Gender Action Plan: Interim report

Issue date: 22 February 2016

Reference: SFC/CP/02/2016

Summary: The recommendations of Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy committed SFC to work to address gender imbalances at the subject level within college regions through the development of a gender action plan. Due to the nature of the issues involved we have extended the plan to cover universities as well, including the underrepresentation of male students at university. This interim report outlines which subjects we will focus on and the actions we will undertake in partnership with colleges, universities and other partners to address gender imbalances.

FAO: Principals and directors of Scotland’s colleges and universities

Further information: Contact: John Kemp
Job title: Director
Department: Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements Directorate
Tel: 0131 313 6637
Email: jkemp@sfc.ac.uk
Foreword by Professor Alice Brown, SFC Chair

I am pleased to present the Scottish Funding Council’s Gender Action Plan: Interim report. We believe our plans are ambitious and challenging, but are based on developing good practice. With greater focus and co-ordination and partnership working across the whole education system in Scotland, we are confident that we can achieve significant change.

In December 2014, the Scottish Government published Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy, a seven-year programme that aims to better prepare children and young people from the ages of 3–18 for the world of work. The headline objective is to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021. A key component in the Strategy is to develop the talents of all young people. It implements the recommendations of the Commission for Developing the Young Workforce and builds on the foundations already in place as part of Curriculum for Excellence. Within the Strategy the Scottish Government committed SFC to develop a Gender Action Plan to address gender imbalances at a subject level within Colleges in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and other partners. The Programme Board for the implementation of the Strategy identified a Key Performance Indicator stating that their ambition was to ‘Increase by five percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced ‘superclasses’ by 2021’. This Plan builds on these expectations and brings together our ambitions for both Colleges and Universities.

Throughout the development of the Plan, SFC has been encouraged by the positive response and aspirations of the Colleges and Universities. They have, however, stressed that a lot needs to happen to influence subject choice when young people are at school. Working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland, SFC will encourage greater collaboration between our institutions and schools, with a focus on tackling gender imbalances at all stages of the learner journey. We will also encourage innovative new ways of working.

This interim report is a result of wide ranging research and stakeholder engagement. Our final report, due to be published in May 2016 will build on Scottish institutions’ own ambitions as outlined in their latest Outcome Agreements and will include detail on the findings from additional externally commissioned research.

SFC looks forward to working in closer partnership with all relevant organisations across Scotland, in order to achieve sustainable change.
Executive Summary

The key priority areas which SFC will be working with colleges and universities to address are:

- Gender imbalance in the subject areas that are most unbalanced
- The gap between genders in participation in undergraduate study
- The gap between genders in retention and completion

Through a co-ordinated effort focused on the ambition and action described in this plan, SFC believes the following can be achieved by 2020 and by 2030:

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Summary of Actions

- Set 2020 National and Institutional Ambitions.
- Improve the evidence base.
- Tackle gender stereotypes.
- Improve partnership working.
- Hold ourselves to account.
What SFC, Scottish Colleges and Universities and partners will do to achieve these aims?

Gender Action Plan

**Outcome Agreements and Funding**
- Outcome Agreements to specify actions from AY 2016-17 onwards
- Encourage positive action to tackle subject imbalances
- Produce college work placement guidelines

**Policy and Strategy Development**
- Outline full 3 year action plan
- Share new and existing research
- Enhance equality in recruitment and admissions
- Prioritise tackling gender stereotypes in widening participation activity
- Identify improvements in teacher and early years training
- Expand the work of colleges and universities to inform and support teachers
- Develop a national articulation strategy

**Data and progress monitoring and reporting**
- Improve monitoring of equality data
- Provide a trend report for each region/institution each year
- Enhance monitoring of progress through Learning for All and inaugural triennial review
- Improve qualitative understanding of minority and intersectional issues
- Conduct regional visits to monitor and respond to progress

**Partnership Working**
Summary of Actions

• Finalise detail of SFC’s 2020 national ambition for change in May 2016, including subject and regional ambitions

• Encourage institutions to set an ambition to address gender imbalances in priority areas. SFC will do this by:
  o Negotiations in Outcome Agreement\(^1\) discussions

• Improve the evidence base. SFC will do this by:
  o More in-depth analysis of the data
  o Investing in research to enable us to shape future policy priorities
  o Sharing good practice across both sectors
  o Focusing on gender within Learning for All updates\(^2\) and the Triennial Review of widening access across Scotland

• Tackle gender stereotypes. SFC will do this by:
  o Working with universities to equip teachers within their initial training to tackle gender stereotypes
  o Working with colleges to tackle gender stereotypes through their training of early years care practitioners
  o Increasing the number of men studying care and teaching

• Improve partnership across education. SFC will do this by:
  o Implementing Scotland’s Youth Employment Strategy’
  o Building closer links between colleges, universities and schools
  o Encouraging universities and colleges to engage with local and national employers, Professional Bodies and Skills Investment Plans to tackle imbalances

• Hold ourselves to account. SFC will do this by:
  o Annual publication of progress on reaching our ambitions reported to our Board and the Programme Board for DYW
  o Annual revisiting of the action plan to check on progress
  o Establishing a Steering Group to help us enhance the evidence base and ensure alignment across key agencies
  o Major reviews of progress every three years, aligned with the OA cycle.

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\(^1\) **Outcome Agreements** set out what colleges and universities plan to deliver in return for their funding from the Scottish Funding Council. Their focus is on the contribution that colleges and universities make towards improving life chances, supporting world-class research and creating sustainable economic growth for Scotland.

\(^2\) This includes any replacement for *Learning for All* following the publication of the report from the Commission on Widening Access.
Background and Context

The need for the Gender Action Plan

Scotland’s Colleges and Universities continue to experience significant and persistent gender bias in applications to certain subjects which are seen to be traditionally ‘male’ or ‘female’. Some courses and subject areas have seen applications from one gender at 98% and historically there seems to have been little positive change in some of these figures. Furthermore, since the early 1990s, the gap between the participation rates between men and women at university has grown, with women far more likely to participate than men. Areas where change has occurred have resulted from innovative new ways of working and this is what we encourage.

Growth industries such as Engineering, IT and the Creative Industries have identified gender inequality at a subject level as a key factor in employment skills gaps and positive action in these areas has started to show optimistic signs of addressing underrepresentation. More widely the problem of unconsciously stereotyping young people from a very young age ultimately limits their individual potential; this affects wages and perpetuates a system where young people can’t make genuinely free choices on their futures.

SFC is in a unique position of influence over a key part of the learner journey, and while we acknowledge that colleges and universities cannot impact on these imbalances alone, they are a crucial part of the wider education system, as well as society, and must be pro-active in playing their part to address this issue. Scotland’s Youth Employment strategy Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), aims to improve employment outcomes for all young people in Scotland and tackling gender inequality in education is integral to its success. We also highlight that whilst the focus of DYW is on young people, and that is the focus of much of this plan, gender imbalances exist amongst students of all ages – and SFC expects different approaches to be adopted for learners entering education at different stages of life.

