



SFC Announcement

Men in Early Years Challenge Fund

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Summary: To announce the Men in Early Years Challenge Fund

FAO: Principals of Scotland's colleges

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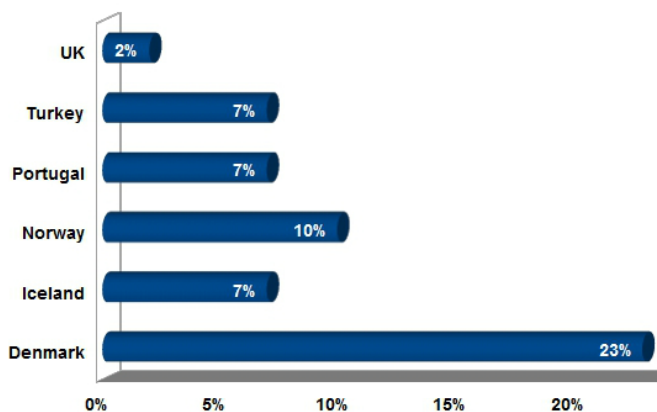
Men in Early Years Challenge Fund: Increasing diversity in ELC college courses

Background

1. Men have historically been under-represented in Early Years settings; in 2014 European Commission (EC) figures showed that approximately 2% of nursery staff in the UK were male. (Fig 1.1). However this is not the case across the rest of Europe. The importance of better diversity and representation in caring roles is widely recognised as vital to allow all children to have positive male role models and to demonstrate to children from a young age that caring is not exclusively a female role.

Fig 1.1 Proportion of men employed in childcare sector in 2013

(European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014)



2. In addition, in order to meet the challenging workforce planning targets set by the Scottish Government to support the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Scotland from 2020, colleges and employers are required to recruit from a far greater and more diverse pool of potential talent in order to fulfil staffing needs.
3. In Scotland the organisation [Men in Childcare](#) has operated for several years, currently providing single-sex access courses in five colleges. This Challenge Fund is intended to work alongside the existing *Men in Childcare* cohort, ensuring that those students who are enrolled on *Men in Childcare* entry level courses are fully engaged and supported to continue their studies; successfully completing SSSC registered ELC courses. Bids are invited from the college sector to develop and implement innovative and flexible new approaches to attract and recruit greater numbers of male students into SSSC registered Early Learning and Childcare qualifications, and increase the number of those who successfully achieve those qualifications.

Invitation to bid

4. In line with recommendations published in the SFC's [Gender Action Plan](#), the Scottish Government's workforce planning paper [A Blueprint For 2020: The Expansion Of Early Learning And Childcare In Scotland 2017/18](#) and as highlighted in the [Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan](#), gender imbalance in the Early Learning and Childcare workforce is an issue which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Through their vital role in the Scottish Government's workforce planning, Scotland's colleges are uniquely positioned to have a positive impact on redressing the gender imbalance in ELC.
5. Bids are sought from individual colleges, or a consortium of colleges, to develop new ways to attract and retain men to successfully complete SSSC registered ELC courses. This should include supporting current *Men in Childcare* students, as well as attracting and retaining additional students.
6. We anticipate awarding two pilot project grants, for awards of circa £20,000-£25,000 each, commencing in January 2019 for a period of 12 months. Each project approach should be transferable to any college region, including those in remote and rural areas and should achieve the following outcomes:
 1. An increase in male students applying for and successfully completing SSSC registered ELC qualifications: NC Early Education and Childcare and HNC Childhood Practice.
 2. Support male students who are already participating in *Men in Childcare* courses to successfully complete SSSC registered ELC qualifications: NC Early Education and Childcare and HNC Childhood Practice as soon as possible.
 3. Share best practice on an ongoing basis throughout the project duration, in partnership with the CDN ELC network and at a dissemination event to be held in June 2019.
 4. Enhance working relationships with key stakeholders in the region including Local Authority, Job Centre Plus and private/third sector ELC employers.
 5. Develop a toolkit incorporating the key activities, methodologies and outcomes utilised in the pilot which can be cascaded and disseminated across the sector.
 6. Provide quarterly update reports, the production of an end of year overview and evaluation of the project's performance against targets.
7. In addition, successful bids will include the following criteria:
 - Project methodologies should be transferable to any college region, including those in remote and rural areas.
 - Activity should be innovative and seek new, more flexible ways to address this challenge.
 - Provide a clear structure and measures of success.

