

# Census 2021 Briefing

## Working Time

**GMCA Research**

July 2023

**Dataset:** Hours Worked by Sex by Age

**Datalink:** The data used in this briefing can be found [here](#).

**Definition:** Working hours measure the number of hours a worker is in paid work per week and is used as an indication of whether they are in part- or full-time employment. This data refers to Greater Manchester residents in employment (both employees and self-employed).

**Census day:** The 2021 census was held in England and Wales on 21 March 2021. It was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic so may not show 'normal' population and household patterns due to temporary changes in living circumstances during the pandemic.

## Key points

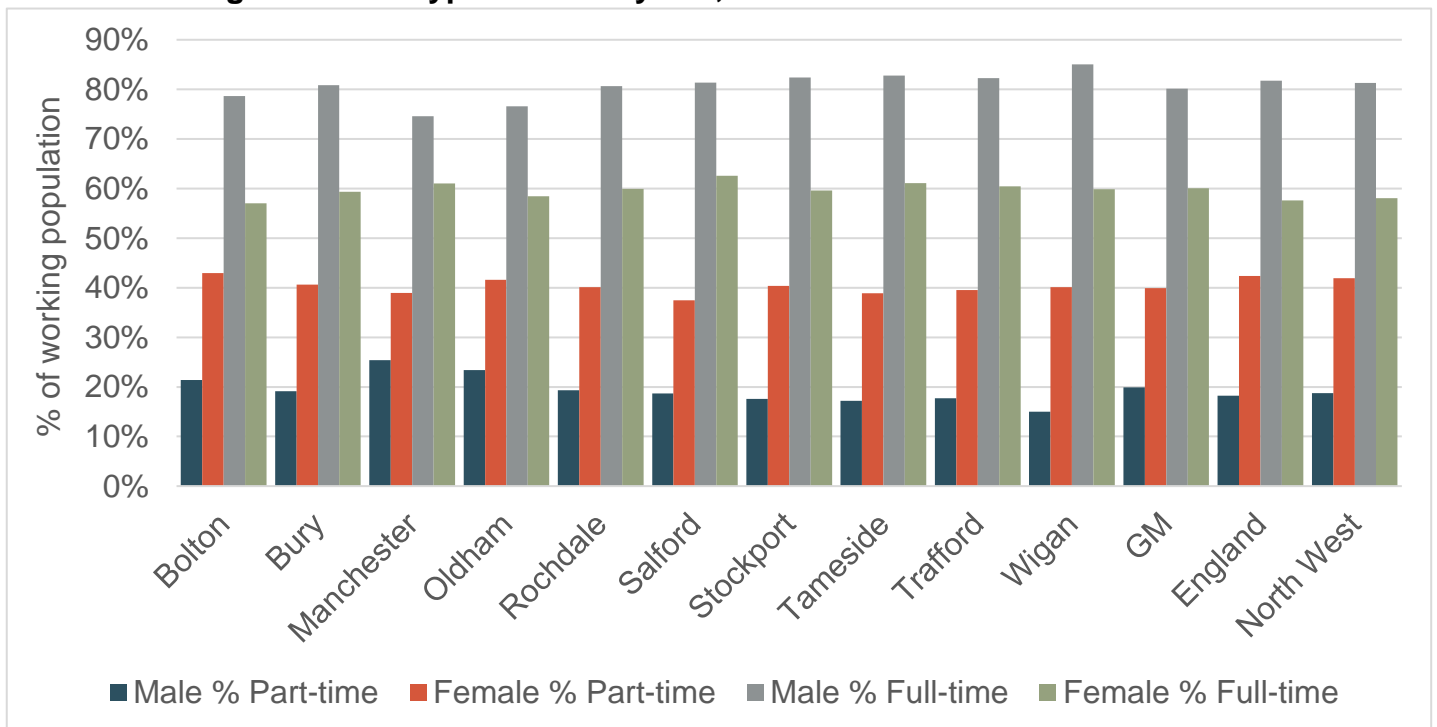
- The proportion of the workforce in part-time employment in Greater Manchester rose from 24% in 2001 to 29.5% in 2021. An increase in men working part-time has driven this change. Men working part-time (defined as up to 30 hours) rose from just under 56,500 in 2001 to almost 132,890 in 2021 – a rise of 135% (compared with a 114% rise in England).
- The proportion of people working long hours (defined as 49 or more hours per week) has declined over the last 20 years – from 12.9% in 2001 down to 8.4% in 2021. Greater Manchester had a lower prevalence of long-hours working than England (8.4% compared with 11.1% in England in 2021).
- At district level, Manchester had the lowest proportion of men in full-time employment (74.6%), while over a quarter were part-time (25.4%). Wigan had the highest proportion of men in full-time work (85%).
- Greater Manchester had a larger proportion of women in full-time employment (60.1%) than England (57.6%) with the highest proportion in Salford (62.5%).

