

14-19 Reform



Gender equality

Nuts and Bolts series

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Introduction

What is this guide?

This is one of a series of guides to support the delivery of Diplomas. It explores ways to encourage both male and female learners to consider qualifications and careers that are not typical to their gender – in this guide these learners are referred to as ‘atypical students’. It suggests activities that consortia can carry out to engage and support young people so that they can make choices based on their interests and aptitudes, rather than their gender.

The guide gives an overview of gender equality issues and includes real examples of how schools and colleges are tackling these issues and promoting gender equality through Diploma delivery.

Who is it for?

The guide is for anyone involved in Diploma consortia – teachers, tutors, lecturers and any other practitioners, as well as managers and leaders.

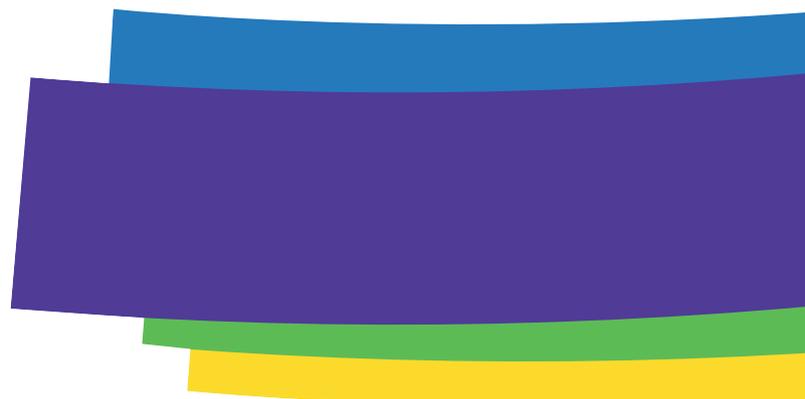
What other guides are available?

Other guides in the Nuts and Bolts series are available from www.diploma-support.org/nutsandboltsguides.

Share your experiences

If you are aware of emerging practice or experience on gender equality or other aspects of consortium work that you would like to share, please feed these through your local consortium adviser.

Their contact details can be found at <http://lmdp.14-19support.org/consortiumadvisers>. You can also join discussions on www.diploma-support.org.



Why do we need to promote gender equality within 14–19?

At 14, young people make important choices that can affect their future employment opportunities. They need to be supported so that they can choose the learning pathway and subjects that are right for them, regardless of their gender.

All schools and colleges offer boys and girls the same opportunities and choices but the reality is that there are subjects that are still seen as more relevant to girls or to boys. For example, girls continue to be underrepresented in the physical sciences and boys in modern foreign languages. In 2006/7, only 2.6% of engineering apprentices and 1.3% of construction apprentices were women. Similarly, very few boys choose qualifications in subjects such as health and social care and beauty therapy, as evidenced in 2006/7, when less than 3% of Apprenticeships in childcare were taken by young men.

The main reason for the disparity in these figures is because there are gender stereotypes surrounding these subjects and courses that affect young people's choices. Young teenagers are often vulnerable to

peer-group pressure and may not want to choose a course that is not typical for their gender. These stereotypes can be encouraged by the media as well as by families and friends. Young people may also have their own preconceptions and may not be fully aware of both the content of a course and its connected career paths.

However, with appropriate information, advice and guidance (IAG) and sensitive teaching and support, some young people will consider and take up places on courses that are not traditionally linked with their gender.¹

The labour market

As well as helping young people to make the right choices, promoting gender equality is also important for the UK labour market, parts of which also remain strongly gender segregated. This has negative consequences for many businesses, as it reduces their recruitment pool and causes skills shortages.

Over the next decade, 1.3 million new jobs are likely to be created and 12 million jobs will change hands as workers retire. There will also be changes in families and family life. Our ageing society means that both women and men may choose to or need to work for longer, but may also have elderly relatives to care for. Men are beginning to play a more active role in caring for children, and it seems likely that, in many

1 Phipps A, *Women in Science, Engineering and Technology: three decades of UK initiatives* (Trentham Press, 2008)

families, both men and women will want to share work and care in a more equal way.² Promoting gender equality means a more flexible labour workforce that can respond to both economic and social changes.

How are businesses promoting gender equality?

There is an increasing willingness among large and small and medium-sized companies to become more involved in reducing occupational segregation.³ Many companies are now recruiting men or women into 'atypical' roles and are, as a result, helping to reduce the gender segregation in these industries.

For example, to encourage women to become engineers, British Gas runs the Georgina and the Dragon campaign, which dispels the myth that only men can be good engineers. This campaign has had some success: the proportion of female and ethnic minority engineers has doubled since 2003 and in 2008, around 13% of engineering apprentices and trainees recruited were women and a similar proportion were from an ethnic minority background. The British Gas Academy has also won awards for its efforts to encourage and attract women into the engineering workforce and into plumbing and associated trades. For more information, go to www.britishgasacademy.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=5.

The Gender Equality Duty

14–19 providers also need to promote gender equality as part of the Gender Equality Duty and the 2007 equalities legislation. Under this, all public authorities – including 14–19 providers – have a legal duty to *promote* equality of opportunity between men and women and eliminate discrimination and harassment. By promoting gender equality to young learners, 14–19 providers are discharging some of these duties.

