

# GREATER MANCHESTER

CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT PROFILE | NOVEMBER 2023

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## SUMMARY

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has the second largest population of the nine English Combined Authorities at 2.86 million.<sup>1</sup> It has an employment rate of 72.4% and its unemployment rate (5%) is higher than the English average (3.7%).<sup>2</sup> Economic inactivity is higher in Greater Manchester (23.8%) than the rest of England (21.4%).<sup>3</sup> Workers in the region earn a weekly wage of £601<sup>4</sup> which is just under £30 lower than the English average wage.

One in five workers in Greater Manchester are in severely insecure work (19.9%), which is broadly on par with the national average of 19.8%. Greater Manchester Combined Authority has the sixth highest levels of severely insecure work out of the nine English Combined Authorities.

The Work Foundation defines insecure work through a single holistic measure which combines:

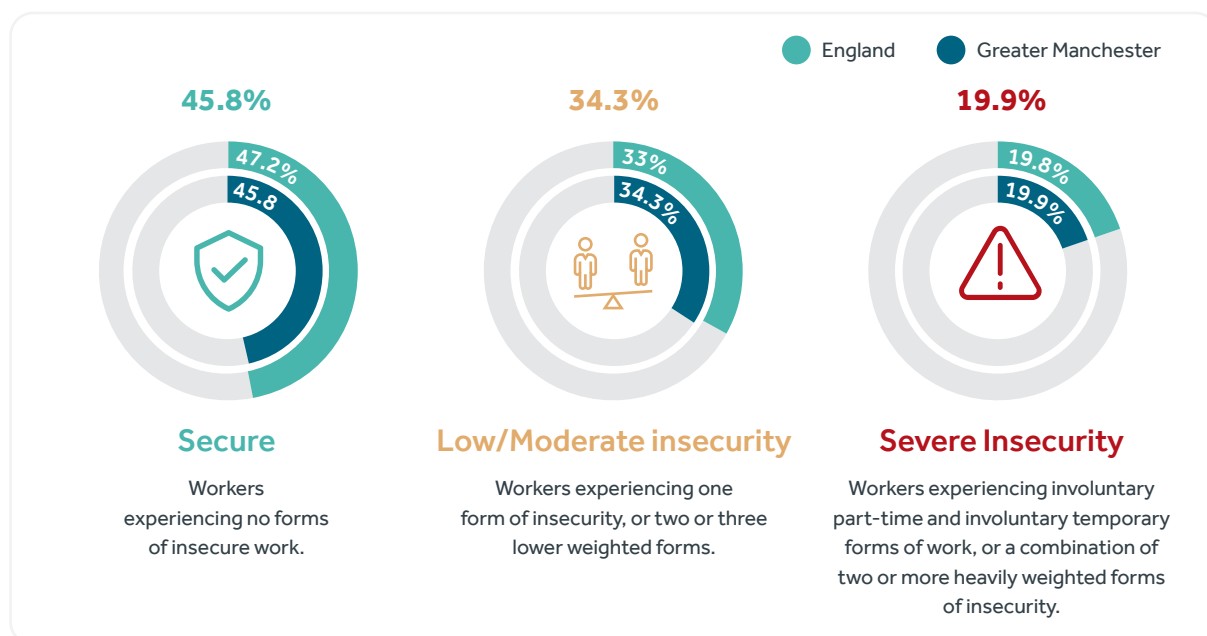
- contractual insecurity, where people are not guaranteed future hours or future work - such as jobs in the gig economy, zero contract work or part-time work
- financial insecurity, where people have unpredictable pay or their pay is simply too low to get by
- lack of access to employment rights and protections.

Despite having lower incidences of severely insecure work, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area has higher than average incidences of second jobs, low paid jobs and temporary work.

Across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, there is significant variation amongst the ten local authorities. Bolton is the hotspot in the city region for severely insecure work at 22.8%, which is over three percentage points higher than both the Greater Manchester and English averages. Oldham has the lowest levels of severely insecure work in Greater Manchester and is six percentage points below the national average.

Analysis shows that disabled workers, women from ethnic minority backgrounds and younger workers are more likely than other workers to experience severely insecure work. Over half of workers aged 16-24 are in severely insecure work in Greater Manchester. You are less likely to be in severely insecure work as a disabled person if you live in Greater Manchester than the other Combined Authorities in England.