The issue of gender inequality in education is not new and significant levels of activity within the sector have resulted in progress in some geographical and subject areas. The Gender Action Plan acknowledges this excellent work and aims to bring together learning from across the sector, to harness the individual, institutional and political momentum which exists and focus it in a co-ordinated way. Working with partners in education will be central to the success of the Gender Action Plan in order to link up with, influence and support other educational providers on each

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3 Our use of ‘universities’ includes Small Specialist Institutions, but is used instead of ‘HEIs’ to distinguish universities from HE offered in colleges.
learner’s journey at all stages of life. This includes Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, Nursery, Primary and Secondary schools as well as Industry and partners in Skills and Professional Development.

**The development of the plan**

In 2015 SFC conducted a wide ranging consultation across both the FE and HE sectors. SFC discussed enhanced partnership working with many stakeholders and analysed quantitative and qualitative evidence to ascertain what actions SFC, colleges and universities should be taking to tackle gender imbalances. This interim action plan is the result of these activities. SFC is grateful to all those who have taken the time to share their ideas, particularly members of the Gender Steering Group who oversaw the plan’s development.

In 2016, SFC will receive the findings from research commissioned to analyse approaches in place to tackle gender imbalances across schools, colleges and universities. This will play an important role in our final report in determining what approaches the sectors should be adopting. Within Outcome Agreements (OAs) for AY 2016-17, SFC has asked institutions to establish their own ambitions to tackle gender imbalances at a subject level for those subject areas with the most severe imbalances. These ambitions will also play an important role in informing the final report. We also continue to welcome feedback on this interim report. All this additional evidence and consultation will inform the final report to be published by the beginning of the next three year cycle of OAs, with the OA guidance updated in summer 2016 to reflect this.

Content of Interim Report, published February 2016:

- Addressing gender imbalances amongst applications and entrants in colleges and universities
- Addressing gender imbalance of all under-graduates in universities
- Actions to support addressing gender imbalances
- Success and Accountability

Additions for the final Report, to be published May 2016:

- Closing the gap between genders in retention and completion
- Summary of research and findings.
Name: Hannah

Qualification: M.Eng, Civil Engineering, Heriot Watt University, 2015

Route: Direct entry from School into a mixed cohort

Hannah applied directly to Heriot Watt University from School in 2010, after learning about engineering by chance and was originally intending to study a more gender-traditional subject such as law or psychology. 7% of the engineering workforce in the UK are female.

Hannah happened upon a promotional leaflet advertising Engineering and looked into it herself. Further confirmation of her interest in this field came from work experience that she independently organised. This opportunity allowed Hannah to see the broad world of engineering, form a more realistic view of an actual engineering office and career, and instilled a confidence in her that she had chosen the right career path. An opportunity, which she reflects, is not currently available to everyone.

Although one of only a handful of female students in her first year, she believes that self-confidence, stood her in good stead to pursue her studies in this field. Overall Hannah believes that the University did well in supporting her as a minority student; however this was largely down to a key female role model within the teaching staff. Hannah acknowledges the fact that many other young female students may be disinclined to pursue this path of study due to the pronounced gender imbalance alone and that this could be easily addressed to encourage more female talent into the industry.

Hannah graduated with a Masters in Engineering in 2015 and started working for Aecom as a graduate engineer; she is now working towards becoming a chartered engineer with the Institution of Civil Engineers.
SFC’s equality and diversity ambitions

In 2015, SFC developed a new strategic plan to take us to 2018. It describes our task to care for and develop the whole system of colleges and universities and their connections and contribution to Scotland’s educational, social, cultural and economic life. This Gender Action Plan is a vital part of our strategy for how SFC will support Scotland’s institutions to become more accessible and diverse.

At the heart of SFC’s strategic plan lie our equality and diversity ambitions. Last year we outlined how we would work with the sectors to achieve them in our mainstreaming report and equality outcomes (as required under the Scottish specific duties of the Equality Act 2010). This action plan relates to the first of these equality outcomes:

More even patterns – at both a sectoral and an institutional level - of participation, retention and success by different groups of learners, from protected characteristic groups and including those from areas of deprivation and care backgrounds where they interact.

Similarly to SFC, all HEIs and colleges have statutory duties to mainstream equality and diversity. SFC will continue to work with institutions to better meet their statutory duties and in doing so, provide a fairer educational system for all. In order to achieve this, SFC is supporting the Equality Challenge Unit to work with both sectors and in our OA guidance for AY 2016-17 SFC is encouraging institutions to embed information within their Outcome Agreement (OA) from their most recent Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming reports.

Actions to enhance equality and diversity

Actions to facilitate enhanced equality and diversity within Scottish institutions are outlined below and provide the foundation upon which the actions outlined later in the plan, focused specifically on tackling gender imbalances, will occur. Specifically, through these actions SFC aims to ensure:

- Enhanced links between tackling inequality, increasing diversity and wider quality work
- Equality and diversity is embedded within recruitment processes
- Equality and diversity is embedded into the curriculum
In 2016:

- SFC is currently reviewing its quality assurance and enhancement frameworks for both colleges and universities, with the introduction of a new quality framework for colleges in AY 2016-17 and a new Enhancement Led Institutional Review cycle in AY 2017-18. SFC will work with the sectors and our partners including Education Scotland and QAA Scotland to identify how:
  - To enhance the focus on equality and diversity in the HE and FE sectors through these frameworks
  - To enhance institutional understanding of the links between quality and equality
  - To align regulatory frameworks for quality, equality and Outcome Agreements. SFC has enhanced this in our expectations for AY 2016-17 and will develop this further for the next three year OA cycle.

- SFC will continue to fund the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to support the sector to mainstream equality and diversity, including further development of their toolkit for embedding equality in OAs for the next three year OA cycle.

- SFC will support and build on the ECU’s Attracting Diversity project and develop further guidance on embedding equality and diversity into recruitment processes where necessary (further detail later in the plan).

- In partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland and the Higher Education Academy, SFC will seek to identify what further steps are required to share the good practice generated by their projects – Liberation and Learning and Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum. With HEA’s focus on universities, SFC will identify what lessons can be shared with the college sector.
SFC’s gender ambitions

Why is gender equality important for Scotland?

At the heart of the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy are two key pillars: increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality, these issues while not mutually exclusive are interlinked. SFC believes that enhancing gender equality within Scotland’s colleges and universities can play a key part in achieving both.

Tackling inequality is fundamentally about fairness. This does not entail treating everyone the same but rather about recognising that specific action is required to tackle barriers preventing some individuals from the opportunity to both participate in all levels of education as well as enter and succeed in careers and workplaces in Scotland and beyond.

As Scotland’s economic competitiveness depends upon the strengths and talent of our people, SFC need to ensure that all students regardless of background or personal circumstances have the best chance of accessing the right educational pathway for them – one which leads them to employment. For our national competitiveness it is important that the workforce in our economic sectors and public services are not just being restricted to the talent of half the population. Furthermore, workplaces must reflect the communities that surround them so as to be creating the right products and services for society. Different perspectives on what these products and services should be, come from having a diverse range of people with different experiences involved in their creation. Diverse groups have been shown to be more creative and innovative leading to increased economic competitiveness as well as wider benefits for society more generally.