2 Women and Work Commission, *Shaping a Fairer Future* (Department of Trade and Industry, 2006)

3 *Closing the gender skills gap: A National Skills Forum report on women, skills and productivity* (National Skills Forum, 2009), p.9

Diplomas and gender equality

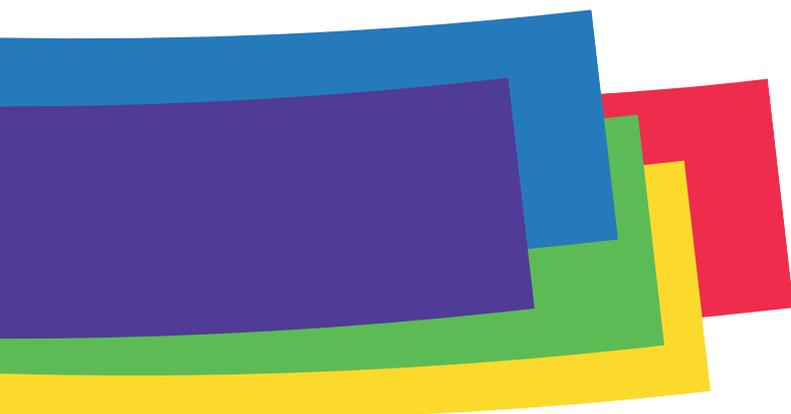
The introduction of Diplomas gives all young people the chance to explore subjects and careers that they might not have previously considered. Each Diploma line of learning is designed to be appealing to both male and female learners.

Diplomas are very broad-based, providing opportunities to move outside the traditional remit and understanding of an industry. For example, the Hair and Beauty Studies Diploma looks at the scientific aspects of the beauty industry. It can lead to careers in TV or film make-up and complementary medicine as well as in the more familiar parts of the hair and beauty sector.

The Engineering Diploma explores the social applications of engineering, such as medical engineering. The Construction and the Built Environment Diploma addresses the value and use of the built environment in its widest sense.

Diplomas explicitly link academic subjects with the real world. This enables students to explore a wide range of careers and can help to challenge stereotypes about jobs. Because it also encourages interaction with practitioners in the workplace, students can be given role models and mentors who can help to break down stereotypes (see page 26 for more detail about work placements).

The curriculum for each line of learning should also be designed with both typical and atypical learners in mind (see the section on embedding gender equality into the Diploma curriculum and teaching on page 10).



How to promote gender equality across your consortium

You need to make sure that gender equality is embedded into Diploma delivery across your consortium. This may mean developing a gender equality strategy or including a gender equality section in your consortium implementation plan.

For more guidance on this, see the Nuts and Bolts guide on implementation planning.

Individual schools, colleges and work-based learning providers may have their own strategies and plans for promoting gender equality. A gender equality steering group can help to co-ordinate these activities and share best practice between individual institutions.

There are a number of activities that need to be carried out to ensure gender equality across your consortium. They have been organised as follows: before choices are made, during the options process and after choices have been made. Some of these activities will overlap.

Before choices are made (Year 8 and autumn term of Year 9)

There are a number of activities that need to be carried out before learners make choices about which subjects to take.

Targets and monitoring

Every Diploma provider should be aspiring to equal gender balance in the long term. However, in the short term it can be helpful to embed gender considerations in planning by setting realistic targets at school, college, work-based learning provider and consortium level. These could identify the desired proportion of boys and girls choosing each Diploma line of learning, based, where possible, on previous uptake numbers. For example, if no boys have chosen to take a Society, Health and Development (SHD) Diploma, you might want to set yourself a relatively low target.

If you do set gender targets, systems need to be in place to monitor and review outcomes across your consortium. This will help you to evaluate which activities are successful and share best practice.

A whole-school approach to equality

Pleckgate High School Mathematics and Computing College, Blackburn with Darwen has embedded equal opportunities for all into its curriculum throughout both Key Stages. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons – particularly in relation to careers – discuss jobs and gender and how both sexes should have opportunities to be employed in whatever job they choose. The school also makes sure that there is no gender bias in its careers' literature, guidance and work-related visits. Selection for courses is on ability alone.

Here are some examples of the school's recent activities to promote gender equality:

- Last year, the school joined forces with BAE Systems to put on a week of engineering activities for pupils in Years 7 and 9 based around a *Dragon's Den*-type format. The groups were carefully selected to include both boys and girls of different abilities. The leaders of each group were also a mixture of boys and girls. The winning team was fronted by a Year 9 girl, who has subsequently chosen to do the Engineering Diploma next year. As a result, there has been greater interest from girls in design and construction as well as the marketing elements of engineering.
- All pupils in Year 9 were given the opportunity to participate in the Diploma Workshops. Three boys have expressed a desire to do the SHD Diploma.
- Existing GCSE Health and Social Care courses were delivered by a male teacher.
- It is compulsory for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 to study a vocational subject. This has resulted in girls selecting subjects like car maintenance and car re-spraying and boys choosing hairdressing and catering.

