

CHAPTER 3: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Following the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty, the promotion of equality between men and women was enshrined within EU policy-making. In recognition of this, the European Employment Guidelines, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 1999, identified *the strengthening of equal opportunities between men and women* as one of four pillars governing employment policy. For Structural Fund Programmes, this means a requirement to incorporate actions to improve the position of women in the areas of employment, training and education, and the reconciliation of working and family life.

Equal opportunities in this context is primarily concerned with ensuring gender equality. The European Social Fund Regulation and the draft UK Policy Frame of Reference, which indicates how the Regulations provisions will be implemented in the UK, present a broader definition of equal opportunities, incorporating the integration of a range of disadvantaged groups in the labour market, namely ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, lone parents and older workers. Promoting the position of women in the labour market more generally is considered in a separate policy field.

This Chapter deals with Equal Opportunities of those groups that can face disadvantage or discrimination, irrespective of the economic status; ie, groups that continue to face barriers even when in highly paid or highly skilled positions. These are women, ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.

Other disadvantaged groups that are excluded from mainstream economic activity - including access to training, such as lone parents, or those with literacy and numeracy problems, have already been identified in Chapter 2.

EMPLOYMENT

The past decade has witnessed a narrowing of the gender gap between males and females in the labour market, in terms of the numbers employed. Between 1988 and 1998 for example, the number of females in employment in the UK increased by 900,000, compared with a male increase of only 71,000.

The changes in employment numbers and comparisons with the South West and the national position are presented in **Table 3.1**. Between 1991 and 1997, total employment in Cornwall increased by more than 10% - or 13,000 jobs, compared with increases of 7.4% and 4.4% in the South West and Great Britain. Although 60% of these new jobs were taken up by men (the bulk of which were full-time), women continued to make up the majority of employees in employment – 53% of the total. The majority of full-time jobs (60%) remained occupied by men, albeit many women who work part-time are not seeking full-time employment.

| | | | Male FT | Male PT | Female FT | Female PT | Total |
|------------------------|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Isles of Scilly | | | | | | | |
| Employees | - | Nos 1991 | 296 | 99 | 267 | 132 | 793 |
| Employees | - | Nos 1997 | 245 | 113 | 170 | 207 | 739 |
| Isles of Scilly | - | % change | -17.2 | 14.1 | -36.3 | 56.8 | -6.8 |
| Cornwall | | | | | | | |
| Employees | - | Nos 1991 | 51,871 | 8,422 | 32,259 | 39,630 | 132,183 |
| Employees | - | Nos 1997 | 57,505 | 10,851 | 37,700 | 39,877 | 145,929 |
| Cornwall | - | % change | 10.7 | 28.7 | 16.4 | 0.8 | 10.3 |
| | | South West | 1.9 | 33.8 | 8.6 | 10.8 | 7.4 |
| | | GB | -1.5 | 37.9 | 5.2 | 9.2 | 4.4 |

Source: Census of Employment 1991/Annual Employment Survey 1997.

In contrast to Cornwall, the number of employees in employment in the Isles of Scilly fell by 6.8% between 1991 and 1997. Whilst the number of part-time jobs increased for both males and females, full-time employment fell significantly for females, by more than a third. This is a worrying trend during a period of growth in the national economy, although the data may reflect increasing levels of self-employment on Scilly, which are not captured by the AES.

Overall, women make up 53.1% of employees in employment in Cornwall and Scilly, compared to only 49% in Great Britain as a whole. The majority of full-time jobs are, however, held by males. In addition, more men are employed in higher paid sectors - such as manufacturing, construction and computing, whereas women continue to dominate lower paid industries - such as hotels and restaurants – See **Table 3.2**.

| | % of All Employees | | % of Full-Time Employees | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Manufacturing | 60.5 | 39.5 | 74.5 | 25.5 |
| Construction | 80.8 | 19.2 | 86.5 | 13.5 |
| Retail | 57.0 | 43.0 | 60.9 | 39.1 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 35.3 | 64.7 | 46.0 | 54.0 |
| Computing and related activities | 74.0 | 26.0 | 77.0 | 23.0 |
| Banking and finance | 42.6 | 57.4 | 50.6 | 49.4 |
| Education | 26.0 | 74.0 | 39.9 | 60.1 |
| Health and social work | 19.2 | 80.8 | 26.5 | 73.5 |

Source: Annual Employment Survey, 1997.