**Figure 1: Insecurity amongst the Greater Manchester Combined Authority workforce, 2022**



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022

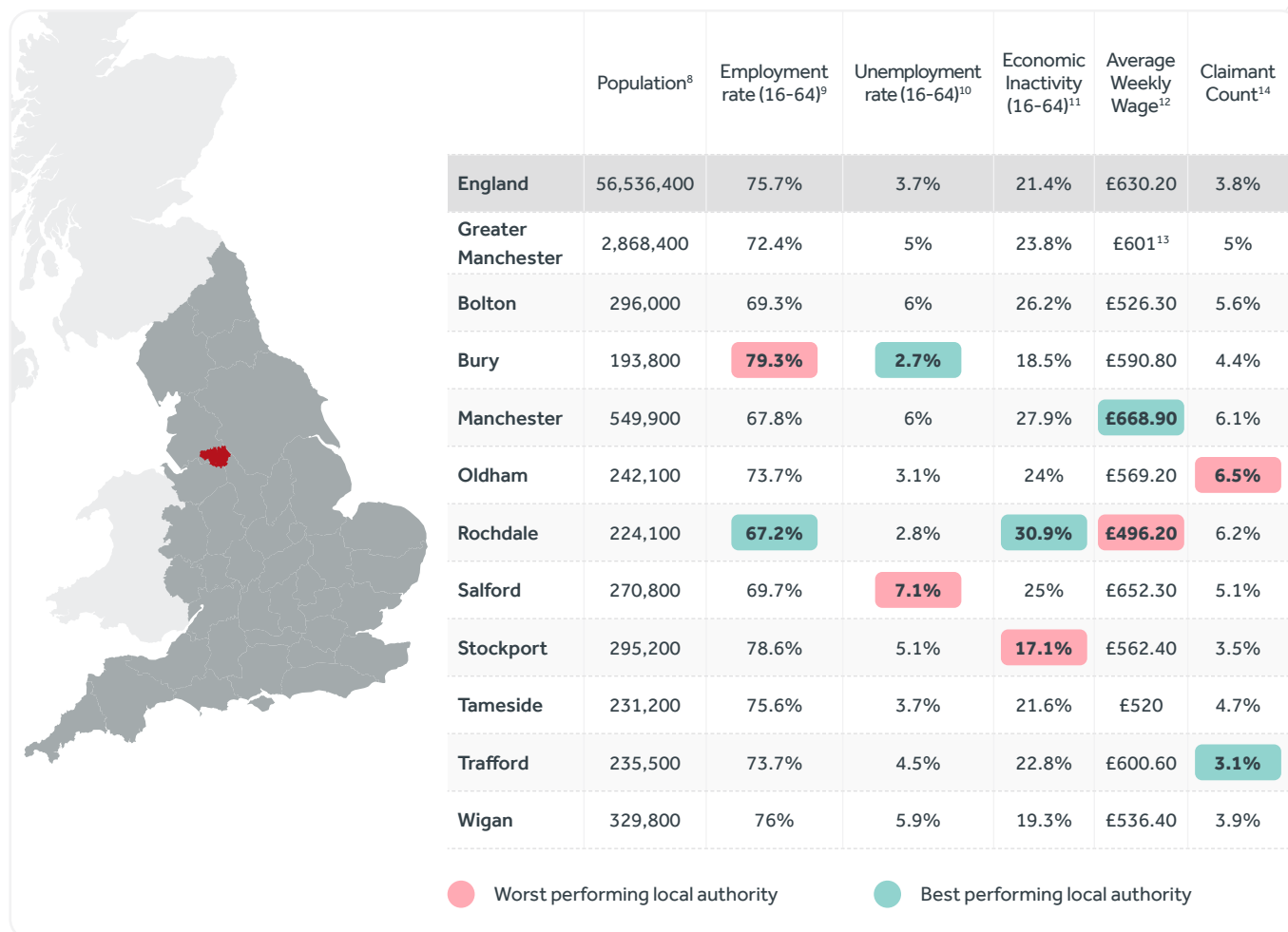
1. ONS 2022, Population estimates local authority based on five-year age band, 2021 data. 2. ONS 2023, Annual Population survey, January-December 2022. 3. ONS 2023, Annual Population survey, January-December 2022. 4. Centre for Cities (2023) Greater Manchester Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/greater-manchester/>

## 1. GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW

Greater Manchester became a Combined Authority in April 2011 and brings together ten local authorities: Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. It has a population of 2,868,387 with a working age population of 1,827,900.<sup>5</sup> The elected mayor, Andy Burnham, came to office in May 2017, and has focussed on creating better homes, jobs and transport. Nearly half of the workforce in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area work in the public administration, education, wholesale and retail, and health and social care sectors (46%). 25.6% of the jobs in the Combined Authority are publicly funded while 16.3% of jobs are high-skilled jobs in the private sector.<sup>6</sup> The Greater Manchester Combined Authority area economy has an annual economic growth rate of 3.7%, which is very similar to the English average (3.6%). Its unemployment rate is 5% which is higher than the English average of 3.7%.