- As part of the gender equality programme launched in all schools in the borough, Pleckgate has become involved with a work-based training provider, Training 2000 (T2K) in promoting engineering. Some Year 8 girls were selected to attend a day's work experience in engineering. Year 8 boys attended a similar event connected with the SHD Diploma. The students have not yet made their choices but there is anecdotal evidence that the events were successful.
- Part of the tie-up with T2K has allowed the school to become involved in a test bed programme with Sheffield Hallam University on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. A visit from Lab in a Lorry gave both boys and girls a chance to observe and explore physics. It also allowed them to see highly paid scientists, most of whom were female, at work, and this was picked up on by some of the girls who attended.

For more information please contact Peter Briggs at **petebriggs55@hotmail.com** or on **01254 244312**.

Supporting staff

Staff across your consortium have a key role to play in promoting gender equality. They need to understand equality issues, be aware of their legal responsibility to promote equality and feel confident when dealing with equality issues. Make sure that libraries and Learning Resource Centres have a range of resources that support equality and diversity. You could also provide useful resource lists for departments across your consortium.

Teachers and lecturers

Some teachers and lecturers, because of their subject or because they have been working in a single-sex school, may not have taught atypical students at all or for a long time. Some will not have experience of addressing gender equality issues in their teaching and classroom practice.

Teachers and lecturers will be expected to collaborate with colleagues from partner organisations, including employers. This means that they will need to be able to handle equality issues both within their school or college and with colleagues from other institutions within your consortium.

Your workforce development plan should address gender equality and identify the skills that practitioners need, where there are gaps and the training that is needed. This should dovetail with schools' and colleges' own workforce development plans. For more guidance, see the Nuts and Bolts guide on workforce development.

IAG staff

Staff who deliver IAG, including form tutors, have a significant role to play in promoting gender equality. IAG must be delivered collaboratively and will involve partnership working between a number of different organisations – local authorities, schools, colleges, specialist providers (including Connexions) and the voluntary sector.

Diploma consortia should identify who is responsible for making sure that IAG is delivered across their consortium. A typical model is an IAG sub-group led by a senior leader who is a member of the consortium's strategy or implementation group. The sub-group will usually be made up of careers co-ordinators, IAG leaders and Connexions personal advisers. They need to make sure that gender equality is promoted across all of the schools, colleges and work-based learning providers in the consortium.

For more guidance about IAG, go to www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 and follow the links to local authorities and partnerships, and IAG.

Embedding gender equality into the Diploma curriculum and teaching

Gender equality has to inform the curriculum throughout education. When equality and diversity matters are seen as add-ons and handled separately from other curriculum issues it can lead to both staff and students considering that they are less significant than other learning activities (see the **Giving the right slant** case study opposite).

Giving the right slant

The science department at Priesthorpe School in Leeds has developed a number of model project specifications to help students to choose their special project. Because research suggests that girls are more interested and motivated to study science if they see a way to apply it in real life, many of the topics on offer have been chosen to reflect their interests. These include:

- is organic food worth the extra cost?
- should all girls be immunised against cervical cancer?
- is UV light tanning bad for you?

Similarly, at Barnsley College, students on the Construction and the Built Environment Diploma are encouraged to choose extended projects which reflect their particular interests, experience and backgrounds. For example, one girl chose to do her extended project on the design of a mosque.

The staff have also made a great effort in raising gender equality awareness among students and introducing gender issues in the classroom. For example, students have been made aware of the many women who hold senior positions as construction professionals in the industry. Local examples have been used as role models, such as the female project manager who worked on the new college building or the female architect who designed the new technology college. Many construction videos shown to the students offer a range of female professionals and female-led teams.

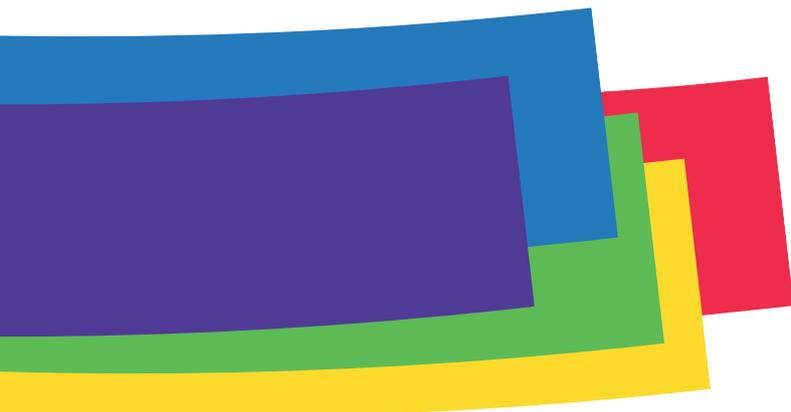
The college also has two professional female teachers who are involved with the Diplomas. They provide continuous role modelling as well as support to the female students.

For more information and advice on Priesthorpe School in Leeds, please contact Wayne Dalley at wayne.dalley@ntlworld.com or go to www.stimulatingphysics.org.

For more information and advice on Barnsley College, please contact Peter Roberts at p.roberts@barnsley.ac.uk.