The traditional gender domination of sectoral employment is changing. More than half of those employed in the retail sector in Cornwall and Scilly, for example, are male, whereas females comprise the majority of employees in the banking and finance sector (albeit many of these jobs will be in clerical positions). Other studies have shown, however, that, even in sectors where females are in the majority, the bulk of the higher paid jobs are held by males.

As **Table 3.2** highlights, however, in every sector, males hold a disproportionate share of full-time employment compared to their overall share of employment in the sector. Thus, for example, males account for 36% of all employment in hotels and catering, in Cornwall and Scilly, but for 46% of the full-time employment.

The change in traditional employment patterns is evident, even since 1990, as shown in **Table 3.3**. The proportion of women employed in construction increased from 14.1% in 1991 to 19.3% in 1997 (more than doubling in nominal terms, although from a low base); in manufacturing, the proportion of women rose more modestly, from 32.4% to 33.9%. Conversely, the proportion of men in service sectors traditionally dominated by women also increased – in 1997, 19.2% of employees in health and social work were male, compared to only 15.1% in 1991.

| | 1991 | | 1997 | |
|---------------------------|------|--------|------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Manufacturing | 67.6 | 32.4 | 66.1 | 33.9 |
| Construction | 85.9 | 14.1 | 80.7 | 19.3 |
| Wholesale, retail | 45.4 | 54.6 | 49.0 | 51.0 |
| Hotels, restaurants | 29.9 | 70.1 | 35.3 | 64.7 |
| Banking and finance | 33.3 | 66.7 | 34.4 | 65.6 |
| Other business activities | 48.4 | 51.6 | 44.4 | 55.6 |
| Education | 33.1 | 66.9 | 26.0 | 74.0 |
| Health, social work | 15.1 | 84.9 | 19.2 | 80.8 |
| Other services | 45.9 | 54.1 | 47.3 | 52.7 |

Source: Annual Employment Survey, 1997.

In spite of these changes, many sectors remain dominated by one gender. In manufacturing, for example, the number of full-time jobs in Cornwall and Scilly increased by 5,700 between 1991 and 1997, 70% of which were taken up by men. Comparatively, however, there is a higher proportion of female employees in manufacturing in Cornwall and Scilly (33.9%) than the national average (25%).

Recent employment trends in Cornwall and Scilly confirm the increasing importance of part-time employment – see **Table 3.4**. In contrast to the national picture where full-time male employment fell by 1.5%, the number of men in full-time employment increased by 10.7% between 1991 and 1997 (although a number of high profile redundancies are likely to have reversed this trend since 1997). Despite the higher growth of male part-time employment, the vast majority of male employees in Cornwall and Scilly remain employed full-time (84%).

| | Male FT | Male PT | Female FT | Female PT |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Manufacturing | 40.3 | 77.1 | 47.9 | 61.2 |
| Electricity, gas, water supply | -36.4 | -40.0 | -38.3 | -85.3 |
| Construction | 42.4 | 113.5 | 182.2 | 48.7 |
| Retail | 12.3 | 48.4 | 3.7 | 0.2 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 20.7 | -2.3 | 15.8 | -25.6 |
| Transport and communications | -23.4 | 21.8 | 21.4 | -9.1 |
| Banking and finance | -26.7 | -72.0 | -33.9 | -32.3 |
| Other business services | -9.7 | 104.5 | 6.1 | 37.4 |
| Public administration, social security | -5.7 | 5.1 | -2.8 | -14.6 |
| Education | -11.7 | -10.6 | 7.8 | 39.0 |
| Health and social work | 36.9 | 74.4 | 30.5 | -5.7 |
| Other personal services | 46.1 | 33.5 | 37.5 | 31.9 |
| Total | 10.7 | 28.7 | 16.4 | 0.8 |
| GB | -1.5 | 37.9 | 5.2 | 9.2 |

Source: Annual Employment Survey, ONS 1997.

Overall, the increase in the number of full-time jobs was split equally between men and women. Fewer than 20% of the extra jobs were part-time, the vast majority of which were taken up by men, mirroring the national trend. In contrast to the increase in male part-time employment, the number of females employed on a part-time basis was virtually unchanged. This partly reflects the existing high level of female part-time employment in Cornwall and Scilly – 51% of female employment in Cornwall and Scilly is part-time compared to only 45% nationally.

Forecast employment trends suggest that many of the jobs that will be created in the Programme Area will be in the service sector. An additional 30,000 jobs are anticipated by 2006 broken down as shown in **Table 3.5**.

| Sector | Change | Sector | Change |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Agriculture | -800 | Construction | +3,000 |
| Mining etc | -1,100 | Distribution, hotels etc | +17,000 |
| Manufacturing | -1,400 | Finance, business services | +5,900 |
| Utilities | -300 | Public and other services | +7,800 |

Source: Cambridge Econometrics.