Why is gender equality important for individuals?

At the moment individual educational pathways are too frequently shaped by gender. Boys from deprived areas of Scotland are far less likely to attend university than those from affluent areas, impacting on their career options, future salaries and depriving them of other opportunities available to those who do go to university. In addition, many courses in both sectors are heavily gendered: that is, their students tend to be mainly men or mainly women. Such imbalances predominantly come about through the gender stereotypes that all too frequently determine subject choice. These courses are often those most closely related to particular occupations. They therefore have a significant effect on subsequent career options. While this is the main issue SFC wants to address, there are other significant issues of gender inequality in colleges and universities such as occupational segregation amongst staff.

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4 Our use of ‘universities’ includes Small Specialist Institutions, but is used instead of ‘HEIs’ to distinguish universities from HE offered in colleges.
at all levels and sexism on campus. These cannot be separated from the main focus of this work and SFC will address them in separate strategic guidance to be issued in 2017.

By seeking to tackle both the disadvantage caused by deprivation as well as addressing underrepresentation related to gender, we recognise that there could be tensions created in admissions procedures. We nevertheless believe that we need to discuss and tackle these tensions head on in order to make admission to Scottish institutions fairer and educational outcomes more equal, with no barrier to any subject, course or institution through an individual’s background or personal characteristics.

While there are many arguments for reducing gender imbalances in subject choices the principal reason we wish to address is that the course choices students make affect the career pathways that create ‘women’s jobs’ and ‘men’s jobs’, this affects wages and perpetuates a system where young people can’t make genuinely free choices on their futures. Changing these patterns cannot be done by colleges and universities alone – but gendered choices in college and university are such a big contributor to patterns in the workforce that they have to be part of the solution.

SFC recognises that gender is not binary and wishes to be inclusive of all learners. Nevertheless, examining the differences in participation and success for male and female students enables the sectors to identify where there are differences, barriers and potential discrimination. Alongside its work to address gender imbalances in colleges and universities, SFC intends to focus on improving the support the sectors provide to all students, irrespective of their gender identity. This will include addressing the particular challenges faced in colleges and universities by trans learners.
The key aims of the gender action plan

Through a co-ordinated effort focused on the ambition and action described in this plan, SFC believes the following can be achieved by 2020 and by 2030:

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SFC invites all colleges, universities and other bodies that share these ambitions to work with us for it is only through partnership across education that a significant impact can be made. The rest of this interim report sets out how SFC and its partners will achieve these ambitions, starting in the next section with the key milestones SFC expects along the way.
What annual milestones does SFC expect?

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<th>By the beginning of AY 2016-17</th>
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<td></td>
<td>• All institutions will know where their underrepresentation in terms of gender lies, have committed to tackling it and have outlined how they will do this in their OAs</td>
<td>• Building on institutional commitments, SFC will finalise its national ambition, including subject and regional ambitions.</td>
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<td>• Fund programmes of support through the Equality Challenge Unit for institutions to embed equality within widening participation, recruitment and admissions.</td>
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<td>• Share good practice, in particular around positive action, through the publication of research and the promotion of existing guidance.</td>
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<td>• Develop our publications to ensure progress can be measured and more in-depth analysis can inform practice, including the development of a measure for college OAs.</td>
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<td>• Identify the issues leading to gendered differences in retention and completion.</td>
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<td>• Conduct regional visits, aligned with outcome agreement discussions, to discuss how institutions are developing their plans and what progress is being made in partnership working with schools and others.</td>
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<td>• Refine our expectations on institutions within our OA Guidance.</td>
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<td>• Review our progress in implementing the plan and</td>
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| By the beginning of AY 2017-18 | • All institutions will have articulated their contribution to the national ambition and have begun implementing their plans to deliver it.  
• All institutions will publish their equality outcomes, mainstreaming reports and action plans in April, including their gender ambitions where appropriate.  
• All institutions will have prioritised tackling gender imbalances within their outreach and widening participation activities and will be working with schools to tackle gender imbalances.  
• All institutions will know where further development of their support structures is required for those students studying within courses in which they are in the minority gender and be developing the efficacy of the support structures available.  
• Negotiate on institutional contributions to the national ambition.  
• Share good practice and develop guidance where appropriate.  
• Fund programmes of support through the Equality Challenge Unit for institutions to embed equality within widening participation, recruitment and admissions  
• Refine our equality outcomes and mainstreaming report to enhance our ambitions in terms of gender by April 2017.  
• Refine our expectations for equality and diversity and gender within our OA Guidance.  
• Review our progress in implementing the plan and report to Council Board. |
| --- | --- |
| By the beginning of AY 2018-19 | • All institutions will have articulated their contribution to the national ambition and be delivering activities and policy to deliver it, supported by organisational policies and practices.  
• All institutions will be evaluating and developing their approach to tackling gender imbalances within their outreach and widening participation activities as well as evaluating and enhancing their approach to working with  
• Review our progress in implementing the plan and report to Council Board. |
schools to tackle gender imbalances.
- All institutions will have enhanced support structures in place for those students studying within courses in which they are in the minority gender.

| By the beginning of AY 2019-20 | • All institutions will have gender mainstreamed throughout institutional policy and practice.  
• All institutions will have established targeted approaches to tackling underrepresentation at a subject level.  
• All widening participation and outreach initiatives will be focussed on achieving enhanced admissions from all genders. | • In addition to the actions outlined for AY 2016-18 SFC will conduct the first major review of our progress in implementing the plan and report to our Council Board. SFC will review our strategy and amend the action plan and our ambitions if required. |
Addressing gender imbalances amongst applications and entrants

The underrepresentation of certain groups at university and college and in particular subjects is a result of a complex web of issues, many of which impact on young people from a very early age. In Annex A we have set out what some of our partners are doing to tackle the issues leading to gender imbalances at university and college.

However, Scotland cannot wait for all contextual factors to be addressed before positive action and proactive approaches are put in place by universities and colleges to increase the numbers of male and female students in subjects where they are underrepresented - this must instead happen in parallel.

SFC therefore will work with all colleges and universities to enhance the work they are already undertaking with schools to increase the aspiration and ambition of young people to continue into further and higher education and to increase the number of applications (and ultimately entrants) coming from underrepresented groups. We expect to see a step-change in the levels of positive activity in this area in order to affect the greatest change. The work must not only focus on individuals, but also on the admissions systems which individual students are required to navigate. SFC will continue to work with institutions to develop their admissions processes to take account of the different contexts within which young people start their education and to ensure all those with potential are recognised. In doing so by 2030:

- No subject will have an extreme gender imbalance (75: 25)
- The gap between male and female representation in undergraduate study is reduced to five percentage points

No subject to have an extreme gender imbalance (75: 25)

SFC is keen to tackle gender imbalances at a subject level involving both underrepresentation of male as well as female students.

