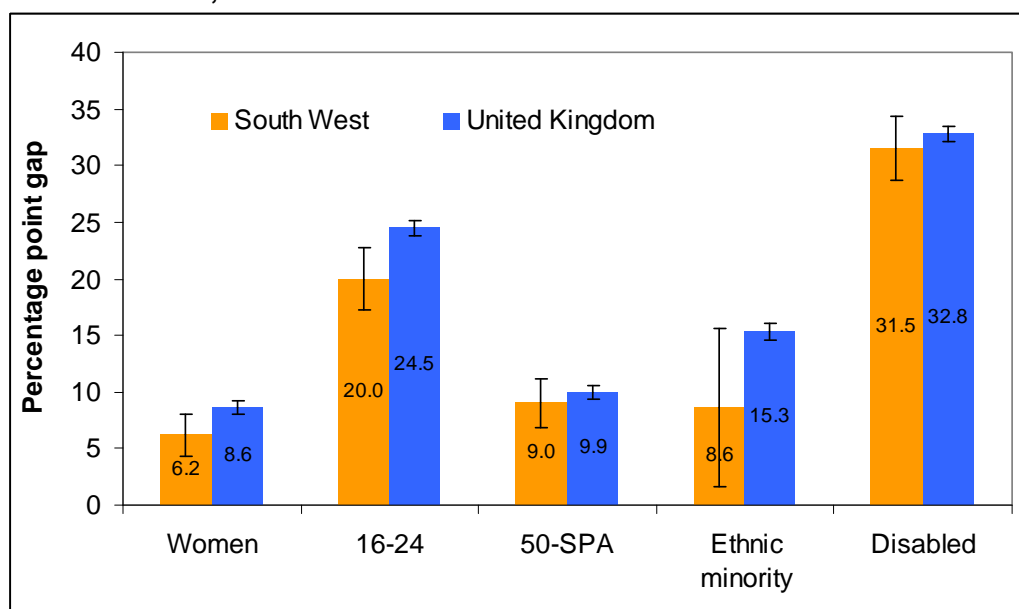


- EMPLOYMENT RATE GAP -

The employment rate gap is the difference in employment rates between two groups within the same population, for example between men and women, the disabled and the not disabled. In the case of populations that have more than two categories, the comparison group is that which has the highest rate – in the case of age, people aged 25 to 29.

The largest employment gap is reported for disabled people (32 percentage points) followed by people aged 16 to 24 (20 percentage points). The employment gap for women, people aged 50 to state pension age and ethnic minorities are not statistically different from one another and only the employment gaps for women and young people are statistically lower than the UK rates.

Figure 1: Employment gap by selected disadvantaged group, September 2007 to October 2008, South West



Source: Annual Population Survey

According to the Government's annual report on poverty and social exclusion, *Opportunity for all*, the gap between the employment rate for the over 50s, lone parents, people with disabilities and ethnic minority people and the overall rate narrowed between 1998 and 2007.

Our analysis of the employment rate gap using Annual Population Survey data for September to October 2004/5 to 2007/8 shows that changes over time were generally small and in almost every case well within the confidence intervals attributable to the estimates. The only result of statistical significance is a widening of the employment gap for people aged 16-24 across the UK. However, this may reflect the growing numbers of young people participating in Further and Higher Education.