



State of the Region Report 2021
Women and Girls Analysis

Mayor's Foreword

The first annual State of the Region report for West Yorkshire provides insight and analysis on how the region is performing, what our strengths are to forge our path forward, and how we can rebuild and create a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

To accompany the main report, I commissioned this supplement to focus on the implications for women and girls. As the first female Metro Mayor in the country, I am absolutely committed to narrowing inequalities and creating more opportunities for women and girls. This report shows that while progress has been made, there is much still to do.

The results show that the gap between employment rates for males and females in West Yorkshire has narrowed, compared to the national average. While this is great news, there is still so much more to be done to achieve parity. There is a significant pay gap of 12% between men and women's median earnings in West Yorkshire, compared to 17% nationally. 66% of companies in West Yorkshire have no female representation at director level, compared with the national average of 63% and despite the indications that women are more likely to be highly qualified than men, the evidence suggests this is not reflected in pay or employment rates. This gender inequality further affects women who are disabled or from an ethnic minority group – these women can face “double-disadvantage” in terms of their likelihood of being in employment. One of my key pledges is to appoint an Inclusivity Champion for West Yorkshire who will work with under-represented groups and individuals to make sure everyone benefits from our recovery.

I am a passionate advocate for women and girls and want to make sure everyone in our region, no matter what their background, can succeed. In future versions of this report, I hope to be able to demonstrate that we have made progress towards a more equal society where everyone can reach their potential.

Key Points

- Women are less likely to be in employment than men but there has been a narrowing of the gap between the employment rate for females in West Yorkshire and the national rate. In 2020 the gap fell from 5 percentage points to 1 point.
- Two-thirds (66%) of companies in West Yorkshire have no female representation at director level, slightly above the national average of 63%.
- Women are more likely to be highly qualified than men but the evidence suggests that this is not fully reflected in their pay or employment rate. Forty-one per cent of women are qualified at level 4 and above in West Yorkshire, compared with 36% of men.
- Women form an important part of the cultural industries' workforce but are still under-represented, accounting for a minority of employment in the sector.
- Women have higher life expectancy (an extra 4 years in West Yorkshire) but there is a smaller difference between men and women in respect of healthy life expectancy (additional 0.5 years).
- Women who are disabled or from an ethnic minority group can face "double-disadvantage" in terms of their likelihood of being in employment. For example, the employment rate for women from an ethnic minority group is 20 points below the overall female rate.
- The unemployment rate for women is slightly lower than for men but women's economic inactivity rate is much higher, with many inactive women looking after the family / home.
- The number of women claiming out-of-work benefits remains 70% higher than pre-pandemic and around 26,000 women were still on furlough at the end of June 2021.
- Women are much more likely than men to be paid below the Real Living Wage. Twenty-five per cent of jobs undertaken by females in West Yorkshire are paid below this level compared with 16% of jobs done by males. This is mainly because of the low hourly rates of pay for part-time jobs, which are mainly done by women. There is also a significant gender pay gap of 12% in median earnings in West Yorkshire.
- A smaller proportion of women than men (20% vs 24%) are poorly qualified (qualified below level 2 or no qualifications). Nonetheless, more than 90,000 women in West Yorkshire have low-level qualifications or no qualifications.
- Women are equally as likely as men to undertake an apprenticeship with nearly 7,300 female apprenticeship starts in 2019/20 academic year. However, female apprentices are much more likely to work in occupational areas that offer relatively poor pay and prospects.
- National data shows that women are less likely than men to have the full range of Foundation digital skills or the Essential Digital Skills for Life.
- Young women are less likely than young men to become NEET but still account for around 40% of all NEETs in West Yorkshire.

- The different level of participation of women in the workforce, paired with the perpetuation of women's role as primary care givers, determines main differences between women's and men's travel behaviour: women make more trips on foot and by bus, and are less likely to have a driving licence or access to a car. Transport planning needs to take full account of women's distinctive travel needs.

Introduction

Women and girls are typically impacted differently by economic, social and transport issues. To ensure that gender equality concerns are being fully considered this section of the report reviews the data for women and girls relative to selected State of the Region economic, social and transport indicators, which are mapped against the Strategic Economic Framework priorities. In some cases, data are not available for West Yorkshire by gender and national data are used to provide an insight into the relevant issues.

Boosting productivity

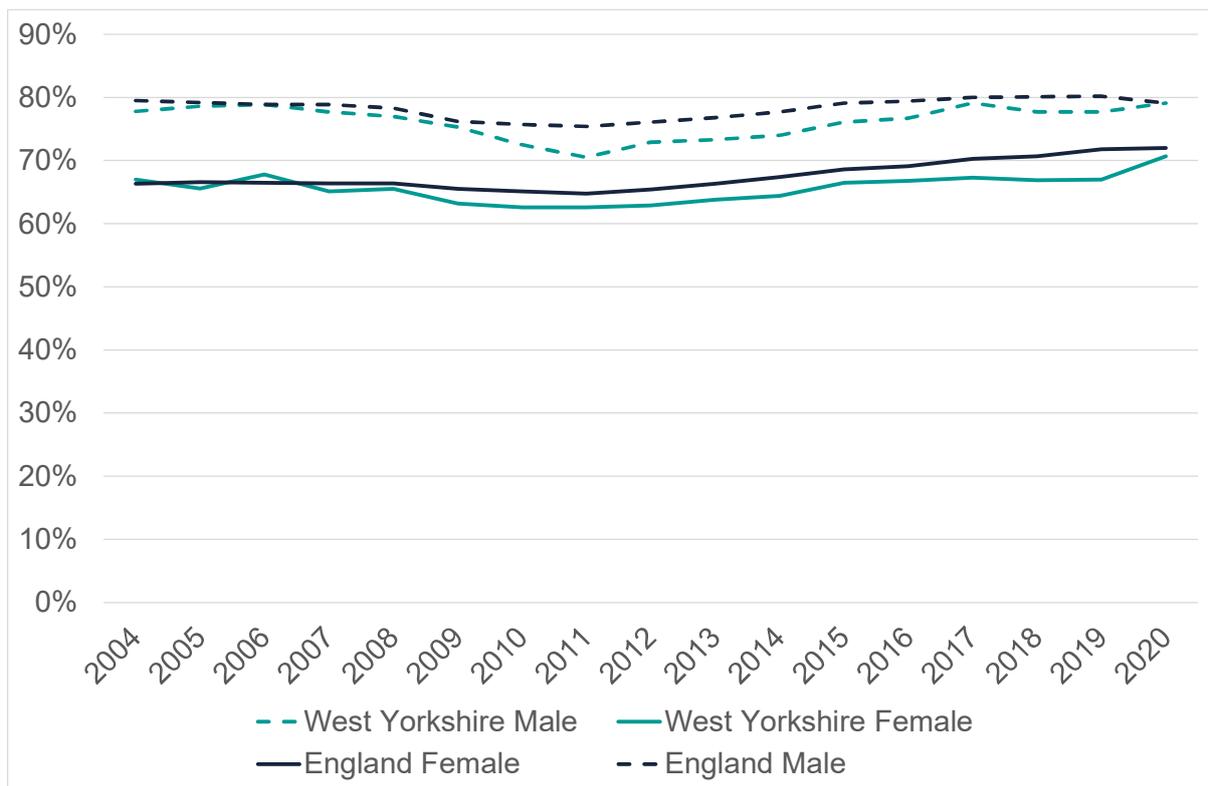
Women have a key role to play in raising productivity and driving inclusive growth in West Yorkshire. But the evidence suggests that a range of issues prevent women from fulfilling their potential.

Employment rate

The employment rate is an important measure of the performance of the local economy because prosperity is dependent on two things: the number of people in employment and how productive those people are in their jobs.

Working-age women are less likely to be in employment than men in West Yorkshire. Although the longer-term trend is towards increased participation in the labour market by women there is a continuing employment rate gap between males and females at national as well as at regional level.

