



Gender Commission

Report and recommendations

A SAAB paper | October 2022

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Foreword

It has been an honour to chair the Gender Commission on behalf of the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board.



Over the past two and a half years the Commission and its sub-groups, comprised of a mix of representatives of businesses from various sectors, educators and learning practitioners, trade bodies, academia and public sector employers, has taken a deep dive into the reasons for a longstanding lack of gender diversity in apprenticeships and in the wider workplace.

This is, of course, by no means the first time an organisation or body has sought to address the issue of workplace inequality that has led us to a chronic lack of women in industries such as construction, or men in the care sectors.

What we have sought to do differently is bring representatives of Scottish employer organisations and those who influence career choices and policy together to understand how we can work together to provide solutions that are both actionable and measurable.

Three fundamental points underpinned the Commission's work, informing our approach and shaping our methodology.

Firstly, we acknowledged that most employers in Scotland were aware of the potential benefits of a diverse workforce, and wanted to help address gender imbalance. However, measurable action and commitment to change had thus far been limited, with many businesses, particularly SMEs, lacking a plan of action. Employers wanted practical advice about what they could do to make a difference now, both through apprenticeships and in the wider strategic development of their organisations.

Secondly, while employer engagement with the workforce pipeline has largely focused on secondary schools, there has been limited evidence of impact. We need to think differently and focus on influencers, as well as young people themselves. The people who most directly influence young people's perceptions, subject choices and subsequent career outcomes are far broader, including parents and carers, teachers, the early years workforce, and the media, both social and traditional.

Finally, there was a clear understanding that what happens in the first stages of a child's life has a significant impact on access to opportunity later on. If young people are to enjoy real choice and achieve their potential across the employment spectrum, and employers are to benefit from the broadest range of talent, the process must start earlier.

In our initial discussions we acknowledged that the early years sector would be central to the Gender Commission meeting its objectives. In itself, the sector shows particularly acute gender imbalance.

It is also an under-recognised means of influence on young people's perceptions of the workplace. We therefore commissioned a further consultation, to be led by Early Years Scotland. This produced a White Paper, which has helped inform our key recommendations and is available as an appendix to this report.

While the publishing of this report is the culmination of a huge body of work by the Commission, as yet it is only words. We need employers, those who influence a child's career choice from the earliest years, and the Scottish Government, to take this work forward and change the way we think about addressing gender diversity in the workplace.

Since the Gender Commission first met in November 2019, a global pandemic, shifting geopolitics and now a cost of living crisis has shone a stark light on existing inequalities and in some cases, exacerbated these. Anything any of us can do to break down the barriers, both societal and value-based, that restrict a young person's employment opportunities from the earliest stages of life must be actioned without delay.

Natalie Buxton

Managing Director, Scotland & UK Network, Weber Shandwick
Chairperson, SAAB Gender Commission



“The more you restrict what children are exposed to in terms of gender, the more you're restricting development and opportunity.”

(Focus-group participant)

Introduction

Background

Many of Scotland's employers are facing a labour shortage, while several sectors struggle to address a lack of gender diversity despite a commitment to addressing the issue. As a result, businesses lose out from the benefits of a more diverse workforce, and this is particularly acute in sectors like engineering and care.

Apprenticeships are key to bringing new talent into organisations while creating employment opportunities for people, particularly, though not exclusively, those aged between 16 and 24. Supporting diverse talent into the workforce pipeline through apprenticeships can be of enormous benefit to employers, and to the wider economy and society.

However, a lack of gender diversity in apprenticeship uptake by occupation is a longstanding, world-wide phenomenon. It reflects the wider occupational employment patterns noted above, and school-subject and post-school choices. Stakeholders agree that the main causes are traditional, cultural norms and out-of-date value systems, including stereotypical views among key influencers such as parents and teachers. These attitudes impact young people's choices in school subjects and jobs.

STEM subjects are still dominated by boys and arts by girls, with individual choices influenced by what individuals hear, see, and learn in the home, in education and through the media from a very young age. These attitudes are deep-rooted in society, and their influence on employers' attitudes to recruitment, promotion and staff behaviours in the workplace further reinforces traditional gender norms.

The challenge of how to address a lack of gender diversity in the workforce and ensure equal opportunities for all has been of significant policy and practitioner focus for many decades. The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW) made several recommendations regarding this issue and, more recently, the [Scottish Government's Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#) identified a range of measures, including crucial activity to address stereotypical gender attitudes early in the school system.

[The Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board \(SAAB\) Group Board](#) considered current trends within apprenticeships, identifying a need to provide visible industry leadership and investigate how business can contribute. To achieve this, a Commission to address gender diversity was established.

Objectives

The objectives of the SAAB Gender Commission were to develop recommendations and proposals that would:

- offer business-ready, practical solutions to what employers can do now, and in the future, to address any real or perceived barriers to improving gender diversity in their workforce
- develop business's knowledge of what works to improve the diversity of their workforce through apprenticeships
- identify how businesses can more easily engage with, and benefit from, the range of support services on offer in a way that suits their own needs and company circumstances; and
- inform Scottish Government (and its agencies) on how to better assist businesses of all sizes through policy and practice

Membership

The membership of the Gender Commission was drawn primarily from employers, including apprenticeship employers. In addition, the membership included representatives of education and early years, trade unions, and experts on equality and fair work.

The Commission was led and chaired by Natalie Buxton, Managing Director, UK, for global communications agency, Weber Shandwick. Natalie is also a member of the [Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board's Group Board](#) and [Employer Equality Group](#).

Evidence Gathering

The Research and Evaluation team at Skills Development Scotland prepared an evidence and literature review for members.

Members of the Gender Commission shared their own insight and experience, and invited some external inputs, through a series of fifteen thematic calls during the lifetime of the Commission.

Thematic call topics included: (refer to appendix two)

- quality assurance in apprenticeships
- gender and LGBT-inclusive education in early learning and childcare
- teachers, early learning and childcare workers as key influencers
- media influence on career choices
- business and school young engineers and science clubs
- role of employers and value
- inclusive workplace
- young people and engineering
- the Young Person's Guarantee

Partway through the work of the Commission it was clear that there were distinct workstreams coalescing around four themes. Members split into four working groups, according to their interest and expertise, while also coming back together as a whole group to consider emerging findings.

The four thematic areas were:

- **Role of business**
- **Key influencers**
- **Role of employers and value**
- **Young people and intersectionality**

Each sub-group in turn considered further evidence. The Role of Business workstream conducted a short survey with other employers. The Key Influencers workstream conducted extensive consultation with career advisers, parents and carers, early learning and childcare workers, Scottish Government, university and college staff, teachers, and representatives of teacher unions.

The young people workstream consulted with Young People Lead, a group of black and minority ethnic young people and equality expert groups.

While we identified the issue of the role of employers and value of work including low pay, the small group of Gender Commission members who met decided that this theme was a cross-cutting one. Much work has been done on the Gender Pay Gap and was included in the [Literature and Evidence Review](#).