Diplomas have been developed with employers and universities, and the curriculum should be relevant and of interest to both male and female learners. Course content that has been taken from industries and learning institutions that have traditionally been dominated by one gender may need to be adapted to meet the needs and interests of the atypical student.

- Diploma providers should ensure that teaching methods and material reflect the experiences and concerns of both girls and boys. The teaching should never be insensitive to the atypical students' needs, or make them feel alienated, bewildered or discriminated against.
- Diploma providers should work together with best-practice employers to ensure that projects and topics reflect real-life examples. Students are more likely to engage in projects with a practical approach where they can draw and build on their own experiences. The case study **Making engineering attractive to girls** shows that the curriculum has been developed to be attractive to both boys and girls, and this almost certainly contributes to attracting a significant number of female learners.



Making engineering attractive to girls

The Oaks Collegiate Academy in Birmingham wanted to encourage more girls to take Level 2 engineering.

A female engineer from Aston University and a female representative from Land Rover were part of the Diploma steering group, and provided positive role models for girls who were considering taking the course.

The course places a big emphasis on sustainability. Learning takes place at a new high-tech building, which is powered by wind turbines and solar panels.

Students were given information through a publicity flyer, which included images of six girls and one boy. Interested students were taken to the teaching centre where they met with course tutors and employers. This helped to challenge traditional stereotypes of engineering.

There was also an open evening at the engineering department at Birmingham University. This provided parents with IAG, helping them to understand how engineering has changed and the career opportunities that arise from studying it. Again, this helped to challenge stereotypes.

The course was targeted at high-attaining students who were likely to achieve A and Bs. Students had to apply and the course was oversubscribed. The first intake in 2008 included 10 girls and 22 boys.

For more information, please contact Dave Beards at **collegiate@sellyoak.bham.sch.uk**.

Helping young people make informed choices

All young people need access to good-quality, comprehensive and impartial IAG and wider targeted support to help them make the right choice of course, to deal with the challenges they may face and to support their transition to adulthood.

The quality standards for IAG published in 2007 include a section on how IAG should promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes. (See Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance, section 5). There are a number of ways you can promote Diplomas to atypical students before they choose a course.

Single-sex tasters

Single-sex taster sessions can raise awareness and demystify unfamiliar occupations. If tasters are offered in mixed gender sessions, students may make choices that conform to gender stereotypes. They may only choose tasters that are typical for their gender, so you may need to persuade learners to take part in tasters for atypical subjects. Running tasters in single-sex groups can also help to remove the constraints that often affect boys and girls in mixed groups (see the case studies on **Encouraging boys into healthcare** and **Encouraging girls into engineering**).

Role models and mentors

Same-sex role models and mentors can help to challenge stereotypes about a course and careers. Role models and mentors could be other students, practitioners or employers (see the case study on **Providing positive gender role models**).

Promotional material

Promotional material can help students and their parents to see that courses are suitable for atypical students. Does your material confirm what many of them already suspect; that is, that Society, Health and Development is for girls and that Construction and the Built Environment is for boys? Or does it directly challenge these assumptions? For example, the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology has produced a booklet which on its cover asks: "Do you want a challenging and well-paid job for your daughter?" Inside, it explains the opportunities available in engineering.

To make informed choices it is vital that promotional material fully explains the curriculum content and course structure.

Encouraging boys into healthcare

In Cornwall, the NHS is aware that young men are missing out on employment opportunities in the healthcare sector.

To address this, the Cornwall Education Business Partnership worked together with Aim Higher NHS and Plymouth University to design and run workshops for boys at the Royal Cornwall Hospital. Six schools each selected 20–25 boys from Year 9 who took part in three workshops, as well as attending interactive stands with different health professionals.

“All the role models were male: midwives, nurses, operating department practitioners, speech and language therapists... because we wanted to provide the boys with role models and surprise them.”

Helen Field, Cornwall Education Business Partnership

The workshops allowed the boys to ask the healthcare professionals how they got into the occupation and how they felt doing it as men. The professionals also shared advice they would give to young men considering a career in healthcare.

The workshops raised great awareness among the boys, who said they were now more likely to consider a career in the health profession.

“We brought boys who were interested in exploring a range of options they’ve never thought of before. It’s been very evident from today that they’ve enjoyed not having the pressure of the girls looking at them. Male role models? An amazing difference – particularly the male midwife who got asked lots of questions, like: ‘Should a male midwife be called a midhusband?!’”

Debbie Webb, teacher, Penair School

For more information, please contact Helen Field at hfield@cornwall.gov.uk.

Encouraging girls into engineering

Positive work placements

At Sheffield Hallam University, the Wider Horizons Work Placement Scheme was developed to provide positive and realistic work placements for girls in engineering and construction. The placements involved shadowing a female role model, attending meetings, observing the role of women and interviewing female employees to find out about the job. Afterwards, the students would give a presentation explaining what they had learnt from the experience.

For more information about the scheme, please contact j.collins@shu.ac.uk.

Out of school

A Young Engineers' Club has been set up at the Little Ilford School in London. The Year 7 to 11 students attend the club on Saturday mornings, as well as during two weeks in the summer break.

