
**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Committee: Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 19 October 2011

Report of: Head of Business Improvement and Partnership

Subject: Discrimination against Women

Purpose of the Report

This report provides the Committee with information about discrimination against women in relation to employment, representation in political life, crime, and access to public services, with a particular focus on women in Manchester. The report also provides information about what action is being taken to address discrimination issues for women in Manchester.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to comment on the issues raised in the report.

Ward Affected

All

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Background documents available for inspection:

State of the City, Communities of Interest Report 2011/12

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester has a strong tradition of championing equality and diversity and the concept of tackling inequality is nothing new for the City. Manchester has promoted and invested in equality through innovative work with communities including women for over twenty five years. However, it is important to recognise that women still experience challenges and this report responds to the request from the Committee to provide information focussing on discrimination against women in relation to:

- Employment - including the effect of the recession, lone parent benefits and the gender pay gap
- Representation in political life and support for women in public roles
- Crime - women as victims of crime and as offenders.
- Access to public services - how equality impact assessments identify access issues for women and the impact of funding changes in Adults services on women.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Committee considered Manchester City Council's Gender Equality Scheme in October 2009 and recommended that the scheme be revised to focus more strongly on discrimination against women.
- 2.2 More recently, the Equality Act of 2010 introduced changed responsibilities on public authorities with regard to equalities. Specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to produce Equality Objectives that set out how they are meeting the general and specific duties of the Act.
- 2.3 The Committee has previously been briefed on the new direction of the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's approach to tackling discrimination through the revised Equality Impact Assessment process. In light of these changes Manchester City Council will no longer produce a Gender Equality Scheme. Gender equality issues will be incorporated into the Council's Equality Objectives.
- 2.4 This report will use information provided in the gender chapter of the State of the City, Communities of Interest report for 2011/12, which members of the Committee will receive separate information about.

3. Employment

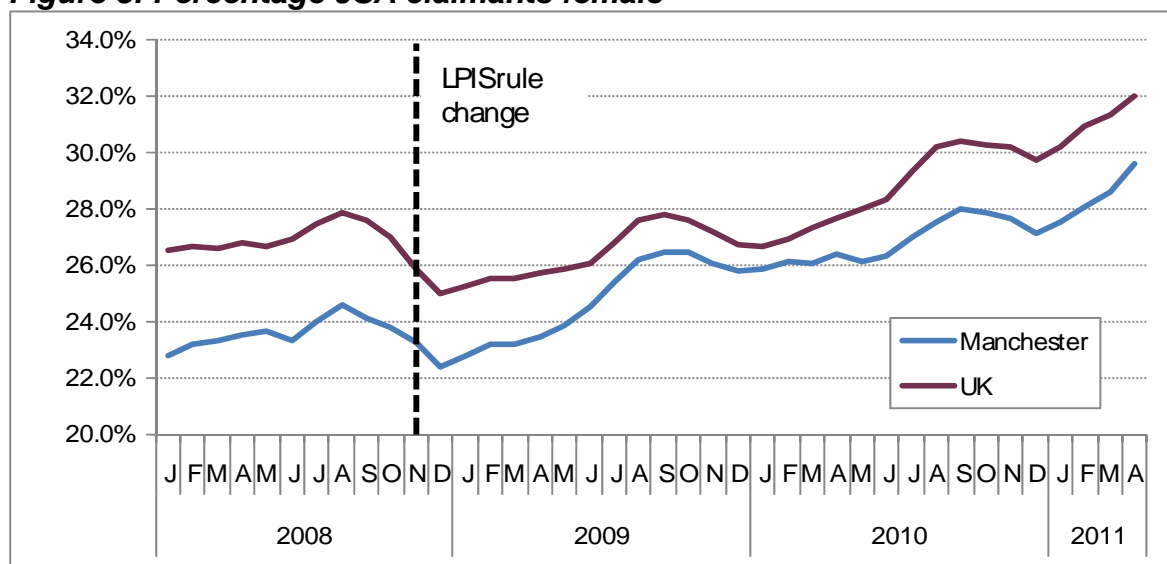
- 3.1 Manchester has recently experienced an increase in the number of women claiming Job Seekers Allowance; this increase is reflected both regionally and nationally.
- 3.2 Nationally there have been significant changes in the conditions of income support (lone parent benefit). These changes are most likely to impact most on women who make up the majority of lone parents. In Manchester, 91.8%