Ten facts members believe underpin the work of the Gender Commission

- 1** Women remain underrepresented in the apprenticeship frameworks providing the greatest returns to individuals in terms of pay, employment and skills development.
- 2** Employers have a crucial role in encouraging and sustaining gender diversity in apprenticeships.
- 3** Employer practices, such as offering limited-quality, part-time and flexible working, do not always recognise the gendered constraints on women's lives that can both create and perpetuate a lack of gender diversity
- 4** Diverse businesses are more successful. They enable broader perspectives and expertise from a wider pool of talent, encourage diverse thinking, develop a better understanding of customers, and improve staff retention.¹
- 5** One of the main causes of occupational segregation in the workplace – reflected both in apprenticeship uptake and subject choice in further and higher education – is the continued acceptance of traditional cultural norms and stereotypical views among the main influencers on young people's career choices, including parents and carers, teachers, and employers.
- 6** Gender stereotyping of career aspirations and preferences begins very early in a young person's life.
- 7** Intervention to address gender imbalance needs to start at a much earlier age. Gendered perceptions of the workforce are established from early years. The point at which employers engage with young people, at secondary school may be too late to make an impact on subject choices and subsequent career paths.
- 8** Achieving greater gender diversity in apprenticeships is complex and action is required to change individuals' attitudes and societal practices. Employers, parents and carers, schools, colleges, careers advisers, unions, industry bodies and government all have a role to play. The SAAB Gender Commission has been focused on the role of employers, in particular, in the context of this wider ecosystem.
- 9** Positive action is rarely used in apprenticeship recruitment because employers lack awareness and/or the confidence to implement effective positive-action measures.
- 10** Gaps are noticeable in the evidence base on initiatives to encourage gender diversity in apprenticeships. Improved reporting of what works in apprenticeship recruitment, retention and progression would inform future action.

¹ Skills Development Scotland (2021) Gender Commission Evidence Review. The role of employers in improving gender balance in apprenticeships. [Rapid Evidence Assessment](#).

Summary of Recommendations

The report makes eleven key recommendations. In addition, the Commission makes a recommendation back to the SAAB Group Board and Employers' Equality Group to monitor the implementation and impact of these recommendations.

Recommendations have been split into three main groups:

- **What employers can do now in the immediate term**
- **What government can do, working closely with employers, in the medium term**
- **What training, further and higher education providers, regulators and professional bodies with responsibility for the care and education of children and young people can do in the long term**

What employers can do now

Recommendation One: Apprenticeship employers should work proactively to ensure they have the right culture and conditions in place to create opportunities and give confidence to employees of all genders and backgrounds. Only then will apprentices, and all employees, view them as places where they want to work.

The Gender Commission recommends employers use the [Think Business, Think Equality self-assessment tool](#),² developed by Close the Gap, an expert, not-for-profit organisation working on women's participation in the labour market in Scotland.

Recommendation Two: Employers should have a proactive strategy in relation to improving gender diversity. This should include a focus on gender neutral language in all communications, a strategy for positive action in recruitment, and a focus on pay in line with the [Scottish Government's 2019 Gender Pay Action Plan](#) and its supporting [Fair Work Action Plan](#). The Gender Commission has created an [Action Priority Matrix](#) to highlight the kind of activity that will be effective for employers in advancing gender diversity in the workplace.

Recommendation Three: Businesses should develop a strategy for engaging young people at various life stages in appropriate settings. This should begin during the earliest years, for example by sending both men and women into early years settings to talk about work, and by hosting 'bring your children to work' days. They should also use digital media and out-of-school settings to engage young people in their preferred environments.

As part of this recommendation, the Commission recommends establishing a National Bring Your Child To Work Day. The Day should include looked-after children by encouraging Corporate Parents³ to participate. Where possible, parents and carers would be encouraged to use the Day to challenge gendered norms about the world of work.

Recommendation Four: Industry and trade bodies should create content and engagement campaigns about gender diversity in employment. These should be shared with influencers of young people, from pre-school to secondary age, as well as to online and

² Think Business, Think Equality, Close the Gap - <https://www.thinkbusinessthinkequality.org.uk/>

³ The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines corporate parenting as "the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked-after children, young people and care leavers".

social media aimed at young peoples' key stages and transitions.

What government can do by working closely with employers and industry bodies

Recommendation Five: Public sector bodies working with SMEs and business organisations, and apprenticeship training providers, should more actively engage with Fair Work First criteria and guidelines. They should also support the development of learning in support of fair work, and help employers take action to tackle the gender pay gap and create more diverse and inclusive workplaces. The Scottish Government's Fair Work First: guidance to support implementation is a useful starting point.

Recommendation Six: Scottish Government should work with employers, trade unions and professional bodies to develop a long-term partnership approach to address gender stereotypes in the world of work. This should focus on key influencers, as well as children and young people themselves, working with early-years settings and schools.

Recommendation Seven: Scottish Government should engage directly with employers, trade unions and professional bodies to develop an improved localised approach to business and education engagement, with a specific focus on skills for the future (Industry 4.0) and gender diversity.

Recommendation Eight: Scottish Government should create a sustained national campaign, for parents and carers of young

children, highlighting the impact of gender stereotypes on choices and chances in later life.

Recommendation Nine: Scottish Government and its agencies should ensure, through the implementation of the Career Review, that career services are delivered with awareness of the gender stereotyping that is endemic in a young person's pathway to work.

What further and higher education, public and private training providers, and government agencies can do

Recommendation Ten: Education and training providers of professional learning for all practitioners working with children and young people (teachers, careers advisers, youth workers) should improve professional learning by including a specific focus on the impact of gender stereotypes.

Recommendation Eleven: The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector should be recognised as vital to the drive to break down gendered barriers to the workplace by all stakeholders. This means that efforts must be strengthened to bring more diversity to the ELC workforce and ensure there are no gender barriers for babies and young children. Employers and the Government and its agencies need to recognise the importance of the ELC workforce as a key influencer of young peoples' perceptions of work.

Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board (SAAB)

Recommendation Twelve: The SAAB Group Board and Equality Employer Group (EEG) should monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SAAB Gender Commission recommendations.

Detailed recommendations: Group one

What employers can do now

Introduction

The Role of Business sub-group included representatives of employers of all sizes, as well as trade and business associations and academia. From the outset we wanted our output to provide actionable advice for businesses across Scotland. We believe most are aware of the benefits of a gender-diverse workforce but have struggled to attract a more diverse pool of candidates into the pipeline, both through apprenticeships and more generally.

During the course of our consultation and conversation, we realised that in order to remove gendered barriers to employment opportunities in key sectors, businesses would first need to create inclusive workforces. This would be key to making them attractive places to work for the discerning talent of the future.

Inclusion is about employee experience. It's a way of working that is relevant to everyone, and is achievable for any organisation, irrespective of size, shape, or sector.

Inclusivity is not a complex concept, but its practical application can be extraordinarily challenging thanks to the cumulation of cultural stereotyping and employer practices established over very long periods of time. It's vital that employers take a proactive approach to address outdated ways of working.