The club has 30 members, an equal number of girls and boys, who get engaged in a range of exciting tailored engineering activities such as building racing cars and boats and entering them into challenges. The club organises taster sessions for girls in Years 4, 5 and 6, where the Year 7 girls help the younger girls to understand what engineering is all about.

Just under half of the Year 11 girls, who are now finishing their time in the club, are continuing in engineering, either by taking a qualification in the subject or choosing it as a career.

"I didn't realise engineering could be that much fun, and that I would actually be building something."

A Year 7 female student

For more information, please contact Famida Noor Mahomed at f.noor-mahomed@littleilford.org.

Providing positive gender role models

The co-operative nursery Sheffield Children's Centre is currently working with a local training provider (In Touch Care) as well as Diploma-awarding bodies to increase the focus on gender equality within Diplomas.

The children at the nursery come from very diverse family backgrounds – including same-sex relationships, absent fathers, single parents, refugee families and families where the children are in care.

The nursery has a policy of employing equal numbers of men and women to help rebuild positive role models of both sexes. The staff share and pool their own experience to create an environment that gives children and parents the support to reflect on their own gender identity.

The nursery and its partner organisations are drawing on these practical experiences to ensure that male perspectives are embedded in the Diploma curriculum. This includes examining the gender socialisation of men in early years, as well as reflecting on how men and women have traditionally divided up roles in the family.

For more information, please contact Chrissie Meleady at **cm.eyequality@btinternet.com** or on 0114 2798236; Jo North at **jo.north@intouchcare.co.uk**.

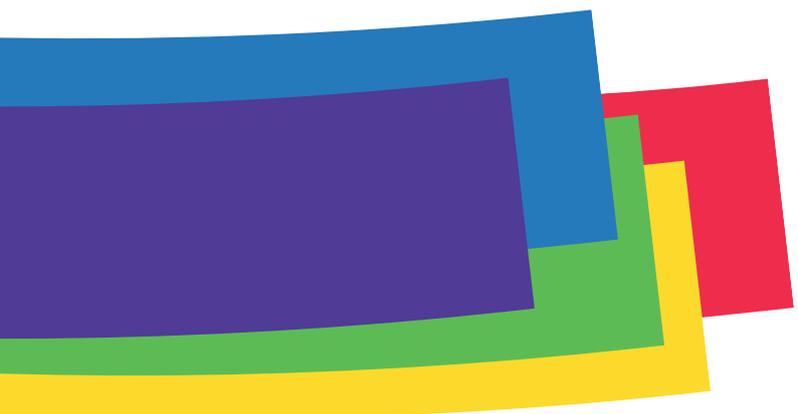
Working with employers

One of the key features of the Diploma is its strong employer involvement. So it is crucial that employers complement the gender equality work carried out at the school or college. Students and parents are likely to perceive messages about gender equality very differently if these come directly from employers, rather than teaching practitioners. Also, workplace professionals often become great role models for students – particularly if they are young and of the same gender.

Employers can support you in your gender equality work by:

- working with you to contribute up-to-date teaching materials, including case studies that challenge stereotyping;
- offering atypical role models/ ambassadors/mentors who can visit schools or be accessible via video link or web cam;

- making it clear in all their publicity that the sector welcomes employees regardless of gender;
- using atypical local role models in publicity material, with permission for the images and information to be used for school and college purposes;
- deliberately encouraging the under-represented group, for example by offering single-sex visits to work sites and taster days, and encouraging organised visits for parents; and
- organising publicity about the sector and its prospects aimed at parents and teachers as well as prospective workers.



Tasters that open opportunities

To help Years 9 and 11 prepare for progression workshops, the OpenOpportunity consortium in Norwich introduced a taster scheme. The purpose of the tasters was to focus on opening up a wider range of career choices for girls and boys.

Before the tasters, students took part in a series of activities highlighting atypical careers. These activities were mapped against the requirements of a range of different curriculum areas including PSHE, IAG and the Every Child Matters agenda.

Following this, students took three tasters. They were allowed to choose two of the sessions themselves, but the third one had to be in an atypical subject and was chosen for them. The third taster was delivered in single-sex groups.

"You can sum up single-sex taster sessions – for example tasters for boys in Hair and Beauty – by the sentiment 'we're all doing it, there are no girls to impress, so we might as well get on with it.'"

Jim Hudson, Director, OpenOpportunity

Following the tasters, a full evaluation was carried out. Students were asked whether they were thinking of taking a course in this industry area. Half the students answered "maybe" – an indicator that the tasters had at least got students thinking about it.

For more information, please see www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/taster_hints_tips.pdf or contact Jim Hudson at j6hudson@ccn.ac.uk.

During the options process (spring term Year 9)

Around the time that that young people are making their subject choices there are many opportunities to address and challenge stereotyping. Some of the activities described in the 'Before choices are made' section on page 7 will be ongoing but the following focus on the options process.