of lone parents are women. These reforms, which started to be phased into implementation from November 2008, mean that lone parents whose youngest child reaches 12 years of age move onto Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Further reforms have continued to be phased in including; in October 2009 parents have moved from lone parent benefit to JSA when the youngest child has reached 10 years of age, in October 2010 the transition occurs when the youngest child reaches 7 years of age and in October 2012 when the youngest child reaches 5 years of age. Whilst there is no financial difference in the level of benefit, lone parents claiming JSA are expected as part of the conditions of the benefit to actively seek paid employment and to take up a job if one is offered. If they refuse to take a job their benefits may be suspended indefinitely. However, there is an appeals process for this and any suspensions to benefits would be assessed on a case by case basis.

- 3.2 The graph below illustrates the increase in women claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in Manchester. This is partly to do with changes to income support. Prior to the beginning of 2009, the percentage of female JSA claimants remained fairly consistent (apart from seasonal fluctuations). However, since changes to the eligibility rules for lone parents claiming Income Support, the percentage of female JSA claimants has steadily increased, from 23.4% in April 2009 to 29.6% in April 2011 (Figure 3). Nevertheless, the city figure remains over two percentage points below the national rate.

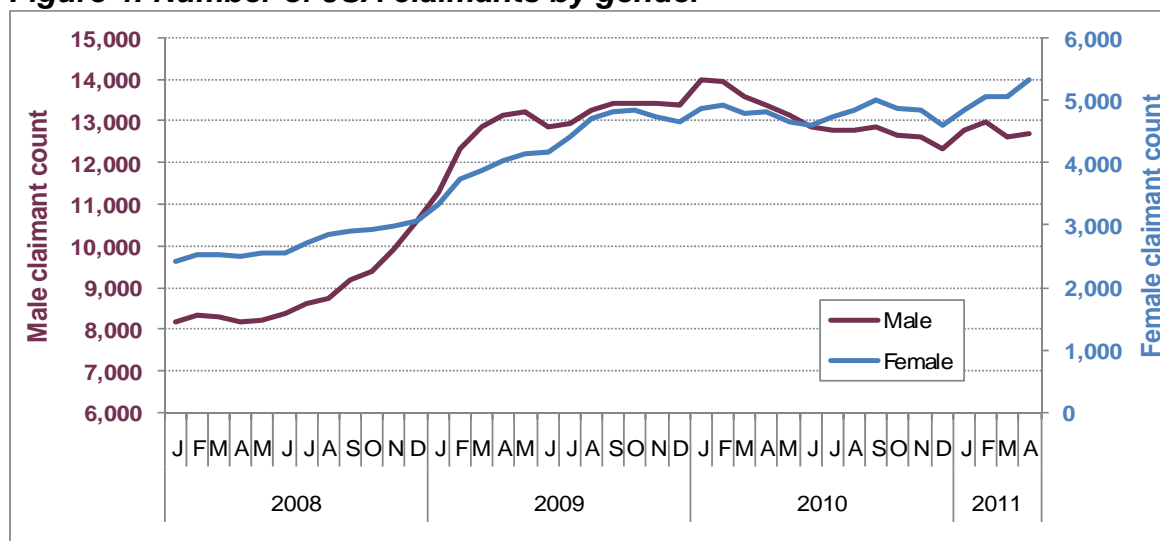
As illustrated in Figure 4, since the peak in the claimant count in February 2010, the number of male claimants shows a downward trend, while the number of female claimants has continued to rise overall.