Colleges

In colleges\(^5\), the overall gender balance of the student population is 49: 51 female. This remains the case at both HE and FE level. Some of the subject areas of focus for this plan however demonstrate a difference in the balance between the HE and FE

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\(^5\) Our subjects of focus for the college and university sectors have developed in different ways, with the former being driven by the Scottish Government’s overall ambitions for DYW whereas the university focus has been determined by analysis of SFC held data and consultation with the sector. We have however, where possible, tried to align the actions in this plan and believe that it will be important to adopt a national approach, rather than the two sectors operating in isolation from one another.
level of the courses. SFC will work with colleges to address these issues through focusing activity on:

- Increasing by five percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced ‘superclasses’ by 2021.

The graphs below show the extent of the gender imbalance in the ‘superclass’ subjects of focus in Scotland’s colleges looking at both HE and FE levels. They show the average of participation rates for three years of data: 2013-14, 12-13 and 11-12.

**Gender balance at all levels of study in the most gender imbalanced Superclasses**

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6 Brackets indicate number of students in the subject area.
HE/FE split for male dominated subjects in Colleges

![Bar chart showing HE/FE split for male dominated subjects in Colleges]

HE/FE split for female dominated subjects in Colleges

![Bar chart showing HE/FE split for female dominated subjects in Colleges]

It is important to note that while these ‘superclasses’ represent the most imbalanced classes, this does not show the entire scale of the problem.

The College sector has many more classes than those noted above where the gender imbalance is greater than the 75:25 sectoral aims for 2030, and while drawing attention to the worst 10 ‘superclasses’ helps to illustrate the extremity of the challenge in some subjects; it does not fully demonstrate the breadth of the problem across all subjects, levels of study and curriculum areas.

Another important example of this is the gender imbalance in some Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Frameworks, delivered in colleges, which can be even more extreme than illustrated in the above table. Colleges already work closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) on the delivery of MAs and as these can lead directly into FE or HE, tackling gender imbalance here is also critical to overall success. This is also true for Foundation Apprenticeships, where colleges are closely involved in
recruiting young people onto programmes. SDS’ plan to tackle gender imbalances in MAs can be found in their Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland. We will work closely with them and Colleges to deliver these plans.
Universities

SFC will work with universities to address subject imbalances in those subject areas which have the most severe gender imbalances or which are severe and have been increasing over the past three years. SFC will work with universities to address these issues through focusing activity on:

- Increasing the minority gender share in each of the most imbalanced subject areas within universities and finalising a national ambition for change in May 2016.

These subjects are outlined in the graphs below. Furthermore, the graphs demonstrate the severity of the issue for the past three years.

**Male dominated subjects in universities**

![Graph showing male dominated subjects in universities]

7 Brackets indicate number of students in the subject area.
Female dominated subjects in universities

While the data for these broad curriculum areas shows striking gender imbalances, it should be noted that within these subject areas, individual classes display significantly more pronounced as well as less pronounced gender gaps. One example of this is Architecture, Building and Planning where Architecture courses do not show severe gender imbalances, however Building courses do and require significant attention and action to address.

What SFC will do to achieve these aims?

- Prioritise gender in institutional Outcome Agreements
- Encourage positive action
- Outline full 3 year action plan
- Continue to share new and existing research
- Facilitate better partnership working
- Produce college work placement guidelines
- Encourage the use of Community Benefit Clauses within procurement to maximise and ring-fence opportunities
- Conduct regional visits to assess progress

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8 Brackets indicate number of students in the subject area.
In 2016:

- All institutions will set out how they are tackling gender imbalances at a subject level within their OA, including (where possible) targets for improvement.

The Youth Employment Strategy includes the aim of ensuring that there is diversity in the workforce and that there is gender balance in subject choices. SFC has already allocated £1.5million to colleges to support partnership working to implement DYW priorities, with tackling gender imbalances as significant priority. Encouraging young people to choose careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is also a key theme and this reflects the Government’s wider Economic Strategy, in particular addressing the underrepresentation of females choosing STEM subjects. Across both sectors, although there is currently more work to tackle female underrepresentation, than there is male underrepresentation we believe that it is important to address both. These different contexts suggest different approaches will be required to address male underrepresentation as opposed to female and whilst there will be overlap in places, our actions will be different.

There are a significant number of initiatives – many doing great work. But too often they are short term, dependent on relationships between key individuals, and inadequately supported within broader institutional structures. They can therefore be of varying or unknown impact with limited co-ordination between them. This can be seen in terms of initiatives for Engineering; Building and Construction; IT and Computer Sciences. Furthermore, despite the range of activity there has been insufficient progress in increasing the number of female students entering our colleges and universities to study these subjects and progressing into the sectors for employment. SFC will prioritise action to address the lack of female students in these subjects by:

- Working with institutions to prioritise gender equality and to build this into all planning and core activities
- Enhancing understanding and co-ordination of initiatives and approaches in place
- Enhancing evaluation of their impact
- Encouraging colleges and universities to work with schools to address barriers to subjects with gender imbalance
- Sharing good practice.

Other subjects, usually involving male underrepresentation, have received far less focus, and so there are far fewer initiatives and approaches in place. This is largely the case for care, nursing, teaching and social work. SFC will prioritise action to address the lack of male students in these subjects by:
- Working with partners who are involved in developing and implementing the training for these professions
- We will work with the University Of Stirling and the Robert Gordon University to build on the research we have commissioned them to undertake (detail given on page 31)
- Seeking to better understand how to tackle male underrepresentation
- Sharing good practice.

**Furthermore, SFC will:**

Outline the case for positive action; detail how it can be effectively implemented and encourage its use across the sectors.
- Outline in our full action plan a national ambition for the next three years.
- **Enhance the evidence base** underpinning approaches to tackling gender imbalances both for young and mature learners.
- **Enhance alignment and partnerships between education partners and other key stakeholders**.
- Develop guidance for colleges on effective work placements which take into account gendered differences in employment outcomes and further seek to understand these gendered differences as SFC develop the action plan.
- Encourage Colleges and Universities to use Community Benefits Clauses in all procured contracts valued at over £50k in line with Scottish Procurement Legislation to increase opportunities for underrepresented genders. This could include targeted training and recruitment and targeted investment opportunities. In addition SFC will encourage Colleges and Universities to work with other public sector partners to maximise opportunities such as these in external contracts, for the benefit of their institutions.

In 2017, SFC will conduct regional visits, aligned with outcome agreement discussions, to discuss how institutions are developing their plans and what progress is being made. This will inform the steps SFC take to support the plan.
Name: Kevin

Qualification: HNC Early Years Education, Edinburgh College, 2005

Route: Men in Childcare 16 week fast track entry course, 9 month HNC full time mixed cohort course

Kevin has worked as an Early Years Officer at Gilmerton Children and Family Centre in Edinburgh, since completing his HNC in Early Years Education in 2005. On average 4% of the workforce in Scottish nurseries are male.

Kevin had worked in various manual roles including as a window cleaner, taxi driver and tractor driver before reaching a crossroads in his life at age 37. As a proud father of 2 girls approaching secondary school age he had never considered childcare as a career until he saw an advert in the Local press for ‘Men in Childcare’ (MiC).

