importance of age in relation to qualifications is confirmed by Taylor and Urwin's (2000) regression analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey. Employees aged between 40 and 64 years were less likely to undergo training and less likely to be offered training, and highly qualified people (managers, administrators, professionals and associate professionals) had a much greater probability of undergoing training than people working in the office, personal and protective/service occupations.

Research conducted as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's programme did point to gender disparity in opportunities for training and development. One example is Rees, Gorard, Fevre and Furlong (2000) whose research in South Wales was based on a large scale questionnaire survey, in-depth semi-structured interviews and archival analysis. They found significantly different gender patterns between post-school participation in learning and pointed to the complexity of assessing the choices made by individuals:

Many older women describe the ways in which the learning opportunities available to them were limited by local employment, social expectations as to what was appropriate or by a 'forced altruism' with respect to family commitments...Even the younger women respondents frequently provide similar accounts, confirming the points made earlier about the very partial nature of changes in womens' trajectories over time (Gorard, *et al.* 1998). It is clear that, to make sense of individual's leaning histories, it is necessary to understand the ways in which learning opportunities were understood when decisions over participation were being made (Rees, Gorard, Fevre and Furlong 2000: 183).

8.4 Policy approaches

The Kingsmill Report on Women's Employment and Pay (Kingsmill 2001) followed a comprehensive review which consulted the senior management of 100 of the UK's leading private and public sector organisations. It includes a summary of the factors behind the UK gender pay gap, an extensive discussion about the ways in which employers are managing their human capital and statements of evidence from fifty of the companies, trade unions, voluntary organisations and public sector bodies which

contributed to the review. The Report focused on five general themes, recommending:

- *Information*
A greater level of information on human capital management within organisations, through tools such as voluntary pay reviews which cover all aspects of women's employment
- *Reporting*
Improved reporting of human capital management information by both public and private sector organisations
- *Research*
Research on issues such as the loss to the economy of not making best use of women's skills in the labour market and providing practical market driven solutions to business.
- *Tax credits*
The use of tax credits for employers who recruit and train women who would otherwise be unemployed or on low earnings, notably in occupations in which women are seriously under-represented or which sponsor training that allows people to progress from lower paid to higher paid jobs in their own organisation.
- *Disclosure*
Improved rights of disclosure for individual employees to determine whether they have remuneration equal to named colleagues, with the obligation on employers where appropriate to explain why the work is not similar or of equal value, or to confirm that the situation would be rectified.

Kingsmill observed that,

The report highlights the demand for better human capital management in the UK. The overwhelming business case for the effective use of the talents and abilities of women offers the greatest potential for reducing the pay gap. My recommendations are aimed at helping organisations to achieve their strategic objectives and develop best practice processes which best serve their needs.

<http://www.kingsmillreview.gov.uk>

The positive response and support from the business community during the consultation phase of this review was documented on the above web site. The response of the Chief Executive of Hermes Pensions Management is relevant to the present review:

Investors will only put value on measures of employment of women once they have data on which to work. Companies should consider publishing appropriate statistics as part of their non-financial reporting.

In November 2002 the Government's Strategy Unit published *In Demand: Adult Skills in the 21st Century Part 2* which present as comprehensive action plan for workforce development in England up to 2010. This proposes a more demand-led system for workforce development which is 'more responsive to the needs of employers and individuals' (Strategy Unit 2002). It includes commitments to supporting training for people with low skills and to tackling the barriers to training, as well as a review of adult learning. Many elements of this paper may have an impact on women's ability to participate in the labour market and on the part which education training and professional development can play in that. However the document

focuses on the barriers of time and money, disregarding social, cultural and psychological barriers which, as we shall see below, still exist. It does pinpoint the importance of women returners to employment, noting that 'being outside the labour market should not mean becoming detached from it' (Strategy Unit 2002: para. 65).

The clearest mark in the paper of the intention to address the skills of returners (among others) is the following:

Many industry sectors are concerned about the impact on their skills profile of an ageing workforce, at a time when there are fewer young people in the labour market. They are seeing the benefits of creating pathways into their sectors for more women returners, ethnic minorities or older people – and of improving career mobility within sectors. The government is introducing new measures to provide working parents with more choice and more support to balance their childcare responsibilities with work in ways which benefit employers and employees (Strategy Unit 2002: para. 71).

Against the statistical educational record and these broad policy directions, what do we know about the experience of girls and women as they move from education into the workforce and their engagement with training and development as they try to sustain a career?

8.5 Performance and experience

Some key points emerge from the data summarised earlier in this section:

- 1 within the school system to age 16 girls achieve qualifications at a level outstripping boys.
- 2 by and large, those who continue in education after 16 still make choices about their studies which align with historic gender patterns
- 3 the early educational achievement of girls at school is not yet followed up by the later career achievement of women.
- 4 distinctions can be made within the female working population in that women with low skills and qualifications have less chance for training to develop a career.

In seeking to explain the part played by education and training in this wider scenario, a number of qualitative analyses highlight areas of concern. Small-scale studies can in this way provide insights alongside the national statistical data which may help us understand key factors or clarify what seem to be inherent paradoxes. One aspect concerns the possibility that young women's actual experience may not mirror their educational performance. Documenting another perspective on the achievement of girls at 16+, Warrington and Younger (2000) drew on data from 20 schools in Eastern England, and suggested that the girls in their study still felt alienated from traditionally 'male' subjects, that career aspirations were still highly gendered, that boys still dominated the classroom environment, that boys' laddish behaviour could have a negative effect on girls' learning, and that some teachers had lower expectations of girls and found boys more stimulating to teach. These writers suggest that 'the gender debate has been captured by those concerned predominantly by male underachievement, leaving girls to make the best way they can in what often continues to be a male-dominated environment'. Much equal opportunities work has taken place in schools, but a study such as this implies that the success story of girls' achievement up to age 16 may have occurred despite on-going social and cultural hurdles.

Similar obstacles may persist for young women who chose to study beyond 16 in areas that have been mainly a masculine domain. Stepulevage and Plumeridge (1998) investigated the experience of female students on a conventional computer science course, focusing on a specific unit taken in year one of the course. One initiative to increase the participation of women in science and engineering is the Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) campaign, which began in 1984. Its approach has influenced many other programmes. Henwood (1996) took issue with the assumptions of the WISE discourse, arguing that we should be seeking a better understanding of the ways in which subjective experiences of both gender and sexuality impinge on work choices. Henwood (1998) contended that explanations for the poor representation of women in science and engineering tended to stress either individual or structural factors, but neither of these adequately enabled us to understand women's occupational decision-making.

The reality of creating a career even on the basis of good educational grounding is still not trouble-free. Aveling (2000) reports on a longitudinal study of young women who had gone to school in an era of 'equal opportunity' and how they made decisions about their future careers and the ways in which they thought their life-paths would unfold. A decade later, the problem of 'having it all' had surfaced for some of them, in the form of coping with motherhood and putting their careers 'on hold'.

An important turning point for women after a period raising a family full-time comes on their return to study or to work. Indeed, Hughes (2002) uses the metaphors of 'exile' and 'nomad' to explore issues of location and transition that form part of the material and subjective experience of the woman returner to work. Britton and Baxter (1999) explored some of the processes of personal and social transformation involved in becoming a mature student (see also Edwards 1993; Schuller, *et al.* 1999). In a six-year study, Beaty *et al.* (1997) followed a group of Open University students engaged in distance learning and compared their observations with two frequently quoted longitudinal studies (Perry 1970 of male students at Harvard, and Belenky, *et al.* 1986 of female students). These students saw their studies as personally transformative; Beaty *et al.* (1997: 164) note that they were all women at a particular stage of life: 'Learning in these cases is thus something that concerns the person, that concerns one's life'.

Research such as the above points to the need to understand better the experience of women in learning and training situations in education and during their working lives so that the discrepancy between the early educational record of girls in school and the later achievement of women at work can be explained and addressed. The resume of mainly qualitative analyses hints at just some of the complexities surrounding women's experience in education and in their subsequent careers. Taking account of such subjective elements as well as addressing structural factors would seem to be a requirement of initiatives seeking to improve the participation of women in the workforce.

In a review of the literature relating to education, work and adult life Tight (1995) found that:

- the relationship between education and work after the period of initial education had become increasingly complicated
- there was a mismatch between those starting work and the requirements of their employers
- the benefits of engaging in education before re-entering the labour market in mid-career were questionable

- despite some examples of good practice, in-company provision for training and development varied and was often inadequate

Research on work and adult life explored career patterns, both in and out of employment, and the place of the individual in organisations. Studies had focused especially on the changing nature of employment and the demands faced by women trying to combine jobs with family responsibilities. They tended to be encouraged into part-time and short-term patterns of work, which restricted their chances of promotion and training.

Studies of education and adult life explored adult participation and non-participation in education and training, individual motivation and progression and factors associated with success or failure. Growing adult participation in education, training and learning opportunities was linked to previous participation, and confirmed the importance of social differences and gender.

Some interesting conclusions are drawn. Tight discusses the need for broader, interdisciplinary research to understand this field better. The existing focus on formal educational provision, especially higher education, should be complemented by wider-ranging work. He questions the assumption that continuing formal education and training is necessarily beneficial, and calls for research which can better assess the types of participation in learning which will be most advantageous. Moreover, little existing research sought to link the areas of education, work and adult life with individuals' perspective on how their learning connected with their work, family and other roles.

8.6 Regional trends: a statistical overview

The data in the West Midlands Household Panel Survey 2002 regarding qualifications, learning and skills are not broken down by gender but the commentary does provide some analysis, for example that male respondents stated they have higher levels of skill than women in problem solving, leadership, numeracy and IT skills.

Respondents were asked about any learning they had done and there was little difference according to sex (West Midlands Household Panel Survey 2002: 114), although there are some areas of difference. Men were more likely to be undergoing taught learning related to a current or previous job and women were more likely than men to be undertaking taught learning for their own personal development and interest (ibid: 116).

Men in the region are more likely than women to have their training paid for by an employer (74 per cent – 63 per cent) and women are more likely to pay for it personally (19 per cent – 12 per cent) (ibid: 120). Those in smaller companies are less likely to have learning paid for by their employer, thus women's concentration in SMEs suggests possible difference in the experience of training.

Women are more likely than men to study at college (20 per cent – 15 per cent) but less likely than men to study at work (45 per cent – 54 per cent). In total, women spend more time than men on taught learning (30 days – 35 days)(ibid: 122).

With regard to self-employed men and women, self-employed women were more likely than men to say there was training, qualifications or skills that could develop their business (30 per cent – 19 per cent)(ibid: 98).

In terms of barriers to training and learning there was considerable difference in responses by gender. Having to look after children/dependants (14 per cent) and lack of or cost of childcare (13 per cent) are significant reasons for respondents who said they would have liked to do some training but were unable to do so (ibid: 130). Not surprisingly, women were more likely than men to give reasons associated with caring for others (23 per cent – 5 per cent)(ibid: 132).

Comparing progression from compulsory education into either full-time education or government supported training in the West Midlands (ONS 2002):

- 80 per cent of females aged 16 are in full-time education/government supported training compared with 74 per cent of males; and
- 70 per cent of females aged 17 are in full-time education/government supported training compared with and 64 per cent of males

(NB: these figures are slightly lower than for England).

Table 8.6a below, (ONS 2002) demonstrates females in the region gaining better qualifications than males at GCSE and 'A' level, but being below the female figure for the United Kingdom.