Figure 3: Percentage JSA claimants female



Source: Manchester City Council

Figure 4: Number of JSA claimants by gender



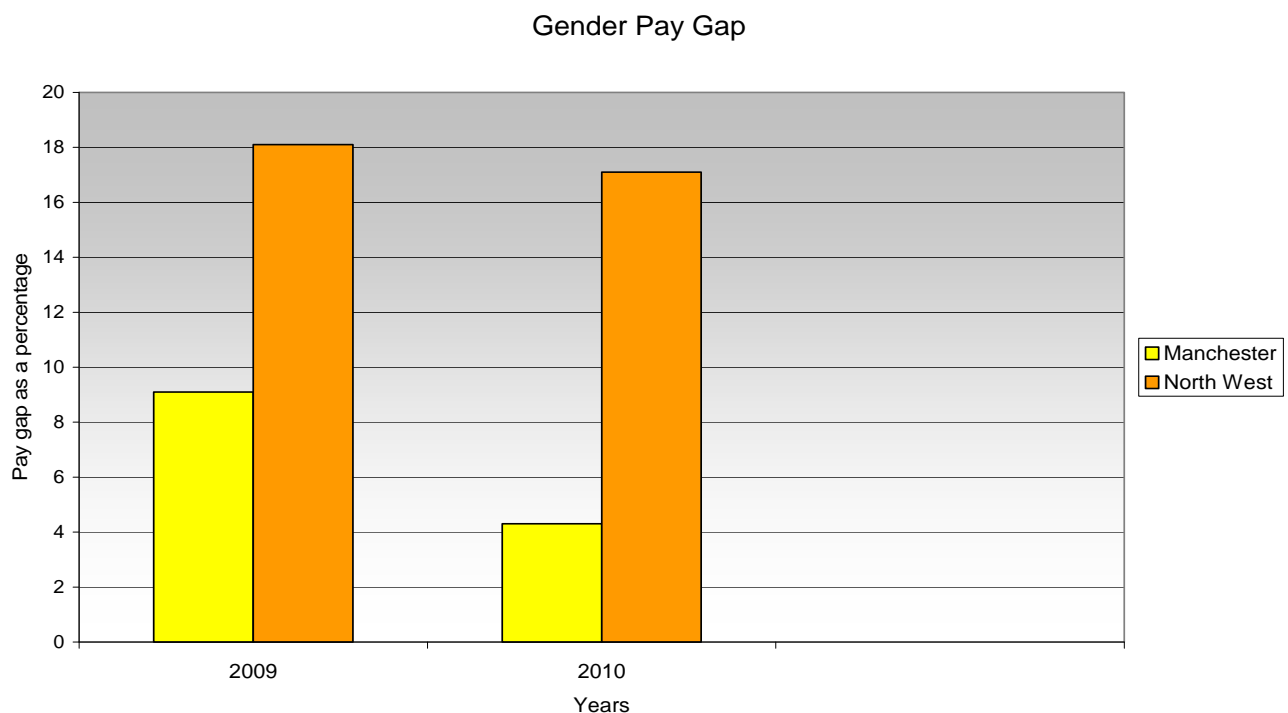
Source: Manchester City Council

- 3.3 The past twelve months have seen significant reductions in public spending. The opposition party commissioned the House of Common's Library to undertake a gender analysis of the impact of the spending review. The findings predicted that the reductions announced in the Spending Review will impact mostly on women, especially lone mothers and female lone pensioners, in comparison to men. Locally, the Pankhurst Centre has also reported that they have experienced an increase in the number of women accessing their service for advocacy, domestic abuse support and food parcels in the past 12 months. However the impact of these reductions on women is contested. The government undertook an impact assessment of the proposed changes to employment support allowance and this identified that the proposed changes could disproportionately impact on men.
- 3.4 Nationally there have also been some significant welfare reforms in relation to benefits that are mostly accessed by women. There have been changes to the Sure Start maternity grants, reductions in health in pregnancy grants, a cap on child benefit and changes to tax credits. The majority of this support is paid to women. The overall impact of these changes on women is yet to be seen.
- 3.5 The impact of childcare costs, shift patterns that are not compatible with family life and inflexible part time hours are barriers to lone parents accessing employment. This means some of the current challenges and key issues for Manchester are to ensure women have appropriate support to enable them to access work whilst being able to meet the needs of their family.
- 3.6 In light of these changes, Manchester City Council has commissioned Gingerbread, a national charity for single parent families, to provide intensive support for lone parents with children under the age of seven to get back into training and employment. The project focuses on raising

individual and family aspirations and motivation, developing individual client development plans and encouraging clients to link into friendship groups through the hubs set up by the project within their community. The overall outcome of this project is to ensure lone parents are supported to access employment opportunities. The project is being delivered through 18 hubs across the city (Ardwick, Ancoats and Clayton, Baguley, Bradford, Brooklands, Cheetham, Gorton North, Gorton South, Harpurhey, Longsight, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, Northernden, Sharston and Woodhouse Park) and the project will run up until March 2012.

Equal Pay

- 3.7 According to Office for National Statistics, this year's figures show that Manchester's pay gap has narrowed again, partly because men's weekly wages have dropped slightly and women's wages have increased marginally. The table below compares the gender pay gap between men and women in 2009 and 2010 for Manchester and the North West region.