Figure 1: Trend in working age (16-64) employment rate by gender



Source: Annual Population Survey

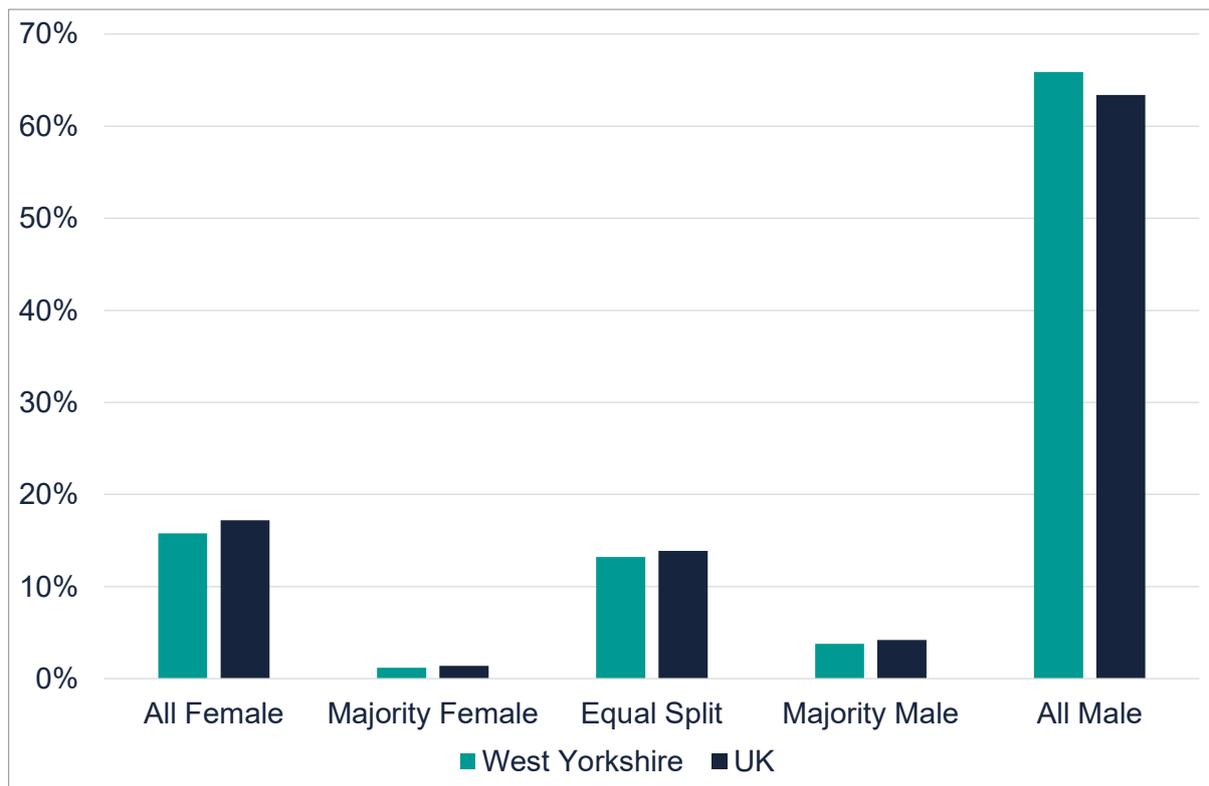
In West Yorkshire the gap stands at 8.3 percentage points, between a male rate of 79.5% and a female rate of 71.2%, based on data for January to December 2020. More positively, this represents a narrowing of the gender gap in West Yorkshire, compared with the 2019 figure of 10.7%. There has also been a reduction in the gap during the same period between the employment rate for West Yorkshire females and the equivalent national rate for females, from 5 percentage points to 1 point.

Private sector business

The size of the private sector business base is a key measure of the health of a regional economy. West Yorkshire has fewer private sector businesses per head of population than the national average and it also a concern that **a minority of businesses are founded or led by women.**

Analysis of businesses tracked by data company [Beauhurst](#) indicates that two-thirds (66%) of companies in West Yorkshire have an all-male board of directors, slightly higher than the national average of 63%. The remainder have female representation to varying degrees.

Figure 2: Gender balance of company directors (% of companies)



Source: *Beauhurst*

A much smaller proportion of women in employment are self-employed compared with men. Only 8% of women in West Yorkshire are self-employed (national average: 10%) compared with 15% of men (national average 17%)¹.

UK data shows that women are less likely to be involved in “total early stage entrepreneurial activity” (TEA). This includes the owning or running of any business that is less than three and a half years old. In 2019/20, the TEA rate in the UK (the proportion of working aged people involved in TEA) for men was 11.7% and 7.0% for women. This gap of 4.7 points is wider than in many other countries².

Higher level skills – people qualified at Level 4 and above

Working age women in West Yorkshire are more likely to be highly qualified (level 4³ and above) than West Yorkshire men, although there is a significant gap with the national average for both men and women in terms of attainment at this level.

Forty per cent of women are qualified at level 4 and above in West Yorkshire, compared with 35% of men. The equivalent national average figures are 45% and

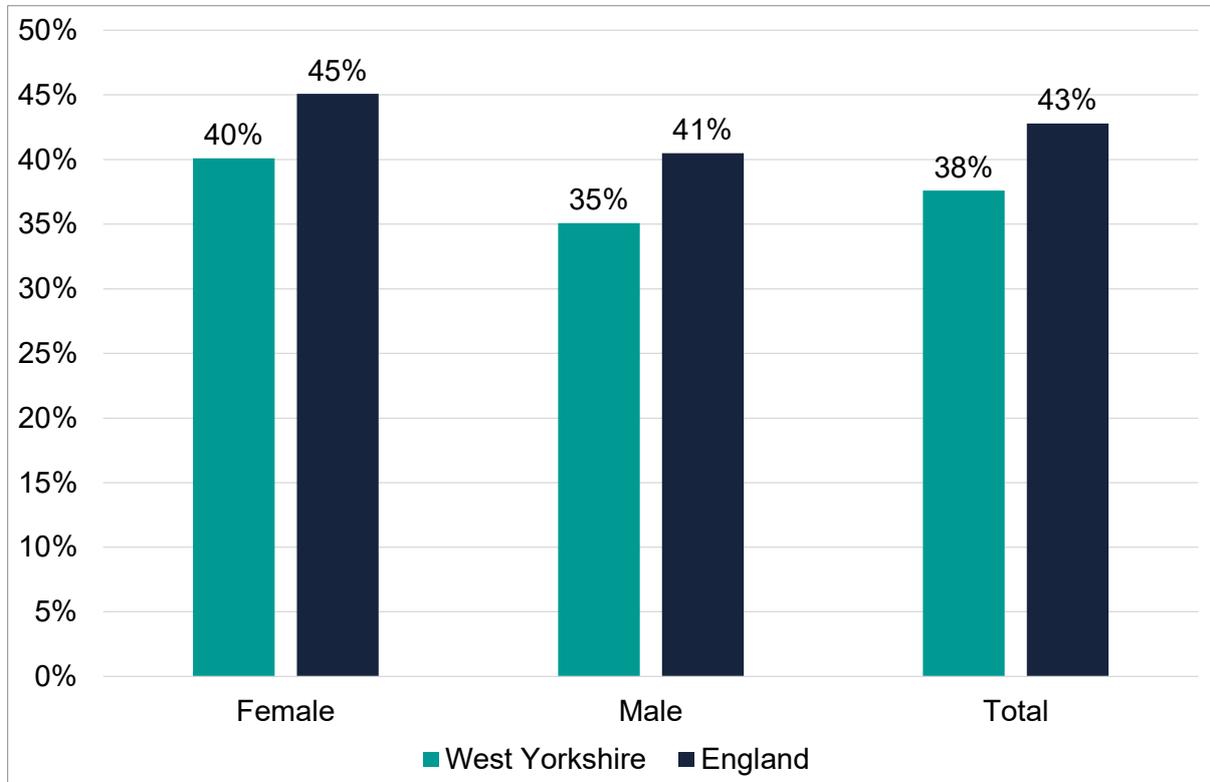
¹ Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2020

² Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, [2019/20 Global Report](#), 2020

³ Level 4 and above equates to qualifications at higher education level.

41% respectively, showing persistent under-performance by both males and females at regional level.

Figure 3: Proportion of working age population qualified at level 4 and above, by gender, January to December 2020



Source: Annual Population Survey

The relatively strong qualification profile of women reflects the fact that **girls perform better at school and college** and are more likely to be qualified at level 3 by the age of 19 (59% versus 46%⁴). They are also **more likely to go on to university**, with 41% of young women entering higher education in 2018/19, following 16-18 study, compared with only 30% of males⁵.

Attainment of qualifications is associated with higher pay for women but this is **not sufficient to offset the gender pay gap** (see below). This is illustrated by the finding that female graduates enjoy a significant pay boost compared with women without degrees but earn little more than many men of the same age without degrees⁶.

Cultural employment

Employment in the cultural sector is a rapidly growing part of the West Yorkshire economy, as noted in the relevant section of the main report.

⁴ Department for Education, [Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2020](#) (2021)

⁵ Department for Education, [16-18 destination measures](#) (2020)

⁶ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [The impact of undergraduate degrees on early-career earnings](#) (2018)

Statistics are not available for the gender split of employment in the sector for West Yorkshire. However, national figures show that women account for around 40% of employment in cultural activities⁷. Therefore, women play an important role in the sector but are under-represented overall with scope to increase their employment in this sector.

⁷ Based on Labour Force Survey data and using the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's definition of cultural industries.