# Main Findings

Some 70.5% of residents were in full-time employment in Greater Manchester (compared with 70.2% in England) and 29.5% were part-time (29.8% in England). Oldham had the lowest proportion of its 16+ workforce in full-time work at 68.1%, followed by Manchester (68.2%). Meanwhile, Wigan had the highest proportion in full-time work at 72.9%.

Greater Manchester had a larger proportion of female workers in full-time employment (60.1%) than England (57.6%). Among men, the proportion in full-time employment was slightly lower in Greater Manchester than in England - 80.1% compared with 81.8%. At district level, Manchester had the lowest share of men in full-time employment (74.6%), while over a quarter were part-time. Wigan had the highest proportion of men in full-time employment (85%), while Salford had the highest proportion of women in full-time employment (62.5%).

**Working hours and type of work by sex, 2021**

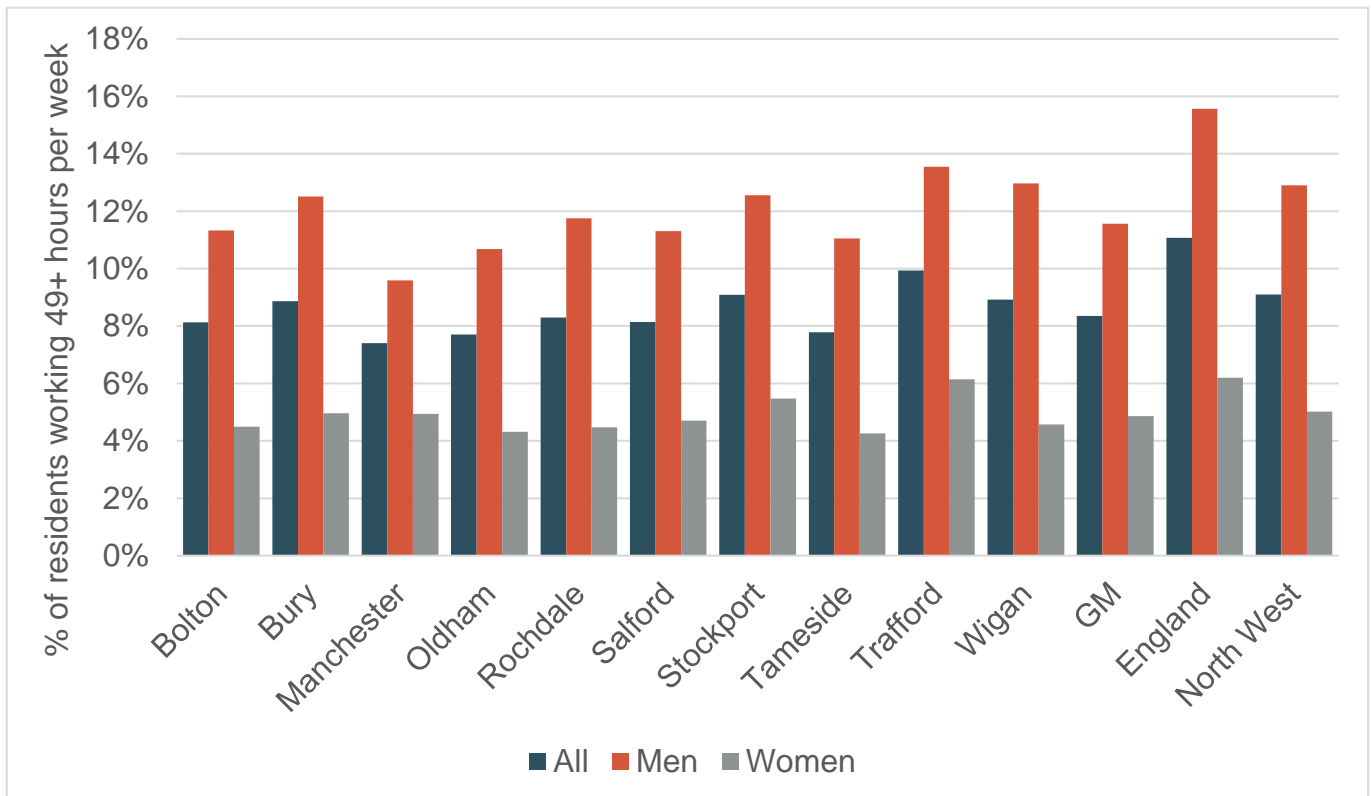


Source: ONS, Nomis – [2021 Census](#)

## Long hours working

Greater Manchester had a lower prevalence of people working long hours – defined as 49 or more hours per week - than England (8.4% compared with 11.1%). This gap was most apparent among men – especially in certain districts. For example, Manchester had a gap of six percentage points between the proportion of men working more than 49 hours a week (9.6%) and the English average (15.6%).