Table 8.6a Examination achievements of young people by sex, 1999/2000¹

Percentages and thousands

	WEST MIDLANDS		UNITED KINGDOM	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
GCSE or SCE Standard Grade:				
Percentage of pupils in their last year of compulsory schooling achieving				
5 or more grades A* to C/1 to 3	40.9	52.3	45.0	55.9
1 to 4 grades A* to C/1 to 3	25.0	25.2	25.0	23.9
Grades D to G/4 to 7 only ²	27.4	17.8	23.6	15.7
No graded results	6.6	4.7	6.4	4.5
Total pupils (=100%)(thousands)	33.3	31.9	357.7	346.0
GCE A Levels/SCE/NQ Highers or equivalent ³ :				
Percentage of Students in post-compulsory education ³ achieving				
2 or more A levels/3 or more Highers	24.4	31.3	26.7	34.0
Total population aged 18 (=100%)(thousands)	34.3	32.7	376.0	356.3

1. From 1999/2000 National Qualifications (NQ) were introduced in Scotland. NQs include Standard Grades, intermediate 1 and 2 and Higher Grades

2. No grades above D/4 and at least one in the D-G/4-7 range

3. Two AS levels count as one A level pass

4. Students in schools and further education colleges aged 17-19 at the end of the academic year as a percentage of the 18 year old population. Pupils in Scotland generally sit Highers and the figures tend to relate to the results of pupils in Year S5/S6 as a percentage of the 17 year old

Source: Department for Education and Skills; National Assembly for Wales; Scottish Executive; Northern Ireland Department of Education

Table 8.6b: Highest qualification held by gender, age, ethnicity and disability: West Midlands, 2002

	No qualifications %	Level 1 %	Level 2 %	Level 3 %	Level 4 %	Level 5 %	Unwtd. base N
All	17	12	26	18	23	5	3,060
Sex							
Men	18	9	24	19	24	6	1,451
Women	17	14	27	17	22	4	1,609
Age							
16 - 18	25	12	50	14	0	0	110
19 - 20	10	14	17	48	11	0	79
21 - 24	9	7	19	33	27	4	215
25 - 34	11	13	26	18	26	6	794
35 - 44	15	12	30	16	23	5	821
45 - 54	23	9	22	16	25	5	634
55+	31	13	18	11	22	4	390
Ethnicity							
White	16	12	27	18	23	4	2,764
Non-white	25	10	17	16	25	7	296
Disability							
With disability	34	9	23	13	19	3	233
Without disability	16	12	26	18	24	5	2,802

Base: all respondents

Source: West Midlands Household Survey, 2002 (in Spilsbury 2002)

Table 8.6b suggests that a greater number of men hold higher qualifications than women in the West Midlands region. A higher number of young people are more likely to have no or low level qualifications than those in higher age groups. Ethnicity and disability are also seen to influence the level of qualifications an individual may have, which is discussed further in the latter sections of this review.

Table 8.6c (ONS 2002) suggests more women in the region receive job-related training than men, but men receive a greater quantity of training in terms of hours.

Table 8.6c Employees of working age¹ receiving job-related training² by sex, Spring 2001Percentages⁴ and hours

	WEST MIDLANDS			UNITED KINGDOM		
	Males	Females	All persons	Males	Females	All persons
Any job related training	13.4	20.3	16.5	14.4	18.5	16.4
On-the-job only	4.8	5.6	5.2	4.7	5.5	5.1
Off-the-job only	6.0	10.3	7.9	6.8	9.5	8.1
Both on- and off-the-job training	2.6	4.4	3.4	2.9	3.6	3.2
Average number of hours of training in the last week	14.3	11.0	12.3	14.6	11.9	13.1

1. Males aged 16-64 and females aged 16-59

2. Job-related education or training received in the four weeks before interview

3. These figures may be subject to change following a subsequent regressing of Labour Force Survey data.

4. As a percentage of all employees of working age

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

The Coventry and Warwickshire Survey of Employers 2002 gives limited gender analysis but does indicate that while only 35 per cent of employers had a training plan and 26 per cent had a training budget, these figures are higher than nationally (Hasluck, et al. 2002: xvi).

The Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey data gives a breakdown of the highest qualification by sex of the working age and economically active adult population for Coventry and Warwickshire (Table 8.6d). The same source provides data on job-related training by sex for Coventry (Table 8.6e) and Warwickshire (Table 8.6f).

Table 8.6d Working-age and Economically active adult population by highest qualification and sex: Coventry and Warwickshire, 2001

	No qualifications (000s)	Other qualifications (000s)	Level 1 (000s)	Level 2 (000s)	Level 3 (000s)	Level 4 and above (000s)	No qualifications (%)	Level 2 and above (%)	Level 3 and above (%)	Level 4 and above (%)
Working Age										
All	90	38	68	95.5	84.5	122	18.1	19.2	17.0	24.5
Male	47	21	27	46	55	67	17.9	17.5	20.9	25.5
Female	43	16	41	49.5	29.5	55	18.4	21.2	12.6	23.5
Economically active adults										
All	57	30	54	80.5	71.5	108	14.2	20.1	17.8	26.9
Male	32	19	25	40	47	63	14.2	17.7	20.8	27.9
Female	25	12	30	41	25	46	14.0	22.9	14.0	25.7

No qualifications	No formal qualifications held
Other qualifications	Includes foreign qualifications and some professional qualifications
Level 1 equivalent	e.g. fewer than 5 GCSEs at grades A-C, foundation GNVQ, NVQ 1, intermediate 1 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent
Level 2 equivalent	e.g. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C, intermediate GNVQ, NVQ 2, intermediate 2 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent
Level 3 equivalent	e.g. 2 or more A levels, advanced GNVQ, NVQ 3, 2 or more higher or advanced higher national qualifications (Scotland) or equivalent
Level 4 equivalent and above	e.g. HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent

Note: Trade apprenticeships split equally between Level 2 equivalent and Level 3 equivalent

Source: Local Area Labour Force Survey, from NOMIS

Table 8.6e Employees and self-employed of working age receiving job related training by sex: Coventry, March 2001 to February 2002, not seasonally adjusted

	Received job related training in last:			
	13 weeks		4 weeks	
	(000s)	(%)		(%)
All	47	35.6	27	20.2
Male	23	31.0	12	16.7
Female	24	41.4	14	24.7

Source: Annual local area Labour Force Survey data

Table 8.6f Employees and self-employed of working age receiving job related training by sex: Warwickshire, March 2001 to February 2002, not seasonally adjusted

	Received job related training in last:			
	13 weeks		4 weeks	
	(000s)	(%)	(000s)	(%)
All	81	32.6	42	16.9
Male	41	29.7	20	14.4
Female	40	36.2	22	19.9

Source: Annual local area Labour Force Survey data

8.7 Summary

Overall, women have increased their levels of training but there are major areas of difference compared with men and between women in different kinds of employment. Women's over-representation in part-time work, responsibility for the family and position in small and medium enterprises all have implications for the learning and training support that women experience. Searches of databases of research such as 'Regard' and 'Qualidata' have found few relevant studies. The EOC review pointed to problems with data on women and training:

Any attempt to examine vocational training and qualifications is hampered by the lack of accurate data disaggregated by gender. Many official analyses still do not consider gender as a variable (EOC 1998: 5).

There are also some caveats about the accuracy of Labour Force Survey statistics on training (Felstead, *et al.* 1999), which is the primary source. Training and professional development is an issue that warrants further study. This review suggests also that it calls for investigation and analysis in which statistical monitoring is complemented by studies which seek a better understanding of experience, both that of the individual and that of the employer.

Central concerns then include:

- continued monitoring of the educational performance and the learning experience of girls and young women in general and vocational education;
- seeking to understand the discrepancy between educational attainment and subsequent achievement at work, and measures to address this;
- ensuring that employers give female employees access to work-based learning comparable with that offered to male employees;
- ensuring that employers enable such learning to lead to progression at work;
- encouraging a workplace culture and an environment which is conducive to women's learning and which takes account of their experience;
- prioritising and safeguarding the opportunities for training and development for part-time employees;
- tackling some women's low expectations and lack of confidence; and
- providing an infrastructure which supports people who are economically inactive because they are caring for dependents but who envisage at some time returning to work.

This list is not exhaustive, but it summarises key concerns from the material which has been reviewed as a contribution to pinpointing particular training and professional development issues which could be addressed to help improve the participation of women in the labour market.

9. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

9.1 Definitions

Ambiguity regarding what actually comprises sexual harassment is reflected in the varied definitions of the term, which embrace a broad range of behaviours. Researchers in this area warn that the greatest difficulty is the lack of agreement regarding exactly what sexual harassment consists of, together with the circumstances in which it occurs (Fitzgerald and Ormerod 1991; Fitzgerald, Gelfand and Drasgor 1995; Stockdale and Hope 1997). So what definitions currently exist?

One definition of sexual harassment is: 'any action occurring within the workplace whereby women are treated as objects of the male sexual prerogative'. This definition was drawn from early research into the frequency and nature of sexual harassment amongst women in traditional male occupations in North America - specifically, engineering, science and management (Lafontaine and Tredeau 1986: 435).

A more detailed definition came from a similar study of women employed in non-traditional areas in the UK. In this case, sexual harassment is regarded as 'unwanted sexual attention', which could either be a single event or a continuous series of events. It includes:

- visual (leering);
- verbal (sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions);
- unwanted pressure for sexual favours or dates;
- unwanted touching or pinching;
- unwanted pressure for sexual favours with implied threats of job-related consequences for non-cooperation;
- physical assault;
- sexual assault; and
- rape (Stanko 1988: 91).

A further typology of sexual harassment proposes eleven categories and three general types of behaviour as follows:

- verbal requests;
- verbal comments;
- and non-verbal displays (Gruber 1992: 452).

Yet another model of sexual harassment consists of three related dimensions: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion, of these:

- *gender harassment* refers to a broad range of verbal and non-verbal behaviours that convey insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes about women, not aimed at sexual co-operation;
- *unwanted sexual attention* includes a wide range of verbal and non-verbal behaviour that is offensive, unwanted and unreciprocated;
- *sexual coercion* refers to 'the extortion of sexual co-operation in return for job-related considerations' (Fitzgerald, Gelfand and Drasgor 1995: 431).

A slightly different emphasis is placed by other definitions, for example:

- unwelcome sexual advances;
- requests for sexual favours; and

- any verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature (Landrine and Klonoff 1997: 11).

This final definition of sexual harassment seems to encompass many of the elements of sexual harassment identified in the previous typologies. However, in comparison the legal definitions of sexual harassment focus on two main forms of behaviour:

- the exchange of sexual favours (*quid pro quo*); and
- hostile work environment (sexual comments, leering ogling, etc.)(Stockdale and Vaux 1993: 92).

Within the legal sphere, Hodges Aeberhard (2001) claims that the most frequently cited definition of sexual harassment is that of the European Commission 1991 Recommendation:

'Article 1: It is recommended that the Member States take action to promote awareness that conduct of a sexual nature and other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work, including conduct of superiors and colleagues, is unacceptable, if:

- a) such conduct is unwelcome, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient;
- b) a person's rejection of, or submission to, such conduct on the part of the employers or workers (including superiors or colleagues) is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision which affects that person's access to vocational training, access to employment, continued employment, promotion, salary or any other employment decisions; and/or
- c) such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment for the recipient' (cited in Hodges and Aeberhard 2001: 504).

Notwithstanding current problems with the lack of agreement about definition and the low levels of identification, research studies that have been undertaken into both different occupational sectors and status levels reveal that sexual harassment is a common experience for many women in employment. Some of these will be discussed next.

9.2 The national context

Sexual harassment is under-researched in the UK and generally not understood, but contributes to gender segregation – in particular, the exclusion of women from traditionally male occupations. This section reviews current evidence and considers implications for improving women's participation in the labour market.

Although the term 'sexual harassment' is recent in origin, the behaviours it describes have been around for centuries. In the UK, the first successful case when sexual harassment was argued to be a form of sex discrimination was under the Employment Protection Act and did not occur until 1986 (Hodges Aeberhard 2001: 520). The term 'sexual harassment' first emerged in North America in the mid-1970s and was not adopted in the UK until the early 1980s (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997: 2). Even in North America, where the term originated, a legal definition of sexual harassment did not exist until 1980 (Fitzgerald 1993: 1070), with the first successful complaint in an American court in 1976 (Faley 1982: 585).