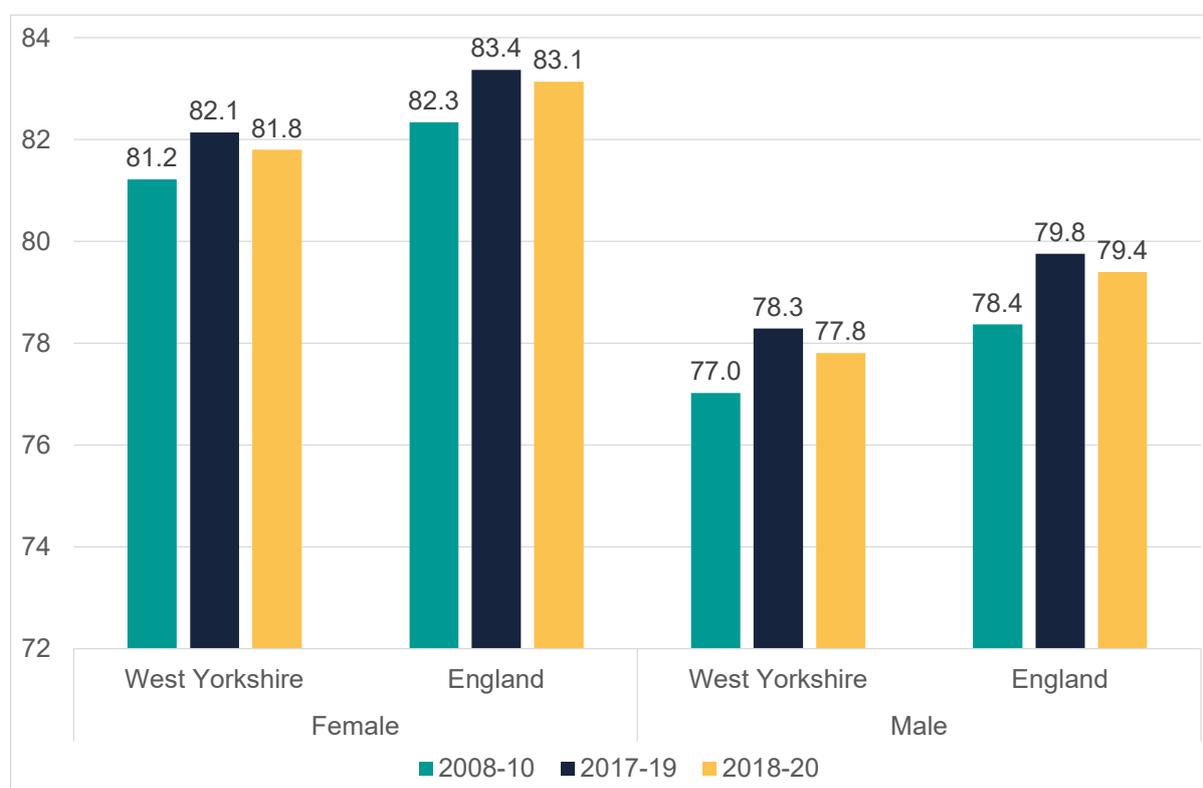
Enabling inclusive growth

Enabling inclusive growth means ensuring that as many people as possible can contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth in our communities and towns. The State of the Region indicators highlight a range of issues facing women and girls with regard to their participation in an inclusive economy.

Life expectancy

Male and female life expectancy at birth in West Yorkshire is currently statistically significantly lower than the England average and has been for a number of years; the latest figure for life expectancy (2018/2020, a 3-year average) for a boy and girl born in West Yorkshire was 77.8 and 81.8 years respectively, lower than the England averages of 79.4 and 83.1 years respectively. As the chart shows, life expectancy was negatively affected by Covid-19 in 2020.

Figure 4: Male and female life expectancy at birth



Source: Life expectancy by sex, age and area, ONS

There is a much smaller gap between males and females with regard to healthy life expectancy than for overall life expectancy. In West Yorkshire, healthy life expectancy at birth is only 0.5 years higher for females than males⁸. Therefore, although females live longer, most of that additional time is spent in poor health.

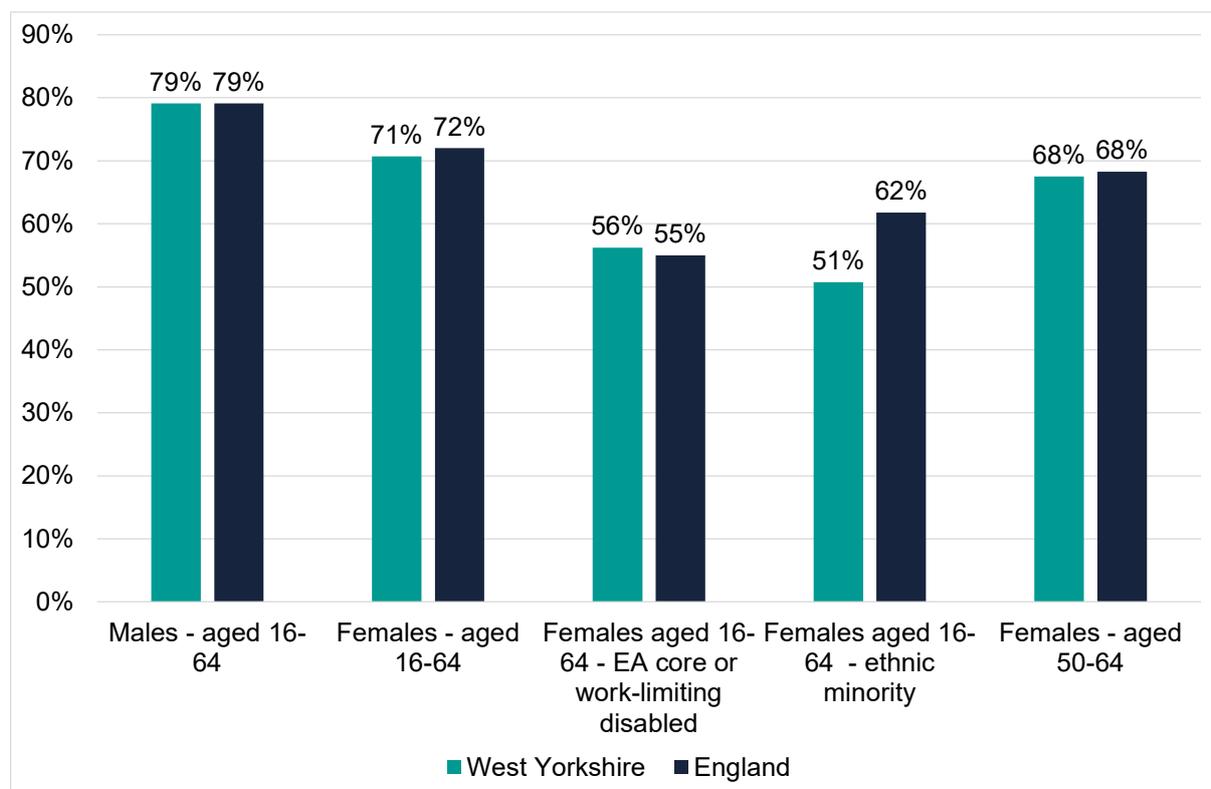
⁸ Office for National Statistics, [Health state life expectancy at birth and at age 65 years by local areas, UK](#) (2021)

The gender gap in life expectancy has narrowed in recent decades with mortality falling faster in males than females because of decreases in smoking and mortality from cardiovascular diseases among men. However, national data show that the gender gap widened in 2020 because mortality rates from Covid-19 were higher in males than females⁹.

Employment rate gap for disadvantaged groups

Employment is the main way in which people can contribute to and benefit from economic growth. We have already seen that women have a low employment rate relative to men. But it is also important to recognise that **gender can combine with other characteristics to create multiple disadvantage**.

Figure 5: Employment rate for disadvantaged groups, Jan – Dec 2020



Source: Annual Population Survey

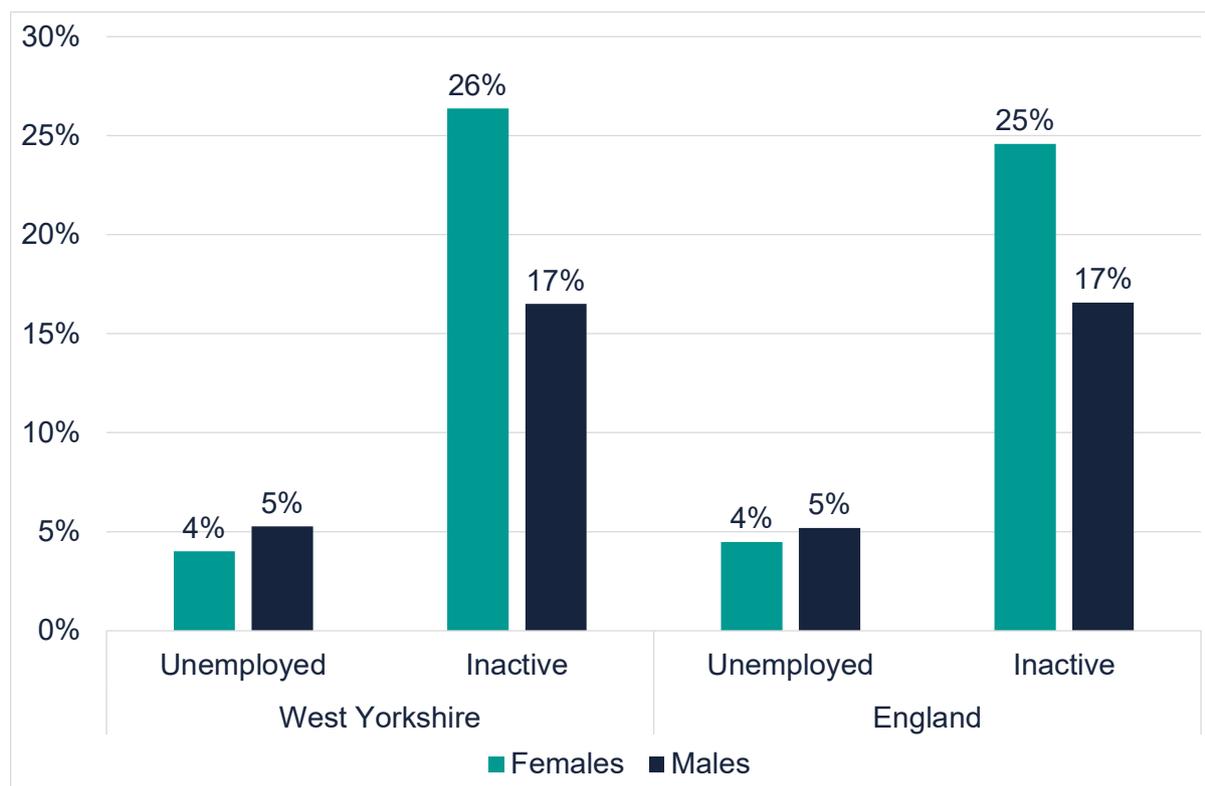
For example, the employment rate for disabled women is 15 percentage points below the overall female rate and for ethnic minority females it is 20 points lower. Pakistani / Bangladeshi women, who are strongly represented in West Yorkshire, are estimated to have an employment rate that is below 40%. Moreover, the employment rate for ethnic minority women in West Yorkshire is 11 points below the national average.