To think differently about what workplaces can be, and to create new structures that support inclusivity, it's essential to accept that the world has changed significantly from the norms of even a few

decades ago. In short, diverse businesses are more successful. The evidence⁴ suggests a number of significant and immediate benefits:

- **Access to a wider talent pool.** If businesses tend to recruit only one gender, they are likely to miss many people with strong qualifications and skills. These potential recruits could help them reduce skills gaps and shortages, and generate a better skill mix across the business.
- **More diverse thinking.** A gender-diverse workforce can increase the diversity of thinking within an organisation, encouraging innovation and leading to better performance from individuals and teams.
- **Improved staff retention.** There is some evidence that more diverse workplaces can encourage personnel to stay with their employers for longer.
- **A better understanding of customers.** Gender-diverse workplaces have a better understanding and enhanced customer relations.

As leaders of people, places, and organisations, the majority of employers have committed to building healthy and safe workplaces that support people. While health and safety policy and practice was once an unusual innovation, it is now the norm. Creating inclusive workplaces builds on this and provides environments where everyone is valued for their contribution.

⁴ Skills Development Scotland (2021) Gender Commission Evidence Review. The role of employers in improving gender balance in apprenticeships. [Rapid Evidence Assessment.](#)

Through our recommendations we aim to provide businesses with some of the information and tools they need to build an inclusive workforce, as well as guidance for attracting more diverse talent through apprenticeships.

Evidence and key learning points

Commission members who focused on the role of business considered existing published work by the [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#), as well as a survey of Scottish businesses. Whilst getting survey responses was challenging during the pandemic, when many businesses were focused on survival, respondents also seemed reluctant to comment definitively on progress, or on remaining barriers to greater gender diversity. This seemed to stem from a fear of ‘saying the wrong thing’, or a reported lack of confidence in addressing the issues practically, despite a generally high level of awareness.

We also analysed Skills Development Scotland’s Labour Market Insights, and the published statistics on uptake by gender across the apprenticeship family.



“We are a rapidly growing Start-Up and as such have inclusivity and gender diversity as part of our foundations. We see no obstacles in these areas.”

SURVEY RESPONDENT

The main learning points include:

- The benefits of inclusive workplaces are well documented (refer to Literature and Evidence Review). Inclusive environments enable everyone to be healthy at work, and this is a characteristic of high-performing workplaces.
- Businesses in Scotland understand the benefits of a diverse workforce, but many realise there is scope for improvement in their HR policies.
- Employer practices do not always recognise the gendered constraints on women’s lives that can both create and perpetuate a lack of gender diversity, such as the likelihood that women carry out most childcare and domestic work alongside their paid work. Adverse employer practices can include a lack of quality part-time and flexible working opportunities, using exclusive recruitment practices (such as word-of-mouth and recommendations) that can exclude non-traditional entrants, and implementing development and progression practices that reward stereotypically male traits, privilege male experiences, and fail to recognise women’s skills and attributes.
- Employers can have their own biases, including believing women are not interested in or suited to particular sectors simply because they are women. In addition, they may be reluctant to risk upsetting a predominantly male workforce by encouraging change. They may lack access to equality and diversity training or believe that the work is not suited to flexible working and cannot be adapted. Positive action is rarely used in apprenticeship recruitment because employers lack awareness and confidence to implement effective positive measures. However, the role and potential impact of employers’ action can’t be understated.

Detailed recommendations

Gender Commission members recognise the inter-connectedness of recommendations. For example, employers can change policies to be more inclusive, but if non-inclusive attitudes are entrenched early, these businesses may still fail to attract interest and applications from all genders and backgrounds. It is essential that short-to-medium and medium-to-long-term recommendations are considered seriously and implemented consistently if sustainable change is to be achieved.

Recommendation One Inclusive Workplace

Apprenticeship employers should work proactively to ensure they have the right culture and conditions in place to create opportunities and give confidence to employees of all genders and backgrounds. Only then will apprentices, and all employees, view them as places where they want to work.

The Gender Commission recommends employers use the [Think Business, Think Equality self-assessment tool](https://www.thinkbusinessstinkequality.org.uk/)⁵, developed by Close the Gap, an expert not-for-profit organisation working on women's participation in the labour market in Scotland. The tool includes practical suggestions for business organisations, public agencies and industry groups to assist SMEs, and to help them engage in the opportunities available to support this important topic. Industry engagement organisations are encouraged to prioritise this.

The self-assessment tool will help employers with:

- Practices which support policy development, including leadership at all levels, flexible hours, blended work practices, facilities, equipment, mentoring and engagement groups.
- Specific focus on inclusive recruitment practices and the important impact these can have. What needs to be done thereafter around retention/talent management/career development.
- Evaluation of HR and management practices at every stage of employment to ensure opportunity on the basis of merit. Identification of unintended bias and barriers that limit equality of access and progression.
- Offering flexibility in contractual terms within security of employment.
- Offering training with flexible schedules, acknowledging care responsibilities and encouraging uptake by women. Respect for family life and the need for work-life balance.
- Speaking to an existing workforce to identify structural, procedural and cultural barriers that may reinforce occupational segregation.

⁵ Think Business, Think Equality, Close the Gap - <https://www.thinkbusinessstinkequality.org.uk/>

Recommendation Two

Promote and ensure gender diversity within the workplace

Employers should have a proactive strategy to promote and ensure gender diversity. This should include a focus on gender-neutral language in all communications, a strategy for positive action in recruitment, and a focus on pay in line with the [Scottish Government's 2019 Gender Pay Action Plan](#) and its supporting [Fair Work Action Plan](#). The Gender Commission has created an Action Priority Matrix to determine the kind of activity that will be effective for them in advancing gender diversity in the workplace (refer to appendix three).

Recommendation Three

Engaging young people

Businesses should develop a strategy for engaging young people at various life stages and in appropriate settings. This should start early, such as sending male and female employees into early years settings to talk about work, or hosting 'bring-your-children-to work-days', which could be broadened to include partners, parents, and key influencers such as teachers.

- For example, Imperial College London's National Heart and Lung Institute hosts a 'bring your child/family to work-day' as part of its [Athena SWAN initiative](#). The day provides an opportunity for children to engage in science-related activities and is part of the department's supportive attitude towards a healthy work-life balance.⁶ Businesses should also use digital and social media and out-of-school settings to engage young people.

- The Commission recommends establishing a dedicated Bring Your Family/Child to Work-Day in Scotland. Although used by some businesses, the day seems to be less formalised in the UK than in the US. The Day should include looked-after children by encouraging councils and other public bodies to participate. A central theme of the day would be to challenge gender and other norms about the world of work. In addition, this should introduce children to as broad a spectrum of work as possible, and not only those settings which currently benefit from the input of families as volunteers, like schools and early years.
- BME women and disabled people are far more likely to be in precarious work than other groups. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to engage, and employers should consider how to reach young people (social media, out-of-school clubs etc.) and think about underrepresented groups – including BME, disabled and LGBT young people – when designing campaigns and activity. Community partners may be able to work with businesses to raise awareness.

⁶ <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/nhli/for-staff/events-and-meetings/bring-your-child-to-work-day/>

Recommendation Four

Curate and create sector-based workplace information

Industry and trade bodies should create content and engagement campaigns about gender diversity in employment, aimed at key and transitional stages, that can be shared with influencers, as well as online and through social media.