The MiC course which he joined at Edinburgh College had roughly 20 participants whose average age was mid-30’s. Kevin felt that at this introductory stage to a career path which was extremely unusual for a man, being part of a group of men with similar interests reduced peer pressure and that there was no perceived judgement from others, which he felt may not have been the case otherwise.

On his first day on the HNC course, he was the first student to arrive and clearly recalls nervously waiting for his fellow classmates to arrive and introduce themselves. One after another, more female students came into the classroom and he hoped that another male student would arrive. This feeling of alienation and isolation he believes would be enough to put many less confident men of all ages off. He was one of only 5 men in a class of approx. 20 – as 2 dropped out, this quickly reduced to 3. Nonetheless he completed his HNC and 10 years later he has never looked back.

He finds his new career rewarding and enjoyable and he feels valued as a colleague. He strongly believes that more men – of all ages – have a lot to contribute to studying and working in this field with more single-sex entry routes such as MiC.
The gap between male and female representation in undergraduate study is reduced to five percentage points

Male students are underrepresented in undergraduate study across Scottish universities.

Gender balance across Scottish universities

![Graph showing gender balance across Scottish universities from 2009/10 to 2013/14]

Whilst the gap between male and female participation over the past five years has closed slightly from 16% to 13.8%, it has been growing since the early 1990s and is exaggerated for young men from the most deprived areas of Scotland. The figures from these most deprived areas show that 8.5% fewer young male students participate in HE, than from the least deprived areas.10

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9 The graph uses gender focused data aligned with Outcome Agreement Measure 4.
10 This imbalance refers to male students who are under 21 years of age and from the 10% most deprived areas of Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). More information on SIMD is available here: [http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD)
Male representation in universities by quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (undergraduate entrants)

We recognise that to address male underrepresentation could create displacement of some potential female students. In an effort to address imbalances at a subject, institution and national level we aim to ensure a holistic approach considering both male and female underrepresentation. This is not about creating exactly equal balances at all levels but about recognising that specific action is required to tackle barriers preventing some individuals from the opportunity to both participate in education as well as enter and succeed in careers and workplaces in Scotland and beyond. With a focus on those who are from deprived backgrounds we hope to concentrate action in a way that is fairest in prioritising those least likely to enter university. We will work closely with universities to understand the impact of this approach.

To begin to address the underrepresentation of male students, SFC will therefore focus our efforts on those from Scotland’s most deprived backgrounds. Together with the sectors’ work to address the underrepresentation of male students in certain subject areas, SFC aims to:

- Close the gap between male and female representation in undergraduate study to 5% by 2030.

SFC will build on previous guidance developed by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions and the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and outputs from the ECU’s
current project ‘Attracting Diversity’ as well the (upcoming at time of writing) report from the Commission on Widening Access to:

- Embed equality within recruitment and admissions;
- Embed gender within widening participation policy and practice;
- Focus SFC funded initiatives on tackling the gender imbalance
- Focus on enhancing male representation within specific subject areas.

What SFC will do to achieve these aims?

- OAs to specify actions to increase male representation
- Enhance recruitment and admissions equality
- Develop a national articulation strategy
- Enable more young men to benefit from the widening participation opportunities
- Continue to gather research
- Monitor and respond to anticipated improvements in male representation

In 2016:

- All universities with a gender imbalance will set out in their OA for 2016-17 how they will tackle the underrepresentation, including through their widening participation activities.
- SFC will share guidance on how institutions can embed equality in recruitment and admissions, identify what further development of the guidance is required.
- SFC will develop a national articulation strategy, in which SFC will look to enhance the role articulation plays in enhancing male underrepresentation, particularly the role for mature male students.
- SFC will work with all our funded widening participation initiatives to enable more young men to benefit from the opportunities they provide.
- SFC will enhance the evidence base and share findings to enhance understanding of why this gender imbalance exists and how it can best be tackled.

In 2017:

- All universities, with an underrepresentation of male students, will set out in their OAs how they will tackle the underrepresentation of male students.
- SFC will develop any further guidance required on how institutions can embed equality in recruitment and admissions.
• Building on these institutional ambitions and regional visits (aligned with Outcome Agreement discussions), SFC will determine what next steps are required to address underrepresentation of male students. SFC will report on our next steps in our annual update to the Council Board.
Actions to support addressing gender imbalances

Achieving our ambitions to tackle subject imbalances and male underrepresentation will require:

- An enhanced evidence base.
- Tackling gender stereotypes.
- Enhanced partnership working.

This section of the action plan outlines the key actions SFC will undertake in partnership to address these three areas.

An enhanced evidence base

A key message SFC received through consultation in the development of the action plan was the need to enhance the evidence for ‘what works’. What this means in practice will vary depending on whether the intervention is focused on female or male underrepresentation. Our actions will be focused on enhancing:

- Sharing of good practice;
- Evaluation of approaches to tackling gender imbalances;
- Understanding and awareness of initiatives and approaches in place.

Over AY 2014-2015 SFC has invested in five projects specifically focused on evaluating different approaches to tackling gender imbalances at a subject level. These are:

- Analysis of college and university approaches to tackling gender imbalances at a subject level across Scotland by the Higher Education Academy
- Analysis of school activity and pupil numbers relating to gender imbalance by Frontline
- Tackling gender imbalance – a pilot project at the Robert Gordon University
- So you want to be in the Professions? – a pilot project at the University of Stirling
- ECU’s pilot of Attracting Diversity, in which four universities looked at gender as part of a review of equality in student recruitment.

Our primary means to enhance the evidence base will be sharing and developing the learning which emerges from the research above. Furthermore, SFC will include a gender analysis section in *Learning for All*\(^{11}\) and will ensure gender is one of the

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\(^{11}\) This includes any replacement for *Learning for All* following the publication of the report from the Commission on Widening Access.
lenses SFC use to consider the progress and impact of widening access through the Triennial Review process.

SFC also believe it is important that policy and practice increasingly recognise and take into account that how an individual experiences their gender is shaped by several different factors, such as disability and race. These different factors form and inform one another and cannot be understood in isolation – for example, an individual’s experience as black cannot be separated from their experience as a woman, but rather they must be understood and supported as a black woman.