- 3.8 The graph illustrates that the gender pay gap has narrowed in 2010. However, it is important to note that this data is based on a national survey and the size of the Manchester male and female samples means that the results are subject to a margin of error ('confidence intervals') of a little over 5%. The North West figures are more accurate due to the much higher sample size.
- 3.9 There are a number of factors that contribute to the gender pay gap such as:
- Interruptions to employment due to caring responsibilities

- 64% of the lowest paid workers are women, contributing to women's poverty and to the poverty of their children.
- There are almost four times as many women in part-time work as men, and part-time workers are likely to receive lower hourly rates of pay than full-time workers.
- Nine out of ten lone parents are women. The median gross weekly pay for male single parents is £346, while for female single parents it is £194.47
- Few senior flexible jobs mean mothers – who still do the bulk of caring at home may have to take lower-paid, part-time work below their skill level.
- Careers traditionally seen as women's roles are undervalued: women's employment is concentrated in the five 'C's – caring, cleaning, catering, clerical work and cashiering – and is valued less than traditional 'men's work'. The annual pay of a mechanic is £17,700; that of a childcarer is £13,900.

Source: Fawcett Society <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=321>

- 3.10 Manchester City Council has robust policies in place to ensure that there is equal pay for male and female employees. In 2006 Manchester set up the Stepping Stones project to comply with the specific duty of the Gender Equality Duty, the need to include objectives aimed at tackling the causes of any gender pay gap. Stepping Stones was a multi-disciplinary project across Human Resources, Finance and Legal services to settle equal pay claims. In addition to this, Manchester City Council developed a gender proofed pay structure as a result of the job evaluation work undertaken in 2008. This has contributed towards Manchester City Council having equal pay structures within its pay scales.

4. Representation in political life

- 4.1 This section will provide information about representation of women in politics and other public roles such as school governors . In total, Manchester City Council has 96 elected Councillors. Of these, 29% are women. This identifies a -1% decrease compared to the figures in 2007 where 30% of the Council's Councillors were women. In comparison to other Core Cities, Manchester is towards the lower end of the scale in relation to representation of women as local Councillors:

- Birmingham 33%
- Bristol 25%
- Leeds 31%
- Liverpool 40%
- Manchester 29%
- Newcastle 28%
- Nottingham 35%
- Sheffield 33%