- Businesses should focus on the creation of developmentally appropriate content about their workplace setting. This should be delivered online, and available both directly and through educators, parents, and carers through an online platform - such as My World of Work - as well on their own assets and through industry groups.
- This content should be aimed at key transitions – leaving school, making subject choices or early years, for example.
- Guidelines and training should be developed for businesses to support the creation of such content (SDS/Education Scotland).
- These assets may then be used to support learning, and for social media activity to support Skills Development Scotland and other partners in the promotion of apprenticeships.
- Publicly supported media producers, such as the BBC, have strong diversity policies and significant influence on young people's opinions and perceptions. Where possible, they should engage with Scotland's businesses with the aim of helping improve awareness of the world of work. That might include programming that engages with a wide range of industry bodies and business organisations at the research stage, with a view to engaging diverse audiences of children, young people and families.

CASE STUDY ONE

The Glenmorangie Company **A business case for embracing diversity**

For some companies, diversity isn't only about social responsibility and fairness. For some it is also essential for the continuity of the business.

Glenmorangie is one of Scotland's best known malt whiskies, producing about 10 million bottles a year. Along with its stablemate, Ardbeg, it is bottled in Livingston, West Lothian, where many of the 120 or so staff are approaching retirement. With training and knowledge transfer typically taking at least two years, recruitment and retention of the next generation is critical.

In 2019 the company began an apprenticeship programme, recruiting a mix of school leavers and people with experience in other industries. Despite the Covid pandemic— which meant initial interviews were online – a new cohort of eight Modern Apprentices were taken on in 2020.

This intake is more diverse, including more women and a wider range of ages and educational backgrounds. Applications were processed with anonymised CVs, and recruiters looked for attitude and potential rather than just relevant experience. Kerryanne Joyce, lead Training and Development Specialist at the plant, says “the business undoubtedly benefits from more diverse recruitment.”

Back in the Highlands, the Glenmorangie distillery is actively recruiting women. “The traditional career path led from the warehouse into production, and that favoured men” says Senior HR Advisor Lindsey Danks. “We're now reaching out to a wider potential workforce and encouraging a more diverse group to apply.”

GLENMORANGIE
SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY



Glenmorangie: attracting a diverse cohort of apprentices through 'blind recruitment'

Support for all new parents, regardless of sexual orientation or how they have become a parent, now includes equal parental leave of up to a year, including six months full pay, as well as parental-leave education material for employees and line managers. Other developments include disability-positive recruitment practices and training, and unconscious bias training for the entire company.

Glenmorangie is part of the global LVMH group, which has long championed inclusive policies. In Britain LVMH is developing a wide range of support including retirement planning, menopause support, training for mental health first-aiders in the workplace and establishing a LGBTQIA+ network.

CASE STUDY TWO

Royal Navy

How women are 'just getting on with the job' below the waves

The Royal Navy was operating submarines for over a hundred years before women were accepted as crew, but now a growing number of female submariners are serving - and 'getting on with it', to quote Lt. Izzy Rawlinson, who has served in a number of submarines.

Women have sailed in RN surface vessels since 1990, but a ban persisted in submarines for a further two decades. This was in part due to fears that submarine atmosphere, healthy for adults, might harm an unborn child.

To counter this, half of the Navy's submarines now have contained atmosphere facilities to protect a pregnant woman on board, with plans in place to equip the whole fleet. To date these have not been used. A more straightforward problem has been the effective allocation of quarters, as personal space is at a premium for every one of the around 160 people on board, who potentially spend many months in a highly confined space.

Accepting and welcoming women has gone hand-in-hand with a wider cultural evolution within the Royal Navy, according to Commanding Officer, Cdr Mark Walker. "When we opened the submarine service to women the planning decisions were still largely taken by men, and there were a few false starts. Once we started to actually listen to women, we began to get it right. Our female volunteers are of an exceptional calibre, and we're a more effective fighting force because of their inclusion."

Positive initiatives include the Naval Servicewomen's Network, which works to provide an open environment for sharing experience and opinions. With a growing cadre rising through the ranks - the first female admiral, Jude Terry, was appointed this year - and by being more inclusive at all levels, the Navy is harnessing a rich diversity of thought which will help to shape the future service.

Izzy Rawlinson joined with a degree in materials engineering and has been in submarines for four years, with about 400 days spent below the surface so far. She says she's never felt intimidated or patronised due to her gender. "You can't expect everything to change overnight but, in my experience, women are treated very much as equals, and judged on their abilities. Everyone's just expected to get on with the job."



Detailed recommendations: Group two

What government can do

Introduction

To gain insight into how we can make recommendations that will improve gender diversity in apprenticeships, the Gender Commission had to first understand when and how young people develop gendered perceptions of apprenticeships and the workplace in general.

Through an existing evidence review, and consultation with educators from early years to secondary, we discovered that children form gendered expectations of employment in their early years. These ideas then persist as they move through education, leading to gender segregation in subject choices in school, further and higher education, apprenticeships, and the workplace. According to the Education Scotland Report, [Improving Gender Balance and Equalities](#), gender stereotyping in relation to employment is firmly established by the age of seven.

By the time most businesses begin engaging with young people, at S3 or S4 level, stereotyped views are already entrenched. These views lead to 70% of girls thinking a career in caring is rewarding (compared to 40% of boys), and boys believing that STEM careers are mostly suited to men ([Young People in Scotland Survey \(YPSS\), 2019-20](#)).

One of the main reasons for these early opinions is continued acceptance of traditional cultural norms, and stereotypical views of what boys and girls should do for a career, among the main influencers on a young person's career choices: parents and carers, teachers, and some sections of the media.

What do we need to do differently to ensure Scotland's children grow up without perceived restrictions on what they should or shouldn't do for a living? Teachers (22%) are the most important source of information on apprenticeships for pupils, followed by parents/carers (15%) and careers advisers (14%) (YPSS, 2019-20), with only 4% of young people surveyed getting information from employers.

As well as the many great careers initiatives and schools' partnerships already taking place across the country, we need to think differently and have greater focus on those people who influence career choices, as well as young people themselves. Current models often focus on how young people overcome these structural barriers themselves. We also need to find a way to communicate information about the world of work to children much earlier, in a developmentally appropriate way.

“An accumulation of policies consistently supporting a more equal sharing of responsibilities between parents (or large policy reforms challenging gender roles) may help build up a change in attitudes that leads to permanent change in norms. Given the huge economic costs associated with the status quo, even expensive policies could potentially pay for themselves if they successfully ensure that the talents of both women and men are put to their most productive uses, whether in the labour market or at home.”

Women and men at work, IFS Deaton Review (2021)

Evidence and key learning points

Commission members who focused on the role of key influencers heard from a wide range of focus group participants with parents and carers, children, early years practitioners, university and college staff, Scottish Government and national organisations, as well as careers advisers, teachers, and teaching unions.

The main learning points and conclusions from consideration of focus group output and other evidence includes:

- There has been considerable investment into programmes to encourage 'girls into' and 'boys into' occupations and sectors where there is little evidence of gender diversity, for example women into engineering, or men into childcare.

However, data that shows impact or success is hard to find. Commission members therefore concluded that a new approach is required. Policy, education, and business need to come together, evaluate the skills requirements of the future, and think about how best to introduce the world of work to young people and their influencers.