In 2014, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority was given extra devolved powers for employment and skills. Greater Manchester has a strong and well-developed Good Employment Charter<sup>7</sup> that is a voluntary membership and assessment scheme.

Figure 2: Greater Manchester Combined Authority economy



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022.

5. ONS 2022, Population estimates-local authority based by five-year age band, 2021, data.

6. Centre for Cities (2023) Greater Manchester Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/greater-manchester/>

7. GMCA Good Employment Charter. Available at: <https://www.gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk/the-charter/>

8. ONS 2022, Population estimates-local authority based by five-year age band, 2021 data.

9. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

10. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

11. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

12. ONS 2022, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), average gross weekly workplace-based earnings, 2022 data.

13. Centre for Cities (2023) Greater Manchester Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/greater-manchester/>

14. ONS 2023, Claimant Count, June 2022 data.



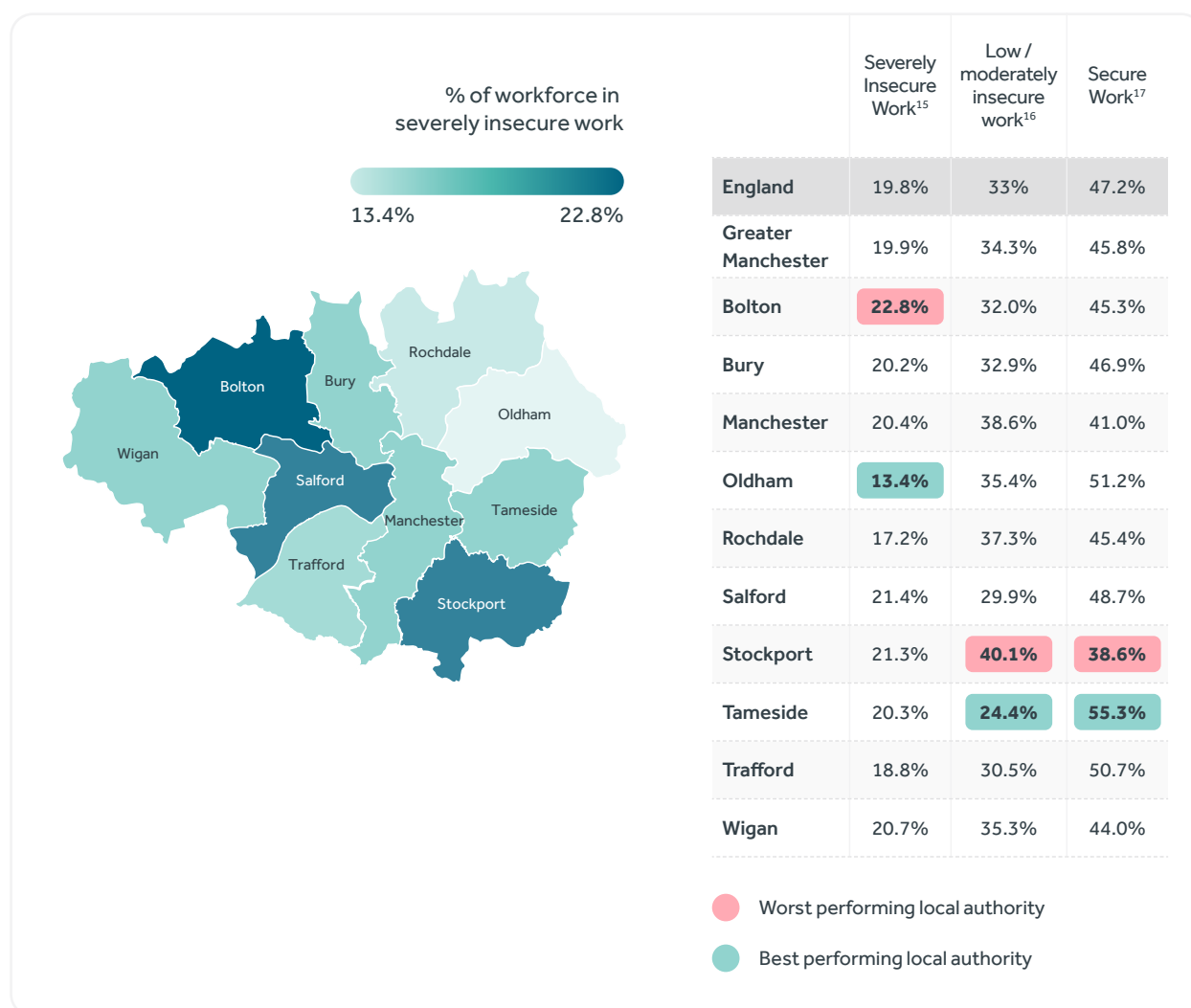
## 2. INSECURE WORK IN THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Between 2021-2022, we found that Greater Manchester was home to a comparatively higher number of low paid jobs and workers with less than two years service in a role and more temporary jobs than the national average. On the other hand, we saw lower levels of part-time work in Greater Manchester compared to national levels.