9.3 Legislation

Under UK legislation, there are two Acts and two codes of practice relevant to individuals subjected to sexual harassment at work and help with definition (EOC 2003b). The two Acts are:

- the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 (available at <http://www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/legislation/sda.pdf>); and
- the Employment Rights Act (ERA) 1996 (available at http://www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/legislation/other_domestic_law.asp).

Under the SDA, sexual harassment is illegal if it can be construed as sex discrimination. The Act distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination with (most) sexual harassment identified as a form of direct discrimination (EOC 2003b). The ERA only applies when an individual has a minimum of one year's service with an employer and has been dismissed, resigned or is considering leaving because of harassment (EOC 2003a).

The two codes of practice are:

- the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) code of practice on Sex Discrimination (EOC 2003c);
- and the European Commission's code of practice on the Protection of the Dignity of Women and Men at Work (EC 2002).

The EOC code of practice 'makes recommendations to employers, trade unions and other organisations on how to avoid incidents of sex discrimination and victimisation' (EOC 2003b), whilst the EC's code 'recognises sexual harassment as being conduct that undermines the dignity of men and women at work' (EOC 2003b). It defines sexual harassment as: 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work, which include physical, verbal and non verbal conduct' (EOC 2003b). Whilst breaches of these two codes are not, in themselves, unlawful, the EOC recommends that they should be drawn to the attention of a tribunal where a claim of sexual harassment is being made so that they can be taken into account when deciding on the claim (EOC 2003b).

Of course, both legislation and codes of practice apply equally to women and men. Nevertheless, it seems that women are victims of sexual harassment more frequently than men. For example, in one of their advice service surveys, the EOC found that 96% of respondents who were complaining about sexual harassment were women (EOC 2000d).

9.4 Identifying sexual harassment

Although indicative data are now available, precise quantification of workplace sexual harassment is difficult (Wirth 2001: 117). This is partly because of the problems with identification. Despite many surveys indicating that large numbers of women are affected, there are low levels of identification (Landrine and Klonoff 1997; Piotrkowski 1998). In 1998 in the UK, for example, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) reported that although 16,000 people had made enquiries for information about sex discrimination and pay issues in England (with another 6,700 people contacting the Scottish and Welsh offices), only seven hundred women contacted the Commission specifically about sexual harassment - making up about 10 per cent of all caseload advice (EOC 1999).

Clearly, there is still a long way to go before sexual harassment is generally accepted as a problem in women's employment. It may be the case that the low rates of identification are due to lack of understanding of what, exactly, it is. Indeed, many women still refuse to define experiences as sexual harassment, with many (both men and women) failing to recognise it when it occurs (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997: 8). Additionally, it has been found that the use of the term sexual harassment without definitions or examples leads to lower percentages of respondents reporting such experiences (Fitzgerald, Weitzman, Gold and Omerod 1988; McKinney 1994).

As well as problems with identification, gender differences exist in its interpretation. Gutek and Morasch (1982) found that women were more likely to view potentially sexual behaviour as negative, compared with men. Similarly, it has been found that the gender of the observer affects the interpretation of behaviour as sexual harassment together with their personality, attitudinal differences, work and situational differences (Stockdale and Vaux 1993: 223). The importance of personality factors is also emphasised by Malavich and Stake (1990: 80) who found that women with traditional gender attitudes, with high self-esteem, were more tolerant of harassment and more negative towards the victim than others. Other identities, which crosscut gender, such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation also complicate the identification of sexual harassment (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997: 9).

9.5 Frequency

Various research studies provide evidence of the high levels of sexual harassment experienced by women in employment (Gutek and Morasch 1982; Tangri, Burt and Johnson 1982; Lafontaine and Tredeau 1986; Stanko 1988; Fitzgerald, Weitzman, Gold and Omerod 1988; Fitzgerald 1993; Fitzgerald and Shullman 1993; Gutek and Koss 1993; Tinsley and Stockdale 1993; Klonoff and Landrine 1995; Landrine and Klonoff 1997; Piotrkowski 1998).

In the UK, the EOC (2000c: 2) estimates that: 'sexual harassment happens to about half of all women in the workforce at some time in their working lives. Similarly, in the US, Fitzgerald (1993: 1071) concluded that it has recently been recognised as a 'social problem of enormous proportions', with as many as one in every two women subjected to some form of harassment during her academic or working life.

However, these estimates may hide a more serious problem. Some researchers in the area argue that workplace harassment has been seriously underplayed: 'studies have underestimated the prevalence of sexual harassment because the more impersonal forms of harassment and "bystander" harassment have been de-emphasised' (Piotrkowski 1998: 40). Others suggest that, like racism and sexism, sexual harassment may be institutionalised in our society and is maintained by a much wider range of attitudes, values and behaviours and traditions than we have yet recognised. Consequently, it is made possible and condoned by us all (Tinsley and Stockdale 1993: 1).

Research into changes to women's employment in Britain found that even in management positions, women often have to tolerate inappropriate forms of behaviour from their male colleagues which include sexual harassment (Perrons and Shaw 1995: 30). Similar findings came from UK research into women and men managers in five multinational companies (oil, chemicals and computing services). The companies were

selected partly because, as so-called 'Opportunity 2000'¹⁵ companies, they were acknowledged to be at the forefront of equal opportunities policies. Despite this, women were still seriously under-represented at senior levels of the management in all five organisations. When all the senior women managers (N=439) and a representative sample of men were surveyed, a marked difference between the men and women in the reporting of sexual harassment was found, with seventeen per cent of women compared with one per cent men indicating that they had experienced sexual harassment (Wajcman 1996: 271).

9.6 Consequences

Despite difficulties with identification and definition of sexual harassment, considerable progress has been made in understanding the consequences of sexual harassment both on the individual victims and the organisations in which they are employed. The penalties suffered by women as a result of unwanted and imposed sexual attention have been variously identified in research (Livingston 1982; Stanko 1988; Frazier and Cohen 1991; Fitzgerald 1993; Landrine and Klonoff 1997). Consequences for both individual victims and organisations include:

- humiliation;
- self-blame;
- anger;
- loss of self-confidence;
- reduction in the ability to perform in the job;
- resignation;
- transfer;
- demotion;
- loss of jobs;
- decreased job satisfaction;
- decreased morale;
- damage to interpersonal relations at work and various economic losses.

A further study identified three outcome categories:

- psychological (for example, anxiety and depression);
- health-related (for example, headaches and sleep disturbances); and
- job-related (job satisfaction and organisational withdrawal)(Fitzgerald, *et al.* 1997).

A separate, large-scale study of gender discrimination in North America (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997: xii) found that the widespread discrimination against women not only contributed to physical and psychiatric symptoms but was also the single best predictor of those symptoms.

An analysis by the EOC of sexual harassment cases that went to an employment tribunal over a three-year period in the UK found that of the forty-eight respondents who lodged their claim with the Employment Tribunal:

- 5 won;
- 4 lost;
- 27 settled out-of-court;

¹⁵ 'Opportunity 2000' was a business-led campaign launched in 1991 in the UK to increase women's participation in the labour market, with a particular focus on women into management.

- 5 were withdrawn because the applicant was 'scared' or 'distressed'.

The remaining cases were ongoing at the time of report (EOC 2000d). Nearly half of those bringing a case had not made a formal complaint to anyone at work because:

- there was no-one to whom they could complain; they were too embarrassed;
- they feared that they would not be believed; or
- they decided to cope with it themselves because of the implications for their careers.

The same study revealed that many of those who suffer harassment are young women who have been in a job for less than a year, and are often in low-paid jobs. In nearly all cases, the harassment was over a prolonged period (EOC 2000c).

In the US, research found that approximately half of the women who had filed a sexual harassment complaint were fired from American companies, with another twenty five per cent resigning because of the stress of the complaints process or the harassment itself (Fitzgerald 1993: 1072).

One research study focussed upon the reactions of victims to sexual harassment and noted that two of the most common reactions were ignoring the incident and denial. This can lead to continued harassment, sometimes with greater intensity. As the severity of sexual harassment increased the reactions of the victims, which included reporting the incident, leaving the job and resisting the attempt physically, also increased (Cleveland and Kerst 1993: 59).

A further study of sexual harassment, based on a sample of four hundred and forty seven female private-sector employees and three hundred female university employees, examined the outcomes of sexual harassment. It concluded that even at relatively low frequencies, sexual harassment exerts a significant negative impact on women's psychological well-being and, particularly, job attitudes and work behaviours (Schneider, Swan and Fitzgerald 1997: 412).

Research into female professionals in the UK, identified the difficulties associated with bringing a complaint of sexual harassment. This process was compared with that involved with rape. It was found that in sexual harassment cases, the risks are, in some respects, greater. This is because the identities of the women, the details of their sexual histories and their current lifestyle are all made public, and thereby the penalties associated with this process for women were found to be heavy (Nicolson 1996: 128).

Research, therefore, has provided us with evidence of the negative consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace, both for the individual and to the performance of the organisation. Why is it tolerated and how, then, can it be explained?

9.7 Explanations

Since sexual harassment is a complex problem, no single explanation is likely to be sufficient (Cleveland and Kerst 1993: 62). Various explanations have been proposed (Tangri, Burt and Johnson 1982; Pryor, La Vite and Stroller 1993; Stockdale and Vaux 1993). Some of these are briefly outlined below:

Organisational or power-base models, emphasising how organisational structures make sexual harassment possible. For example:

- sexual harassment is a result of the misuse of organisational power, used to warn women away from invading previously male work spheres (Stanko 1988: 97);
- organisational hierarchies represent maps of the distribution of authority and subordination. Far from being gender-neutral, these 'power trees' are structures of gender power in which men generally have much greater power than women (Cockburn (1991: 141);
- different perceptions and labelling behaviour are important in explaining sexual harassment and depend on variables like the level of power of the harasser and harassed; sources of power; the context of the harassing situation; and the reactions of the harassment victim (Cleveland and Kerst 1993);
- sexual harassment is one form of workplace dispute which systematically disadvantages women. Its origins, process and outcomes are patterned by sex, race, occupation and the social organisation of work (Lach and Gwarntey-Gibbs 1993: 103).

However, some argue that these power-based, organisational explanations are somewhat compromised, because findings indicate that much sexual harassment is perpetrated by peers (Tangri, Burt and Johnson 1982).

Sociocultural models, focusing attention on the patriarchal structure of society and implicating the wider and widespread gender imbalance of power in society. Sexual harassment operates to maintain male dominance, occupationally and economically, and is the consequence of gendered relations in society. Consequently, women are much more likely to be treated as sex objects when circumstances emphasise gender roles:

- Adkins (1995) studied employment in the tourist industry and found that sexual harassment and sexualisation of women at work is embedded in the gendered relations of production, contributing, in turn, to the production of economic divisions between men and women;
- Similarly, Gutek and Morasch (1982: 580) argue that sexual harassment is a result of 'sex-role spillover' into the workplace, because of gender-based expectations for behaviour.

Natural or biological models, argue that men and women are naturally attracted to each other and willingly engage in sexually-oriented behaviour at work.

- Studd and Gattiker (1991) propose a model based on evolutionary biology that argues that sexual harassment can be understood in terms of mating strategy.

Variations within this framework include:

- an emphasis on the male's stronger sex drive;
- mutual attraction and enjoyment by both sexes of sexually orientated behaviour in the workplace; or
- deviant behaviour by a minority of men (Stockdale and Vaux 1993).

All of these types of explanation are deterministic in nature since they are grounded in a genetic explanation of behaviour and are, therefore, resistant to change. This model has been criticised for failing to take account for all cases of sexual harassment and (in its original form) most scholars in the field have consequently dismissed it.