Engaging parents and carers

Parents and carers have a big influence on learners' choices. Many of them will be unfamiliar with current labour market opportunities and requirements and will be grateful for information that helps their children to make the right choices. This does not mean providing the same information to all parents and carers. You should think about how you can target the parents and carers of atypical learners for each line of learning, for example, by promoting engineering to the parents and carers of girls and society, health and development to the parents and carers of boys. There are a number of ways that you can do this:

- Options evenings and events. Employers and former students who are following atypical courses or who are in atypical jobs should be encouraged to attend and answer questions (see **Making engineering attractive to girls** on page 13).

- Marketing material that addresses equality issues. This material may include the 14–19 prospectus, options evenings brochures and websites featuring webcasts from atypical students or employers.
- Site visits to employers' premises. These can help parents to understand the career opportunities that a particular subject or course offers.

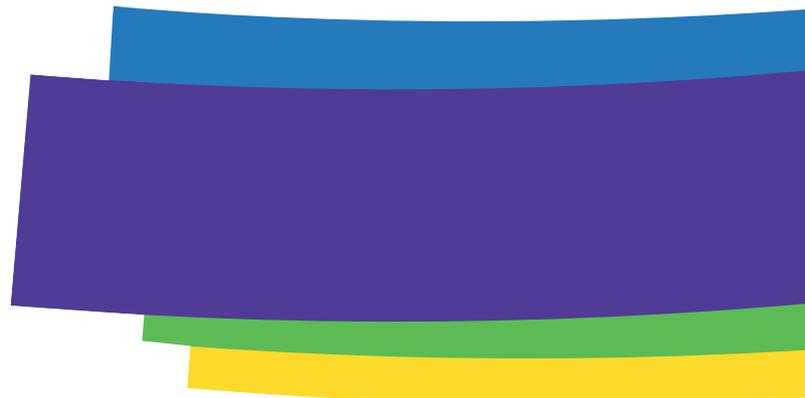
You need to make sure that all of the institutions across your consortium are addressing gender issues when they engage parents. There may be opportunities for schools and colleges to work together to offer events or visits so that there isn't duplication of effort. Similarly, students and mentors could attend events at schools and colleges other than their home institution.

Helping young people make informed choices

Making sure that young people are well informed at the options stage is crucial. This is the stage when young people who may be considering atypical routes could be easily dissuaded from doing so by a raised eyebrow from an adult, or more overt pressure from peers. As well as the activities described on page 20, you could also help young people to make informed choices using the following resources.

Drama techniques

Drama is a good way of challenging some of the dilemmas that learners face. Your consortium could work with a theatre-in-education group which works across all of the schools and colleges in your consortium so that all learners have the opportunity to think about gender issues. It is also feasible to involve your creative and media students in this activity.



Challenging stereotyping through drama

Value Theatre, working with drama students, developed a workshop that addressed gender equality issues for Year 9 students in Exeter secondary schools. The project aimed to give young people across Exeter a clearer understanding of the wide range of atypical careers available to them and to raise issues about gender stereotyping in all learning pathways, including Diplomas.

A drama production explored traditional gender patterns of student choices in schools through a number of scenarios and role plays. Led by an experienced professional drama facilitator, the sessions were interactive and engaged students in small groups. The project produced a replicable script and teachers' notes for use by subsequent 14–19 groups or facilitators.

Feedback from staff and students involved was very positive.

The project has clear objectives for sustainability, which include the further development of the programme to include all Devon schools, with the additional option to involve students in Plymouth and Torbay, where both local authorities have expressed interest in the project.

For further information, please contact Jeremy Cloke at jeremy.cloke@devon.gov.uk or on **01392 385 235**.

Learning ambassadors and mentors

Learning ambassadors and mentors can motivate and engage students and help them to make informed choices. Learning ambassadors are students who help and advise younger students, often of the same sex. Young people are often more receptive to fellow students' thoughts and recommendations. Mentors are experienced practitioners, either undergraduates or professionals, in a particular subject area. Mentors can become powerful role models, allowing the student to link their own interests with the real world.

Connexions Personal Advisers and tutors

At this crucial stage, Connexions Personal Advisers and tutors can help by encouraging discussion about the pros and cons of different choices and helping learners make decisions that are the right ones for them.

After choices have been made

It is important to continue to support students once they have chosen an atypical course.

Supporting students

The opportunity to work and learn in different settings is one of the greatest advantages of the Diploma, but it can also make some students feel isolated and insecure. This may be a particular issue for students who are doing part of their qualification in unfamiliar surroundings with new fellow students, teachers and instructors. It is important that there are processes in place to make sure that learners are supported, particularly when learning is delivered in various environments.

Role models and mentors

Support for atypical learners can be offered by same-sex practitioners in both home and partner organisations. Other ways include introducing atypical learners to same-sex student following similar courses. It might also be appropriate to appoint same-sex mentors during work placements. All this needs to be done without making them feel awkward or picked on (or giving rise to resentment from 'typical' learners).