The forecasts highlight the continuing decline in primary and industrial employment (although employment in manufacturing, for example, has risen since 1991), sectors which have traditionally been dominated by men. Substantial employment opportunities are confined to the service sector - jobs, which in the past have proved much more attractive to women than men. If the long-term decline in the number of men in employment is to be reversed, then men will be increasingly required to take up opportunities in non-traditional sectors.

KEY POINTS

Women are more highly represented in Cornwall and Scilly than males, due to increasing participation rates, but men dominate the higher paid jobs.
 Men continue to dominate full-time employment.
 Part-time work is becoming increasingly important.
 Traditional sectoral employment is changing, but gender domination remains prevalent.
 Future employment opportunities will be dominated by the service sector, traditionally taken up by women.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Claimant count data for April 1999 in Cornwall and Scilly indicates that 73% of those registered unemployed were male, although the claimant count statistics do underestimate the number of women looking for work who are not, for a variety of reasons, registered as unemployed. The broader Labour Force Survey (LFS) measure of unemployment in Cornwall and Scilly is, however, statistically unreliable/unavailable due to the relatively small sample sizes - for example, in 1996 the LFS recorded a female unemployment rate significantly higher than the male rate.

The male rate of unemployment in Cornwall and Scilly is consistently higher than the female rate, although the gap has narrowed – see **Table 3.6**. At the start of 1999, the male unemployment rate in Cornwall and Scilly was 8.0% compared to 4.2% for females – the equivalent male and female rates at the start of 1996 were 13.4% and 6.2%.

| | Male | % | Female | % | All | % |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|--------------|------|--------------|-----|
| April 1995 | 15,921 | 74.7 | 5,405 | 25.3 | 21,326 | 100 |
| April 1996 | 14,671 | 73.7 | 5,223 | 26.3 | 19,894 | 100 |
| April 1997 | 11,509 | 74.9 | 3,856 | 25.1 | 15,365 | 100 |
| April 1998 | 9,636 | 73.0 | 3,560 | 27.0 | 13,196 | 100 |
| April 1999 | 8,915 | 72.6 | 3,360 | 27.4 | 12,275 | 100 |
| Change 1995-1999 | -44.0 | | -37.8 | | -42.4 | |

Source: Claimant Count, ONS, April 1999.

The number of people registered as being out of work in Cornwall and Scilly fell by more than 40% between 1995 and 1999, in line with national trends. Whilst male unemployment fell by 44% compared to a female reduction of only 37.8%, this divergence was insufficient to significantly alter the gender composition of those registered unemployed.

Older females comprise a higher proportion of those out of work than their male counterparts. In April 1999, 36% of females registered unemployed were aged 45 or older, compared to less than 30% of males. Many of these older individuals will possess outdated or outmoded skills, thereby often requiring significant levels of support in order to (re)enter employment – see **Table 3.7**.

| | Male | % | Female | % | All | % |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Under 20 | 748 | 8.4 | 417 | 12.4 | 1,165 | 9.5 |
| Aged 20-24 | 1,243 | 13.9 | 580 | 17.3 | 1,824 | 14.9 |
| Aged 25-34 | 2,538 | 28.4 | 653 | 19.4 | 3,183 | 25.9 |
| Aged 35-44 | 1,736 | 19.5 | 505 | 15.0 | 2,241 | 18.3 |
| Aged 45-54 | 1,743 | 19.6 | 853 | 25.4 | 2,596 | 21.1 |
| Aged 55 and above | 915 | 10.3 | 352 | 10.5 | 1,267 | 10.3 |
| Total | 8,915 | 100 | 3,360 | 100 | 12,275 | 100 |

Source: Claimant Count, ONS, April 1999.

Rates of long-term unemployment for both men and women in Cornwall and Scilly are below the national average, although this partly reflects the availability of seasonal employment opportunities which results in individuals leaving and rejoining the register during the year. In contrast to the national picture, the proportions of men and women who are long-term unemployed – see **Table 3.8**; a higher relative proportion of males would have been expected.

| | Male | % | Female | % | All | % |
|---------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Up to 26 weeks | 5,229 | 58.7 | 2,199 | 65.4 | 7,428 | 60.5 |
| 26-52 weeks | 1,694 | 19.0 | 618 | 18.4 | 2,312 | 18.8 |
| 52-104 weeks | 1,020 | 11.4 | 303 | 9.0 | 1,323 | 10.8 |
| More than 104 weeks | 972 | 10.9 | 240 | 7.1 | 1,212 | 9.9 |
| Total | 8,915 | 100 | 3,360 | 100 | 12,276 | 100 |