Alternative explanations of sexual harassment include: Fitzgerald, Dragow, Hulin, Gelfard and Magley's (1997) integrative model which emphasises organisational and job contexts; Pryor, La Vite and Stroller's (1993) social psychological framework focuses upon particular organisational factors which may trigger or inhibit harassment; Stockdale and Vaux's (1993) application of misperception theory understands the processes leading to the outcomes of sexual harassment; and there is also the contention that sexual harassment represents a form of moral exclusion where powerful group members maximise their own interests at the expense of the less powerful (Stockdale and Vaux (1993).

9.8 Summary

Sexual harassment emerges as a strong and recurrent theme in women's employment, which occurs because of their relatively unequal and disadvantaged position in UK society. It functions at the level of employing organisations to reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality in the labour market. It follows, therefore, that solutions should challenge the underlying structural causes.

10. ETHNICITY AND GENDER

10.1 Introduction: background to ethnicity and labour market disadvantage

There are longstanding concerns that ethnic minorities and immigrant groups suffer labour market disadvantage and tend to live in areas of socio-economic deprivation. Labour market disadvantage of ethnic minorities is evident across a range of indicators, but is perhaps most evident with the unemployment rate, where the incidence of unemployment for ethnic minority groups is approximately twice as high as for White people (Owen and Green 2000). However, there are important differences between ethnic minority groups, with Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black-African groups tending to suffer highest unemployment rates. This is indicative of an overall picture of inequality and diversity when considering ethnicity and the labour market (Sly, Thair and Risdon 1998). In order to capture some of the differences in circumstances of different ethnic minority groups, Modood *et al.* (1997) distinguished between:

- Chinese and Other-Asians – displaying broad parity with the White population;
- Indians and Black-Caribbeans – experiencing disadvantage; and
- Pakistanis and Bangladeshis – facing the most serious labour market disadvantage.

In a wide-ranging assessment of the participation and achievements of ethnic minority groups in education, training and the labour market Owen *et al.* (2000) found that:

- In examinations at the end of compulsory education, Indian and Other ethnic groups tended to perform best and Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils tended to have the worst performances – although girls generally out-perform boys.
- A 'Success Index' calculated by Connexions Coventry and Warwickshire shows that people from ethnic minorities, particularly those of mixed race, Asian and Other origin, are more likely to remain in full-time education following the end of compulsory education than White people. White people are more likely than those from other ethnic groups to enter employment with training at the end of compulsory schooling.
- In higher education, White students are more likely than those from ethnic minority groups to attain first or upper second class degrees, and also to obtain permanent employment after graduating.
- Progress in the labour market tends to be greater for Indian, Chinese and Other-Asian people than for Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people.
- In work-related training, people from ethnic minority groups are less likely to achieve 'positive outcomes' than White trainees.
- Overall, evidence suggests that White people are better able to 'translate' achievements in education and training into employment than their ethnic minority counterparts.

10.2 The national context: differential industrial and occupational concentration

Key sources of information on women in the labour market are the Census of Population and the Labour Force Survey. The former source provides only limited information on the characteristics of the employed population by ethnic group, while the latter has the potential for more detailed industrial and occupational disaggregation, but is subject to sampling variability.

Much of the data on women in employment actually relates to White women, since Black women are so under-represented in many sectors and occupations, like television, finance and higher education (Coyle and Skinner 1988: 2). However, the characteristics of the employed population by ethnic group are outlined by Green (1997), who concludes that for women, as for men, some ethnic groups are segregated in particular industries and occupations (Green 1997: 82). However, she cautions against generalising employment trends for Black women, reminding us that patterns of industrial and occupational concentration are complex and vary by ethnic group. For example, while minority ethnic groups are, on aggregate, more concentrated in declining industries than White women, this is largely because South Asian women are concentrated in these industries (Green 1997: 89). This is in contrast to the picture for men, where White men display a greater concentration in declining industries. Particular features of industrial and occupational concentration of women from minority ethnic groups include:

- A relative concentration of women from Black-Caribbean, Black-African and Black Other ethnic groups in public services.
- These same groups of women are under-represented relative to all women in the professional and managerial occupations that have witnessed considerable occupational growth for women more generally over recent years. However, women from the Black-Caribbean, Black-African and Black Other ethnic groups are over-represented relative to the female average in associate professional and technical occupations (in part reflecting their employment as nurses).
- Black-African women are disproportionately concentrated in other elementary occupations.
- An over-representation of women from the Chinese group in distribution: in 1991 more than half of Chinese women in employment were engaged in this sector.
- A particular concentration of South Asian women (particularly those from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups) in the textiles and clothing sector – which has experienced, and is projected to continue to witness, declining employment levels. South Asian women are more concentrated in manufacturing than women from other ethnic groups, and this includes the engineering sector. Such women are three times more likely to be engaged in plant and machine operative and craft and related occupations than all women.
- Relatively few South Asian women are employed in personal service occupations.
- Chinese women were more concentrated than women from other ethnic groups in growing occupations, while South Asian women were the most likely to be engaged in declining occupations.

Phizacklea (1988: 43) discusses the way in which the UK labour market has witnessed 'the development and reproduction of "ethnic" niches within the larger body of "women's" work'. Her analysis of gender, racism and occupational segregation concludes that:

- Black women suffered high levels unemployment from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s;
- that an increased tendency for Black women (particularly Asian women) to engage in home-working was clearly discernible; and
- that, because of sexism, racism and racial discrimination, Black women were finding it harder than White women to get and keep employment (Phizacklea 1988: 53).

By deciding to opt for 'accessible careers' (meaning jobs that are gendered and racialised), Mirza (1997) argues that Black women are demonstrating the strategic decision to choose an area which will permit entry to a qualifying course of study and possible promotion. Targeting occupational areas like social work and nursing is not, therefore, an indication of conformity to stereotypes. Rather, it represents the strategic optimisation of opportunities and routes available (Mirza 1997: 271).

Asian women workers are regarded by Wilson (1997), as a sub-class of the working class. Consisting of sweat-shop workers and home-workers, she discusses how they are treated by employers as having no rights at all: 'Before Asian immigrants came to Britain, these jobs were done by previous waves of immigrants in certain areas (such as the East End of London). But elsewhere in the country, they were usually done by indigenous working-class women' (Wilson 1997: 31). She concludes that now Asian women have taken their place, White working class women have moved slightly upwards in the hierarchy.

A study into the key barriers to employment for Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people in Oldham (Karla, *et al.* 1999) revealed that the gender divide was more significant than ethnicity when examining overall levels of participation. Bangladeshi females were the most likely to be on unstable pathways, and the low level of participation of Asian young women in employment, education and training was the result of a combination of domestic responsibilities and poor institutional experiences (Karla, *et al.* 1999: 78).

The importance of employment for Black women is emphasised by Mama (1997), since they are so often head of their families. In this capacity, they are more likely to have more dependants, more likely to have unemployed men as members of their family, and where men are in work, wages are low (Mama 1997: 40). She argues that the employment situation for Black women is deteriorating, and concludes: 'In short, what is bad for women is worse for Black women' (Mama 1997: 40).

10.3 Patterns of economic occupational attainment

Green (1997) used 1991 Census of Population data to investigate hours and work, and Holdsworth and Dale (1997) have used related sources - the 1% SAR and the ONS Longitudinal Study (LS) - to explore variations in patterns of employment and occupational attainment among women from different ethnic groups. They show that women from different ethnic groups have different employment patterns. Specifically:

- Across all occupational groups, White women are more likely than their ethnic minority counterparts to work on a part-time basis. The response to child-bearing is much stronger for White women than for most other groups - except Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.
- Generally, it is only white women who have high levels of part-time working. Logistic regression analysis shows that whilst women under 35 with no dependent children were unlikely to be economically inactive, the likelihood increases sharply over the other life-stages, especially for White women with unemployed partners or for un-partnered women with dependent children.
- Among the ethnic minority women, Pakistani-Bangladeshi women were generally found to have the highest risk of economic inactivity across the different life-stages.
- Educational qualifications also played a significant role. Even with life-stages controlled for, Black-Caribbean and Black Other, and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were about 13 times more likely to be economically inactive than the reference group (the group least likely to be constrained

from employment, namely, those who were under 35, UK-born, un-partnered and had degrees with no dependent children, of whom over 95% were economically active).

- White women were markedly more likely than the other ethnic groups to work part-time rather than full-time if they had dependent children or if they were over the age of 35 or they were single-mothers.
- The results also showed that cultural norms were being modified by socio-economic factors. Thus, even though Pakistani-Bangladeshi women were, as a group, the most disadvantaged, 97% of the reference group were economically active.

Holdsworth and Dale (1997) then used the LS data to show that minority ethnic women had higher levels of full-time working over child-bearing, and one may expect that to be advantageous to their career progression. Detailed analysis shows, however, that this was not the case. Even though more women from minority ethnic groups who had children between these dates were working full-time at both time points, they did not benefit from working full-time. Ethnic minority groups were doubly disadvantaged because, as the authors say, 'they are more likely than White women to retain a full-time profile and be in manual jobs' (Holdsworth and Dale 1997: 453).

10.4 Travel-to-work patterns

There is a good deal of statistical and research evidence to show that women tend to work closer to home than men (Pickup 1990; Green, *et al.* 1986). According to the 1991 Census of Population, 39 per cent of women worked within 2 kilometres of their home and 57 per cent worked within 4 kilometres of their home (the respective percentages for men were 24 per cent and 40 per cent). Analyses of distance to work information from the 1991 Census of Population shows:

- Overall, White women tend to travel shorter distances to work than their counterparts from ethnic minority groups. However, this largely reflects the greater propensity for White women to work on a part-time basis (part-time workers tend to travel shorter distances to work than full-time workers).
- Amongst women travelling the longest distances to work, White women are over-represented relative to those from ethnic minority groups.
- South Asian women are most likely to work closest to their homes.

Women from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be reliant on public transport for journeys-to-work than White women. The greater concentration of women from ethnic minority groups in urban areas (where public transport networks are best developed) can explain part, but not all, of this differential. According to the 1991 Census of Population, 44 per cent of women from ethnic minority groups used public transport to get to work, compared with 20 per cent of White women.

10.5 Ethnic minority women in Coventry and Warwickshire

At the time of writing, the 1991 Census of Population provides the most comprehensive information on the size and distribution of the population by ethnicity at local and micro area levels. When the results of the 2001 Census of Population are published, a new 'snapshot' will be available.

In inter-censal years, the Labour Force Survey provides some information on the population by ethnic group, although the scope for disaggregation of data to sub-regional level is limited. In 2001-2 the minority ethnic proportion of the population resident in Coventry was 11.6 per cent and in Warwickshire was 3.1 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent in the West Midlands and 6.8 per cent in the UK.

Amongst minority ethnic groups residents of Asian or Asian British groups predominate at local level.¹⁶

According to the 2001-2002 Local Area Labour Force Survey, 40,000 residents of the population aged 16 years and over in Coventry and Warwickshire were from non-white ethnic groups. This represents 6.2 per cent of this age group, and 7.1 per cent of the population of working age. As nationally, the non-white population is younger than average. Hence, non-white residents are estimated to accounted for 12.9 per cent of the population in Coventry and Warwickshire aged 20-24 years, but only for 4 per cent of those aged 50 years and over.

In Coventry and Warwickshire the working age employment rate for non-white females of working age was 50 per cent, compared with 74.3 per cent for white females of working age. This differential is greater than that recorded for males: the employment rate for non-white males was 65.3 per cent, compared with 82 per cent for white males. Small sample sizes mean that it is not possible to make further disaggregations by different ethnic minority groups.

10.6 Summary

Any examination of the relationship of women and the labour market needs to take account of ethnicity. Women's position in the labour market continues to be different and unequal, compared with men. These trends are exacerbated for some ethnic groups. Coyle and Skinner (1988: 2) stress the fundamental limitations of the concept of equal opportunities for women because it fails to challenge other major divisions, like class and ethnicity, on which organisational hierarchies are premised. It is important to avoid regarding women as a homogeneous group and to acknowledge the extent and degrees of inequality within this group.