Curriculum and teaching

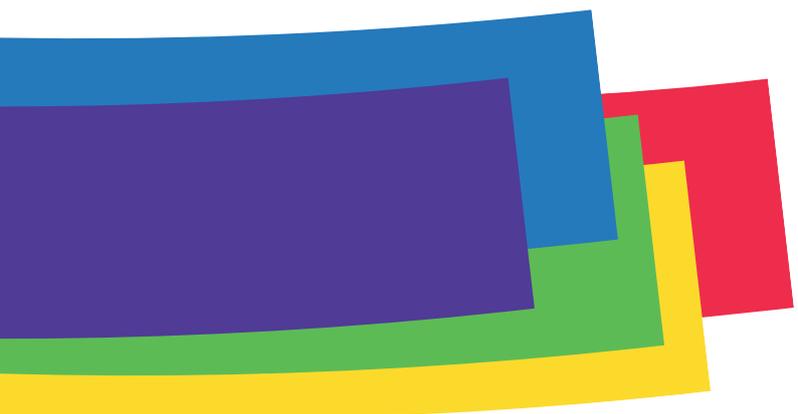
As discussed on page 12, practitioners need to make sure that projects and teaching are relevant to atypical students so that they stay engaged and interested after they have chosen a course.

Learner voice strategies

Your consortium should have a learner voice strategy and this should make sure that atypical learners have the opportunity to have their say. For example, at Lewes Rural Consortium, an independent co-ordinator listens to the students' comments and then feeds these back so that the courses can be improved. Similarly, at Leeds College of Building, a support worker on secondment from Connexions runs focus groups with female students to give them an opportunity to talk about issues affecting them as females in predominantly male environments.

Exit interviews are a useful way for schools and colleges to review the experiences of atypical learners. Their experience and advice can be used when planning the support needed to encourage the next cohort to consider courses based on their aspirations and aptitudes rather than their gender.

For more guidance about engaging learners, see the Nuts and Bolts guide on learner voice.



Putting a stop to sexism

At Barnsley College, the construction department has put a solid and successful support structure in place to make sure that their female Diploma students feel welcomed and supported throughout the course.

The induction programme has a strong focus on establishing, explaining and enforcing behaviour standards. Students are made aware of what constitutes sexism and that sexist comments are not permitted. Teachers run regular tutorials with students to deal with their concerns, whether these arise from individual relationships or academic work. It has become clear that there is great trust between staff and students, and this has enabled discussions to take place openly.

The department monitors their female students with particular care to make sure that they are content with the course. In 2008/9, three out of 24 first-year Construction and the Built Environment Diploma students were female. The three girls have made great progress and are carrying on to the second year.

For more information, please contact Peter Roberts at **p.roberts@barnsley.ac.uk**.

Work placements

Research⁴ shows that many students are only offered work experience placements traditionally associated with their gender, and also encounter gender stereotypes in the workplace. Work placements should challenge, rather than reinforce, stereotyped presumptions in the workplace. Many employers have excellent practice and can provide useful exemplars.

Work placements should be comfortable and enjoyable for all students. To ensure this attention needs to be spent on detail, e.g. ensuring that work clothes fit and are appropriate for both boys and girls; toilets are clean; and the experience is free of harassment and gender-neutral. Students should not automatically be given traditional roles to fulfil e.g. girls asked to spend most of their time filing or making tea and boys being asked to do 'heavy work'. Atypical students may benefit from being allocated same-sex mentors and meeting successful same-sex employees. They should also know who to contact if anything starts to go wrong so that issues can be addressed and resolved promptly.

Role models

Atypical learners can support new learners on site and by visiting partner institutions. Learners' success can be celebrated, for example with a 'Hall of Fame' display of successful atypical role models. Using atypical learners for publicity purposes in local and trade papers can help spread the message about attracting atypical recruits, but this needs to be done with sensitivity. Some learners feel uncomfortable about being used in this way and their peers may become resentful if it is done in a heavy-handed manner. However it is always worth inviting successful learners to keep in touch when they leave and the atypical ones can become your future role models.

Maintaining contact with parents and carers

Keep parents and carers involved in their child's progress so that they can support them. Communicate regularly through newsletters and letters home.

4 Francis B, Osgood J, Dalgety J and Archer L, 'Gender equality in work experience placements for young people', *Occupational segregation Working Paper Series*, no. 27 (London Metropolitan University/Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005)

Increasing the number of male learners in Hair and Beauty Studies

Solihull College encouraged male learners to choose the Hair and Beauty Studies Diploma by:

- taking both male and female learners to careers events;
- making sure that the college prospectus photographs promoted both male and female learners;
- taking Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority Diploma leaflets to school open evenings;
- displaying 'Hall of Fame' photographs and articles about learners; for example, one male learner won UK Hairdressing student of the year in October;
- trying to ensure that there is a balance of male and female staff;
- inviting local male salon owners to complete careers talks and demonstrations;
- writing articles for local press and trade magazines to celebrate the achievements of male learners;
- organising an Equality and Diversity noticeboard in the vicinity of the department;
- thinking about male learners when developing the curriculum – for example by offering barbering courses;

- establishing a gender equality steering group to discuss strategies and initiatives for curriculum areas;
- ensuring that male learners feel comfortable when attending interviews, particularly for Hair and Beauty Studies;
- using celebrity male role models – for example, Andrew Barton from the TV programme *Ten Years Younger* – when promoting courses;
- ensuring that there are firm procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour for male learners in a female-dominated environment;
- ensuring appropriate materials or friendly resources are available from day one, for example male-appropriate uniforms;
- including one equality and diversity learning outcome in each lesson plan; and
- inviting employers to Year 9 options evenings to inspire and speak to learners and their families about possible progression routes – this works as a ‘win-win’ situation in which young people get a chance to learn about new career options and employers can promote themselves.