Source: Claimant Count, ONS, April 1999

Median duration rates of unemployment between men and women also contrast with the national picture, as shown in **Table 3.9**. Whilst in both the South West and GB, unemployed males are likely to be out of work for a longer period of time than their female counterparts, in Cornwall and Scilly the reverse situation applies. Although the absolute difference is not substantial (and the median duration for both sexes is above the national average), this suggests that women face greater barriers to return to employment.

| | Male | Female | Persons |
|---------------------|------|--------|---------|
| Cornwall and Scilly | 12.2 | 13.0 | 12.5 |
| South West | 10.9 | 10.5 | 10.8 |
| GB | 11.9 | 11.4 | 11.7 |

Source: Claimant Count, ONS, April 1999.
¹ Number of weeks.

KEY POINTS

Male unemployment rates (as measured by the claimant count) are consistently higher than for females, although the gap has narrowed.
 The proportions of male and female long-term unemployed are similar, in contrast to male dominance at a national level.
 Seasonal employment artificially reduces long-term unemployment, as both men and women temporarily remove themselves from the register.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Many of those who have been unable to find employment, particularly older males, have become economically inactive, and are not, therefore, captured by the claimant count statistics. Whilst economic activity rates for women of working age in Cornwall and Scilly have risen from 70.8% in spring 1995 to 73.1% in spring 1998, male rates have fallen over the same period from 85.5% to 79.8%.

Economic activity rates amongst women in Cornwall and Scilly are already higher than the national average, although there is clearly a ceiling which will be reached at some point - ie, not all women will wish to return to work after an absence. During the 1990s, the number of females in the labour force in Cornwall and Scilly increased by 3,000, from 91,000 to 94,000 (+3%), compared to an increase in males of 7,000, from 119,000 to 126,000 (+6%). Whilst gender convergence is occurring, the process is relatively slow – in 1992 males accounted for 57.3% of the labour force; by 1998 this had fallen marginally to 56.7%.

In spite of this smaller increase in female participation, forecasts suggest that the number of women in the labour force will increase over the next decade. Nationally, women are expected to account for 49% of the labour force by 2006. In Cornwall and Scilly, the current rate of 42% can be expected to increase in line with national trends.

In 1997, 71% of females of working age in Cornwall and Scilly were in employment, compared to 68% nationally. Nevertheless, there remains scope to increase the participation of women who wish to return to employment – overall, 25% of females of working age are economically inactive.

KEY POINTS

Male economic inactivity rates are rising, especially for older males, whilst female economic activity continues to increase.
 However, 25% of females remain economically inactive, although this is expected to reduce further.
 The proportion of females in the workforce is expected to rise from 42% to 49% by 2006.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

The long-term decline in industrial employment and the growth of the service sector has been accompanied by a changing occupational structure. The number of people employed in managerial/professional activities is on the increase, with a consequent reduction in the number in craft occupations (ie, trades such as electricians, welders, joiners) - see **Table 3.10**. Within Cornwall and Scilly, however, recent evidence suggests that such trends have been less dramatic, with, for example, the proportion of both males and females classified in the higher skilled occupations

(Managerial/ Professional/Associate Professional) declining between 1991 and 1999, although this may reflect sampling errors.

| | Male | | Female | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 1991 | 1999 | 1991 | 1999 |
| Corporate managers and administr | 21.2 | 18.3 | 14.0 | 8.5 |
| Professional | 7.9 | 7.0 | 6.8 | 6.8 |
| Associate professional | 6.0 | 6.8 | 8.9 | 12.1 |
| Clerical | 4.9 | 5.5 | 22.1 | 18.9 |
| Skilled construction trades | 25.6 | 23.2 | 3.5 | 2.3 |
| Protective service | 8.4 | 7.3 | 16.7 | 14.4 |
| Sales and buying | 4.5 | 6.0 | 12.5 | 10.1 |
| Plant and machine operatives | 11.8 | 8.9 | 4.0 | 2.7 |
| Other occupations | 9.5 | 9.6 | 11.5 | 9.7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Census of Population, Labour Force Survey .

Nevertheless, higher order occupations continue to be dominated by males. In 1999, for example, the proportion of males classified as corporate managers/proprietors was more than twice the proportion of females in this highest category. Conversely, around a fifth of women were employed in clerical occupations compared to only 5% of men. Whilst some convergence has occurred, long established trends of occupations being dominated by either males or females still largely apply.

