



*Making equality a reality... Education and Training*

*A summary and discussion of the implications of data from the Gender Audit of Statistics [Breitenbach, E. and Wasoff, F. Scottish Executive Social Research 2007] relating to care and caring prepared by S. Macpherson, Engender Associate and E. Thomson.*

## **Gender Audit Findings**

### School Education:

- More girls than boys are likely to leave school with higher levels of qualifications. In 2004/05, 48% of girls achieved qualifications attained at SCQF levels 6 and 7 compared to 38% of boys.
- Boys are more likely to be excluded from school, with boys making up 91% of those excluded from primary schools and 76% from secondary schools in 2004/05.
- Girls and boys make different subject choices at secondary school. Boys are more likely than girls to study Physics and Computer Studies while girls are more likely to choose subjects such as Biology and Arts and Languages.
- After the compulsory school leaving age, girls are more likely than boys to stay on in secondary education than boys.

### Post-Compulsory Education:

- Girls are more likely than boys to go on to Further and Higher Education on leaving school. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to go directly into employment after leaving school.
- Boys are more often than girls unemployed and seeking employment or training, with 12% of male school leavers in this category in 2004/05 compared with 8% of girls.
- In 2004/05, females made up 57% of the students taking further education courses. Similarly, in 2004/05, females made up 57% of students participating in Higher Education Institutions.
- Subject choice in Higher and Further Education reflects the gender segregated choices made in secondary school. In further education, the majority of enrolled vocational students in Engineering and Technology in

2004/05 were male, while females made up the majority of those taking subjects Allied to Medicine, Social Studies, Languages and Creative Arts. This pattern is replicated for students enrolled in Higher Education.

#### Work-Related Training and Government Training Programmes:

- In 2005, 33% of female employees and 28% of male employees received work-related training.
- The proportion of male and female employees receiving work-related training in each industrial sector varied considerably.
- In Modern Apprenticeships (the 16-24 age category), females represented 40% of new starts in 2005/06. For the over 25 year old category, the gender balance is reversed, with females representing 60% of Modern Apprenticeship new starts in 2005/06.
- Women were 35% of new starts on the 'Get Ready for Work' programme in 2005/06.

#### Education Workforce:

- Women made up 93% of primary school teachers in 2005. Women also were the majority (81%) of primary school *head* teachers in 2005.
- Women made up 49% of secondary school teachers in 2005, and only 21% of secondary school *head* teachers, with men making up 79% of secondary school head teachers in 2005.
- In Further Education colleges, women made up 51% of all academic staff (full and part-time) in 2005.
- In Higher Education Institutions, women made up 40% of academic staff in 2003/04.
- In relation to senior academic positions, women made up 24% of Principals, 38% of Deputy/Assistant Principals and 43% of other senior management in Further Education Colleges in 2004/05.
- Women made up 26% of Senior Lecturers and Researchers and 14% of Professors in Higher Education Institutions.

#### **Discussion**

Education and training are important areas of devolved Scottish policy. Building on policy agendas from previous administrations, the continuance of concern with improving skills should be contextualised within a gender framework.

We know for example that girls and boys, women and men, are having different experiences of and engagement with education and training courses. We know too that women and men are participating in the workforce in educational settings differently, with more men working in higher education and more women working in further education. This has implications with regard to potentially offering positive role models and mentors for male and female learners in these different settings.

The lack of male primary teachers in particular has been raised as an area of concern, with research suggesting that a more diverse teaching workforce would have many benefits for pupils. In particular, boys from lone parent families could benefit from having male role models at school where no positive male role model may be available at home.

The continued segregation of male and female students into specific areas of study has an impact on the skills base of Scotland's current and future workforce. This segregation impacts on the economy and individual social and economic potential, with job segregation (both into particular jobs and into positions within organisations) explaining to some extent the continued pay gap between men and women in Scotland.

With respect to achieving gender equality, the pervasive occupational segregation that currently characterises the UK and Scottish labour markets stems from ingrained and stereotyped ideas and opinions held by boys and girls throughout their educational experiences. There is therefore an important role to be played by primary and secondary education institutions, and others such as careers guidance advisors, to take positive action to challenge these stereotypes.

The commitment to increase the availability of pre-school childcare is a positive step in recognising the importance of women to the Scottish labour market. This does however need to be embedded within a wider framework that allows girls and boys, women and men, to make genuine choices in taking forward education and training opportunities. This is one route through which occupational segregation can be challenged, through offering more opportunities for girls and boys to participate in non-traditional educational and training settings, to try out new or diverse subjects/areas of work.

Breaking down occupational barriers between men and women starts with providing positive opportunities for education and skills development. The objective should be to achieve a more diverse workforce, with fewer structural constraints limiting women and men's experiences of employment, family life, pay and pensions. Important to understanding the context within which gender inequality is situated is to recognise the socio-economic position from which particular groups of girls/women and boys/men experience education and skills training. Increasing the value of vocational skills for both men and women is one route through which to challenge the structural experience of employment inequality.