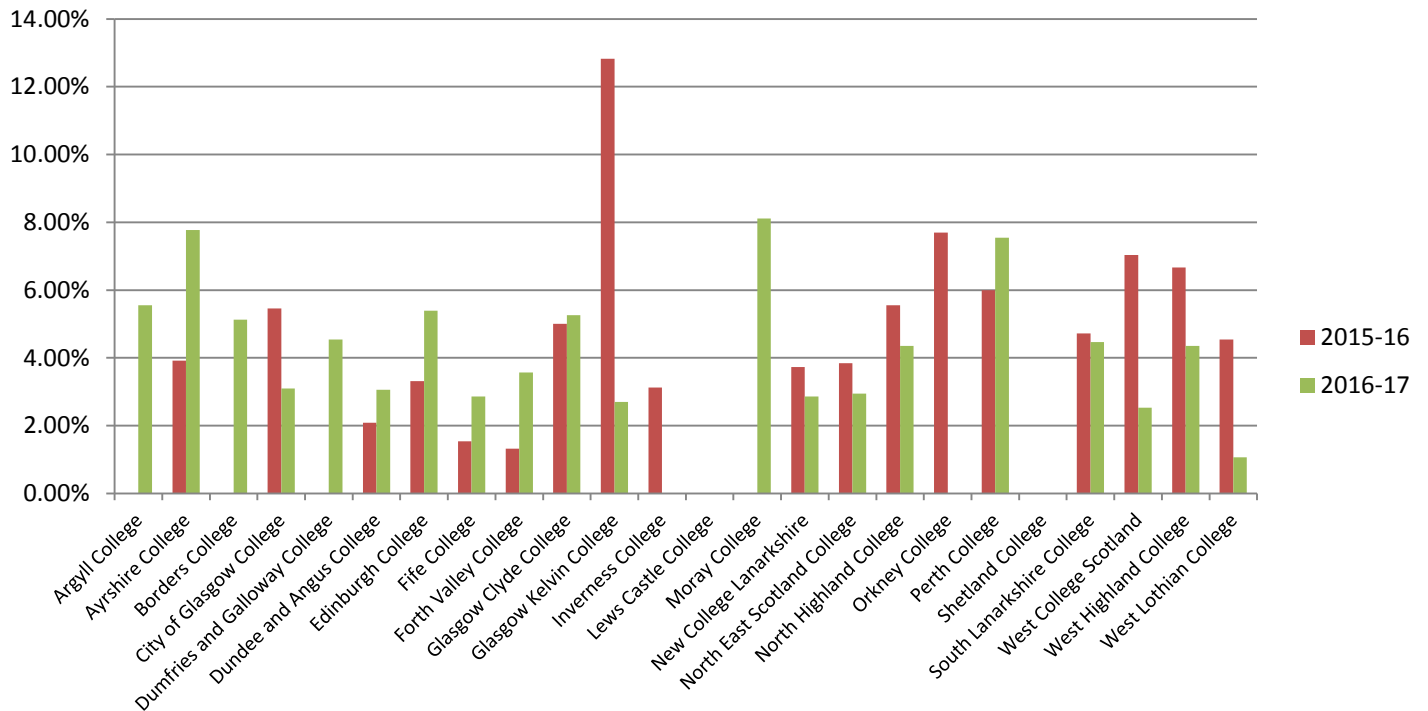
- Be evidence led and based on research, following a theory of change model where activities have a rationale for why they are likely to deliver the long term outcome identified.
- Senior management support will be vital to test out innovative and bold initiatives, e.g. stronger positive action initiatives.