### Residents working 49 or more hours per week by gender, 2021



Source: ONS, Nomis – [2021 Census](#) Notes: GM refers to Greater Manchester

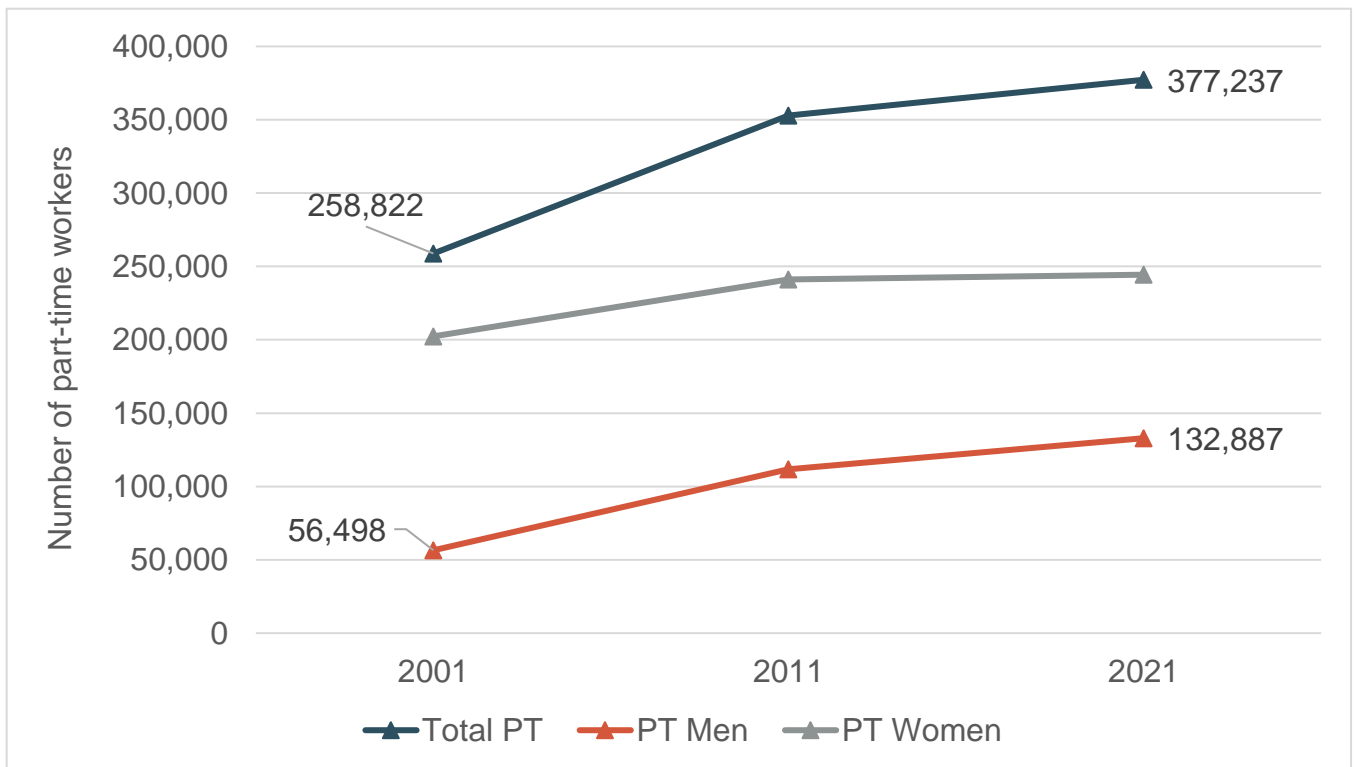
## Change in working time patterns

Since 2001, the most arresting change in working patterns has been the rise of part-time men. Men working part-time in Greater Manchester (defined as up to 30 hours) rose from just under 56,500 to almost 132,890 – a rise of 135% (compared with a 114% rise in England). Although the numbers of part-time women also went up by a fifth (20.8%) over the twenty years, it was men that primarily spurred the overall increase – with the most rapid change over the decade between 2001 and 2011 (There

was a 40% increase in part-time working in general between 2001 and 2021.) This change was most apparent in city centre districts – and especially in part-time work for low numbers of hours (up to 15 a week). For example, in Manchester part-time men working up to 15 hours a week rose by 206.7% and by 191.9% in Salford.

The numbers of full-timers also rose over the 2001-2021 period – notably among women – but the increase was not as dramatic (a 10% overall increase in full-timers; 23.4% for women; 2.8% among men). The chart below shows the change in numbers among part-timers. Again the rise in full-timers was principally in Manchester and Salford.