In particular, women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups emerge as particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Indeed, women from these groups are more likely to withdraw from the labour market after marriage and child-bearing. Those in employment are more likely to be engaged in declining industries and occupations – although the industries and occupations where they are over-represented include manufacturing and operative positions, where men outnumber women overall.

The ethnic minority population retains a more youthful age profile than the White population. A greater proportion of young entrants to the labour market are from ethnic minority groups than formerly. However, the ageing of the ethnic minority workforce is an emerging issue. Owen *et al.* (2000: 17) note that the Black-Caribbean and Indian ethnic groups are further advanced on this path than other minority ethnic groups, as more people from the original 'migrant' generation reach late middle age. From a policy perspective it is pertinent to note that 'age' may act as an additional discriminatory factor in the labour market for these older women from ethnic minority groups.

¹⁶ LFS sample sizes are too small to enable a more detailed breakdown of the population by broad minority ethnic group.

11. DISABILITY AND GENDER

11.1 Defining disability

A theme of this report is that women are not a homogenous group and that in considering women's participation in the labour market it is important to recognise differences between women, not simply differences between men and women. Women's experience of the labour market can be mediated by other factors in addition to gender. This section considers disability as a dimension of women's experience of employment.

'Disability' is a contested term, with there being two main models: the medical and the social. The definition set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) states that disability is:

'A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.¹⁷

The DDA definition, therefore, uses the medical definition of disability, which refers to a restriction of the ability to perform a given human activity. The medical model of disability defines disability in terms of the medical impairment. Thus, the functional limitation of the disabled person explains the problems that an individual faces in trying to get around or access a building. The social model, which is embraced by the disability movement, accepts the reality of the physical impairment highlighted by the medical model, but maintains that the problems that disabled people face are socially created and are often the product of discrimination. For example, a person with impairment caused by the medical condition emphysema is categorised as disabled because they cannot get on a bus unaided or use a building without a lift. The bus and the building could be redesigned to be accessible to all. In summary, disability is the product of social discrimination not merely a physical impairment.

11.2 The national context

The Office for National Statistics' 'Labour Market trends' has throughout 2002 provided data on disability. The most recent data on the social and demographic characteristics of disabled people in the UK and the relative participation of disabled people in the labour market draws on 2001 LFS data (Smith and Twomey 2002). The picture that is presented is of disabled people, when in work, are more likely to be facing unemployment, more likely to work part-time, be under-represented in senior positions. However, it should also be noted that there are some significant differences between the experiences of women and men with disabilities.

The key findings can be summarised as follows:

- In 2001 nearly one in five people of working age in private households had a current long-term disability (this equates to 7.1 million people of whom 3.7 million were men and 3.4 million were women).
- In 2001 48 per cent of disabled men were in employment (compared to 81 per cent of non-disabled men) and 45 per cent of disabled women were in employment (compared to 75 per cent of non-disabled women).

¹⁷ The Disability Discrimination Act definition of Disability. DL60 October 1996.

- The ILO unemployment rate for disabled people in 2001 was 8.3 per cent compared to 4.8 per cent for non-disabled people.
- For disabled men the unemployment rate was almost twice as high than for non-disabled men (9.7 per cent compared with 5.0 per cent). For women the gap was narrower (6.6 per cent compared with 4.5 per cent).
- Employment rates for disabled men and women increased by 2.7 percentage points between 1998 and 2001.
- Disabled people were less likely to work full-time than non-disabled people. More disabled women than disabled men expressed a desire to work longer hours (women 9.5 per cent, men 6.6 per cent).
- More economically inactive disabled people (32 per cent) said they would like to be in paid employment than non-disabled economically inactive people (26 per cent). The difference between women in these groups was less marked with 27 per cent of economically inactive disabled women saying they would like to work compared with 26 per cent of economically inactive non-disabled women.
- The disability rates for men and women of working age stand at 19 per cent, but for most age groups women have slightly higher disability rates than men.
- The proportion of people reporting a disability increased from 17.8 per cent in 1998 to 19.3 per cent in 2001. The reporting of disability has grown faster than the general population for both sexes with the exception of women in the 16-19 age group.
- There was a strong association between the reporting of disability and the age of respondents, with the incidence of disability increasing with age. For example, fewer than 10 per cent of men and women in the 16-19 age group had a disability but this increased to around a third of both men and women in the 50 to retirement age group. Due to the relationship between age and disability the employment rates of men and women over 50 with a disability are very low.
- There are fewer than average disabled people among managers and senior officials, professional, professional associate and technical occupations, and sales and customer service occupations. There are higher than average proportions of disabled people in administrative and secretarial, skilled trades, personal services, and elementary occupations. For example, 12 per cent of working disabled people were managers and senior officials (compared with 14 per cent of the total employed population) and 15 per cent were in elementary occupations (compared with 12 per cent of the total working population).

The following table shows that for both men and women, those with mental illnesses, learning difficulties or psychological impairments are less likely to be in employment than those with a physical disability. Disabled people with skin conditions and allergies had the highest employment rate (69.3 per cent) followed by those with hearing difficulties (68.1 per cent) compared with just 18.4 per cent of those with mental illness.

Table 11.2 People in employment by sex, whether disabled and type of health problem: United Kingdom, Autumn 2001, not seasonally adjusted

	All		Men		Women	
	In Employment (000s)	Employment Rate %	In Employment (000s)	Employment Rate %	In Employment (000s)	Employment Rate %
All people of working age*	27,590	74.8	15,407	79.6	12,183	69.5
Not Disabled	24,180	81.2	13,530	86.6	10,650	75.3
Disabled by type of long-term health problem						
Musculo-skeletal problems	1,128	45.6	629	48.7	499	42.2
Back or neck	588	46.1	315	49.3	273	42.8
Leg or feet	345	43.5	210	46.1	135	40.1
Arms, hands	195	48.4	104	53.1	91	44.0
Difficulty in seeing	60	44.3	41	49.3	19	36.3
Difficulty in hearing	81	68.1	48	74.1	33	61.0
Speech impediment	*	*	*	*	*	*
Skin condition, allergies	91	69.3	52	71.6	39	66.4
Chest, breathing problems	592	64.0	309	67.2	283	60.8
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	402	50.3	264	50.2	137	50.5
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	177	52.0	98	59.2	79	45.2
Diabetes	217	65.1	145	70.8	71	56.0
Epilepsy	70	44.0	38	47.5	32	40.5
Mental illness	117	18.4	56	18.5	61	18.3
Depression, bad nerves	96	22.2	43	22.2	53	22.2
Mental illness, phobia, panics	21	10.4	13	11.9	*	*
Learning difficulties	32	21.4	23	23.2	*	*
Progressive illness n.e.c.	121	39.0	54	37.8	67	40.0
Other problems, disabilities	308	52.9	109	48.6	199	55.7
All disabled ^{ab}	3,410	47.9	1,876	50.3	1,533	45.2

a Working age is defined as 16-64 for men and 16-59 for women

b includes those who did not state the nature of their health problem or disability

* Sample size too small for a reliable estimate

Source: Labour Force Survey (2001)

Ethnicity is an additional factor that needs to be considered when examining people with disabilities. Those from an ethnic minority background (around 7 per cent of the total disabled population) have lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates relative to their white counterparts. The unemployment rate for disabled white people is 7.7 per cent, for ethnic minority disabled people the figure is 18.9 per cent.

With regard to pay, employed disabled people have lower average hourly earnings than their non-disabled peers, even after taking account of differences in age, education and occupation (Burchardt 2000). This gap has grown since 1985.

11.3 The regional picture

The same Office for National Statistics report (Smith and Twomey 2002) notes that the number of disabled people, of working age, as a proportion of the total working-age population varies markedly across regions from 16 per cent in the South East to 24 per cent in the North East and Merseyside. The figure for the West Midlands is 19.9 per cent which is very close to the UK total of 19.3 per cent. The reasons for regional variations are not explored further but the authors contend that they are likely to be associated with regional variation in: the distribution of industries; the availability of, and access to, health care and adequate housing; lifestyle and dietary behaviour; levels of education; and the age distribution of the population.

The 2002 Region in Figures for the West Midlands (Causer and Williams 2002) indicates that disabled women in the West Midlands are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled women in the region (Table 12.3a).

Table 11.3a ILO unemployment rates for people of working age¹ by whether they have a disability²: West Midlands, Spring 2002³

	Percentages		
	Males	Females	All Persons
All	5.7	5.2	5.5
People with disabilities	11.1	10.1	10.7
Others	4.8	4.4	4.6

1 Males aged 16-64 and females 16-59

2 People with disabilities are defined as those with a long-term health problem or disability, which is expected to last at least a year or more and which either affects the amount and/or kind of work the respondent might do and/or substantially affects their ability to carry out normal day to day activities

3 These Labour Force Survey estimates are not seasonally adjusted and have not been adjusted to take account of the recent Census 2001 results. ONS are working toward producing unweighted LFS estimates based on the findings of the 2001 Census, which will be available from Summer 2003

Additionally, it is indicated (Table 11.3b) that the proportion of households in the West Midlands in receipt of incapacity or disablement benefit is virtually the same as for the UK (15 per cent and 16 per cent respectively).

Table 11.3b Households in receipt of benefit¹ by type of benefit, 2000-2001

	Percentage of all households	
	WEST MIDLANDS	GREAT BRITAIN
Family Credit/WFTC ² or Income Support	18	16
Housing Benefit	17	21
Council Tax Benefit	22	21
Jobseekers Allowance	4	3
Retirement Pension	30	29
Incapacity or Disablement Benefits ³	15	16
Child Benefit	29	29
Any benefit	70	69

1 Households in which at least one member is currently in receipt of benefit

2 Working Families Tax Credit replaced Family Credit in October 1999

3 Incapacity Benefit, Disability Living Allowance (Care and Mobility components), Severe Disablement Allowance, Disabled Person's Tax Credit, Industrial injuries Disability Benefit, War Disablement Pension, Disability Working Allowance and Attendance Allowance. Disabled Person's Tax Credits replaced Disability Working Allowance in October 1999.

Source: Family Resources Survey, Department for Work and Pensions

In the 'West Midlands Household Panel Survey 2000: Regional Report' (WMHS) 6 per cent of respondents (1,240 individuals) had a long-term illness or disability. This under-representation of people with disabilities was because the sample only included people seeking work or who would accept a job if offered one, as compared with LFS data which include all people of working age. This may explain why the WMHS found no variation in the existence of disability by sex, although it did find the likelihood of *disability increasing with age*. The lack of analysis by gender is a further limitation. The main relevant points from the survey can be concluded:

- People with a disability/long-term illness were less likely to be in full-time employment than the non-disabled (30 per cent and 55 per cent respectively).
- Respondents with a disability were more likely than the non-disabled to be claiming JSA (12 per cent compared with 3 per cent), economically inactive (13 per cent compared with 2 per cent) or looking after the home (14 per cent compared with 6 per cent)
- 21 per cent of people with disabilities cited discrimination as a barrier to getting a job.
- People with disabilities were more likely to have no qualifications (44 per cent compared to 28 per cent of all respondents) and less likely to be qualified at higher levels i.e. NVQ Level 4 and above (15 per cent compared with 23 per cent).
- Disabled people were overall less likely to be engaged in learning than the non-disabled (54 per cent compared with 66 per cent), although they were more likely to be undertaking taught learning because of personal interest and learning relating to a job they may wish to do in the future.
- People with disabilities were less likely than the non-disabled to have their taught training paid for by an employer.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Survey of Employers 2002 (Hasluck, *et al.* 2002) asked respondents if they employed staff with learning disabilities. Around 7 per cent of workplaces reported that they employed people with learning disabilities and, on average, employed two such people.

In the same survey respondents were asked if they had recruited anyone from a specified list of potential job hunters. Young school leavers were most likely to be mentioned (52 per cent of recruiters) followed by older workers (aged 45 years or older)(48 per cent). The groups that employers were least likely to have recruited from were New Deal clients (5 per cent), ex-offenders (5 per cent), and people with disabilities (7 per cent). Approximately 11 per cent of recruiters mentioned that they had taken on someone with learning difficulties.