- 4.2 In the May 2011 elections 30.7% of all Councillors elected nationally were women; women make up 28.7% of Conservative Councillors, 32.5% of Labour Councillors and 33.7% of Liberal Democrat Councillors. At present, the Local Government Group does not systematically collect and monitor data for candidates or elected Councillors on ethnicity. However, this information used to be available through the Councillor Census, but this activity was discontinued in 2008. As a result of this, there is no up to date statistics on the number of BME women as candidates or elected Councillors.
- 4.3 The Government has established a Taskforce to address the under representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Women Councillors. The Taskforce will be working closely with the Department of Communities and Local Government, who will soon be responding to the Councillors Commission report Representing the Future which made recommendations aimed at reducing barriers and increasing the incentives for people to stand and serve as councillors. A key aim of the initiative is to increasing the number of BAME women on local councils.
- 4.4 BAME women account for less than 1% of England's councillors (from the 2008 Councillors Census). To be more representative of society as a whole, the number of BAME Women Councillors needs to be increased more than five-fold - from 168 of all councillors in England to nearer a thousand. The Taskforce is being chaired by Baroness Uddin of Bethnal Green and will initially last for 12 months. The members will include BAME women councillors and former councillors from every region in England, as well as from Scotland and Wales.
- 4.5 Manchester's main political parties offer women training, support and mentoring to become Councillors e.g. through candidate workshops, invitations to meet high profile MP's to share learning and advice on how to get elected.
- 4.6 In 2010, 22% of Members of Parliament (MP) were women. Research has shown, that the Westminster parliament passed more legislation on issues such as domestic violence and childcare after the number of women MPs increased in 1997 (Centre for Women and Democracy report 2011). This illustrates the positive impact women MP's can have on gender related legislation and in turn gender equality.
- 4.7 The Government has taken a series of measures to boost the number of women participating in public life, including establishing the Councillors' Commission to increase the diversity of Local Government Councillors so that communities are better represented. The Commission was set up by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in February 2007 as an outcome of an independent review to look at the incentives and barriers that encourage or deter people from standing for election as councillors. The Councillors Commission was chaired by Dr Jane Roberts DBE, former Leader of the London Borough of Camden. The Commission published its recommendations in its report Representing the Future in December 2007.

The Government is currently considering the Commission's report and will be publishing a response later this year.

- 4.8 There are no local initiatives to support women to become school governors, but work in some individual schools does take place to attract women and BME governors to reflect the diversity of the school and community population. Manchester City Council also monitors the diversity of school governors and currently 63% of governor positions are held by women and 37% are held by men.
- 4.9 In the absence of any national programmes and initiatives, NHS Manchester has delivered local events for under represented groups to attract their membership onto the Manchester PCT Board. This has included a drive for more women and BME members.
- 4.10 Statistics collated by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) show that nationally there are continuing low rates of representation of women in public bodies.

Women's Representation in politics across the UK - an overview

- 19.7% House of Lords Peers
- 4% Ethnic Minority Women Members of Parliament
- 34% All Ministers
- 26% Cabinet Ministers
- 22% Members of Parliament
- 33% Members of Scottish Parliament
- 15% Northern Ireland Assembly
- 46.7% Welsh Assembly Members
- 26% Members of European Parliament
- 0.9% Ethnic Minority women councillors

Women's Representation in Other Public Bodies

- 9.26% High Court Judges
- 8% University Vice-Chancellors
- 30% Police Authority board members

5. Crime

- 5.1 Greater Manchester Probation Trust found that there has been an increase in the number of women sent to prison by 44% in the past decade compared to a 26% increase for men in the same period (Ministry of Justice 2009). It has been suggested this increase is due to sentencing trends rather than an increase in serious offending. In 1996 10% of women convicted of a chargeable offence were sent to prison, in 2007 this had risen to 15%. Women are sent to prison for less serious offences than men such as shoplifting, and more women are sent to prison for shoplifting than any other crime. Evidence shows that in Greater Manchester BME women are more likely to go to custody than their white counterparts.