⁹ The King's Fund, [What is happening to life expectancy in England?](#) (2021)

Unemployment rate

Working-age women are slightly less likely to be unemployed than men in West Yorkshire but are much more likely to be economically inactive (i.e. out of work but not currently seeking work and / or unable to start work in the immediate future). Twenty-six per cent of working-age women were inactive based on data for 2020, compared with 17% of men.

Figure 6: Proportion of population (aged 16-64) unemployed and economically inactive by gender, Jan-Dec 2020



Source: Annual Population Survey

Around 29% of economically inactive women in West Yorkshire cite looking after the family / home as the reason for being inactive, compared with only 7% of inactive men. Inactive men are more likely to be students or long-term sick than inactive women.

Impact of the pandemic

- Due to data limitations it is difficult to capture the impact of Covid-19 on employment, unemployment and redundancies at West Yorkshire level. Current national statistics (for quarter ending May 2021) show that female employment is recovering more slowly than male employment. There have been large falls in female part-time work during the pandemic, suggesting that women could fall behind in the recovery due to a shortage of flexible and part-time opportunities¹⁰.
- The most obvious manifestation of the pandemic's impact in West Yorkshire is the large increase in people claiming **out-of-work benefits**. The number of women claiming these benefits in West Yorkshire increased by 21,000 or 90% between February 2020 and the peak in March 2021. The number of female claimants remains at 39,000 as of June 2021, 70% higher than in February 2020.
- Provisional figures for West Yorkshire indicate that 25,700 female employments were on **furlough** at the end of June 2021 (a take-up rate of 5%), compared with 31,600 male employments (7%). Male and female figures are both well down on their peak earlier in the pandemic, when women were disproportionately impacted due to their representation in the worst-affected sectors.
- **Flexibility around working hours and location** is key to balancing paid work with unpaid child and adult care work, of which women do the bulk. According to ONS the proportion of working adults who did any work from home in 2020 increased to 37% on average from 27% in 2019. Women were more likely than men to report homeworking gave them more time to complete work and fewer distractions, while men were more likely to report better wellbeing¹¹.

Jobs paying below the Real Living Wage

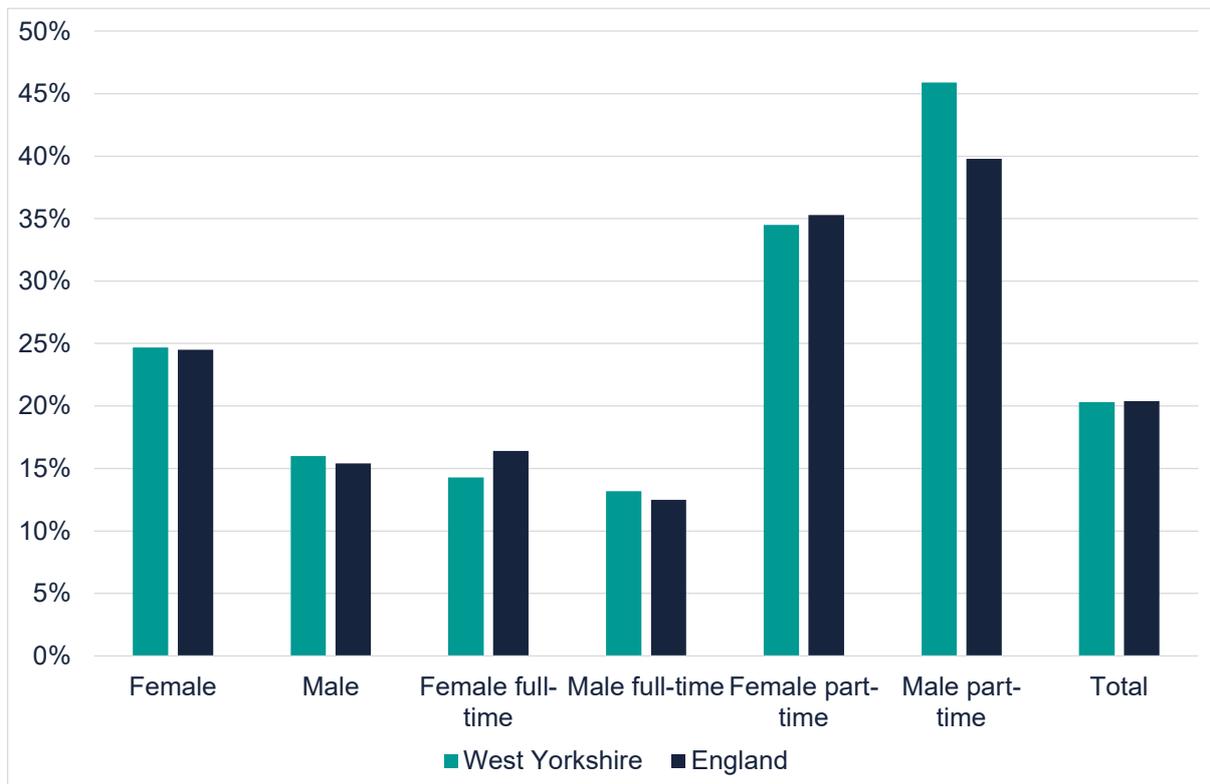
Women in employment in West Yorkshire are much more likely than men to be paid below the Real Living Wage – the hourly rate of pay that is estimated to provide a decent standard of living¹². Twenty-five per cent of jobs undertaken by females in West Yorkshire are paid below this level compared with 16% of jobs done by males. The main factor is the high proportion (more than a third) of part-time jobs undertaken by females that pay below the Real Living Wage, although it is also partially due to women in full-time jobs being slightly more likely to be paid below this level. Part-time jobs undertaken by men are even more likely to be paid below the Real Living Wage but there are relatively few men working in this kind of role.

¹⁰ Institute for Employment Studies, [Labour Market Statistics](#), July 2021 (2021)

¹¹ Office for National Statistics, [Business and individual attitudes towards the future of homeworking](#), UK: April to May 2021 (2021)

¹² This was set at £9.30 in 2020 by the Living Wage Foundation, the latest period for which pay data are available.

Figure 7: % of all employee jobs paying below the Living Wage Foundation’s real living wage rate by gender and status