This is key not only to supporting children and young people in the full spectrum of expectation and aspiration regarding subject and career choice, but also to improving the gender diversity of the workplace and productivity of business. By addressing these long-standing areas of challenge, the economic future of our country will in turn be enriched.

- A consistent approach to data gathering is required to evaluate the impact of investment over the long term.
- Parents and care givers, practitioners working with young people, and the media all have significant influence on young people's perception of the workplace. Employers and other organisations seeking to prevent or reduce, gendered perceptions need to start focusing on influencing the influencers, as well as young people themselves.
- Perceptions of gendered roles and the workplace start to form from the earliest months and years of a child's life. Initially this happens largely in the home and in early years settings. Employers and other organisations seeking to prevent or reduce gendered perceptions need a strategy that begins with focusing on children before school age.

Detailed recommendations: Group two



- Some key viewpoints from focus group participants in the early learning and childcare sector need to be considered in the work of the Gender Commission:
 - Work must be done to improve the gender balance by supporting more men into the sector.
 - Structural barriers that potentially prevent men from considering a career in early years, primarily pay and perceived value of roles, need to be broken down.
 - There is room for improvement around training staff about the benefits of a non-gendered approach when working with young children. Staff should be supported and encouraged to talk confidently and openly with parents about this.
 - Children should have a choice in play, and work should be done to address factors that contribute to gender stereotypes being perpetuated.
 - Parents, families and carers often reinforce gender stereotypes. This can be a sensitive and difficult topic for ELC staff to address.
 - Businesses have a role to play in helping children explore the world of work. This should start earlier than it does currently, which is often when gendered attitudes to work have already been formed.

CASE STUDY THREE

Starting early **Addressing gender stereotyping in** **Early Years settings**

Gender stereotyping limits future opportunities for children, and it starts early. Now a number of initiatives are helping early years settings promote equality and redress the balance.

In Glasgow, the Gender Friendly Nursery (GFN) project provides training, resources and support for staff to help reduce gender stereotyping, and to understand the harms associated with gender inequality. Meanwhile, Education Scotland's Improving Gender Balance & Equalities (IGBE) programme⁷ has focused on addressing the underlying causes of gender imbalance in some subjects and learner pathways, including science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). IGBE supports practitioners in addressing stereotypes and exploring their own unconscious bias.

Shaw Mhor Early Years Centre on Glasgow's Southside has worked with both programmes, piloting IGBE's Whole Setting Approach to achieving gender balance while simultaneously following a proactive and consistent programme of action based on the Gender Friendly Nursery 10 Point Plan.

Training addresses staff attitudes, awareness and language, the environment, management practices, engagement with families, and resources including books, games and toys. Actions range from simple choices - like varying pronouns in nursery rhymes – to more complex interventions, such as managing the environment so a full range of skills can be developed in all areas of the nursery. Activity is monitored so staff can see which children are accessing

which activities and how often, and the data is used to make sure each child gets the chance to develop a full range of skills. Staff use online sharing to maintain conversations with families, raising issues of equality and opportunity with parents who might otherwise – perhaps unwittingly – contribute to stereotyping.

Key to the IGBE programme's success has been getting buy-in from senior leadership and identifying lead practitioners who've been able to 'own' the activity. New staff are 'buddied' by those who've already had training, and refresher courses are available for all.

Of course, children in early years settings have some years to go before they begin choosing subjects and possible careers. However, early experience and environment can have a significant impact on future choices, and it's very encouraging that all the children at Shaw Mhor have been able to experience the full range of relevant skills and activities, no matter where they learn and play. There's also been a big uptake in engagement from parents around gender-friendly practice.



⁷ The Improving Gender Balance in Education/Equalities programme is delivered by Education Scotland and was developed from a pilot programme from Skills Development Scotland and the Institute of Physics

Recommendation Five Implementation of Fair Work

Public sector bodies, working with apprenticeship learning providers, small-medium sized enterprises and business organisations, should more pro-actively promote fair work practices.

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government policy to drive high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland, criteria include but are not limited to,

- appropriate channels for effective voice, such as trade union recognition
- investment in workforce development
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts
- action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace

Actions to help achieve this include:

- This will include the development of learning across training providers in supporting fair work, guidance to support implementation, and support for employers in taking action to tackle the gender pay gap and create more diverse and inclusive workplaces.
- Continue practical support for Fair Work First in public procurement (Scottish Government); create specific materials to support providers and employers, highlighting inclusion of gender as a factor in fair work, including examples of good practice (Scottish Enterprise/Skills Development Scotland); monitor

implementation through ongoing contact management and quality assurance processes, with specific reference to gender (SDS, SFC).

Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training providers have a responsibility to implement fair work in their own employment practices, as well as a role to promote fair work practices to employers. The 2021-22 MA Programme Specification Document states, “when marketing your MA Services to employers and apprentices, you must take appropriate action to promote the benefits of employers operating Fair Work Practices.”

Recommendation Six Develop a long-term partnership approach

Scottish Government should work with employers, trade unions and professional bodies to develop a long-term partnership approach to address gender stereotypes in the world of work. This approach should focus on key influencers, as well as children and young people themselves, and should include working with early years settings and schools.

To deliver this recommendation:

- The approach should be integrated within the curriculum and school performance and business partnership priorities and measures, including through the uptake of Foundation Apprenticeships (FA).
- Businesses from sectors with significant gender diversity challenges should ensure their strategy for engagement includes the tackling of gender stereotypes and aims to break down the barriers to gendered subject and job choices. Larger employers have a role in involving SMEs in this type of activity.

- Equal focus should be placed on engaging parents and education practitioners, who between them have the greatest impact on a young person's perceptions of the world of work, as well as directly with children and young people.
- Careers events can be immediately impactful but may have limited long-term impact. Such events should be part of a long-term engagement strategy.

Recommendation Seven **Develop a localised approach**

Scottish Government should engage directly with employers, trade unions and professional bodies to develop an improved localised approach to business and education engagement, with a focus on skills for the future (Industry 4.0) and gender diversity.

- The improved approach in this recommendation refers to the need for specific focus on gender diversity within business and education engagement, as a specific outcome in itself, and in the need for a consistent approach. Those were themes that emerged from consultation.
- Employers should engage with the regional networks in their area to ensure a coordinated, equitable and sustainable allocation of employer support across the region. Scottish Government has a key role in creating the conditions for this to happen effectively and consistently
- Such networks might include schools, regional improvement collaboratives, local authorities, parent teacher councils and community learning and development organisations, as well

as SDS, DYW groups, Chambers of Commerce and Education Scotland.

- These networks must ensure they include a gendered approach to their work while focusing on the future skills needs of the region's businesses.

Recommendation Eight **Develop a National Campaign**

Scottish Government should create a sustained national campaign for parents and carers of young children highlighting the impact of gender stereotypes on choices and chances in later life.

- This campaign should aim to support parents and carers of young children in understanding the many behaviours and attitudes that characterise a gendered approach.
- Parents and carers should be supported in appreciating how gender stereotyping can inhibit, limit, and influence their children's play and learning in childhood, as well as their choices and chances later in life.

Bookbug gives every child in Scotland four free Bookbug Bags between birth and the age of five. Each bag contains picture books and other fun items for families to enjoy together while helping children develop a love of stories, songs and rhymes.