Whilst SFC has for the purposes of this action plan specified gender as a priority area of focus, SFC will endeavour to develop understanding of how these different factors interact with one another to impact on any one person’s experiences and educational outcomes. Such interaction is often referred to as intersectionality and is expanded on by ECU here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What SFC will do to achieve these aims?</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Facilitate better sharing of best practice</td>
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<td>• Improve monitoring of equality data</td>
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<td>• Share new and existing research on best practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support outcome from Commission on Widening Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Enhance monitoring of progress through Learning for All and inaugural triennial review</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide a trend report for each region/institution each year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve qualitative understanding of minority and intersectional issues</td>
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**In 2016:**

- Develop appropriate models for sharing practice within and between the sectors linking with existing models where possible.
- Develop our own monitoring systems and work with all institutions to enhance appropriate monitoring of all protected characteristics, with a focus on gender identity and sex.
- Publish research on the approaches in place to tackle gender imbalances in schools, colleges and universities, including those identified within our consultation on this plan and then SFC will:
  - Identify and implement key actions for SFC, colleges and universities arising from the recommendations.
• Work in partnership with Government, Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and other partners to implement recommendations arising for schools.
• Share good practice highlighted by the research.
• Work with organisations including the University of Stirling, the Robert Gordon University, National Union of Students Scotland, Young Scot and Scottish Youth Parliament to identify the challenges for male students in entering and staying in courses where there are few male peers.
• Support outcome of the Commission on Widening Access to be published in Spring 2016 when SFC will identify and implement any key actions for SFC, colleges and universities arising from the recommendations in relation to gender.
• Publish *Learning for All* \(^\text{12}\) to include a section on gender from 2016 onwards. This will include intake by subject, consideration of gender by protected characteristics and gender retention figures by subject. Gender, specifically its intersection with socioeconomic disadvantage, will be the priority theme for *Learning for All* 2016 practitioner and management events.
• Continue to support the ECU to enhance the sectors’ evidence base through the provision of statistical publications, guidance and examples of practice. In 2016 this will include:
  o Developing a range of guidance focused on adopting an intersectional approach, using previous projects as a basis. SFC will seek to understand if further guidance is required and develop it in 2017 if necessary.
  o Seeking to further align SFC and ECU statistical publications.
• Publish our inaugural triennial review building on the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access in which SFC will provide
  o An assessment of progress in widening access from a gender perspective and where possible considering the intersection between gender and socioeconomic disadvantage as well other protected characteristics
  o Evidence of good practice in considering the intersection between gender and socioeconomic disadvantage as well other protected characteristics
  o An assessment of what is required to tackle gendered outcomes.
• Identify any learning which can be taken from increasing the number of women studying medicine in the UK; studying science, engineering and construction in the Nordic countries and any other good practice in terms of overall male underrepresentation at university and publish our findings,

\(^{12}\) This includes any replacement for *Learning for All* following the publication of the report from the Commission on Widening Access.
mindful of the very different cultural and historical context within which such initiatives may be positioned.

- Through our OA discussions, SFC will provide a trend report for each region/institution each year up to 2020 providing data and evidence on the gender imbalances.
- Consult with relevant ethnicity and disability representatives to improve our qualitative understanding of the issues faced by minority groups and how they differ by gender to inform the further development of actions to support an intersectional approach.

**By 2017**

SFC aim to have a better shared understanding across institutions as to what approaches are having an impact. Together with the regional visits SFC will conduct, aligned with Outcome Agreement discussions, SFC will determine what next steps are required to enhance the evidence base and share the knowledge being learnt. SFC will report on our next steps in our annual update to the Council Board.
Tackling gender stereotypes

What SFC will do to achieve these aims?

- Prioritise tackling gender stereotypes in college and university outreach work with schools
- Identify improvements in teacher and early years training to tackle gender stereotyping
- Work with GTC to prioritise gender equality as part of CPD
- Expand the work of colleges and universities to inform and support teachers
- Increase the number of men entering the childcare and teaching professions

Much of the work to achieve the outcomes above will have to impact on the context within which young people make their subject choices in secondary school. SFC believe colleges and universities can play a key role in shaping this context and assisting to shift the perceptions that lead to gender imbalances at a subject level within their own institutions. Whilst this whole action plan is effectively striving to tackle gender stereotypes and so there are actions throughout the document which will serve to do this, SFC is nevertheless highlighting the following actions as they will play a particular role in tackling the stereotype underpinning many imbalances such as women are nurturing whilst men are not or that men are more inclined to a career in engineering. These can be messages that children receive on entering childcare and we believe tackling them should be a priority across all stages of the education system – some of our partners’ actions are outlined in Annex A.

In 2016:

- Work with all colleges, universities and Education Scotland to prioritise tackling gender stereotypes in their work with schools through outreach and activities to widen access.
- Work with the Government and universities to identify how best to prepare teachers through their initial teacher training to tackle gender stereotyping within the school classroom.
- Work with colleges to tackle gender stereotypes through their training of early years care practitioners.
- Work with the General Teaching Council to identify how to ensure tackling gender stereotypes is prioritised within teacher CPD and understanding developed for College lecturers.
- Build on initiatives such as the Russell Group’s Fair Access Project and the Sutton Trust’s Teachers Together initiative to expand the work of colleges and universities to inform and support teachers to tackle gender stereotypes.
• Work to increase the number of men entering childcare. Aligned with the Scottish Government Response to an Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce, this will focus on working in partnership with the Government and Colleges to:
  o Introduce workforce planning for childcare courses in Colleges.
  o Introduce positive action in recruitment across all college childcare course providers to enhance the number of male applicants.

In 2017:

• SFC will conduct regional visits, aligned with outcome agreement discussions, to discuss how institutions are developing their plans and what progress is being made. This will inform the steps SFC take to support the plan. SFC will report on our next steps in our annual update to the Council Board.
• SFC will work with partners to identify how to increase the number of male teachers in teaching.
Enhanced partnership working

SFC acknowledges the limited role that further and higher education have in the decision making involved in choosing which area of study and subsequent career path to pursue in the learner’s journey. With ongoing work to address gender inequality and stereotyping in Schools through Education Scotland and formal Careers Advice and Guidance through Skills Development Scotland, there has never been a better time to deliver real change in colleges and universities but the Gender Action Plan will only be effective if partnership work is pro-active and integral with this.

Enhancing partnership among all educational partners and stakeholders is an issue emphasised throughout this plan so far. This section focuses on the significant work to tackle gender imbalances which will be required across education providers and their partners to shift gender imbalances. This alignment will need to occur at a national, regional and institutional level.

SFC has outlined some of the work our partners are undertaking to tackle gender imbalances and stereotypes in Annex A. SFC will annually update this annex to ensure universities and colleges are aware of the work schools, early year practitioners and employers are undertaking to tackle gender imbalances, in order that they can best align their work with it.

SFC does nevertheless believe that there is more that universities and colleges can do to enhance the work they already undertake.
The following sets out the specific action SFC will undertake to enhance alignment between the actions of our institutions and those of the educational partners they recruit from and the workplaces their students enter following their studies. These actions will be focused on:

- Representing colleges and universities in national policy discussions concerning gender imbalances.
- Enhancing the role of colleges and universities in working with schools.
- Encouraging more local and national employers to work in closer partnership with colleges and universities.
- Facilitating engagement with professional representative bodies to develop sector specific approaches to tackling imbalances.

In 2016, at a national level, SFC will work with many national and local partners, including:

- Scottish Government: to ensure efforts to tackle gender imbalances are prioritised throughout education and into employment and to identify what further action, aligned with, but in addition to activity to support DYW, is required to ensure this.

- Colleges Development Network: to identify and put in place the support required for Colleges to effectively tackle gender imbalances.

- Equality Challenge Unit:
  - To fund ECU to support both sectors to enhance equality and diversity through a range of projects, statistical publications and guidance and to develop further guidance building on their work where necessary.
  - ECU to update their guidance on support for trans students and SFC will seek to enhance its take up across both sectors.