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS, 2020

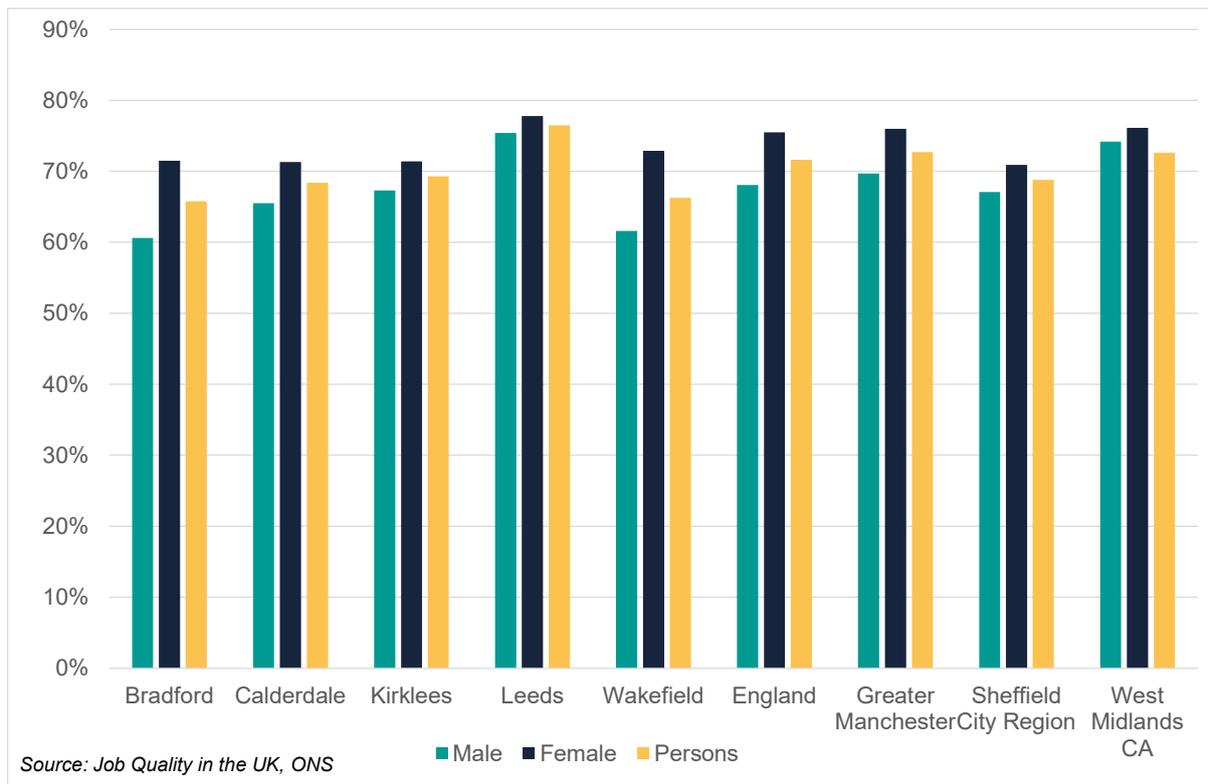
The relatively low rates of pay received by women is also reflected in the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men’s earnings. According to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020, the pay gap for median earnings in West Yorkshire is 12%, somewhat below the national average of 17%.

Quality work

Inclusive growth means connecting people to jobs that are of good quality, not just in terms of pay but across a range of measures.

The Office for National Statistics has developed a composite measure of good work in response to recommendations in the Taylor Review of modern working practices. According to this measure, a person in quality work has all of the following characteristics: not in low pay, working satisfactory hours, and having desired contractual status.

Figure 8: Proportion of residents who are employees in quality work by sex, 2018



Around two-thirds of resident employees are in quality work across the majority of West Yorkshire districts, somewhat below the national average. Women are more likely to be in quality work, reflecting the fact that they are more likely to be working a satisfactory number of hours than men.

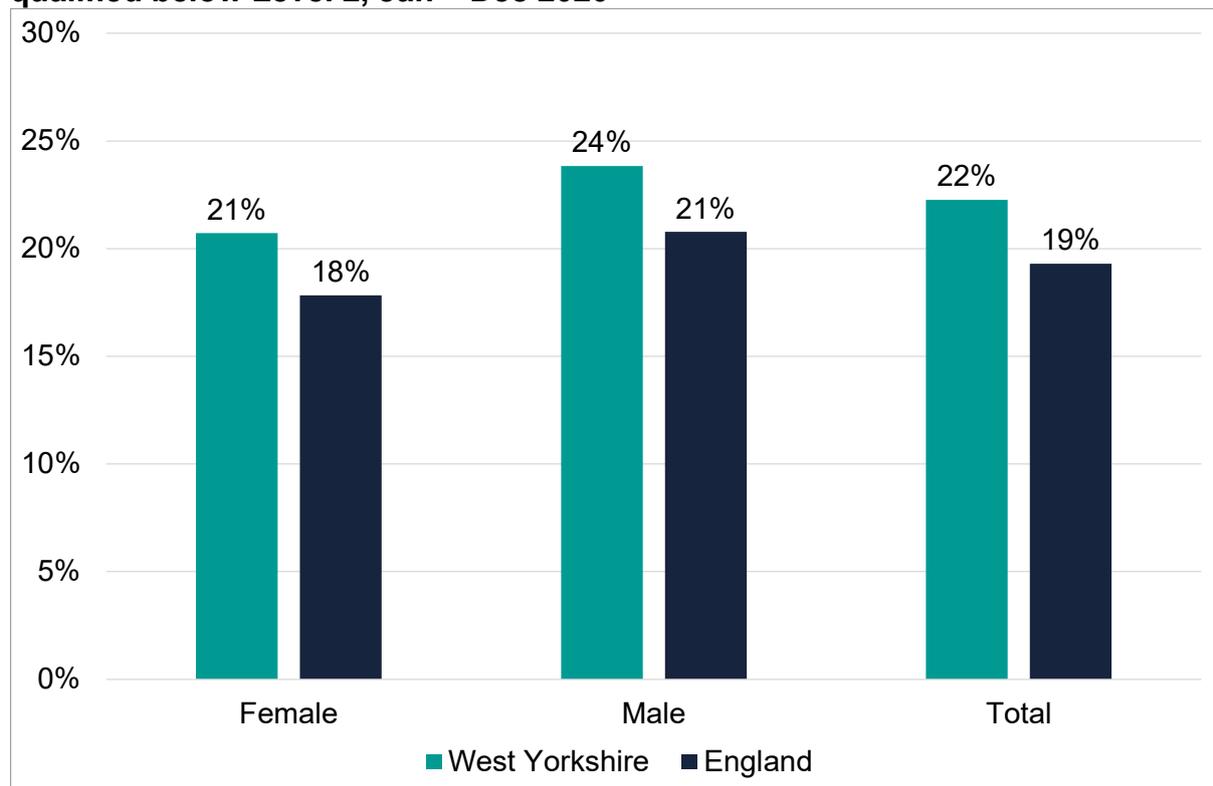
Men are consistently less likely than women to be working satisfactory hours, due to longer hours of paid work, reflecting shift patterns. It should be noted that women shoulder the responsibility of “unpaid work”, however, undertaking an estimated average of 10 hours more unpaid work than men (26 hours compared with 16 hours)¹³. The larger degree of unpaid work and desire for more flexible hours mean female employees are less likely to be in paid employment working above the 48-hour threshold, which is the principal cause of employees working unsatisfactory hours.

People with no / low qualifications

We have already seen that women are more likely to hold higher level qualifications than men. **Women are also less likely to hold lower-level qualifications (below level 2) or to lack qualifications altogether**, than men. Twenty-one per cent of females fall into this category, compared with 24% of males. This matters, because a basic level of qualifications is often a requirement for a job, course or apprenticeship.

¹³ Office for National Statistics, [Women shoulder the responsibility of 'unpaid work'](#) (2016)

Figure 9: Proportion of working age population with no qualifications / qualified below Level 2, Jan – Dec 2020



Source: Annual Population Survey

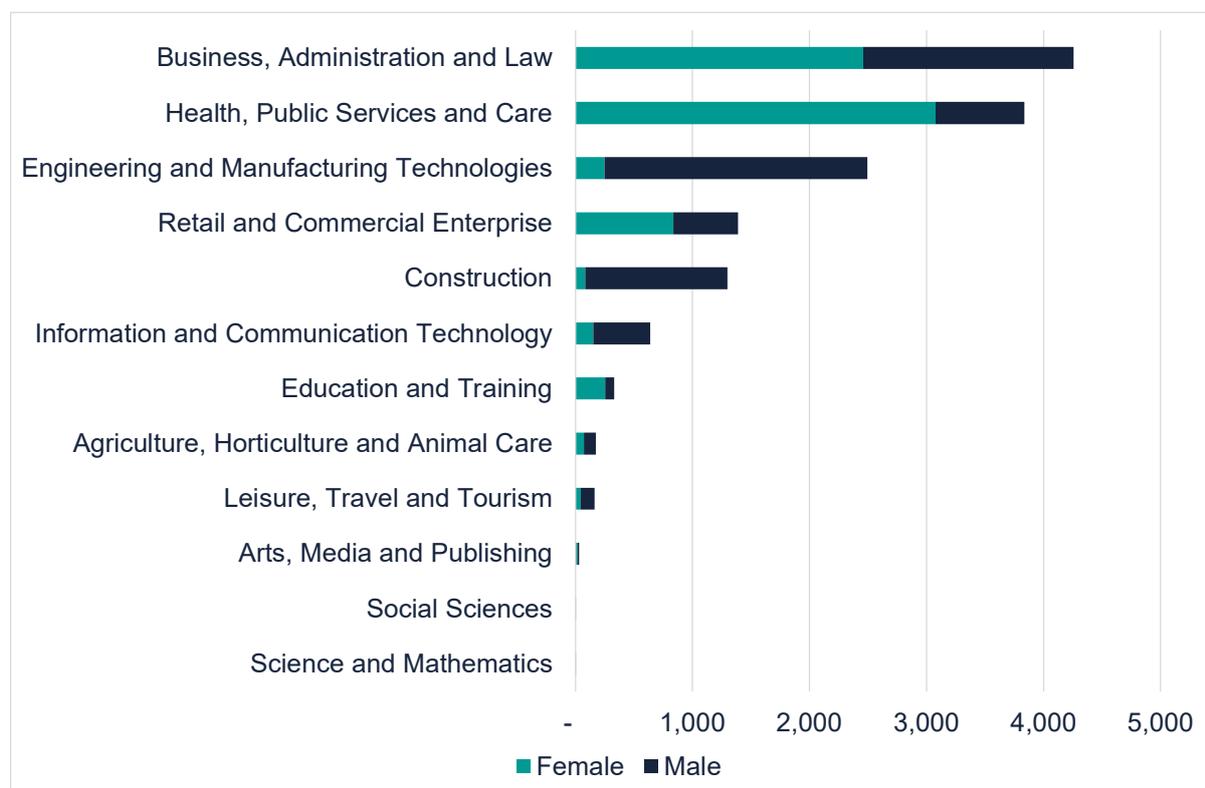
Nonetheless, there is still a significant challenge around providing women with qualifications at a basic level. The proportion of women in West Yorkshire who have not achieved a qualification at level 2 is higher than nationally (21% versus 18%) and is substantial in absolute terms, translating into more than 150,000 people.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are key to inclusive growth and social mobility as they provide an opportunity to build a sustainable career. **Apprenticeship starts in West Yorkshire are evenly split between men and women**, with 7,260 female starts in 2019/20, 50% of the total. However, young women only account for 40% of starts for apprenticeship among 16-18 year olds, pointing to a **lack of opportunities for female school leavers**. More than half of female apprentices are aged 25 and above, compared with barely a third of male apprentices.