The programme is run by the Scottish Book Trust. The books chosen are high-quality, age-appropriate books, with appealing illustrations,

language, rhythm, rhyme and repetition. There is a good opportunity to influence choice of books used to help tackle early years stereotype influences.

Scotland's Baby Box is currently sent to all expectant parents, containing baby essentials from birth to six months, as well as guidance and information. The Gender Commission recommends the inclusion of appropriate information to explain how gender stereotyping of career aspirations and preferences begins very early in a young person's life. It should offer information about how to break down gender barriers through play, the selection of toys, choice of media, etc.

Recommendation Nine

Raise awareness of gender stereotyping through career education

Scottish Government and its agencies should ensure, through the implementation of the Career Review, that career services are delivered with awareness of the gender stereotyping that is endemic in a young person's pathway to work.

- Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland should develop criteria for high quality professional learning and inspection frameworks for teaching and career guidance staff. These should be focused on addressing gender stereotyping in the workplace, and on the apprenticeship pathway.
- Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland should review existing resources available for careers guidance in schools to ensure there is a consistent approach to gender diversity, and to ensure that young people, their parents and carers are clear about the impact of occupational segregation.

📄 CASE STUDY FOUR

Prestwick Academy

Working with local industry to broaden horizons

Girls and boys demonstrate a broadly similar range of interests and abilities during the early years of school. As they get older, though, there's a tendency for them to gravitate towards subjects traditionally seen as 'appropriate' for their gender. At Prestwick Academy, Depute Headteacher Mark Anderson sees S3 - when children start to choose subjects for further study - as the crucial turning point.

"By the age of about 13 or 14, even girls who've already shown real talent in STEM subjects tend to shy away from them. The result, down the line, is that very few girls are training for jobs in engineering and other technical areas."

Whether influenced by peers, parents or the media, girls and boys continue to choose the old favourites for their gender.

"We have some great role models here, with women teaching most of the STEM subjects. But that's clearly not enough to redress the balance," says Mark.

The answer could lie in close cooperation with local employers. Prestwick is a major centre for the aeronautics industry, and Jane Sinclair, Principal Teacher of Design & Technology, has built a great relationship with some key businesses in the sector.

"We're working with people like Spirit Aerosystems, GE Caledonian and Collins Aerospace to offer our students – boys and girls alike – some really exciting opportunities," says Jane.

The Academy's Performing Engineering Operations (PEO) programme combines teaching at school, training at Ayrshire College and industrial



Connecting local schools with local industry: Prestwick Academy's Performing Engineering Operations programme

experience. Around 17 students are taking part each year, achieving an impressive 97% pass rate in 2020. Young people can sometimes even go straight into the second year of apprenticeship.

"Employers are now asking us what they can do to attract and support our students in years to come" says Jane. "They're clearly seeing advantages for their own businesses, as well as for the apprentices themselves."

Other initiatives to promote technical subjects include events like the Faraday Challenge, and Step into STEM. The Academy has even teamed up with Rice University in Texas to give students a chance to speak directly to astronauts on the International Space Station.

"It's about making the school experience relevant to the world of work" says Mark. "It can be really inspiring for kids when they see that link between what they're doing in class and the kind of jobs they could be doing later on."

If asked for advice, the team at Prestwick Academy would encourage any school to make the most of what's on their doorstep. "We've got the local airport and aeronautics industry" says Jane, "but wherever you are, there'll be opportunities for your students, both boys and girls."

Detailed recommendations: Group three

What further and higher education, public and private training providers, and those with responsibility for the care and education of children and young people can do

This final set of recommendations is focused on longer-term change in attitudes to the world of work.

While we recognise that equality, diversity and inclusion awareness, and unconscious bias training, have become commonplace for some employers, we still see a need for a focused approach on gender norms in work for practitioners working with children and young people. The role of focused professional learning on gender norms will be instrumental in opening opportunities, including through apprenticeships, for all Scotland's children and young people, and in turn in addressing occupational segregation in the longer term.

In addition, while the Gender Commission considered taking a sectoral approach to addressing gender diversity in apprenticeships, where some sectors have a particular challenge, the consensus was that the recommendations in this report can be used by all employers, education and learning practitioners, and policy makers.

However, we realised very early on in our discussions that the early learning sector is central to meeting the Gender Commission's objectives. It lacks gender diversity more than most other sectors, and is an under-recognised key influencer of children and young people's perceptions of the workplace, as referenced in the Foreword to this report. That's why we have decided to include a recommendation for the early learning and childcare sector itself - recommendation eleven - again with the objective of effecting and embedding longer-term change.

Finally, recommendation twelve identifies an ongoing role for SAAB in monitoring the implementation and measuring progress of the recommendations in this report. We believe that SAAB, working closely with SDS, SFC and other partners (including expert equality groups), is best placed to do this, given the centrality of employers to the recommendations of the report.

Evidence and key learning points

Evidence was taken from a wide range of consultation with parents, children, national bodies, teachers and others. The detail of that evidence is included in the White Paper that goes with this report.

Recommendation 8 of the Scottish Technology Ecosystem Review, by Mark Logan, commissioned by Scottish Government in 2020, talks about the need for action at an earlier age to tackle gender-role stereotyping.

'We stated earlier in this report that, by the time pupils take the Higher Computing Science qualification, only 16% of them are female on average [16% on average are female]; a ratio that worsens as they continue on through university and into industry. Put simply, gender role stereotyping removes almost half of our best future engineers. It would be economically and societally beneficial if Scotland was to lead on addressing this aberration. Gender role stereotyping is established by society during the primary-school years, and it is here that work should be particularly focused.'

We recommend that the Scottish Government conduct a sustained public information campaign aimed at countering role stereotyping as it relates to science, Computing Science and engineering, enlisting role models and others as part of that campaign.’

The second part of this recommendation could link strongly with recommendation 8 in this Gender Commission report, which calls for a national campaign for parents and carers.

Similarly, there is a link between the implementation of the recommendations of the Gender Commission with the [OECD Curriculum for Excellence](#) review, specifically in relation to the theme about ‘consolidating institutional policy processes for effective change.’ Coherence across agencies and with employers will be essential for the system-wide approach in the education and skills ecosystem which is required to address occupational segregation.

Recommendation Ten

Raise awareness of gender stereotyping through professional learning

Education and training providers of professional learning for all practitioners working with children and young people (teachers, careers advisers, youth workers) should improve professional learning by including a specific focus on the impact of gender stereotypes.

- Initial training programmes and ongoing professional learning for all practitioners working with children and young people should include a specific focus on the likely impact that gendered experiences can have, from early childhood experience right through to future life chances and career choices.

- The training programmes and courses should include an emphasis on including, involving and engaging children’s parents, carers, and families, so that they too are supported in making more informed choices about the effects of gendered attitudes and behaviour.
- Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate should be supported to enable them to make early years settings and schools responsible for ensuring non-gendered approaches.

Recommendation Eleven

Increase Diversity in the ELC Sector

The Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector should be recognised as vital to the drive to break down gendered barriers to the workplace by all stakeholders. This means that efforts must be strengthened to bring more diversity to the ELC workforce and ensure there are no gender barriers for babies and young children. Employers and the Government and its agencies need to recognise the importance of the ELC workforce as a key influencer of young peoples’ perceptions of work.

