

# GM4WOMEN2028

## EMPLOYMENT BRIEFING NOTE 2023

### 2023 Pankhurst-Fawcett GM Scorecard Employment Indicators:

- **Indicator 1: Employment Rate Gap.** The gap between employment rates for men and women in Greater Manchester has fallen from 8 percentage points in 2022 to 7.2 percentage points in 2023. Men's employment rate has grown but women's has grown further reaching its highest level since the score card began.
- **Indicator 2: Gender Pay Gap.** After a fall in the gender pay gap to 10.3% in 2022, it widened again in 2023 in Greater Manchester to 11.3% but still well below the average for Great Britain at 14.7%.

This briefing note produced by the GM4Women's Employment Action Group starts by reviewing the trends in our scorecard indicators in more detail. This is followed by a report on new research that is producing a regional index of gender equality that should enable a better comparison of trends in GM to those experienced in other parts of the country. We also include an item on flexible working, a topic that has risen in the agenda since COVID with a rise in people working from home on a regular basis, but we also examine what can be done for those, the majority of women, who are not in jobs where remote working is possible.

### A mixed picture from the scorecard data on women's employment

The scorecard data on women's employment and pay in Greater Manchester (GM) again show a mixed picture with the data for 2023 indicating improvements in employment but a slight widening of the gender pay gap.

### Women's employment in GM has risen in 2022/2023

This year the employment rate gap by gender in GM has narrowed, with women's employment rate reaching its highest level since the start of the scorecard at 69.6%, some 2.8 percentage points above the level when we started monitoring the employment gap in 2018/19. However, the gender employment rate gap in GM at 7.2 percentage points is still above that for GB as a whole at 6.8 percentage points.





This narrowing gap has been achieved despite men’s employment rate also rising over the past year - but this time women’s employment rate rose faster as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Employment rates by gender in Greater Manchester**

July to June	Men	Women	Gender gap
2022/2023	76.8	69.6	7.2
2021/2022	75.8	67.8	8.0
2020/2021	74.1	69.3	4.8
2019/2020	77.5	68.2	9.3
2018/2019	77.8	66.8	11.0

There are also highly variable employment rates by ethnic group in GM (see Table 2); there are quite a number of major changes since 2022 with employment rates for mixed ethnic women, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women and Black women improving but deteriorating for Indian women. The changes are likely to be explained by problems of too small a sample for reliable estimates. Women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicity still have the lowest employment rates at 43.8% but significantly improved on the 31% in 2022 data.

**Table 2. Employment rates for women in GM by ethnic group June 2022 and June 2023**

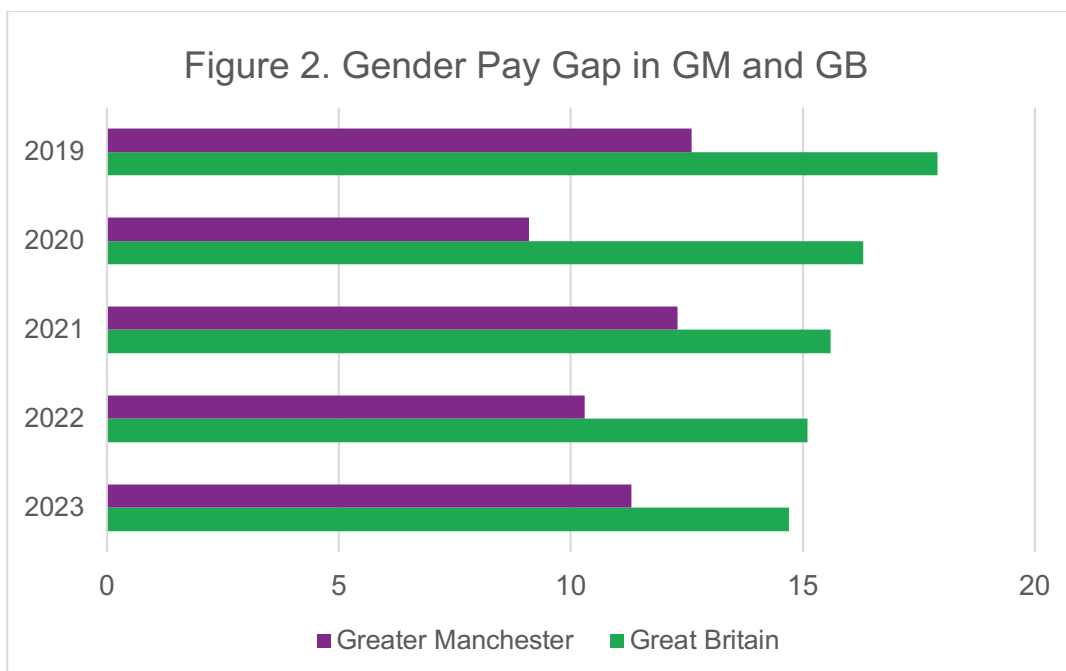
	All	White	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	Black	Other
2023	69.6	73.8	72.2	63.8	43.8	65.0	47.2
2022	67.8	73.1	65.2	72.0	32.0	51.9	37.9



The employment rate for disabled women in GM fell between 2021 and 2022 from 53.7% to 51.9% and there has been a further slight deterioration in 2023 to 51.8%. The employment rate for disabled women in GB as a whole in contrast rose by 0.4 percentage points to 55.9%.

