

## **Introduction**

Chwarae Teg exists to deliver our vision of a Wales where women achieve and prosper. We do this by working with women to broaden horizons and build confidence and skills; working with employers to create modern workplaces that are successful by harnessing everyone's contribution; and working with influencers, educators and decision makers to build a society that values, supports and benefits women and men equally.

We are pleased to respond to this inquiry and our response focuses on the question of gender stereotyping. The fact that apprenticeships remain notably gendered is one that has broadly been accepted and there is agreement that action to address this should be a priority. The appointment of an Equality and Diversity Champion by the Welsh Government is testament to this.

The new Apprenticeship Policy offers further opportunities to ensure that this remains a priority and that action to address gender stereotyping is effectively evaluated for impact.

## **Key messages:**

1. Access to gender disaggregated data related to apprenticeships has been improved, which makes it much easier for external stakeholders to support scrutiny and develop solutions.
2. The new Welsh Government Apprenticeship Policy rightly highlights equality and diversity as a key priority. It offers new opportunities to address gender stereotyping, but must be closely monitored for any unintended negative impact on women.
3. A number of activities listed in the Apprenticeship Policy should be prioritised for action including implementing equality plans; expanding flexible provision; developing a toolkit and training for the Work-Based Learning Network and streamlining and improving the on-line Apprenticeship Matching Service.
4. Targets should be put in place for providers to ensure that all of those engaged in delivering apprenticeships are actively addressing issues of gender stereotyping. This would ensure consistency of approach and provide focus for WG and providers.

In our detailed response below we outline why the above key messages are important.

## **Detail response**

## What good practice exists and what more can be done to address gender stereotyping?

1. Access to gender disaggregated data related to apprenticeships has been improved, which makes it much easier for external stakeholders to support scrutiny and develop solutions.
  - 1.1. Crucially, data is now available on Stats Wales that allows analysis by gender and sector. This is vital to understand the differences that sit behind a more-or-less equal gender split in overall apprenticeship figures.
  - 1.2. Data on Stats Wales demonstrates that there is still a need to prioritise action with apprenticeship pathways being strongly gendered. For example, 1.6% of Construction apprentices and 3.1% of Engineering apprentices are female, compared with 96% of Children's Care, Learning and Development apprentices and 91% of Hairdressing apprentices.<sup>1</sup>
  
2. The new Welsh Government Apprenticeship Policy rightly highlights equality and diversity as a key priority. It offers new opportunities to address gender stereotyping but must be closely monitored for any unintended negative impact on women, as a result of its new focus on Level 3 qualifications and STEM sectors.
  - 2.1. A number of changes in focus are outlined in the new WG Apprenticeship Policy, which could have a more noticeable impact on women if the pace of change in relation to gender segregation does not quicken. This includes a move to focus on Level 3 and above; a greater focus on STEM based frameworks and a reduction in foundational apprenticeships beginning with administration, customer service, retail and hair and beauty.
  - 2.2. Currently, women are much more likely to be found in foundational apprenticeships than men. This does to some extent contribute to the apprenticeship gender pay gap and we are of course keen to see more women able to take up opportunities for training and employment in sectors that offer better paid jobs with clear progression pathways.
  - 2.3. However, a switch in focus to higher-level apprenticeships in a smaller number of sectors cannot be allowed to result in fewer opportunities for women of any age to access training. The impact of this change in policy should therefore be closely monitored for any gender impact.
  
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<sup>1</sup> Stats Wales *Learning programmes for Foundational Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships* Accessed 02/05/2017

- 3.1. The actions listed above are all practical steps that could help address gender stereotyping. They should therefore be prioritised for action as soon as possible.
  - 3.2. We would recommend that changes to the Apprenticeship Matching Service include a gender lensing activity to determine whether content could be inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes.
  - 3.3. We would also highlight the importance of Careers Advice. As a result of the cuts to the Careers Wales budget, the ability of the service to provide face-to-face careers advice has been greatly reduced. We would suggest that the impact of this be considered in the context of addressing gender stereotypes and bringing parity of esteem to vocational pathways such as apprenticeships.
  - 3.4. We fear that the ability of predominantly on-line services to support people to challenge their own perceptions about apprenticeships could be limited. Therefore there is a risk that some delivery priorities outlined in the Apprenticeship Policy could be undermined.
  - 3.5. The importance of face-to-face careers advice was made clear in the previous Assembly's Enterprise and Business Committee inquiry *Assisting Young People into Work*, which recommended that face-to-face advice and guidance should be available to all young people who need it.<sup>2</sup>
4. Targets should be put in place for providers to ensure that all of those engaged in delivering apprenticeships are actively addressing issues of gender stereotyping. This would ensure consistency of approach and provide focus for WG and providers.
    - 4.1. The most effective way to ensure that all actors engaged in delivering apprenticeships are working to address gender stereotyping and to quicken the pace of change would be to put targets in place as part of the new Apprenticeship Policy.
    - 4.2. There are examples of this being done elsewhere, such as the inclusion of an "ambition for at least 20% of new entrants to engineering and technical apprenticeships in the transport sector to be women by 2020" in the UK Government's Transport Skills Strategy.<sup>3</sup>
    - 4.3. There has previously been discussion around placing requirements on providers in receipt of public money and we remain supportive of this. We would be keen to see requirements placed on apprenticeship providers such as targets for the proportion of female apprentices in key pathways, having a named E&D Champion in place and producing action plans outlining their activities to address gender stereotyping.

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<sup>2</sup> National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Business Committee *Assisting Young People into Work* 2015

<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport *Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy: building sustainable skills Moving Britain Ahead* 2016