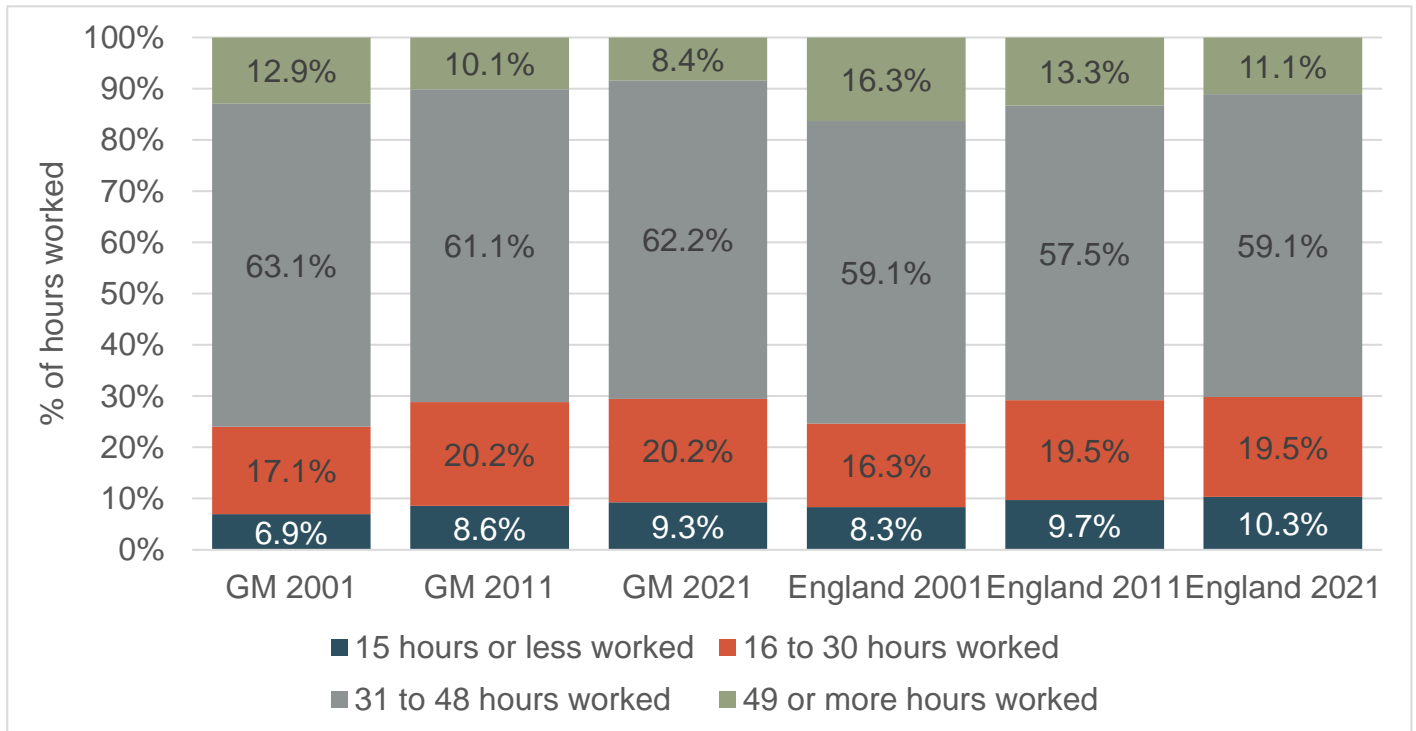
**Number of part-time workers by gender, Greater Manchester, 2001-2021**



Source: ONS, Nomis – [2021 Census](#)

Expressed as a proportion of the overall workforce, part-time employees rose from 24% of the Greater Manchester workforce in 2001 to 29.6% in 2021 (a similar rise occurred in England from 24.6% to 29.8%). The chart below shows the changes in working hours. People working more than 49 hours a week declined from 12.9% of the GM workforce in 2001 down to 8.4% in 2021. This pattern was particularly apparent among men. The number of men working more than 49 hours per week declined from 111,812 in 2001 down to 77,235 – a decline of 30.9% over the twenty years.