- Education Scotland:
  - To address gender imbalance in subject choices, particularly in STEM, by supporting closer collaboration with schools, colleges and universities to challenge gender perceptions in career choices.
  - To collaborate on reviews and research on gender inequalities and share good practice.

- NUS Scotland: to support the aims of their Liberation and Learning project in our interactions with our partners and as SFC develop policy to embed equality and diversity within the curriculum.
• Skills Development Scotland:
  o To enhance the focus on tackling gender imbalances identified within Sectoral Skills Investment Plans as they are revised and seek to identify gender balance issues in developing the Regional Skills Assessments.
  o To implement the SDS Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland.
  o To enhance vocational choices as pathways to MAs (and other destinations) in senior school phase through working with schools and colleges to seek to address gender perceptions of differing occupations and working to review the impact and share good practice.
  o To promote positive action to colleges to tackle the gender imbalance in Foundation Apprenticeships.

At a regional level, SFC will work with institutions:
• To ensure widening access activities are working sufficiently early in Secondary school to impact on subject choice. SFC will outline the course of action SFC will take to address this issue within the triennial review.
• To develop innovative, evidenced outreach activities to tackle gender imbalances, aligning with regional partners
• To encourage, where appropriate, institutions to develop regional Gender Action Plans with their partners.
• To encourage greater consideration of gender equality within activities involving employers.

At an institutional level, SFC will work with institutions:
• To ensure policies and practices to tackle gender imbalances are embedded within strategic plans and supported by institutional structures;
• To engage their Students’ Associations in the development of their OA in order to support their ambitions and activities to tackle gender imbalances. For the College sector this is consistent with the Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students’ Associations in Scotland.

In 2017, SFC will conduct regional visits to discuss how institutions and employers are developing their plans and what progress is being made. This will inform the steps SFC take to support the plan. SFC will report on our next steps in our annual update to the Council Board.
Success and accountability

The milestones SFC hopes to achieve are outlined earlier in the document. The signal that we are successful will be that we are beginning to make progress on reducing the gender imbalances in the most extreme subjects and improving the gender balance entry to university. We will also be able to gauge early progress through the extent to which colleges and universities are beginning to see addressing gender disparities as a key strand of their activities and building activities to address imbalances into their recruitment, their widening access work and the way they design and measure the success of courses. We often hear that little can be done about gender imbalances because they are based on student choice: developing recognition that these choices operate within a context and that – with joined up work across the education sectors – we can change that context will be one of the ways we know we are being successful.

Oversight of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan will sit with the Board of the Scottish Funding Council who will be accountable to the DYW Programme Board. The SFC executive will provide an annual review of progress to the Board, aligned with the OA reporting cycle, this will be publically available.

The main aim of this action plan is to shift the gender imbalances which are apparent at a subject level. SFC will set out how we will monitor changes in these imbalances through Learning for All\textsuperscript{13} and the Triennial Review. Our focus in the first three years is in creating a significant change in the focus given to addressing gender imbalances and ensuring all practices and processes are fully embedded to secure these changes.

SFC will establish a steering group of interested parties to advise us on how to reach our aims as well as considering progress. Membership of the group will build on the membership of the Steering Group which oversaw the development of this plan (see Annex B for members).

\textsuperscript{13}This includes any replacement for Learning for All following the publication of the report from the Commission on Widening Access.
Next Steps – Final Report

SFC will publish our final report in May 2016. At this stage in our analysis we suggest our actions beyond those outlined above will also cover the issue of the gender gap in retention and completion.

Closing the gap between genders in retention and completion

The gap between male and female students in terms of retention at university has been narrowing over the last five years, but it still remains at just over 2%. This gap persists for those from the most deprived areas of Scotland and in combination with the overall lower retention rate for those from the most deprived areas of Scotland, this sees male students from the most deprived areas of Scotland with a retention rate just under 6% lower than female students from the least deprived areas.

In Colleges the picture is more mixed. Completion rates on FE and HE programmes for males and females are improving and withdrawal rates are decreasing. Male students have been between 2-3% more likely to successfully complete their FE programmes than female students for the past five years, whereas for HE programmes, whilst the gap has been closing (from 8% in 2009-10) in AY 2013-14 female students were still 5% more likely to complete successfully.

SFC aim to close these gaps so that there will be no difference in retention and completion between genders.

To do this, SFC must firstly identify the issues leading to gendered differences in retention and completion. This will include findings from the recent review of Extended Learning Support (ELS) in Colleges, which has indicated that females are much more likely to seek support. This has led to questions surrounding student support (both financial and supportive) in both sectors. More research and evidence is required before SFC can outline any conclusions and actions on retention and completion and the implications for student support at this stage, but SFC will seek to do so early in 2016.
Annex A: Partnership across Scotland and work in schools

Tackling gender imbalances will require a collaborative effort across all national and local education partners. There are a range of approaches in Scotland’s colleges and universities already underway to address gender imbalances. Our final report will be informed by the findings of the research we have commissioned to analyse these approaches and will give more details of the work colleges and universities are already involved in, as well as indicating how this work can be enhanced.

Beyond colleges and universities, local authorities and schools, clearly have a key role to play in tackling gender stereotypes, therefore in developing this plan we have worked alongside Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland to ensure our actions, focused on colleges and universities, complement their actions focused on schools as well as Modern Apprenticeships. As part of the recommendations of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Youth Employment Strategy our national partners are also working to address inequalities affecting subject choice and career choices, particularly in STEM occupations. The implementation of the recommendations of the Youth Employment Strategy builds on the foundations already in place as part of Curriculum for Excellence.

The development of the Scottish Funding Council’s Gender Action Plan is one of the 39 recommendations contained in the Youth Employment Strategy and is aligned with a variety of activities which are being undertaken by partners from across Scotland. An overview of this work as well as other gender equality focused work is given below:

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<th>Scottish Government</th>
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<td><strong>Curriculum for Excellence</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The National Profile Raising Group</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gender Equality a toolkit for education staff</strong></td>
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range of practical steps that can be taken to promote gender equality in Scottish schools.

**Skills Development Scotland (SDS)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland</th>
<th>As part of DYW, SDS was tasked with developing an action plan to address gender disparities within Modern Apprenticeships (MAs). Their Equalities Action Plan for MAs in Scotland outlines how they will tackle underrepresentation within MAs by gender, ethnicity, disability and for those individuals who have experience of care.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Equality Challenge fund</th>
<th>Equality Challenge fund launched for projects aimed at widening access to Modern Apprenticeships. 13 Small scale project contracts were awarded in Aug 2015. The following are specifically targeting gender</th>
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**Ayrshire College:**

**Target group: young females:**

**This project addresses gender segregation in Engineering and ICT MA Frameworks.** The College looks to improve female engagement in these sectors, initially targeting an increase in MA starts from 4% to 8% for June 2016. Activity to sustain and build engagement, raise aspirations and debunk misconceptions regarding MAs will be supported by a media campaign. A positive and proactive campaign is intended, with activity planned to cover a 5-year period, working towards a sustained improvement in gender bias in the sectors. Partners will include East Ayrshire Council, UTC Aerospace and Spirit Aerosystems, Woodward Aerospace, Education Departments of Ayrshire Local Authorities and Schools. Geography; Ayrshire area.