5.2 Important issues for women's offending in Greater Manchester are:

- 66% of women sent to prison are mothers and a recent survey by Styal prison found only 5% of children remained in the family home after their mother was sent into custody.
- 73% of women in prison and around 60% of the Greater Manchester Probation Trust caseload have experienced domestic abuse and up to a third have been victims of sexual violence.
- Nationally 80% of women in prison have a diagnosed mental health problem (Prison Reform Trust Nov 2009).
- Nationally two thirds of women in prison are drug dependent and 30% have been daily alcohol users (Prison Reform Trust Nov 2009).

5.3 Greater Manchester Probation Trust recognises within its work to support women offenders that promoting health and wellbeing within women's centres is fundamental to addressing women's offending. Manchester City Council and its partners are also addressing some of the issues highlighted through the Manchester Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy 2010 – 2014.

5.4 As a result of this evidence Greater Manchester Probation Trust has developed a Strategy and Action Plan for Women Offenders 2010/2013. The strategy sets out plans to divert women where appropriate away from custody and provide positive and effective supervision in the community. The action plan will aim to improve criminal justice, health and social outcomes for women offenders in Greater Manchester and address issues of over representation in custodial sentences for specific groups, for example BME women.

5.5 The main support for women offenders in Manchester is WomenMATTA, a partnership between Greater Manchester Probation, the Pankhurst Centre and Women in Prison. The project supports women at risk of offending, women serving community sentences and women released from prison after remand or a custodial sentence of less than six months. The project benefits from the work of the Women in Prison charity; they have a national freephone advice line, information and advice sessions in all 14 women's prisons and specialist support workers for young women, BME women, older women and women with a history of mental illness. WomenMATTA is delivered from the Pankhurst Centre, a women only space that also provides gender based violence services. WomenMATTA believe it is important that the service is delivered from a women only space so women accessing the service feel safe and able to engage with the support offered. They offer:

- 1-2-1 individual advocacy support
- volunteer peer mentoring
- group work
- until recently they had a young women's worker and a family support worker

The Manchester Community Chaplaincy service, Insight for Change, offers a city wide mentoring scheme for women offenders that provides advocacy support when women are released from prison.

- 5.6 The Committee also asked for this report to look at issues for women as victims of crime. The figures below have been provided by Manchester Victim Support. The main areas where women are more likely to be victims of crime are sexual offences, theft, criminal damage and violence, assault/wounding. Victim support commented that criminal damage is higher for women because most of criminal damage is linked to domestic abuse. It is important to note that when the violent crime figures are broken down into sub categories they are much high for females for common assault (domestic violence), whilst racially aggravated common assault is higher for males.

Referrals by Crime Type and Gender

Manchester

Crime Type	Female	Male
Burglary	1144	1273
Criminal Damage	786	538
Fraud and Forgery	46	69
Non Crime	26	8
Other offences	253	344
Robbery	229	575
Sexual Offences	255	18
Theft	749	483
Violence: Assault/ Wounding	1367	1257
Violence: Harrassment	243	225
Violence: Other	34	91
Violence: Homicide	100	196

- 5.7 Manchester City Council and its partner have developed a robust Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy 2010-2014 that aims to provide a range of support to prevent domestic abuse and support survivors. The strategy focuses on four key objectives, Communication, Prevention, Provision and Protection.

6. Access to public services

- 6.1 In line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty, Manchester City Council has revised its Equality Impact Assessment process. As a result services will identify access needs for all protected characteristics, of which women are one. The revised process supports services to evidence where any differential impacts have been identified and there is a process to mitigate any adverse or differential impact through Equality Delivery Plans within the Business Planning Process.
- 6.2 The Committee specifically asked for information about access issues

identified by the Directorate of Adults. Detailed EIAs have been undertaken for all Adults budget decision making – Social Care, Supporting People, Voluntary and Community Sector and Fairer Charging. These issues are being considered by Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.