One in five workers (19.9%) in Greater Manchester Combined Authority area are in severely insecure work, which is in line with the national average. However, there is some variation in the incidence of severely insecure work within the local authorities. Bolton has the highest proportion of workers in severely insecure work at 22.8%, while in Oldham only 13.4% of workers are in severely insecure work and more than half are in secure work. Despite Tameside having the most workers in secure work (55.3%), severely insecure work is still above the national average at 20.3%.

Rochdale has a lower than average number of workers in severely insecure work (17.2%), however, it has the lowest employment rate, highest level of economic inactivity and lowest average wages within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

Figure 3: Greater Manchester Combined Authority labour market



Map created with Datawrapper.

15. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

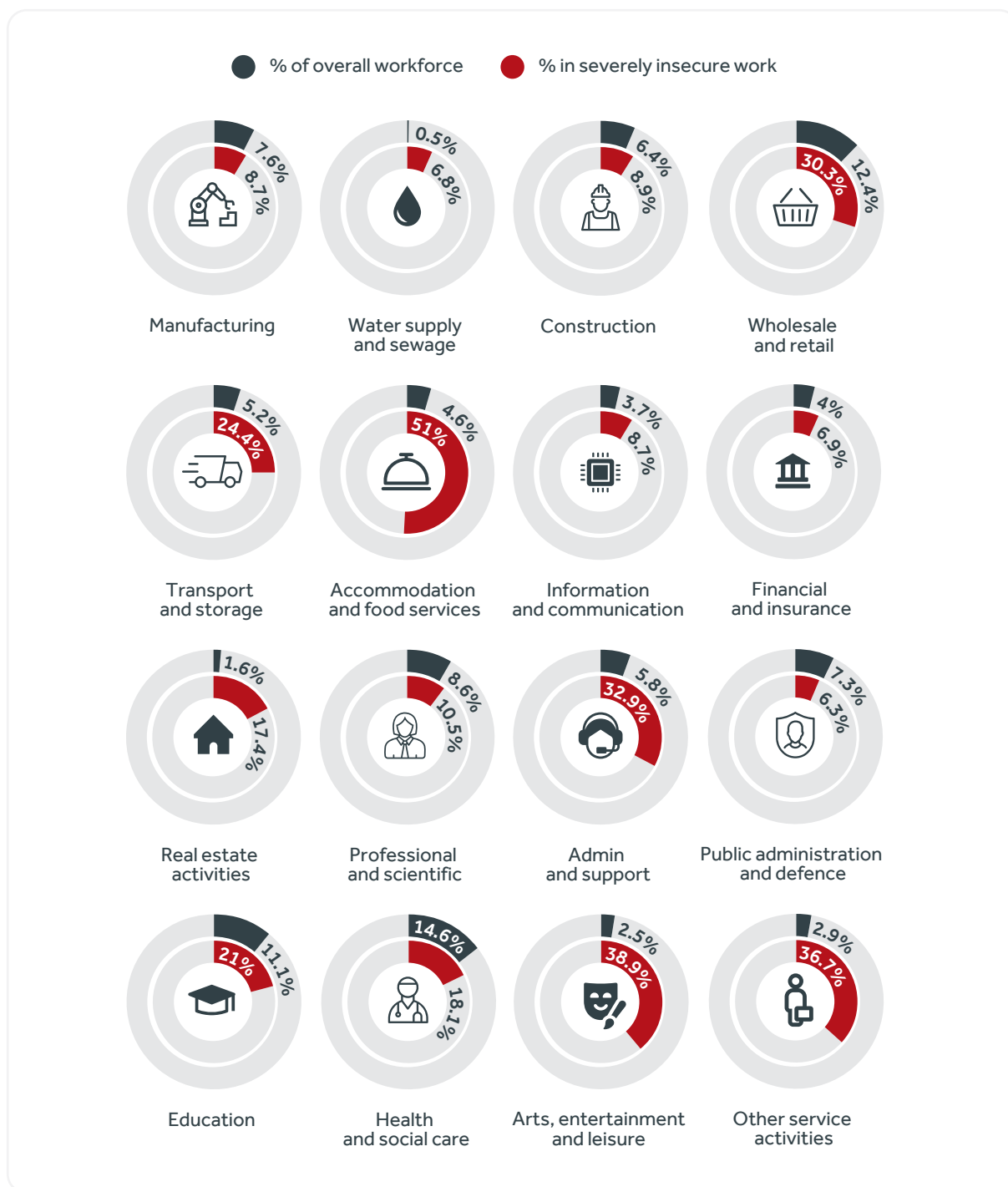
16. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

17. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

## Sectors

Insecure work in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area is particularly high in the accommodation sector. While this sector only makes up 4.6% of the jobs in Greater Manchester, 51% of its workers are in severely insecure work. The education and health and social care sectors make up over 25% of the workforce with nearly one in five workers in severely insecure work in those sectors. Severe insecurity is widespread in the admin, arts, retail and other services sectors, although these sectors make up less than a quarter (24%) of the overall workforce.

Figure 4: Insecurity across sectors in Greater Manchester Combined Authority area

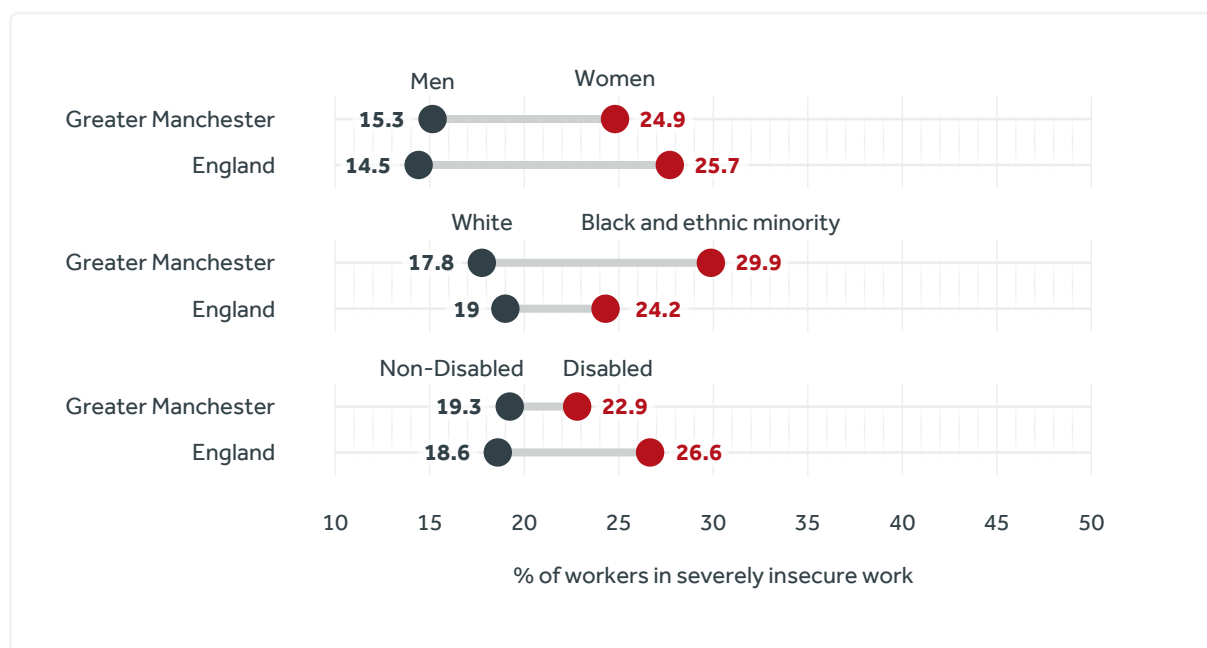


Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022.