## The Gender Pay Gap in GM has widened but is still well below the average for Great Britain

When it comes to pay, the gender pay gap widened this year in GM from 10.3 to 11.3 percentage points, still well below the gap for GB as a whole at 14.7 percentage points, down from 15.1 percentage points in 2022. This apparently strong performance for GM is rather misleading as both men's and women's earnings still fall below the GB average but by a larger amount for men who earn 7% less than the GB average compared to 3% less for women. The pay gap for full-time workers is closer to that for the GB average (7.4 compared to 8.3 percentage points) suggesting that the somewhat smaller gap in GM compared to the GB average is also due to the lower proportion of women in part-time work, at 33.3% compared to 36.9% for GB as a whole, and because wages are lower in part-time than full-time jobs. This sounds like good news until we remember that the employment rate in GM is also 2.6 percentage points below that for GB, and that therefore a shortage of part-time jobs may be leading to higher unemployment or economic inactivity among women in GM.



## Women's pay differs across GM's local authorities

What happens at the aggregate level in GM may hide quite wide variations across the ten local authorities in Greater Manchester. Here we take a look at women's pay across the constituent local authorities by comparing median hourly pay levels (that is those who are right in the middle of the pay distribution) to the median for GB both for all women in employment and for women in full-time employment.



We find significant differences across the ten council areas: Trafford is the highest paying area on both measures, with median pay for all women in employment some 15% above that for GB as a whole. Median pay also exceeds that for GB in Stockport and Bury, but by smaller margins.

At the other end of the scale Tameside and Salford record the lowest median pay for all women (8.3 percentage points and 7.2 percentage points below the median level in GB). Bolton has in fact the lowest pay for women in full-time work, at 12.3 percentage points below the GB average but Tameside and Salford also record gaps of over 10 percentage points.

**Table 3 How women’s median hourly pay within GM compares to median hourly pay for women in GB.**

April 2023	Women’s full-time median hourly pay as % of that for GB as a whole	Women’s median hourly pay (full and part-time) as % of that for GB as a whole
Greater Manchester	94.5%	96.8%
Bolton	87.7%	95.0%
Bury	103.6%	103.9%
Manchester	93.9%	95.8%
Oldham	91.2%	94.8%
Rochdale	92.4%	95.6%
Salford	89.2%	92.8%
Stockport	105.8%	103.0%
Tameside	89.2%	91.7%
Trafford	108.7%	115.4%
Wigan	90.7%	94.1%

## New index measuring gender gaps across local authorities in the UK: The Lloyds Banking Group UK Sub-National Gender Equality Index

The variation in women’s pay across GM’s local authorities are indicative of a wider trend: mounting academic research suggests that socio-economic outcomes differ across neighbourhoods. For example, there is evidence that neighbourhood characteristics influence health outcomes and the prevalence of intimate partner violence (Pinchevsky and Wright 2012; Stafford et al. 2005). In the United Kingdom, where regional inequalities are amongst the highest in the developed world (Davenport and Zaranko 2020), we can expect gender differences to vary from one local area to another. Understanding the spatial variation in gender inequalities is crucial to developing tailored policy solutions to improve the lives of women and men throughout the UK.

With funding from the Lloyds Banking Group, the Global Institute for Women’s Leadership at King’s College London is currently developing an index that will capture and compare levels of gender equality across local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The



index will measure gender gaps in Paid Work, Unpaid Work, Financial Resources, Education & Skills, Power & Participation, Health, and Violence Against Women and Girls. GM4Women's work and scorecards have been influential in shaping the thinking behind the development of this upcoming index, which is set to launch in autumn 2024. For more information, visit [the Global Institute for Women's Leadership website](https://www.gm4women2028.org).

## New developments in flexible working rights

Since 2003 employees who have worked six months for an employer have the right to request flexible working. This has helped many women return to their jobs after maternity leave but the need to work six months before making a request has limited women's choice of jobs so if their current job is not suiting them, they cannot change jobs and ask immediately for flexible working. Therefore, women are at risk of becoming trapped in their jobs and not able to pursue their careers.

The government has now agreed to the right to request flexible working from day one of employment but does not require companies to advertise that they are willing to offer flexible working. This change should help some women but still does not go far enough: it would be good for those with primary care responsibilities to have a right to flexible working. The government has also agreed to a second change: the right to request more predictable hours, as that is often more important for those with care responsibilities than flexibility, since childcare must be planned. Unfortunately, that right to request does not kick in till after six months employment and is based only on a right to request. For more information on what is happening and what needs to happen to help women manage their work and their other life responsibilities you can click [here](#) to access this review on the future of flexible working (or see full details at end of leaflet).

## Key policy priorities for 2024

**1. Employers and policymakers are asked to ensure that social care workers and early years practitioners are paid at least the real living wage.** Central government and local authorities who set the level of funding need to ensure that it is high enough to cover the real living wage and then take measures to ensure that the private providers genuinely pay the real living wage.

**2. Support for working parents (and all those unable to work due to childcare problems) should be at the centre of GM's strategy.** Rights to request flexible working from day one of employment has now become law, but the GMCA Employment Charter should go further and advertise availability of flexible working and offer predictable hours from day one, especially for carers. A coordinated strategy is needed to campaign for, and deliver, flexible and affordable childcare in all areas of GM. The central government needs to provide better funding for its current schemes and for its planned expansion of free childcare for younger age ranges.



**3. Support is maintained and improved upon for all those women vulnerable to the cost-of-living crisis.** Central and local governments must put in place measures to support financially vulnerable women, the disabled and the elderly. Measures discontinued after the COVID crisis, including free school meals during school holidays, need to be reinstated and the costs of the energy crisis on the poorest households addressed.

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## Data sources and definitions

All employment data come from the Annual Population Survey available from the NOMIS website <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>. Employment rates are calculated as the number of people in employment divided by the 16-64 year old working population. Data on employment rates for the disabled is drawn from Table T02A Economic Activity by Disability (Equality Act)

All earnings data on gender pay gaps and the real living wage come from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). Gender pay gap (GPG) is defined as the difference between men's median and women's median hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings.

## References

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