There are stark differences in the sectors in which men and women take up apprenticeships, often based on occupational stereotypes of “traditional roles”. For example, in West Yorkshire 80% of starts in health, public services and care are for women but only 6% of starts in construction, 10% in engineering and manufacturing and 24% in information and communication technology are for females.

Figure 10: Apprenticeship starts by sector subject area and gender, 2019/20, West Yorkshire



Source: Department for Education

This segregation has been linked to a gender pay gap for apprentices¹⁴ and has prompted calls for action to address gender stereotyping and to tackle discrimination that limits the access of young females to apprenticeships that offer the best opportunities for pay and progression, as well as formal training and development¹⁵. There is also a wider debate about investment in social infrastructure so that working in sectors like care is valued and offers the same level of pay and security as other apprenticeships.

People without basic digital skills

There are some gender-based differences in performance with regard to Essential Digital Skills, although the analysis is only available at national level¹⁶. Eighty six per cent of males aged 15 and above have achieved the Foundation Skill level compared with 81% of females. Similarly, 81% of males have the full Essential Digital Skills for Life in comparison with 76% of females. There is no difference by gender for Essential Digital Skills for Work: 48% of both males and females hold a full range of these skills. Overall, the evidence points towards a **deficit of basic digital skills among women at foundation level and in respect of Skills for Life.**

¹⁴ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2018 to 2019 \(2020\)](#)

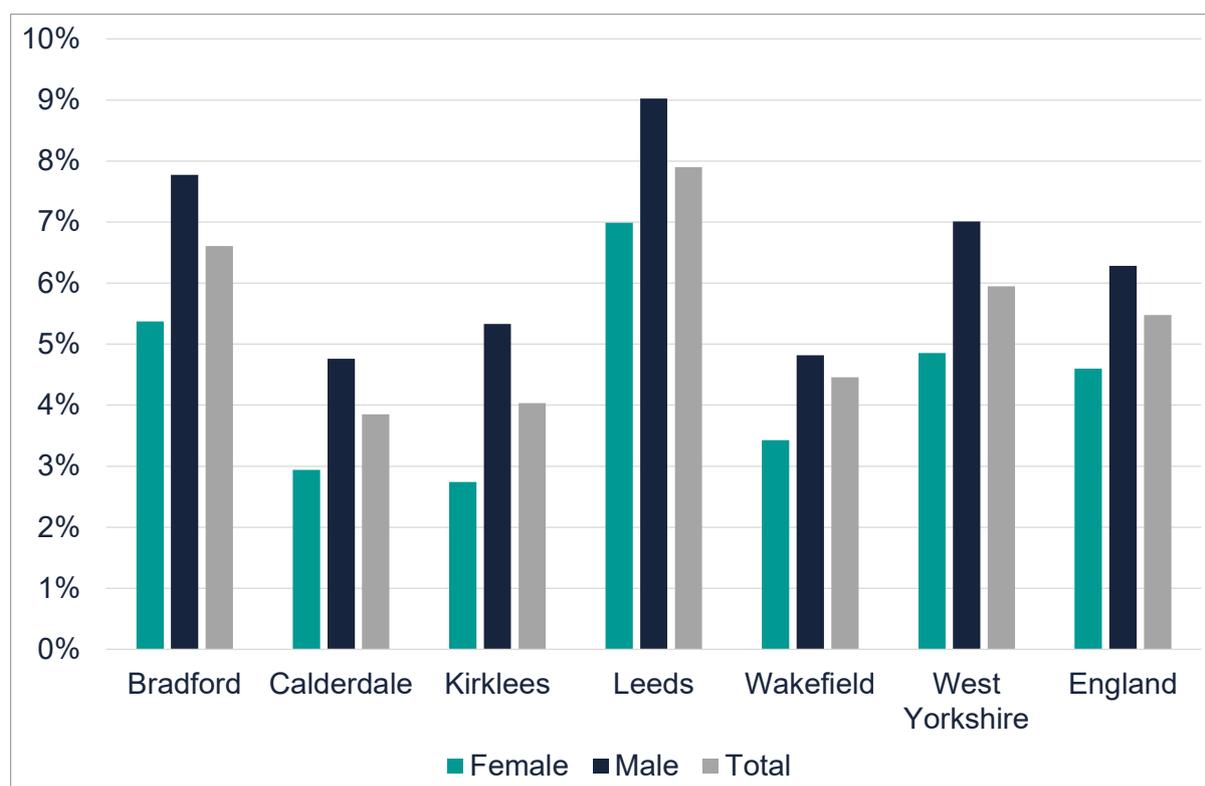
¹⁵ Young Women's Trust, [The real cost of apprenticeships](#) (2018)

¹⁶ Lloyds Bank, [Essential Digital Skills Data Tables](#) (2021)

NEETs

Young people who become NEET (not in education, employment or training) face an increased likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low-quality work later on in life, as well being more susceptible to health problems.

Figure 11: Number and proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known by gender (average of December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021)



Source: Department for Education

Based on the latest available figures females in West Yorkshire are less likely than males to become NEET (or activity not known) at age 16 and 17 (the ages at which local authorities have a statutory duty to track and support young people). Five per cent of females fall into this category compared with 7% of males. Nonetheless, almost 40% of all NEETs are female, around 1,200 young women in absolute terms. The prevalence of NEET females in West Yorkshire is similar to the national average but this disguises important variations at local authority level, ranging from a female NEET / not known rate of 7% in Leeds to rates of less than 3% in Calderdale and Kirklees.

Historically more women than men have been NEET but over time this gender gap has disappeared due to a decrease in the number of young women who are inactive because they are looking after their family or their home¹⁷.

¹⁷ Commons Library, [Why has the NEET gender gap disappeared?](#) (2017)

Delivering 21st Century Transport

In creating an efficient transport infrastructure to connect our communities, it is important to take account of the distinctive needs of different groups within those communities.

Access inequality ratio

The access inequality ratio compares accessibility of jobs by bus with accessibility by private car. The nature of this indicator means that it is not possible to provide a gender breakdown. However, we can say that women are more likely to be affected by access inequality because they are more likely to part of a household that does not have access to a car, they are more likely to be a non-driver¹⁸ and they are also more likely to be reliant on bus services (see below).

Mode share

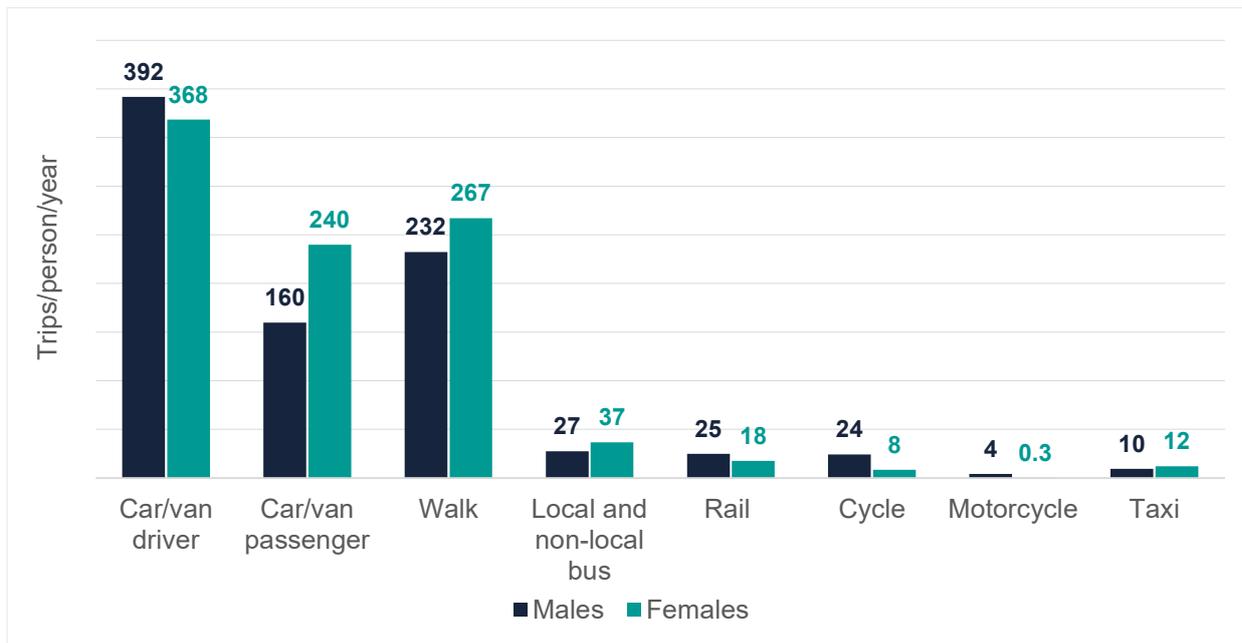
Women's travel behaviour and travel needs are different from men. This is clear from national data relating to mode share, although data are not available to show these differences at West Yorkshire level.