11.4 Disability and employment: other studies

The report from the Office for National Statistics (Smith and Twomey 2002) cited at the start of this section, also noted that an exploration of labour demand and supply issues for disabled people is limited by a lack of data sources. Very little data exist on employers' attitudes to disabled people or the attitudes of disabled people to work. The findings of a previous review of research on disabled people and employment (Barnes, Thorton and Maynard-Campbell 1998) concluded that:

- there is an unmet need for facts and figures on employment;
- the disabled do not have 'a voice' in many research projects;
- most research is not tailored to meet the needs of employers;
- new technology is not helping to increase employment opportunities as much as it could;
- the lack of support from other people is often a problem;
- exiting employment projects do not always meet with the requirements of disabled people;
- too many projects concentrated on training and entering work rather than sustaining employment; and
- too much emphasis is on disabled people needing to change rather than employers.

Analysis of the British Household Panel Survey has also led to the conclusion that there is a need for more research on employment and disability, and in particular an emphasis on improving job retention by disabled people, because one in three disabled people were found to be unemployed again within a year of starting work (Burchardt 2000). The last decade and a half has seen the emergence of a 'specialist supported employment sector' for disabled people but research (O'Bryan, *et al.* 2000) found that:

- access to supported employment remains difficult for large numbers of disabled people who might benefit;
- funding for supported employment is fragile and fragmented;
- the benefit system and other related systems continue to cause major problems both for individuals and the development of supported employment; and
- there is as yet little infrastructure to support the development of the sector across the UK.

A recent study by Schneider and Dutton (2002) examined the attitudes of employers towards disabled staff. The study conducted interviews with 100 employers and 100

Disability Employment Advisors across the UK. Some of the employers reported that the employment of disabled people increased costs and administration and reduced productivity. People with learning difficulties were believed to have the highest training needs and thereby incur high costs. Some employers also reported low levels of satisfaction with the level of assistance provided by the Supported Placement Scheme, which preceded the Workstep programme. However, analysis of the combined views of Disability Employment Advisors and employers gave broadly positive findings indicating that:

- only 8% of the sample thought that employing disabled people was not cost-effective;
- only 9% thought that disabled people took more sick leave; and
- less than 25% thought that disabled people tend to be less qualified for their job.

Employers also reported specific benefits to employing disabled people notably that this employee group tends to show more loyalty to their employer than the non-disabled. Another gain for employers is that a disabled person is often cheaper to employ because employers only pay a percentage of their salary (costs being offset by Access to Work, Workstep/ Supported Placement Scheme). The study raised some concern about the long-term impact of the National Minimum Wage on the willingness of employers to take on disabled staff in the context of decreased funds available to offset initial set up costs. And it should be noted that these were employers who already employed disabled people. Other studies have found that employers are less likely to select a person considered to have an illness or impairment because they are thought to be less productive; employers associate disability with risk and uncertainty (Heenan 2002).

A larger scale study of employers (1,005 firms) was undertaken for the Disability Rights Commission, but the sample only included organisations with less than 50 employees. The research found that small employers have only a sketchy understanding of the DDA's provisions and hardly any small firms have changed their policies and practices as a result of the Act (available at www.drc-gb.org/drc/informationandlegislation/Page348.asp). This is typically because the organisations believe they do not discriminate, or that the Act is not 'relevant' to them as they say disabled people do not apply to work in their business.

Where anxieties were expressed about the costs of compliance, these typically related to the costs of physical adjustments. These anxieties were not borne out, however, by the experience of those small firms who had disabled employees already. Over half of the organisations pointed out that they had disabled employees for whom no adjustments whatsoever were necessary. Where adjustments were made, these were found to be commonly related to changes in working hours or arrangements, and most costed the employer nothing.

The study revealed a significant and widespread need among small employers for better information, advice and support on the Act, and on the implications for employers of employing disabled people.

Another source of support for disabled people entering employment is the New Deal. There has been a substantial body of critical and negative literature on the impact of the New Deal for disabled people (Heenan 2002). However, Heenan's (2002) own qualitative study of disabled people who re-entered the labour market through the Personal Advisor Scheme (PAS) was more positive. Many of the disabled people

interviewed had found the emotional support of the PAS scheme very helpful and was an approach that they preferred to that previously taken by the Employment Service. The continuous nature of the PAS support in the workplace, once a job had started, was seen to be vital by disabled New Deal participants. This helped to allay fears on re-entry to the world of work. The high level of personal investment from PAS was also valued very highly. This challenges the view that PASs are merely marketing agents for the disabled, as argued in other research, although a finding common to other studies was that employers were identified as a major stumbling block for disabled people trying to enter the labour market.

11.5 Summary

Research demonstrates the disadvantages faced by disabled people in the labour market. Women are more likely than men to be disabled so gendered disadvantage in the labour market is compounded further for women with a disability. Regional data are limited, but show no particular divergence from the national position (Table 11.5). A lack of research on disability and employment, and particularly the experience of women with disabilities is evident. From what research has been undertaken two particular themes emerge: the importance of employers' attitudes towards disabled people, and the importance of not just assisting disabled people in finding a job but providing support once a job starts.

Table 11.5 ILO unemployment rates for people of working age¹ by whether they have a disability², Spring 2001

percentages

	WEST MIDLANDS			UNITED KINGDOM		
	Males	Females	All persons	Males	Females	All persons
All	5.6	4.4	5.1	5.3	4.3	4.9
People with disabilities	12.2	8.3	10.5	9.4	6.8	8.3
Others	4.6	3.8	4.3	4.7	3.9	4.4

1 Males aged 16-64 and females aged 16-59.

2 People with disabilities are defined as those with a long-term health problem or disability which is expected to last at least a year or more and which either affects the amount and/or kind of work the respondent might do and/or substantially affects their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

12. AGE AND GENDER

12.1 The importance of demography: an introduction

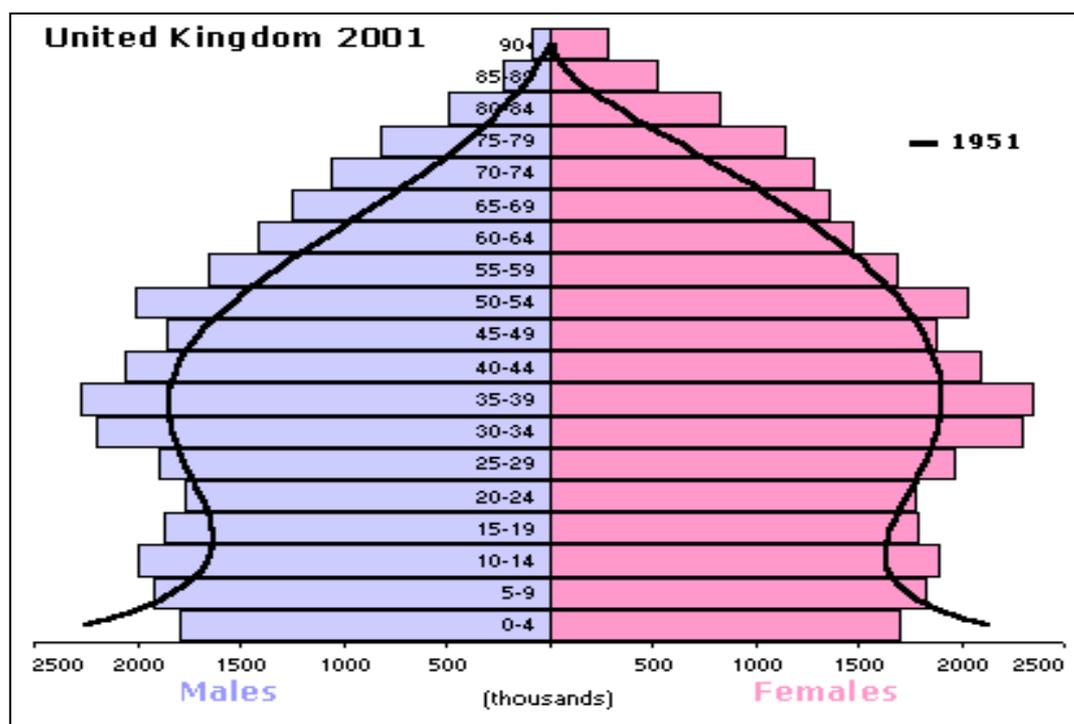
Demography is fundamental to an understanding of the labour market. Most notably, the age structure of the population influences the size and age structure of the workforce (although it should be remembered that changes in participation rates by age and sub-group also play a very important role too). The age structure of different population sub-groups is an important consideration. For instance, the younger age profile of the minority ethnic group population means that the labour force from minority ethnic groups is likely to grow – in relative terms – much more rapidly than the white workforce.

Interest in issues of age and the labour market waxes and wanes. In the early 1980s substantial numbers of young people entered the labour market joined the market at a time of recession, and this led to high levels of youth unemployment. A few years later there were concerns expressed about a ‘demographic timebomb’, as there were fewer young people entering the labour market, which was seen to be a result of demographic trends combined with a tendency for young people to stay in education longer. More recently, the term ‘demographic timebomb’ has been used, although this time the emphasis has been on whether population ageing will render existing levels of pension provision and healthcare unsustainable. Some commentators (see Catalyst 2002) suggest that concerns about the ‘economic burden’ imposed by an ageing population are greatly exaggerated, and rather that particular emphasis needs to be placed on enhancing labour force participation and employment opportunities for older workers.

12.2 The changing age structure of the population: the national picture

There is an *ageing population* nationally (see Figure 12.2) which shows the population structure in the United Kingdom in 2001 compared to that in 1951.

Figure 12.2a United Kingdom age structure: 2001 and 1951 compared



Source: ONS – Census of Population

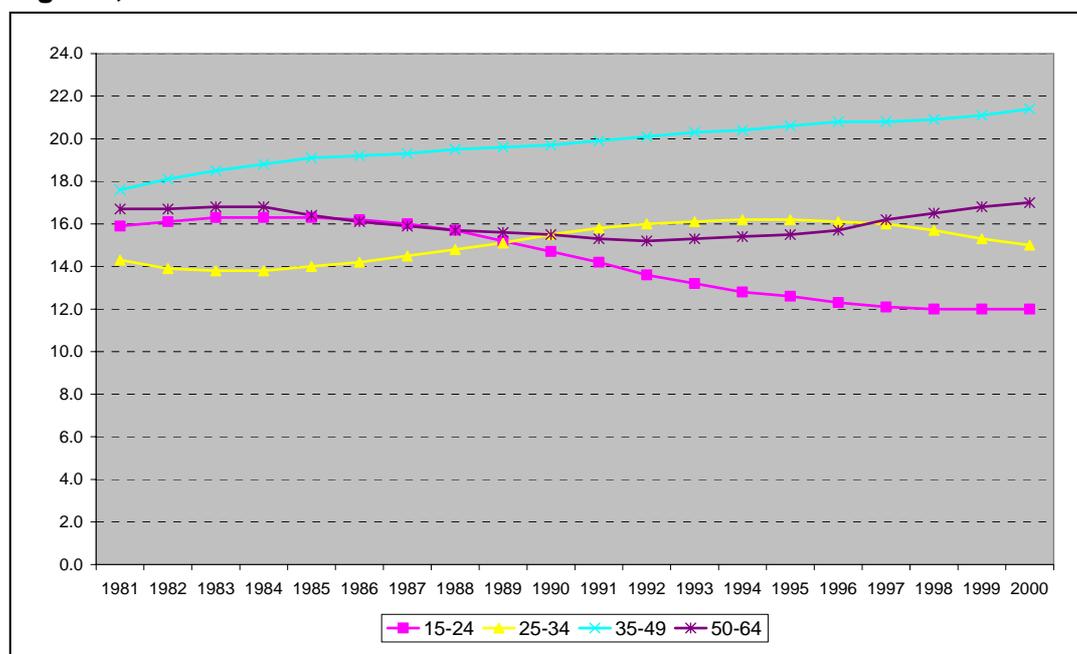
In 2001, for the first time there were more people aged over 60 years than there were children. Also in 2001, people over 60 years accounted for 21 per cent of the total population (compared with 16 per cent in 1951) and people under 16 years made up 20 per cent of the population (compared with 24 per cent in 1951). The growth in population has been particularly marked in the oldest age groups.