**Change in proportion of hours worked, 2001- 2021**



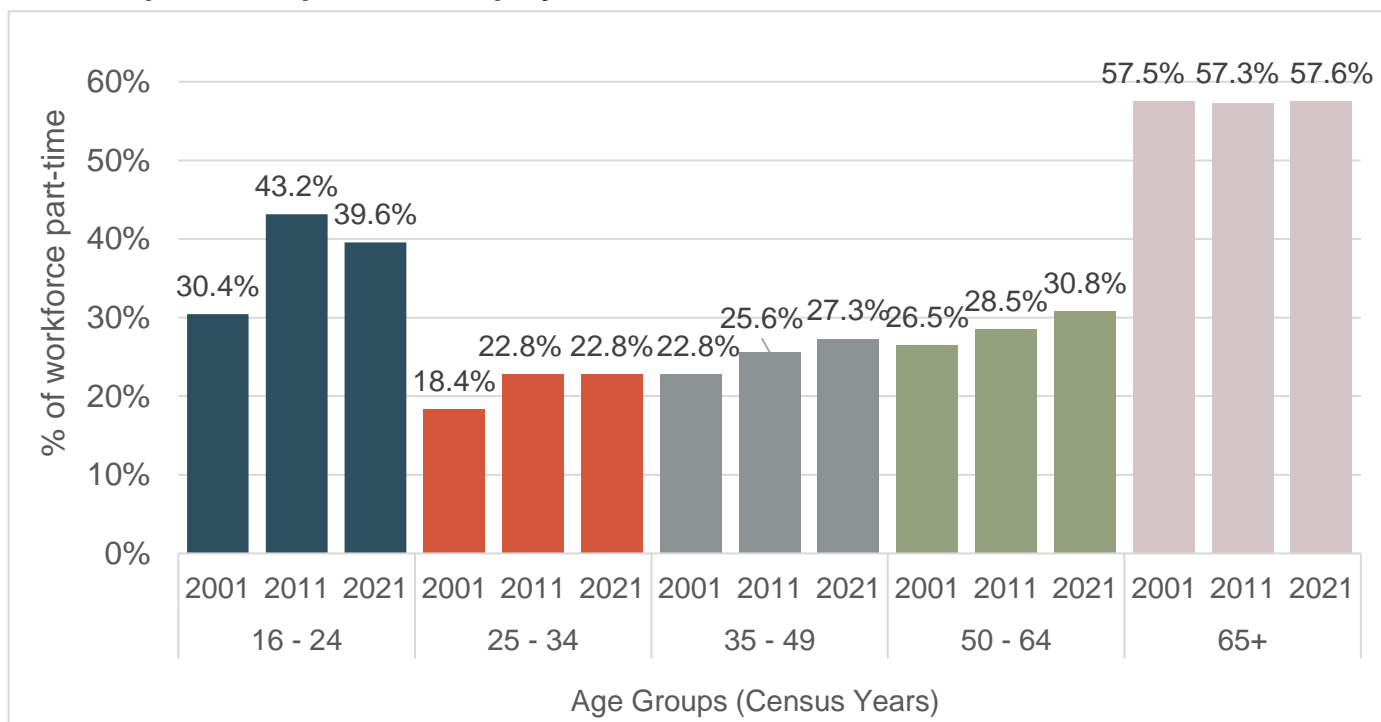
Source: ONS, Nomis – [2021 Census](#); [2011 Census](#); [2001 Census](#)

Notes: GM refers to Greater Manchester

**Age patterns**

All age groups are gradually undertaking more part-time work (with the exception of workers over the age of 65). However, the impact of the pandemic and lockdowns may have affected these results. Part-time workers made up not far from a third of the Greater Manchester workforce aged between 50 and 64 (30.8%) and over a quarter aged between 35 and 49 (27.3%). Among younger people, the proportion of the GM workforce aged between 16 and 24 in part-time work rose from 30.4% (2001) to 43.2% (2011) before falling back to 39.6% in the 2021 census.

**Proportion in part-time employment, Greater Manchester, 2001, 2011, and 2021**



Source: ONS, Nomis – [2021 Census](#); [2011 Census](#); [2001 Census](#)

## Reflections

- The timing of the census means that these results may have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns.
- Changes in working time since 2001 seem most marked among men: more are part-time and fewer are putting in long hours. In 2001, 9.8% of men in the workforce were part-time in Greater Manchester. By 2021, 19.9% were.
- Working longer hours appears to be in general decline, but nevertheless Greater Manchester tends to have fewer people working long hours than is typical. This pattern was most obvious among men in Manchester – possibly reflecting a relatively youthful population with a large student population. Working time patterns may be an under-examined part of the economic performance puzzle.
- Manchester, Oldham, and Bolton have the highest proportions of part-timers (and the lowest proportions of full-timers). Since 2001, Oldham has seen the largest percentage point increase (8.3ppts) in its part-time workforce. Whether these patterns are driven by demographic factors (such as a relatively youthful population) or by employment factors (the availability of certain types of work) requires further research.