In 2019 in England, women made an average of 990 trips, compared with 915 for men, but men travelled 7,013 miles on average, a distance 17% greater than that travelled by women. Part of these differences is explained by their different modal usage, which in turn is affected by inequalities of access to different transport modes; for example, more adult women than men do not have access to a car. In 2019, 20% of adult women lived in households with no access to a car, compared to 17% of men.

Women's travel is characterised by a greater localism too; although women use buses more often, they have a lower train usage – a typical commuting mode for longer distances. Women also make more walking trips than men – 267 a year, compared with 232 of men –, but just 24% of these are of a mile or more, compared with 29% for men. The reliance of women on bus services locally is understated in the national figures presented below because overall bus usage is higher in West Yorkshire than nationally (see main report).

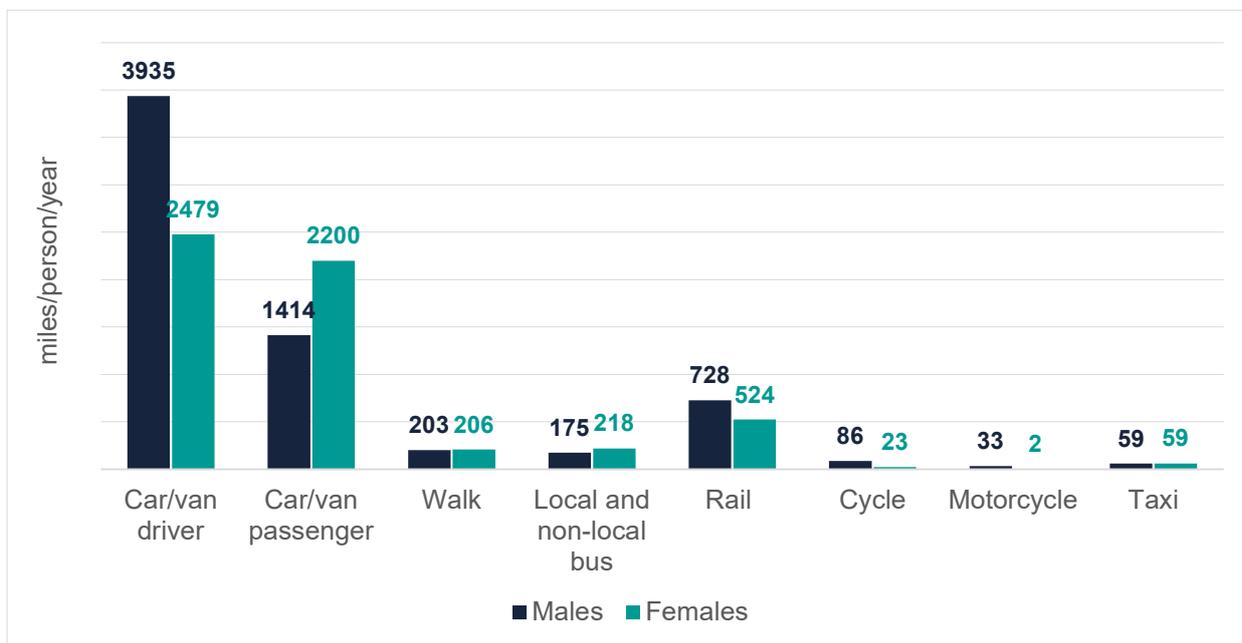
¹⁸ Department for Transport, [Adult personal car access by gender: England, Table NTS0206](#), 2020

Figure 12: Average trips per person and year by main mode and gender, England 2019



Source: National Travel Survey 2019, Department for Transport, 2020

Figure 13: Average distance by person and year by main mode and gender, England 2019



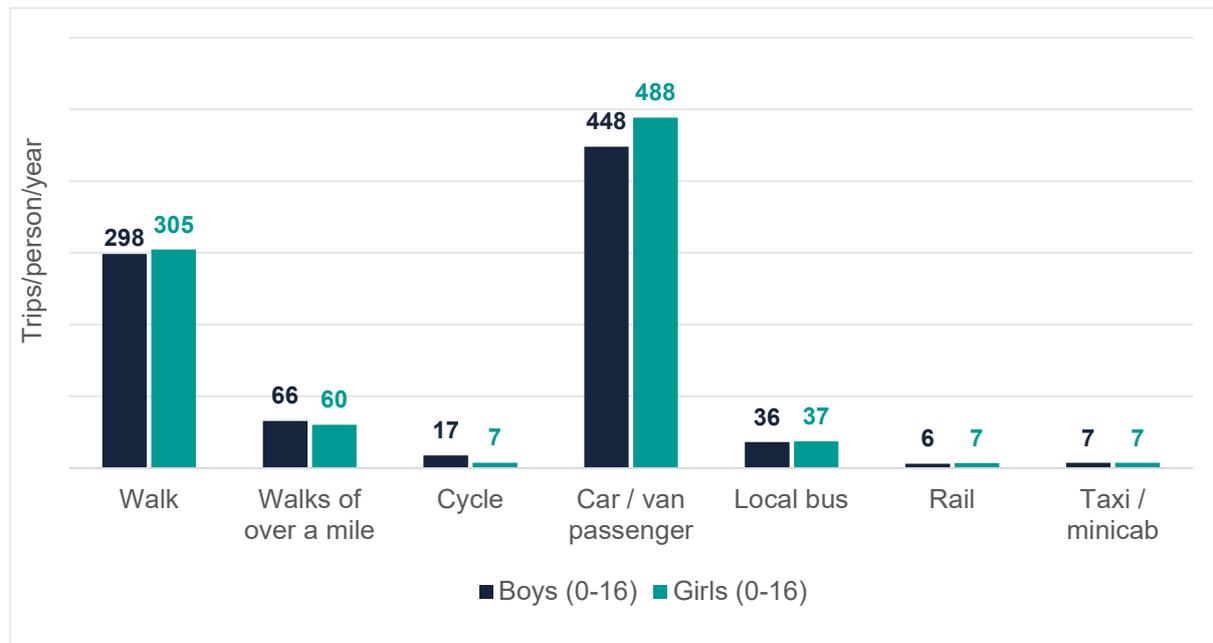
Source: National Travel Survey 2019, Department for Transport, 2020

Although some gender inequalities in the labour market such as the pay gap and the higher time dedicated by women to unpaid and care work may partially explain these

differences –the only area of unpaid work where men put in more hours than women is the provision of transport¹⁹.

As occurs with adult women, girls make more walking trips than boys, but boys walk greater distances, and also cycle at a much higher rate than girls. Girls are also given a lift more often than boys. Again, this denotes some early inequalities in activity levels and constraints on the way girls use public space.