Data from the LFS for the first quarter of 1999 confirms the continued occupational dominance in Cornwall and Scilly of one or other gender – see **Table 3.11**. Whilst the precise numbers should be treated with caution due to small sample sizes, the results highlight the traditional gender differences. More than 9 in 10 production managers are male, as are more than 4 in 5 engineers. Conversely, almost 4 in 5 persons in catering occupations are female. In the catering sector as in others, women are also likely to be earning lower wages within the broader occupational group ie, the bulk of head chefs or supervisory staff will be men.

| | Male | | Female | |
|------------------------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Production managers | 4,139 | 91.1 | 402 | 8.9 |
| Engineers | 2,212 | 83.5 | 439 | 16.5 |
| Scientists/technicians | 2,127 | 83.7 | 423 | 16.3 |
| Health associates | 422 | 4.4 | 9,088 | 95.6 |
| Catering occupations | 1,237 | 21.8 | 4,344 | 78.2 |

Source: Labour Force Survey.

The gender imbalance of occupations is confirmed by the occupational structure of those out of work. More than 95% of those unemployed with craft-related skills, for example, are male. Of those males who are currently registered unemployed, more than 3,300 (a third of the total) are seeking employment in the “craft and related” or “plant and machinery” occupations, where as only 900 were seeking employment in the clerical and administrative areas see **Table 3.12 (over)**

| Cornwall and Scilly and Scilly | Desired | | Current | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Managers/administrators | 78.8 | 21.2 | 79.9 | 20.1 |
| Professional occupations | 67.8 | 32.2 | 67.8 | 32.2 |
| Associate professional, technical | 68.9 | 31.1 | 69.6 | 30.4 |
| Clerical, secretarial | 49.9 | 50.1 | 48.2 | 51.8 |
| Craft and related | 95.4 | 4.6 | 95.3 | 4.7 |
| Personal and protective | 51.6 | 48.4 | 51.4 | 48.6 |
| Sales | 47.1 | 52.9 | 47.8 | 52.2 |
| Plant and machinery | 93.1 | 6.9 | 92.1 | 7.9 |
| Other | 83.8 | 16.2 | 83.6 | 16.4 |

Source: Claimant Count, ONS April 1999.

¹ % of occupational group

A growing mismatch is, therefore, potentially developing between the aspirations of those out of work, particularly males, to obtain employment in their established area of experience, and the available opportunities. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, there was a strong correlation between the current occupation of those out of work and the occupation which they desired. Unless employment opportunities are forthcoming which meet these desires (which seems unlikely), it is debatable to what extent such individuals will be willing or suitable to take up alternative opportunities. This suggests a growing rationale for significant re-skilling, particularly for men.

KEY POINTS

Men continue to significantly outnumber women in professional and other higher order occupations.

Higher skilled technical related occupations are overwhelmingly dominated by men.

Few men seek employment in clerical and administration posts, despite greater employment opportunity in these areas.

AVERAGE EARNINGS

A large gap in earnings exists between men and women employed on a full-time basis, as shown in **Table 3.13**. Although the earnings gap is narrower in Cornwall and Scilly than the rest of the country, female earnings are only 76% of male earnings. The difference in wages is reinforced by the proportion of women working full-time who earn less than £200 per week – 42.8% compared to only 23% of males.

| | Avg Weekly Earnings (£) | As % of Males Earnings | % Earning < £200 | % Earning < £300 | % Earning < £400 | % Earning < £500 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| UK Males | 407.3 | 100 | 10.6 | 37.4 | 61.6 | 77.7 |
| Cwll & IoS Males | 315.2 | 100 | 23.0 | 58.0 | 80.2 | 89.7 |
| UK Females | 296.2 | 72.7 | 26.7 | 61.4 | 80.6 | 92.4 |
| Cwll & IoS Females | 240.6 | 76.3 | 42.8 | 78.6 | 88.9 | 91.8 |

Source: New Earnings Survey, ONS 1997.

Since 1995, the gap between male and female earnings has narrowed slightly – see **Table 3.14**. In 1997, female earnings in Cornwall & Scilly were 76.3% of male earnings, compared to 75.3% in 1995. As employment in traditional male-dominated occupations which are often well-paid - eg, in the manufacturing sector, continues to decline, the gap between male and female earnings is likely to continue to narrow, albeit slowly. In any event, a range of evidence exists which shows that female wages are often lower than male wages in similar occupations.

| | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | % Change 95-97 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|
| UK Males | 373.4 | 389.9 | 407.3 | 9.1 |
| Cwll & IoS Males | 295.0 | 303.4 | 315.2 | 6.8 |
| UK Females | 269.3 | 282.3 | 296.2 | 10.0 |
| Cwll & IoS Females | 222.3 | 224.6 | 240.6 | 8.2 |

Source: New Earnings Survey, ONS 1997.