Recommendation Twelve

Monitor impact

The SAAB Group Board and Employer Equality Group (EEQ) should monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SAAB Gender Commission recommendations.

- The SAAB Employer Equality Group should hold an annual thematic meeting focused on gender in apprenticeships. This meeting should be used to monitor the implementation, progress and impact of the Gender Commission report and recommendations. Gender Commission members and relevant Scottish Government officials should be invited to take part.
- SAAB EEQ will work collaboratively with SDS, SFC to develop the measurement framework and will oversee implementation to ensure delivery against the key indicator of success for each of the recommendations. It is recognised that the measurement framework will develop as key stakeholders respond to the recommendations and design their practical implementation actions. The measures will be monitored by the SAAB Employer Equality Group and reported to the SAAB Group Board.
- The SAAB Group Board should receive an annual progress report from the Employer Equality Group and should discuss next steps in response.

Conclusion

SAAB Gender Commission members welcomed taking an employer-led, commission-based approach to such a complex area of workplace equality.

They were clear about the specific remit of the Commission and mindful of the large body of existing evidence on broader gender equality in employment. Members demonstrated their commitment to making a tangible difference through the time and expertise they brought to the task of examining this workplace equality issue through the lens of apprenticeships.

The SAAB Group Board and Gender Commission Chair would like to extend a sincere thanks to all Commission Members for their time, input, and commitment, especially during the pandemic period. The SAAB Gender Commission would also like to thank all stakeholders for their contribution to the process, their input was invaluable to the Commission in reaching its conclusions and recommendations.

Sustainable change will involve action in the short/medium term and over the longer term. Employers are best placed to improve their workplaces in the here and now to ensure everything possible is done to welcome and retain the broadest range of new talent. However, to achieve longer term more sustainable change, we need to see system wide, concerted activity, where government, including education and early years, work with employers to truly broaden the horizons of all young people starting to imagine and plan for their future.

The SAAB Gender Commission looks forward to seeing the response of key stakeholders to its recommendations and continuing to work in partnership to make the change we all want to see happen.

Appendices

Appendix One: [Gender Commission Members](#)

Appendix Two: [Meeting schedule and governance](#)

Appendix Three: [Action Priority Matrix](#)

Appendix Four: [Glossary of Terms](#)

Appendix Five: [Literature and Evidence Review](#) - view online

Appendix Six: [Early Years Scotland White Paper - 'Young Children and Gender'](#) - view online

Appendix One

Gender Commission Members

Natalie Buxton (Chair)

Managing Director, Scotland & UK Network
Weber Shandwick

Thomas Wild

Programme Manager, Young Engineers and Science Clubs,
Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI)

Irene Bruce

Energy Services Agreement Manager
Offshore Energies UK (OEUK)

Patricia Findlay

Distinguished Professor of Work and Employment Relations
University of Strathclyde

Maureen Douglas

HR Director
Forster Group

Fergus McMillan

Head of Equality & Diversity
Skills Development Scotland

Stevie Grier

Country Manager
Microsoft

Jane Brumpton

Chief Executive
Early Years Scotland

Mark Anderson

Head Teacher
Prestwick Academy

Paul Sheerin

Chief Executive
Scottish Engineering

Jean Carwood Edwards

Professional Consultant
Early Years

Karen Stewart

Director
Nine Twenty

Observers

Callum Grigor/ Nicola Craig
Scottish Government

Scottish Trade Union Congress and National Parents Forum of Scotland were also consulted throughout the lifespan of the Commission.

We would also like to recognise and thank the wide range of other people who contributed to the work of the Commission, either through its sub-groups or as consultees.

Appendix Two

Meeting schedule and governance

07 OCT 2019	Initial meeting – introductions and scope
29 NOV 2019	Gender in early years education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jean Carwood Edwards, Chief Exec, Early Years Scotland: gender in Early Years• Shaddai Tembo PHD student Early Years Scotland Reflections on Gender and LGBT+ Inclusive Education in ELC
16 DEC 2019	Teachers as key influencers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark Anderson, Acting Head Teacher, Prestwick Academy: Teachers as Influencers• Shukriya Addow, Equalities Executive, Skills Development Scotland: Improving Gender Balance (IGB) programme
20 JAN 2020	Media Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natalie Buxton, Managing Director, UK at Weber Shandwick (and Chair of Gender Commission)
28 MAY 2020	The role of business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thomas Wild, Scottish Council for Development and Industry: Business and school partnerships: Young Engineers and Science Clubs• Paul Sheerin, Chief Executive, Scottish Engineering - the role of the employer• Naziya Mahmood, Gender Equality Officer Scottish Engineering experience from Scottish Engineering's equality project
16 JUN 2020	Young people: perceptions of apprenticeships and the effects of the current Covid-19 crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emma Hollywood, Insight and Impact Manager, Skills Development Scotland: Young People in Scotland Survey Presentation and Discussion.
30 JUL 2020	Role of quality assurance in equality and diversity in apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Karen Murray, Head of Work Based Learning, Skills Development Scotland: Quality Delivery
31 AUG 2020	Value <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patricia Findlay, Strathclyde University: Issues of private and public value in apprenticeships
22 OCT 2020	Mid-point review - Updates from workstreams: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natalie Buxton, Weber Shandwick: Key influencers• Paul Sheerin, Scottish Engineering: Role of business• Fergus McMillan, Skills Development Scotland: Young people and intersectionality• Patricia Finlay, Strathclyde University: Value
26 NOV 2020	Inclusive workplace <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fergus McMillan, Skills Development Scotland: Inclusive workplace – members' examples
26 JAN 2021	Young Person's Guarantee and Workstream Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Claire Baird, Scottish Government: Young Person's Guarantee and Workstream Updates

23 FEB 2021	Literature review and updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynne MacDougall & Naomi Taylor, Evaluation & Research Team, Skills Development Scotland • Claire Baird, Scottish Government: Young Person’s Guarantee and Workstream Updates
30 MAR 2021	Workstream and case study updates, occupational segregation study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Bolger University of the West of Scotland: Occupational Segregation in Apprenticeships
29 APR 2021	Recommendations Workshop
23 JUN 2021	Final Recommendations
11 NOV 2021	Progress catch-up

Membership: Membership of the commission was made up of selected key influencers, employers, equality, diversity and inclusion practitioners, and representatives from education, academia and trade unions, complemented by expert advice drawn in from key policy areas where appropriate.

Group Chair: the group was led by Natalie Buxton, Managing Director, UK, at global communications agency, Weber Shandwick. She is also a member of the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board’s Group Board and Equalities Group.

Frequency: Gender Commission meetings were conducted approximately every 6-8 weeks dependent on members’ availability.

Meetings: there were 16 main meetings in total, lasting between 1.5 – 2 hrs, with additional sub-group meetings as and when required. Members were allocated to 1 or 2 subgroups to discuss key themes in detail, reporting back to the main group

Themes: discussions were split into 4 main emerging themes and respective subgroups:

- The Role of Business
- Key Influencers
- Young People and Intersectionality
- Value of Work

Attendance: was excellent throughout all meetings, with a switch to online meetings (MS Teams) following the pandemic outbreak ensuring that attendance remained high throughout.