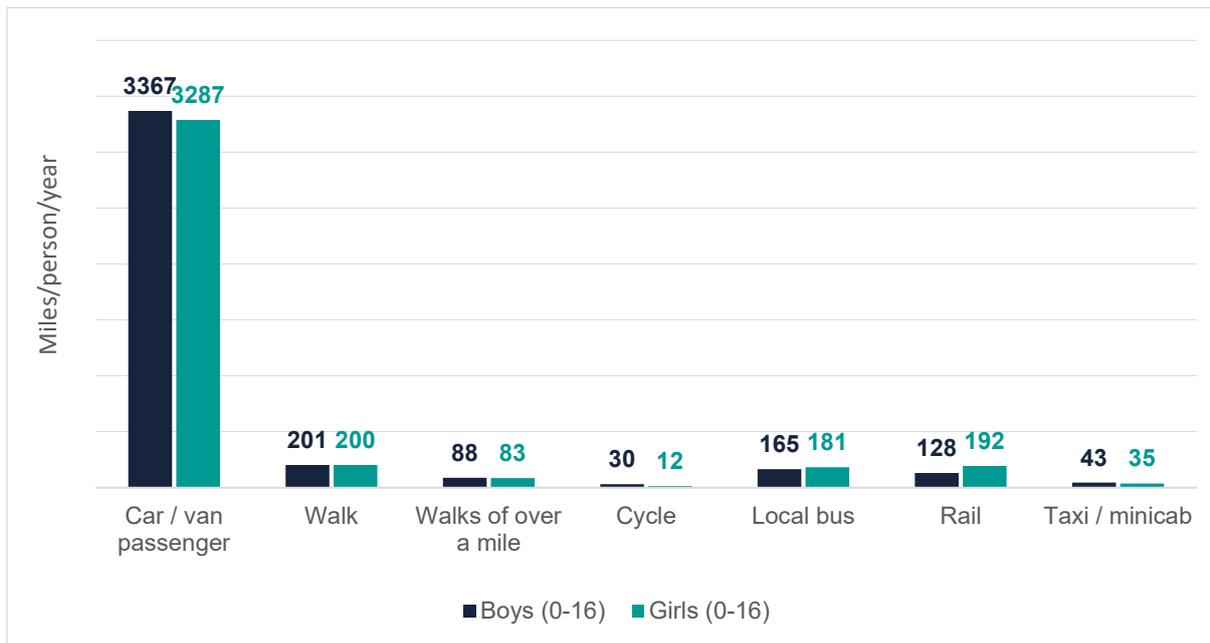
Figure 14: Average number of children trips by main mode and gender, England (2019)



Source: National Travel Survey 2019, Department for Transport, 2020

¹⁹ Women carry out an overall average of 60% more unpaid work than men. Source: [ONS](#)

Figure 15: Distance travelled by children by main mode and gender, England (2019)



Source: National Travel Survey 2019, Department for Transport, 2020.

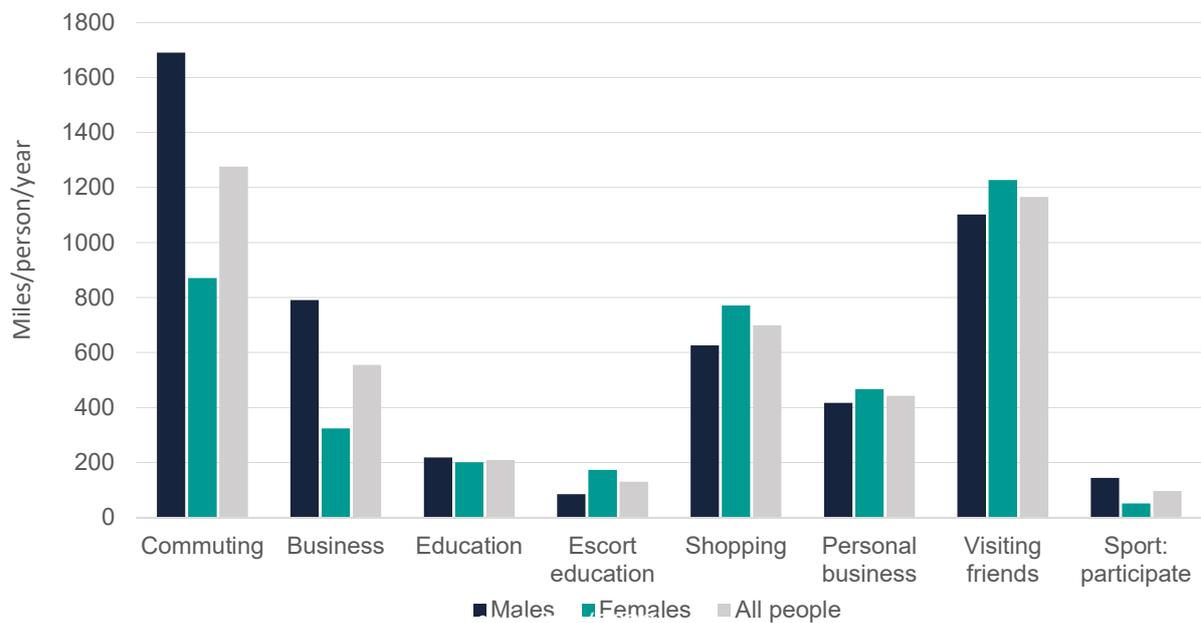
Women travel shorter distances than men for commuting, business, education and to participate in sport, but the distance women travel for escorting education, shopping, visiting friends and personal business is greater than that of men.

This already denotes the different spheres that women and men still occupy in society, with women dedicating more time to caring work within the family; for example, 40% of the distance travelled by men is commuting or business related, whereas this proportion is just 20% for women.

It has been argued that women’s experience of travel has not been fully considered in the planning of transport services and that poor quality, unreliable and expensive public transport has a far bigger impact on the lives of women, who are more likely to be on low incomes and working part-time²⁰.

²⁰ Women’s Budget Group, [Public transport and gender](#) (2020)

Figure 16: Average distance travelled by purpose and gender, England (2019)



Source: National Travel Survey 2019, Department for Transport, 2020.

Women also make more “trip chains” (linked trips for different purposes). Analysis of National Travel Survey data from 2002 to 2014²¹ showed that women were more likely to combine purposes on their way to work; 12% of full-time working women chained trips on their way to work, compared to 9% of full-time working men. The proportions increased to 26% and 13%, respectively, among part-time workers.

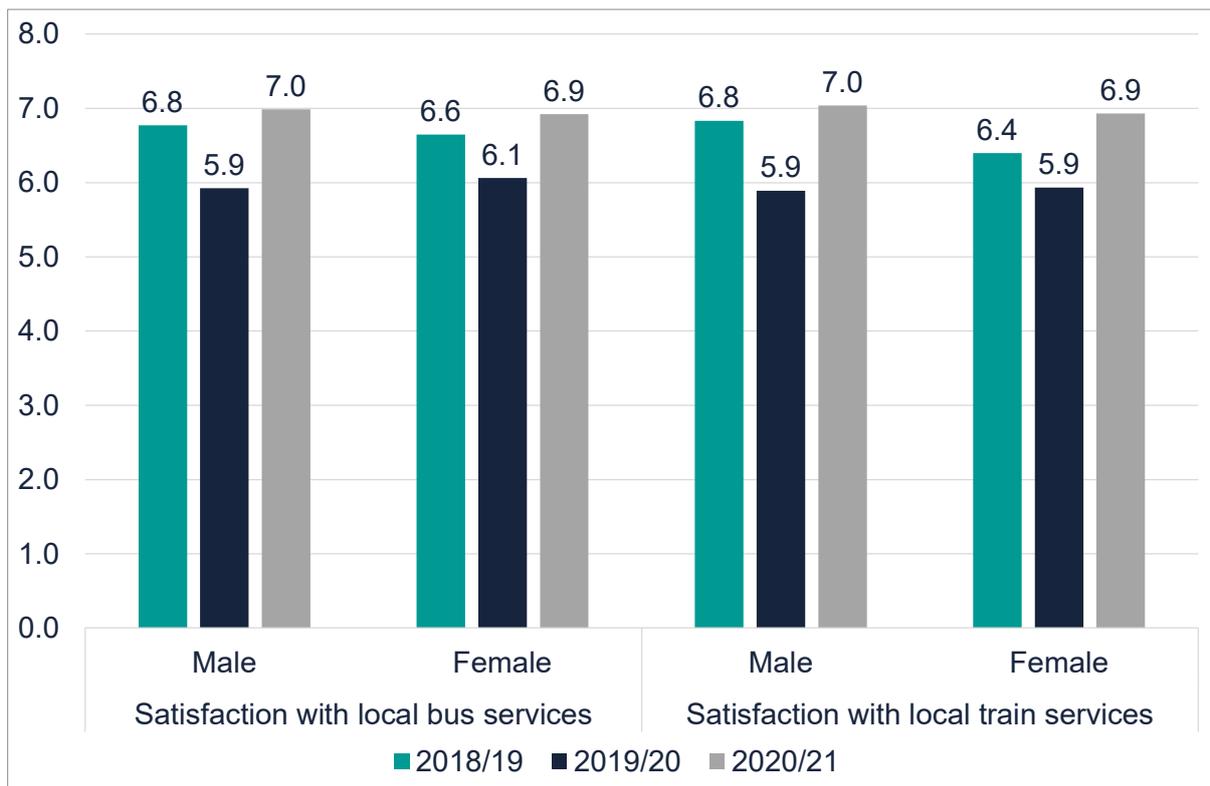
The same study also revealed that women were more likely than men to go to work after making a trip for other purpose, for the three categories analysed: escorting children to school (7%), escorting others (5%) and other purposes (2%).

Satisfaction with public transport

In spite of the different way in which women engage with the transport system, the pattern of satisfaction with bus and rail services is similar for men and women.

²¹ Trip Chaining Factsheet: 2002-2014, DfT.

Figure 17: Satisfaction with local bus and train services (average score 1-10)



Source: Residents Perceptions of Transport Survey

Like men, women give similar average ratings to local bus services and local train services. Average ratings increased during 2020/21 for both men and women in spite of the impact of the pandemic during that period.

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