Whilst the earnings differential between males and females in Cornwall and Scilly narrowed between 1995 and 1997, both genders continued to lose ground compared to the national picture. Male average earnings grew by 9% in the UK, compared to 6.8% in Cornwall and Scilly, whilst earnings for UK females increased by 10% as against only 8.2% in Cornwall and Scilly.

The challenges are, therefore, two-fold:

- ◆ To narrow the earnings gap between males and females within Cornwall and Scilly; and
- ◆ To narrow the gap for both males and females with the national averages.

KEY POINTS

Female earnings are still far lower than male earnings, at 76%.
 42.8% of females earn less than £200 per week, against 23% for males.
 Although the earnings gap between males and females in Cornwall and Scilly has narrowed recently, the gap with the rest of the UK has widened.

SELF EMPLOYMENT

There are 113,000 people currently self-employed in Cornwall and Scilly, accounting for 16% of all those in employment, a much greater proportion than the regional or national average. This is partly explained by the important agricultural sector. During the 1990s, the self-employment rate rose, from 17% of those in employment to 21% in 1994, only to decline to its present level. This reduction is explained by a number of factors, including changes in Inland Revenue rules making self-employment less attractive, and a levelling off in outsourcing opportunities.

Women are also much less likely than men to take up self-employment. In 1998, 7% of UK women in employment were self-employed compared to 16% of men, although the rate for women has been fairly stable over the past decade, whereas the rate for men has been declining steadily. Unfortunately, LFS data on self-employment by gender in Cornwall and Scilly are not reliable. Data from the 1991 Census of Population indicate that males comprised 77% of all those who were self-employed. Although this proportion may have fallen since then, the reduction is unlikely to be dramatic, so that more than 70% of those self-employed are likely to be male. This partly reflects the broader domination by males of sectors where self-employment is heavily concentrated, namely agriculture and construction.

KEY POINTS

Only 1 woman is self-employed in Cornwall and Scilly for every 3 men.
 On present trends, the number of self-employed females appears unlikely to increase significantly.

RECONCILIATION OF WORKING AND FAMILY/PERSONAL LIFE

Female participation in economic activity has risen considerably in the past 20 years. National data presented by the Policy Studies Institute for the Department of Social Security, indicated that in 1979, 24% of women who worked during pregnancy returned to work within 1 year of their child being born; by 1988 this had increased to 45% and, by 1996, the figure was 67%.

The increase in the number of women in employment, combined with other social and family trends, has led to significant implications for the way in which work is organised and conducted. Evidence from employers in Cornwall and Scilly indicates increased flexibility in meeting the needs of their employees, compared to even 2 or 3 years ago:

- ◆ 11% employ people who have a degree of flexibility in working from home;
- ◆ 38% employ staff on flexible hours to suit either their individual needs or the needs of their employer;
- ◆ 35% operate flexible working hours adjusted to the school day;
- ◆ 33% allow paternity leave.

Direct employer assistance with childcare is, however, limited. Only 2% of employers provide financial assistance towards childcare costs, whilst 1% provide a crèche/nursery. These results do, however, partly reflect the limited number of large private sector employers in Cornwall and Scilly.

Limited childcare provision is one factor which constrains the further expansion of women's participation in the labour market. A recent evaluation of Devon and Cornwall Playlines, the local delivery of the Government-led Out-of-school Childcare Initiative, found that out-of-school childcare had enabled over 50% of parents to continue working, and a further 40% to enter employment or increase the number of hours they worked.

Other factors are likely to result in increased female participation, including the continued expansion in service sector employment opportunities, many of which will be part-time. For younger women, the prospects are relatively bright – women outperform men in attainment of qualifications, both at school

and also in further and higher education. In Cornwall and Scilly, 57% of young women achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C compared to 45% of young men.

Available data on the number of potential women returners in Cornwall is, however, strictly limited, as there is currently no statistical source available which is capable of directly identifying the number of women returners. Analysis is limited to broader trends in female participation and employment, the most detailed data being drawn from the 1991 Census, and therefore somewhat dated.

KEY POINTS

Flexible working methods continue to increase in importance, although only a very small minority of employers provides childcare assistance.