Bidding process and details

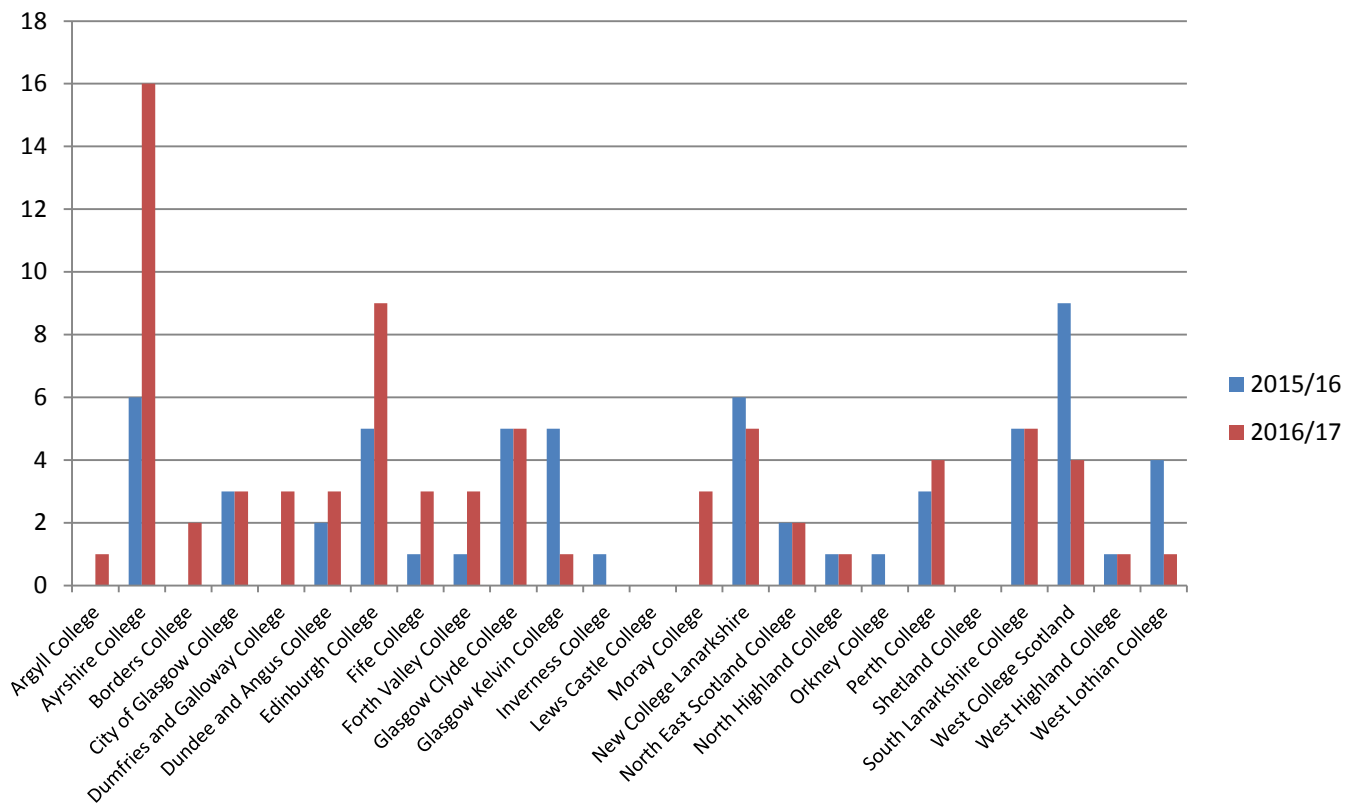
8. Bids should entail no more than three sides of A4 (1,500 words) for awards of circa £20,000-£25,000 to support activity commencing at the beginning of January 2019. Bids should clearly and fully demonstrate how funds will be spent, how they will achieve each of the above outcomes and will be scored on these criteria.
9. Bids should be submitted by email to ELC@sfc.ac.uk by 12noon, Friday 9 November 2018. For further information please contact [Sharon Drysdale](#) or [Alison Malcolm](#). Announcements on successful bids will be made on 30 November 2018.

Appendix1

Proportion of total cohort of students who are male, enrolled in HNC Early Education and Childcare or HNC Childhood Practice

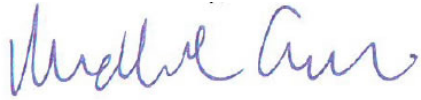


Number of male students studying HNC Early Education and Childcare or HNC Childhood Practice



Further information

10. Please contact Alison Malcolm, Policy Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6522, email: amalcolm@sfc.ac.uk.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Cross".

Michael Cross

Director of Access, Skills and Outcome Agreements