Across the UK the 2001 Census of Population recorded 30.2 million females and 28.6 million males, representing a male: female sex ratio of 0.95. Figure 13.2a shows that the excess of females over males is particularly apparent in the older age groups – reflecting the longer life expectancy of females.

Figure 12.2a also shows the growth in population over the long-term: between 1951 and 2001 the UK population increased by 17 per cent to nearly 59 million. Since the late 1990s migration has been the most important factor in population growth nationally, although natural increase¹⁸ also contributes to population increase.

Analyses of Mid Year Estimates of the population in England over the period from 1981 to 2000 can give insights into the changing age structure of the population of working age. Figure 12.2b depicts how four age groups within the working age population accounted for changing shares of the total population in England over the period. There was a relative (and absolute) decline in the percentage of population in the younger working age group (i.e. under 25 years), although the trend had stabilised by the end of the period shown. In the latter part of the period there was also a relative (and absolute) decline in the proportion of the total population aged 25-34 years. By contrast, there have been relative (and absolute) increases in the population aged 35-49 years and 50-64 years, so underlining the ageing of the potential workforce.

Figure 12.2b Changing age structure (as a percentage of the total population): England, 1981-2000



Source: Mid year estimates of population

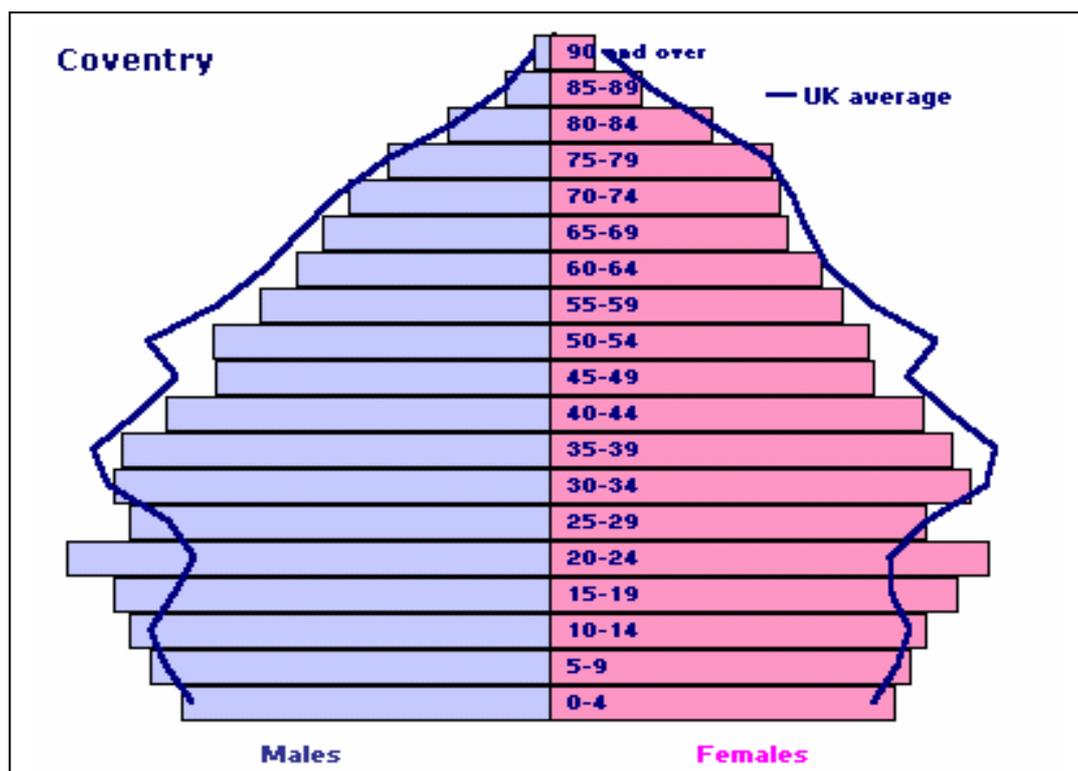
¹⁸

An excess of births over deaths.

12.3 The changing age structure of the population: the local picture

Figures 12.3a and 12.3b show the age structure of the population in Coventry and Warwickshire, respectively, in 2001. Relative to the UK average, Coventry has an over-representation of young people – especially in the 15-24 years age range (reflecting the location of two universities in the city), and a slight under-representation of population in the 35-64 age range. By contrast, Warwickshire has an under-representation of young people aged 15-29 years, but middle and older age groups are slightly over-represented relative to the UK average. However, Coventry and Warwickshire together have a similar age structure to the UK average.

Figure 12.3a Coventry age structure, 2001

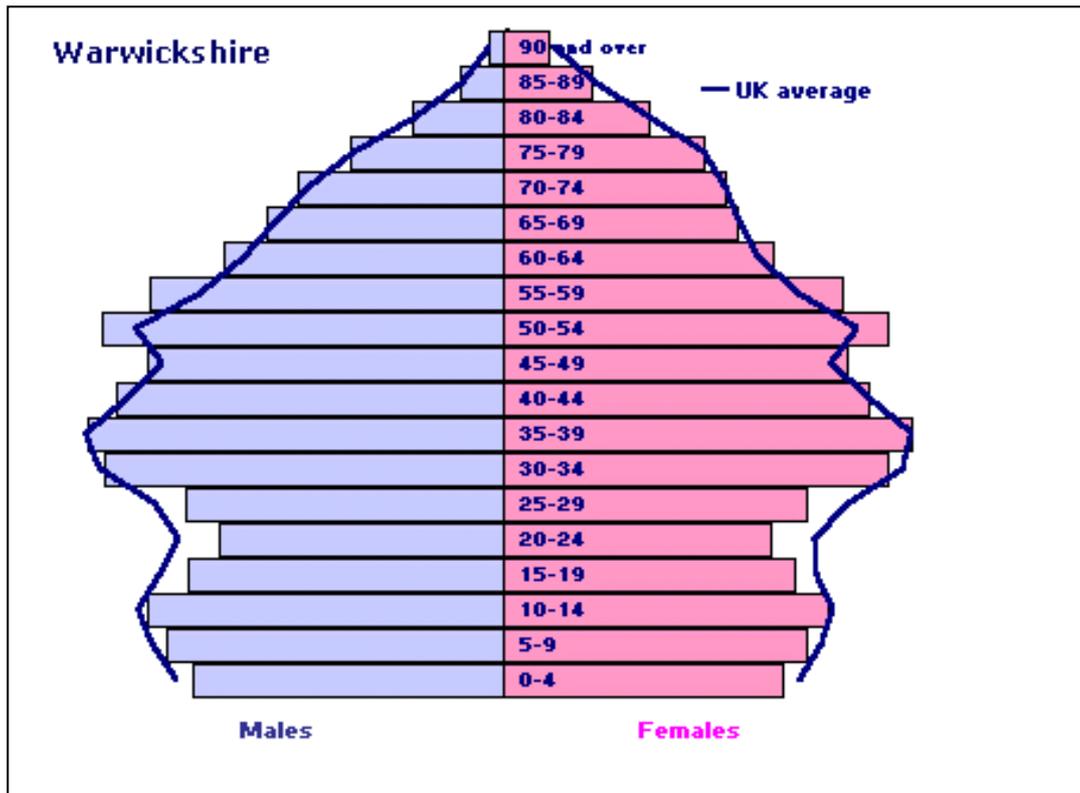


Source: ONS – Census of Population

Population projections point to an increase in the population of both Coventry and Warwickshire over the medium-term.¹⁹ Population growth in Warwickshire is projected to be greater than that in Coventry. In Warwickshire, net in-migration accounts for population increase, while natural change is projected to contribute to a slight decline in population. Conversely, in Coventry, population growth occurs through a positive natural change more than counteracting net out-migration,

¹⁹ Population projections are currently being revised following publication of results of the 2001 Census of Population.

Figure 12.3b Warwickshire age structure, 2001



Source: ONS – Census of Population

Tables 12.3a and 12.3b show projected age structure of the *female* population in Coventry and Warwickshire, respectively over the period from 1996 to 2021. The most salient point to note from a labour market perspective is the increase in projected female population in the 50-69 age range over the period, which is evident in both Coventry and Warwickshire. This is indicative of the ageing of the population, and illustrates the potential importance of older female workers²⁰ in the labour force. For the future, from a policy perspective, it will be increasingly important to look at the circumstances influencing the over-50s' decisions to supply their labour (Barham 2002).

²⁰ Older male workers will be important too.

Table 12.3 Projected population change, females by age group, 1996-2021**a) Coventry**

Age	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
0-4	10.1	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	9.1
5-9	10.9	9.7	8.9	8.7	8.7	8.8
10-14	10.1	10.3	9.3	8.5	8.3	8.3
15-19	10.3	11.1	11.5	10.6	9.8	9.6
20-24	11.6	11.8	12.5	13.2	12.4	11.8
25-29	10.1	8.7	8.8	9.3	9.8	9.4
30-34	12.3	9.9	8.5	8.5	8.9	9.4
35-39	10.5	12.1	10.0	8.5	8.5	8.9
40-44	9.1	10.3	11.9	9.9	8.4	8.4
45-49	9.3	8.9	10.1	11.6	9.7	8.3
50-54	8.3	9.0	8.6	9.7	11.1	9.4
55-59	7.4	7.9	8.6	8.2	9.2	10.6
60-64	6.9	6.9	7.5	8.1	7.7	8.7
65-69	6.8	6.3	6.4	6.9	7.5	7.2
70-74	7.1	6.0	5.7	5.8	6.3	6.9
75-79	5.9	5.8	5.0	4.8	4.9	5.4
80-84	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.9
85+	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.4
<i>All Ages</i>	<i>155.0</i>	<i>152.7</i>	<i>150.6</i>	<i>149.4</i>	<i>148.7</i>	<i>148.7</i>

b) Warwickshire

Age	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
0-4	14.4	13.9	13.4	13.2	13.3	13.5
5-9	15.7	15.0	14.4	13.9	13.7	13.8
10-14	15.0	16.2	15.5	14.8	14.3	14.1
15-19	13.9	14.6	15.7	15.0	14.4	13.9
20-24	14.4	12.6	13.4	14.4	13.8	13.2
25-29	17.8	15.9	14.6	15.5	16.5	15.9
30-34	19.0	18.6	16.4	15.2	16.1	17.2
35-39	17.6	19.5	18.9	16.6	15.4	16.4
40-44	16.6	17.9	19.8	19.2	16.7	15.6
45-49	19.3	16.8	18.1	20.1	19.4	16.9
50-54	17.5	19.1	16.7	18.1	20.1	19.4
55-59	13.8	17.0	18.7	16.4	17.8	19.8
60-64	12.2	13.3	16.4	18.0	15.9	17.3
65-69	12.1	11.6	12.6	15.5	17.2	15.3
70-74	11.5	11.1	10.8	11.8	14.5	16.1
75-79	9.5	10.0	9.7	9.6	10.6	13.0
80-84	6.7	7.4	7.8	7.7	7.8	8.7
85+	6.0	6.6	7.2	7.8	8.2	8.7
<i>All Ages</i>	<i>253.1</i>	<i>257.0</i>	<i>260.1</i>	<i>262.7</i>	<i>265.8</i>	<i>268.8</i>

Source: 1996-based population projections, ONS

12.4 Labour force participation by age

Table 12.4 shows economic activity rates and employment rates for females by age group. In the 16-19 years age group approximately three in five females are economically active and about half are in employment. Thereafter, economic activity rates and employment rates rise through the 20-24 years and 25-34 years age groups, to peak in the 35-49 years age group. In the 25-49 years age groups – which may be considered the ‘prime working age groups’ – economic activity rates and employment rates in the Coventry and Warwickshire LSC area are higher than those recorded regionally or nationally. After the age of 50, economic activity rates and employment rates decline; just under a third of these older females are in employment, compared with over 80 per cent of those in the 35-49 years age group. In the 50-retirement age group economic activity rates and employment rates in Coventry and Warwickshire are similar to the regional and national averages.