## The insecurity gap

Women in Greater Manchester are 1.6 times more likely to be in severely insecure work than men, which is below the English average of 1.8 times. Compared with the average in England, there is a larger share of workers from a Black and ethnic minority background in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority area (17.6% compared with 13.7%). Black and ethnic minority workers are 1.7 times more likely than white workers to experience severely insecure work which is higher than the English average of 1.3 times. Disabled workers are 1.2 times more likely to be in severely insecure work than non-disabled workers, which is below the English average of 1.4 times.

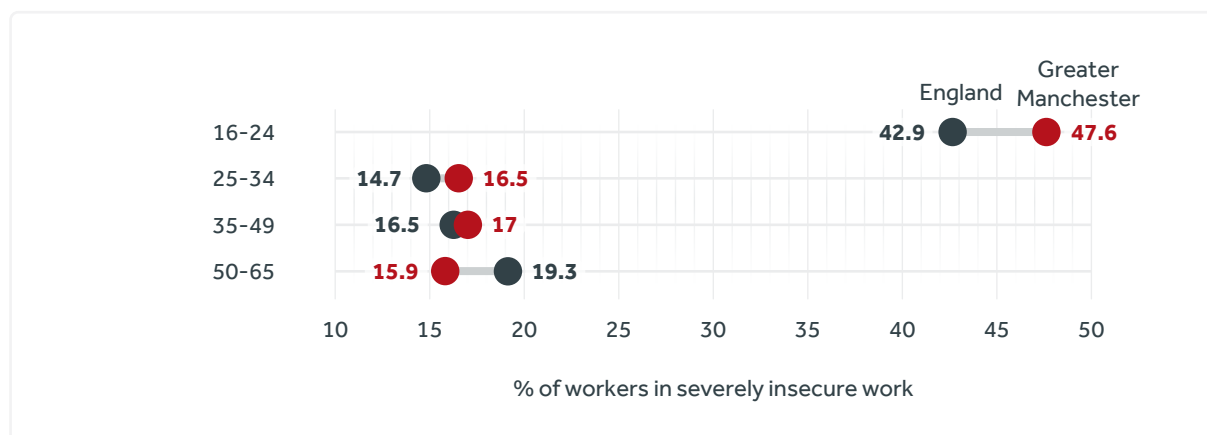
Figure 5: The gender, ethnicity and disability insecurity gaps



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

Nearly half of workers aged 16-24 are in severely insecure work (48%), and this is three times higher than older workers aged 50-65. The prevalence of insecure work among those aged 16-24 years old is about five percentage points higher in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority than elsewhere in the country.

Figure 6: The age insecurity gap



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022

### 3. HOW SECURE WORK CAN REDUCE REGIONAL INEQUALITY

Insecure work is a national issue, but the consequences are felt locally. In order to reduce regional inequalities and limit the impacts of severely insecure work on individuals in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the UK Government and Combined Authority Mayors must focus on two complementary ambitions over the next five years:

1. to significantly reduce levels of severely insecure jobs across the UK by 2030
2. to ensure that no English Mayoral Combined Authority is home to higher levels of severely insecure work than the national average.

#### Recommendations for Combined Authorities

- **Recognise insecure work in economic development and skills strategies** based on the sectors and roles within where it is concentrated, and the worker groups who are primarily impacted
- **Include the regular tracking of insecure work indicators** as part of existing Combined Authority labour market analysis
- **Explore partnerships and engagement with employment charters** to share lessons and best practice
- **Harness procurement and investment incentives** by building clear employment standards requirements into the commissioning and procuring goods and services
- **Support national enforcement bodies** by helping to build relationships with local employers and reporting non-compliance or violations of rights in your area.

For further research and recommendations on insecure work across England's Mayoral Combined Authorities, please see: [Delivering Levelling up? How secure work can reduce regional inequality \(2023\)](#).

For further information on our methodology, please see our [Technical Annex for the UK Insecure Work Index](#).

Please note: our insecurity measure counts people where they live as opposed to where they work. Household composition and demographic traits can therefore affect results meaning that insecurity at a local level will not always correlate with the level of economic deprivation in that area.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to William Phillips and colleagues at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority as well as Ian MacArthur, Director of the GM Good Employment Charter, for their helpful comments and feedback.

### CITATION

If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is: Fitzmaurice, J., Navani, A. & Florisson, R. (2023). Greater Manchester city region employment profile. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.

### MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please contact the Work Foundation at Lancaster University at: [info@theworkfoundation.com](mailto:info@theworkfoundation.com).