No detailed research exists on the potential number of women who could return to the labour market in Cornwall and Scilly or to what extent women face a glass ceiling in their career progression.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Significant potential exists to increase the labour market participation of people with disabilities. Estimates for Devon and Cornwall suggest that the participation rate of this group is less than half of that for the non-disabled group. In this instance, people with disabilities are defined, not only as those who are registered disabled, but those “people of working age with a health problem lasting more than 12 months which affects the kind of paid work they can do”.

In 1997, the number of people meeting this criterion in Cornwall and Scilly was estimated at 39,321 (LFS) – 13.4% of the working population. Of these, 15,700 (43%) are estimated to be economically active - see **Table 3.15**.

| Age | Economically Active (No.) | % Age Group |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 16-19 | 1,600 | 53 |
| 20-24 | 2,000 | 56 |
| 25-34 | 7,100 | 53 |
| 35-49 | 11,100 | 46 |
| 50-retiral | 10,100 | 27 |
| All ages | 31,900 | 40 |

Source: Burnett 1998 (ONS 1996, Labour Force Survey 1997).

There are 18,000 people who are not actively seeking entry into the labour market but a proportion will do in the future, if judged fit for work.

KEY POINTS

Economic activity and employment rates of those with disabilities remain significantly below able-bodied individuals. Significant potential exists to increase participation of people with disabilities in the labour market.

ETHNIC MINORITIES

In comparison to other parts of the UK, the proportion of the population in Cornwall and Scilly drawn from ethnic minority backgrounds is relatively small. This is a common feature of rural areas, as ethnic minority groups in the UK are heavily concentrated in urban centres – 20% of the non-white population lives in Greater London, compared to only 12% of the population as a whole.

According to the 1991 Census (the latest data series which provides comprehensive coverage), there were 2,453 persons from ethnic minority groups in Cornwall and Scilly – 0.5% of the population. This compares to a national ethnic minority population of 5.5%. **Table 3.16** provides a breakdown of this population by ethnic group and district. As with the population as a whole, the ethnic minority population is split fairly evenly across the six districts of Cornwall and Scilly.

| | Caradon | Carrick | Kerrier | N Cornwall | Penwith | Restormel | Is of Scilly | Total |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|
| White | 77,731 | 83,331 | 88,209 | 64,626 | 59,530 | 86,903 | 1,999 | 462,329 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|--------------|
| Black-Carib | 36 | 41 | 50 | 21 | 24 | 28 | 0 | 200 |
| Black-Afric | 12 | 10 | 56 | 22 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 121 |
| Black-Other | 105 | 68 | 70 | 71 | 64 | 68 | 1 | 447 |
| Indian | 30 | 59 | 36 | 28 | 28 | 25 | 0 | 206 |
| Pakistani | 2 | 15 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 31 |
| Bangladeshi | 3 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 25 | 16 | 0 | 67 |
| Chinese | 43 | 116 | 61 | 45 | 76 | 78 | 0 | 419 |
| Other Asian | 30 | 31 | 36 | 36 | 45 | 21 | 0 | 199 |
| Other | 108 | 124 | 169 | 118 | 100 | 144 | 0 | 763 |
| Total Eth Min | 369 | 470 | 491 | 356 | 370 | 396 | 1 | 2,453 |
| Total | 78,100 | 83,800 | 88,700 | 64,885 | 59,900 | 87,300 | 2,000 | 464,685 |
| % | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.5 |

Source: 1991 Census of Population.

Between 1981 and 1991, the ethnic minority population increased by 23%, from 1,890 to 2,543. Whilst this was higher than the white population increase in Cornwall and Scilly, the proportion of the ethnic minority of the population rose only marginally – from 0.4% to 0.5%.

Outwith the 1991 Census (which is now comparatively historic), there is limited data relating to the specific position of the ethnic minority population in Cornwall and Scilly. The sample coverage for ethnic minorities of the Labour Force Survey, for example, is too small to produce meaningful results, either for Cornwall and Scilly, or even the South West region. An analysis of the 1991 Census by the Institute for Employment Research, nonetheless, indicates regional differences in the labour market position of various ethnic group – examination of the national position, in the absence of dedicated local research, will provide an indication of the relevant issues. Given the relatively small absolute numbers in each ethnic grouping in Cornwall and Scilly, the analysis is not disaggregated in this way – the focus of the analysis is on the key differences between ethnic minorities overall and the national average.