Dates: the first, introductory meeting took place in October 2019, with the final meeting taking place on November 2021

Meetings’ governance:

- the Group’s Chair was Natalie Buxton, Managing Director, UK, Weber Shandwick
- each meeting was guided by an agenda, approved by the Chair
- action points were captured at meetings, to continue progress
- all papers, meetings agendas and additional reading was shared with all members via a secure extranet, allowing for continuous discussion amongst members
- Skills Development Scotland facilitated the running, organising and support at meetings
- [the Group’s Terms of Reference](#) are published online at Skills Development Scotland’s website
- [the full membership list](#) was also published online

Appendix Three

Action Priority Matrix

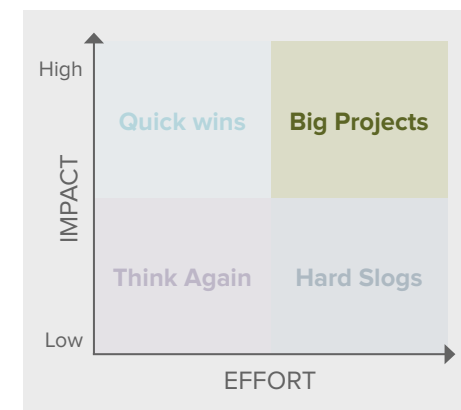


Quick Wins – High Impact, Low Effort

- Use gender-neutral language in job adverts including job titles, job descriptions, skills profiles and person specifications. Utilise recruitment processes and seek to avoid word of mouth recruitment, which is generally less inclusive.
 - Utilise diverse interview panels and anonymous application processes. These promote inclusive recruitment by minimising bias at key parts of recruitment processes.
 - Women are less likely to apply for roles where they do not meet ALL the criteria. Eliminating extra requirements that are not absolutely necessary can increase the number and diversity of applications.
- Reach out to and use the resources of relevant industry bodies, trade unions and specialist organisations that help promote gender diversity and attract underrepresented groups.
 - Offer information sessions prior to recruitment, specifically targeted at underrepresented groups and genders. These can be offered in house and advertised via social media, local employability partners and education providers.
 - Offer work tasters or work experience, outside of more strategic engagement projects, to underrepresented groups and genders. (While this can be useful, more strategic engagement projects are likely to be more impactful over time.)
 - Develop diverse case studies and marketing materials that show the experience of apprentices and staff from underrepresented groups. Consider how the industry you represent is portrayed, are there other aspects of the work that could be highlighted that would make the industry more attractive to individuals from other genders?
 - Encourage the development of staff networks to provide support and mentoring which can help improve recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups. Enable people to see themselves within your workforce and feel supported by people who are best able to understand their experiences.
 - Consider detailed insight into the actual requirements of a specific job or trade, and adoption of specific tools and technologies. Discuss the pay available in different jobs, and opportunities for progression.

Big Projects – High Impact, High Effort

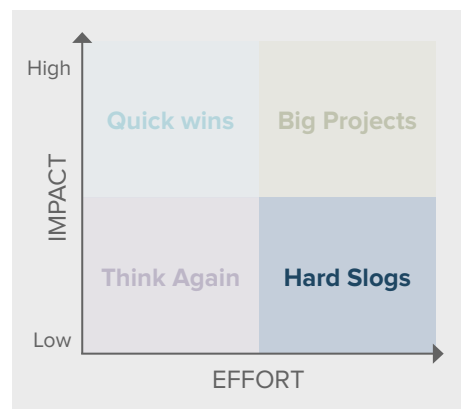
- Develop a proactive gender diversity strategy and action plan, including:
 - Gender analysis (including baselining)
 - Gender equality objectives
 - Gender impact assessment
 - Indicators (stretching but achievable targets)
 - Ensure staff engagement and buy-in to the strategy and action plan
 - Build a knowledgeable workforce, from onboarding to gender-specific training, including gender knowledge and competence development.
 - Adopt an outreach strategy, working with relevant partners including community groups, schools, trade unions and industry bodies to promote the business to underrepresented groups, as part of an ongoing, considered and evaluated approach. For example, working closely with a school to pipeline underrepresented groups into employment
- Role modelling is important. If young people can't "see it" they struggle to "be it". Businesses should ensure that their employees tasked with outreach in schools and other settings reflect a diverse workforce as far as is possible. Develop positive action strategies for underrepresented groups, including thinking about multiple identities like ethnic-minority women, disabled women, single-parent families. This should include areas where men are underrepresented; for example mentoring programmes and paid internships
 - Commit realistic and sufficient resources, time and money. Consider it as a long-term investment in the future of the organisation that will bring both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits, and the potential to shift organisational norms.
 - Offer and promote flexible working, part-time working and family-



Hard Slogs – Low Impact, High Effort

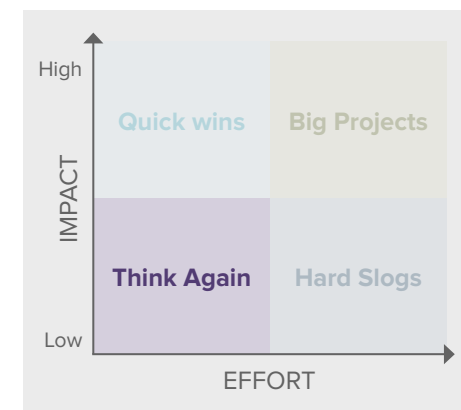
The rationale for engaging with these includes situations where targeted effort might result in positive results, albeit in small numbers. For example, in reaching out to an intersectional minoritised group.

- Complex strategies, policies or partnerships with low involvement and engagement, or a focus on practical action.
- Carrying out some or parts of the actions within Big Projects but without having a strategic and structured approach. For example, attending a range of events, offering some training but without any objective other than ‘ticking a box’.
- Holding outreach events aimed at minority groups of women in rural areas.



Think again – Low Impact, Low Effort

- Generalised statements in recruitment (including promotional/information events), such as “we welcome applications from all” or “apprenticeships for all”, without practical action to make a difference.
- One-off events in schools and community settings where diverse groups are expected to attend, but there is no follow up with attendees, or where the event is not part of a planned approach.
- One-off training around equality and gender sensitivity which is not followed up with conversations or additional training.
- Job adverts with no salary, or ‘competitive salary’.
- Unsubstantiated claims of being family friendly or offering flexible working but with no relevant or visible policy in place.



Appendix Four

Glossary of Terms

Key influencers: these include the media, parents and carers, teachers, youth workers, careers advisers and peers.

Gendered approach: when we say ‘taking a gendered approach’ to something, we mean thinking about or considering the role and impact of gender more closely.

Gender diversity: at an early stage, the Gender Commission decided to focus on ‘gender diversity’ in apprenticeships and the workplace, rather than ‘gender balance’. This reflects the inclusion of gender identities that don’t fit within a binary definition.

Early learning and childcare (ELC) sector or settings

Early years practitioners

Education practitioners is used as an inclusive term to include early years practitioners, teachers, community learning and development (CLD) practitioners and other professionals who work with children and young people in an education or learning setting

YPSS: Young People in Scotland Survey