Table 12.4 Economic activity rates and employment rates for females by age: Coventry and Warwickshire, West Midlands and England, 2001

Age group	COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE %	WEST MIDLANDS %	ENGLAND %
<i>Economic activity rate</i>			
Working age	75.8	72.1	72.7
16-19 years	62.8	59.0	60.3
20-24 years	71.7	71.6	71.8
25-34 years	76.1	73.1	74.2
35-49 years	85.1	77.9	77.8
50-retirement	66.3	66.7	67.5
over retirement	7.3	7.8	9.0
<i>Employment rate</i>			
Working age	72.7	68.9	69.5
16-19 years	49.2	49.3	52.2
20-24 years	68.8	66.3	66.5
25-34 years	72.8	70.3	71.2
35-49 years	82.6	75.3	75.2
50-retirement	65.8	65.4	65.9
over retirement	7.3	7.7	8.9

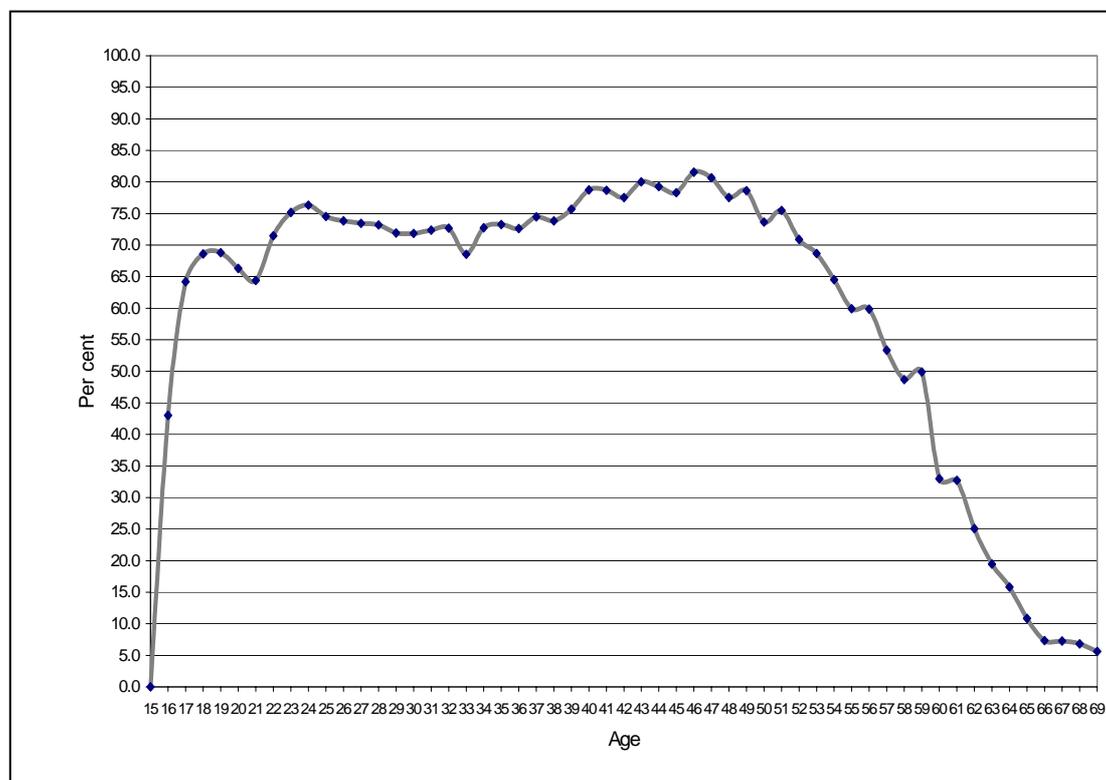
Note: These data are not consistent with the 2001 Census of Population data.

Source: Local Area Labour Force Survey data, 2001.

Given the ageing of the population, a key challenge would appear to be to maintain higher economic activity and employment rates in the older age groups. The steep downward trend in female activity rates after the age of 50 years is illustrated in Figure 12.4, which shows the changing economic activity rates of females by individual year of age in the UK in 1996. An analysis by Collis, Green and Mallier (2000) highlight that while successive cohorts of females have exhibited higher economic activity rates, these increases have been particularly marked in the prime age groups (and especially from 30-45 years). Yet a marked decline in female economic activity rates after the age of 50 remains a continuing feature.

With the ageing of the population, the labour market may not have sufficient young people to replace older people in employment as they retire. This means it is critical that those people already in the workforce have the skills employers require in order to work as productively and effectively as possible.

Figure 12.4 Economic activity rates for females in the UK by individual year of age, 1996



Source: NIDI (1999)

Research on older workers has focused mainly on older males and specifically on the factors associated with the withdrawal of males from the workforce over the age of 50 years. Policies aimed at women have tended to focus mainly on 'women returners' (i.e. those returning to the labour market after child birth and child rearing). Relative to their younger counterparts, older women tend to suffer previously truncated learning profiles and a lack of current training opportunities (Lindley 1999; Collis, Green and Mallier 2000). In the modern workplace older workers with no or few qualifications is increasingly marginalised. Moreover, evidence suggests that motivation and capability for learning is strongly related to previous experiences of learning. Hence, there would appear to be scope for enhanced engagement of older females in learning.

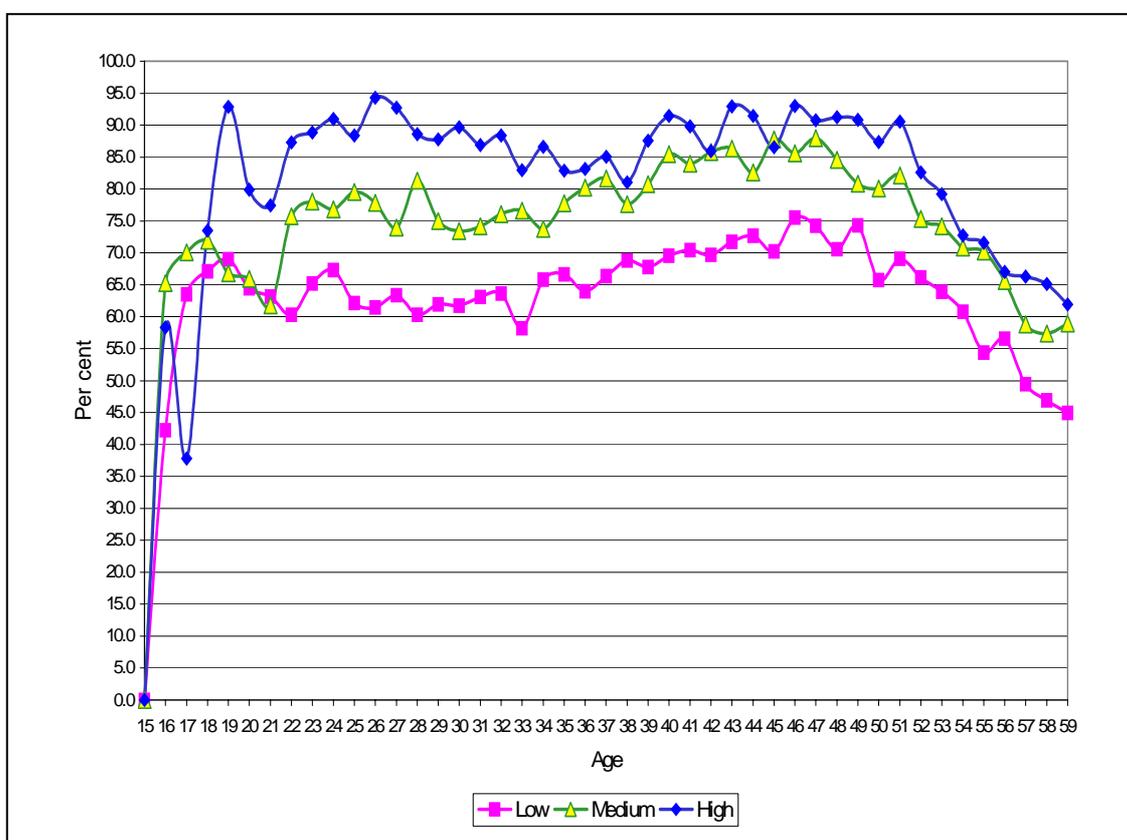
The increased emphasis by employers on customer care and social skills would tend to favour women and older workers, since these skills tend to increase with age and are often associated with women. Common employer perceptions of older workers are that they represent a knowledgeable, experienced, stable and reliable workforce, with good interpersonal and customer care skills (Kodz, Kersley and Bates 1999).

12.5 Heterogeneity amongst women workers by age

An emphasis of women in different age groups overlooks *heterogeneity* amongst women within the same age group. Hence, as highlighted in section 5, women vary in their commitment to work according to family circumstances and work orientation, etc.

A key factor underlying variations amongst women within the same age group is *educational attainment*. Figure 12.5 shows variations in labour market participation amongst women by age and broad level of educational attainment. Except in the younger age groups (in which increasing numbers of females are engaged in further and higher education), participation rates are consistently higher for females with medium and higher level qualifications than amongst those with no or lower level qualifications.

Figure 12.5 Economic activity rates for females in the UK by individual year of age and educational level, 1996



Source: NIDI (1999)

12.6 The national context

The social factors affecting the employment of older women in Britain will be examined in this research, which uses the work and family history data from the 1987 'Social Life and Economic Change Initiative' and the 'General Household Survey' for the years 1987-1989. Women's employment rate declines steeply during the 15 years preceding their state pensionable age, in spite of the fact that childcare responsibilities are rare. The research seeks to understand what factors influence older women's employment and their pension entitlements. The factors, which are likely to explain the timing of exit from the labour market, include health, marital

status, husband's employment, household income and assets, the health of other household members and the need to care for adult relatives. The employment opportunities available are also likely to be relevant, and will depend on women's previous work experience and qualifications, local labour market conditions and employers' attitudes to older women as employees. Understanding the reasons for the decline in women's employment after age 45 is important for community care policy, labour supply and pensions policy: older women are a major source of informal care for elderly people, yet are also a potential source of extra employees as the supply of school leavers declines during the 1990s. Employment in the years following the childrearing phase is also important in enabling married and divorced women to obtain a significant improvement in their occupational pension entitlement, and reduce the concentration of poverty among elderly women (Arber and Ginn 1995).

12.7 Summary

Demography has a profound influence on the understanding of labour market processes, and particularly on labour supply issues. At the current time, particular policy attention is focused on the ageing of the population and the associated ageing of the workforce. The 2001 Census of Population showed that Coventry and Warwickshire together had a similar age structure to the national average. However, Coventry is characterised by a greater than average share of young adults (aged 15-24 years) in the population, while Warwickshire has an under-representation of people aged 15-29 years and a greater share in middle and older age groups than nationally. Population projections reveal an increase in the population aged 50-69 years in the medium-term, highlighting the need to understand the labour market participation decisions of older women.

Female participation rates are characterised by a rise through the 20-24 and 25-34 year age groups, to a peak in the 25-49 age groups. Thereafter, economic activity rates decline. A key challenge is to retain these women in the workforce and to enhance their engagement in learning.

Between women of the same age there are variations in participation rates by sub-group in accordance with family circumstances, individuals' work orientation and by broad level of educational attainment. Participation rates are higher – across the age range – for women with medium and higher level qualifications than for their counterparts with low or no qualifications. Understanding the heterogeneity of women's experience of the labour market amongst women in the same age group is crucial.

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