**Forth Valley College:**

**Target groups: Care Leavers and Gender representation within MA Frameworks in Construction and Engineering.** The college has achieved the Buttle Award which recognises institutions that have a full commitment to and appropriate resources to supporting Looked After and Accommodated/Care Leavers (LAYP/CL). An enhanced level of support will be provided to the participants that are recruited to this project. Work will be through Partnership Matters a group consisting of schools, social work, Opportunities for All co-ordinators, educational psychologists, NHS, JC+. Geography; Forth Valley area.

**Careers Information Advice and SDS delivers Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) within all Local Authority secondary schools in Scotland. In addition to the school offer, post-school CIAG services are**
Guidance delivered for those currently making their transition from school to employment, education or training and those who are unemployed, via SDS public access centres.

SDS provides an all age universal Career IAG with more and better support for those who need it most. Their face to face service focuses on those in greatest need of support and they work with schools and other partners to identify those who need help most. Through their coaching approach they spend more time with these individuals to develop their Career Management Skills (CMS). Through developing CMS they aim to drive up enthusiasm and preparedness of school leavers to fulfil their individual potential and consider all the opportunities and choices available to them. Working with partners they aim to enable school leavers to enter post school learning and work based learning pathways and make successful transitions into the world of work.

Challenging attitudes towards gender stereotypes has been a key focus for their CIAG and CMS work throughout 2014-15, and will continue to be going forward. SDS will also expand the CIAG service to offer direct support to schools from P7/S1 transition.

In 2015-16 as well as updating existing S4-S6 engagement activities, SDS extended the school service offer in response to DYW with a focus on the development of career management skills at the earlier stages of P7/S1 transition through to S3. In particular, this includes group work engagements with pupils planning for and making subject choices and within the 35 early demonstrator schools includes the offer of an individual career guidance engagement at S2/3 for those making subject choices within that year. The early demonstrator activity forms a key contribution to the delivery of the Career Education Standards.

Improving Gender Balance Scotland is a partnership between SDS, the Institute of Physics, and Education Scotland. It aims to challenge the misconception that some school subjects are ‘just for girls’ or ‘just for boys’.

Being delivered in six school clusters in five regions, the project will empower pupils, teachers, parents, and local authorities to address the complex issues that can lead to stereotyping, and support them to challenge traditional career choices.

Early years and primary school work for Improving Gender Balance Scotland project.
Balance Scotland looks at preventing early bias in career choices; when it is known most young people first form ideas for their future career. In the senior phase, a particular focus will be on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to encourage a more diverse subject selection choice, and prepare young people for the world of work.

**Careerwise**

Working in partnership with SDS, Equate Scotland are supporting employers and training providers in the engineering and construction sectors, to encourage them to take positive action to attract more female apprentices. This project is funded until March 2016 and is being piloted in Fife and Glasgow.

**Regional Pipeline Partnership Model**

SDS is supporting the development of regionally co-ordinated school interventions to effect long term cultural change, with a particular focus on challenging gender stereotypes in STEM subject areas through the Improving Gender Balance (IGB) Scotland Project; aligned to the Education Scotland 5 test areas for STEM framework delivery as well as in West Lothian. The aim is to develop a sustainable regional pipeline model of initiatives/support to address gender segregation, tapping into the funds, support and experts of regional partners in a co-ordinated approach.

Working on the pipeline activity, which starts in early years, must be sustained and SDS are engaging with Education Scotland and those organisations responsible, for example, for STEM related inputs for girls to ensure that this activity is embedded. This activity will also align with SDS’ work with local partnerships working on Foundation Apprenticeship pathfinders. As they develop, this activity will also include the regional DYW groups to ensure that the co-ordination of local employer engagement, to support work-based learning pathways, has equality of access at its heart.

**Education Scotland**

**Reviews and Inspection**

Education Scotland is the national body in Scotland for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching. This includes reviewing the quality of provision in schools and colleges.

The following were all published in 2015 by Education Scotland.

**Revised career education standards**

The standard recognises the journeys children and young people make as they learn about the world of work from the early years to the senior phase. It sets out what children and young people will learn and what parents/careers, teachers/practitioners, employers and Skills Development Scotland will do to support
**Work placements standard**
The standard recognises the rich learning that a young person can experience when they use and develop their skills in a work environment. It recognises that a work placement should help a young person to make informed career choices. The standard sets out expectations for the young person, employer, school and local authority and parent/carer before, during and after work placements.

**School-employer partnership guidance**
This guidance for schools, authorities, Developing Young Workforce Regional Groups and employers highlights the mutual benefits of school/employer partnerships. It provides information on the benefits and value of establishing collaborative partnerships which can enrich learning across the curriculum and help young people to improve their understanding and readiness for employment.

**Looking at Gender balance in STEM**
This briefing summarises research on the gender differences in participation and attainment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, and explores some of the factors that may lead to these differences. The main focus for research selection was large scale, systematic or meta-analytical reviews and empirical research studies.

**Local Authorities**
Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring appropriate standards in schools, including a responsibility for quality assurance in learning and teaching. They are working to secure improvement across school provision and are critical in ensuring gender stereotypes are tackled early in education.

**Developing the Young Workforce Regional Groups**
The Developing Young Workforce Regional Groups have been established to provide leadership and a single point of contact and support to facilitate engagement between employers and education. The Groups will be chaired by an employer and will have a membership of Authorities, Skills Development Scotland, Colleges and other local employers. By March 2016 a total of 21 Regional Groups should be established.

**Other – this gives a small selection of some of the initiatives in place. Through the research SFC has commissioned and further consultation, we will add to this list in the final report.**

**Gender imbalance in Early Learning and Childcare**
A group of organisations is exploring approaches to tackling gender stereotyping and gender equality in early learning and childcare settings. The group includes NHS Health Improvement,
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<th><strong>Respect Me, LGBT Youth Scotland, Men in Childcare, Fathers Network Scotland, Zero Tolerance, Baltic Street Adventure Play and Education Scotland.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Engineer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Design Engineer Construct!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Men in Childcare Scotland</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex B: Steering Group representatives

Jackie Galbraith  Colleges Scotland nomination (Ayrshire College)
Emily Beever  NUS Scotland
Vonnie Sandlan  NUS Scotland
Anne Ashton  Scottish Government
Julie Martin  Scottish Government
Donald Lumsden  Skills Development Scotland
Karen Murray  Skills Development Scotland
Nicola Swan  Skills Development Scotland
Gillian Hogg  Universities Scotland nomination (Heriot-Watt University)
Simon Clark  Universities Scotland nomination (University of Edinburgh)

Scottish Funding Council representatives:

Rachel Adamson  Senior Policy and Analysis Officer
Fiona Burns  Assistant Director, Access Policy Lead
John Kemp  Director, Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements (Chair, Steering Group)
Louise Lauchlan  Policy and Analysis Officer
Cathy Mitchell  Policy and Analysis Officer
Alison Malcolm  Policy and Analysis Officer