Based on the key indicators of participation in economic activity and employment, the position of the ethnic minority population in comparison to the white population is significantly poorer, as shown in **Table 3.17**. The economic activity rate of white males is 85.7% against 76.4% for ethnic minority males, with a similar gap in the employment rate.

| | Economic Activity Rate | | | | Employment Rate ¹ | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|--------|----------|--------|------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|
| | 1991 Census | | 1996 LFS | | 1991 Census | | 1996 LFS | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| All | 86.6 | 67.6 | 85.1 | 71.7 | 76.8 | 62.9 | 77.0 | 67.0 |
| White | 87.6 | 68.3 | 85.7 | 72.8 | 77.5 | 63.8 | 77.9 | 68.3 |
| Ethnic Minor | 79.6 | 56.6 | 76.4 | 54.9 | 63.4 | 47.7 | 61.1 | 46.5 |

Source: 1991 Census of Population, 1996 Labour Force Survey in IER/University of Warwick "The Labour Market Position of Ethnic Minorities"

¹ Either an employee or self-employed.

KEY POINTS

The number of individuals from ethnic minority groups in Cornwall and Scilly is very small – only 0.5% of the population. Economic activity and employment rates for ethnic minority groups remain below the average for the population as a whole.

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

The lack of affordable childcare and of companies offering family friendly policies is a continuing constraint to equal opportunities in Cornwall and Scilly. Surveys of employers and parents/guardians indicate that much remains to be done to fully develop equality of opportunity.

A good example of family friendly initiatives is the Devon and Cornwall Playlines, which was established in 1993 to provide out-of-school childcare, in response to DfEE's stated aim to remove barriers to parents/guardians returning to work or training. The initiative was part-funded by PROSPER. At the start of January 1999, Playlines had established 2,176 places for children, with clubs formed.

A recent survey identified a number of important features, including the fact that only 39% of clubs felt they were operating at full capacity. The main reasons given for this were:

- ◆ A lack of space in the premises to hold more children;
- ◆ A lack of resources;
- ◆ Not enough funding available; and
- ◆ Parents unable to afford the fees.

The research report found that over 50% of parents/guardians reported that the service allowed them to continue working, with a further 15% stating that the service allowed them to return to full-time work. Other positive benefits included people being able to take up education and training opportunities, self-employment and voluntary work.

The 1999 Employer Survey undertaken by PROSPER indicated a considerable variation in the proportion of companies offering a broad range of family friendly policies - see **Table 3.18 over**). Very few companies in the survey contributed to childcare costs or provided a crèche or nursery. The companies most likely to contribute were larger employers (and Cornwall and Scilly have only a small number of employers falling into this category).

Flexible term-time working, a key requirement for a working parent with school age children, was only available from some 30% of employers surveyed. The proportions allowing job share or career breaks was even lower.

| Policy | % of companies surveyed |
|--|-------------------------|
| Flexible working hours | 41 |
| Term-time working | 29 |
| Flexible working hours to care for elderly | 28 |
| Other flexible hours | 60 |
| Help with childcare costs | 2 |
| Provision of crèche/nursery | - |
| Paternity leave | 28 |
| Job share | 21 |
| Career breaks | 15 |

Source: PROSPER Employer Survey 1999.

An analysis of the employer survey indicated that there was considerable variation between sectors on the range of family friendly policies practised - see **Table 3.19**. The hotels and distribution sectors were more flexible, although this may reflect difficulties in getting people to take up low paid opportunities. The banking and finance, and manufacturing sectors have a more limited proportion for companies offering flexible working hours to suit school days/term-time working, for example. This may reflect the fact that higher than average earnings allow employees to secure childcare places, or a reluctance to give up full-time work (and therefore to make whatever arrangements are necessary). The overall results are disappointing, particularly with regard to flexible working hours.

| Policy | Manufacturing % | Distribution % | Hotels % | Banking Finance % |
|--|-----------------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| Flexible working hours | 30 | 41 | 53 | 31 |
| Term time working | 15 | 26 | 43 | 17 |
| Flexible working hours to care for elderly | 13 | 30 | 40 | 15 |
| Other flexible hours | 44 | 57 | 62 | 54 |
| Help with childcare costs | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Provision of crèche/nursery | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Paternity leave | 24 | 33 | 14 | 29 |
| Job share | 10 | 12 | 19 | 22 |
| Career breaks | 5 | 14 | 11 | 14 |

Source: PROSPER Employer Survey 1999 - Includes Devon employers.

KEY POINTS

Childcare costs remain expensive and relatively few employers provide support. There is clear evidence that appropriate childcare support allows parents and guardians to access training and employment opportunities.

There are many elements of family friendly policies that are only made available by a small minority of employers.