For more information, please contact Yvonne Malpass, Head of School, Hair & Beauty, Solihull at yvonne.malpass@solihull.ac.uk.

Suggested action plan

Before choices are made (Year 8 and autumn term of Year 9)

- Embed equality into your consortium's planning (see page 7)
- Set targets and monitoring (see page 7)
- Support staff so they can promote gender equality (see page 10)
- Embed equality into Diploma curriculum and teaching (see page 10)
- Promote Diplomas to atypical learners (see page 14)
- Work with employers to promote Diplomas (see page 18)
- Evaluate your activity
- Share good practice

During the options process (spring term Year 9)

- Continue to promote Diplomas to atypical learners and their parents (see page 20)
- Work with employers to promote Diplomas (see page 18)
- Evaluate your activity
- Share good practice

After choices have been made

- Provide ongoing support to atypical learners (see page 23)
- Identify same-sex mentors (see page 23)
- Listen to learners' voices (see page 24)
- Work with employers to support learners on work placements (see page 26)
- Keep communicating with parents (see page 26)
- Evaluate your activity
- Share good practice

Further resources

General information about the Diplomas and other education options

■ Diploma support

Provides a wide range of professional development training and support to help prepare for Diploma delivery from a number of partner organisations.

www.diploma-support.org

■ Diplomas for 14–19 year olds

Gives useful information and resources on 14–19 Diplomas. Also includes information on making Diploma choices.

www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas

■ Department for Children, Schools and Families

Gives information about the Diplomas, as well as equality and diversity. The site also gives links to guidance on encouraging cultural diversity and gender inclusion.

www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 and follow the links to 'qualifications and curriculum/diplomas' or 'equality and diversity/gender equality'

■ Connexions

Gives information about careers, education and training in England. Also provides links to local Connexions services and resources linked to a broad range of career opportunities.

The service is managed locally by your local Connexions service, which brings together all the key youth support services in your area.

www.connexions-direct.com

■ **Apprenticeships**

Provides information about Apprenticeships, case studies and details of how to apply for an Apprenticeship.

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

■ **Construction Apprenticeships: Bconstructive**

Gives information and answers to frequently asked questions about Apprenticeships in Construction, including a section on women in construction.

www.bconstructive.co.uk

Gender Equality: Challenging Stereotypes initiatives

■ **The WISE campaign (women into science, engineering and construction)**

Collaborates with industry and education to encourage UK female students to value and pursue science, engineering, technology, maths or construction-related courses in school or college, and to move on into these careers.

Provides a range of resources, including models, tools and approaches to challenge traditional approaches to these subjects.

www.wisecampaign.org.uk

■ **Early Years education**

Gives information about equality and diversity in early years education, with a particular emphasis on race and gender in, for example, childcare.

www.earlyyearesequality.co.uk

■ **Headstart (science and maths)**

Provides courses for young people who enjoy maths and science and are interested in taking up technical careers. Also runs positive action girls-only courses for 16 to 17-year-olds.

www.headstartcourses.org.uk

■ **Teachers TV: Gender Equality – Curriculum Choices**

Shows how two schools in Norfolk are tackling long-standing gender stereotyping in subject option choices.

www.teachers.tv/gender-equality

Other organisations and initiatives

■ **The Royal Academy of Engineering**

Supports engineering education from the sixth form through to postgraduate level and continuing professional development. Runs a wide variety of education schemes and awards.

www.raeng.org.uk/education

■ **UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology**

Provides access to a range of information, statistics, good practice guidelines and training for women in science, engineering and technology. A range of posters and packs are available related to engaging girls and women in areas where they have traditionally been under-represented. It also suggests strategies for teachers to help their female students overcome the barriers they face and practical advice for encouraging and supporting girls.

www.ukrc4setwomen.org

■ **The Centre for Science Education and VT Enterprise**

Aims to provide a wide range of curriculum resources, careers workforce resources and continuing professional development to improve the take-up of science, engineering, technology and maths. The project is run under the theme of 'enthusing students, equipping professionals, supporting employers'.

www.shu.ac.uk/research/cse/stem-careers.html

■ **STEMNET (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network)**

The STEM Ambassadors Scheme

The STEM Ambassadors scheme works with schools to excite young people about science, engineering, technology and maths by bringing into schools professionals working in industry. The After School Science and Engineering Clubs programme allows children to explore STEM subjects away from the restraints of the classroom.

Challenging stereotypes

Through its enrichment activities and linking STEM-based companies to schools, STEMNET aims to ensure that more young people in the UK choose to enter science, technology, engineering and mathematics-related careers.

www.stemnet.org.uk

■ **Future Morph**

Provides information for young people, their parents and teachers about careers that result from studying science and maths.

www.futuremorph.org

■ **Gender Equality Race Inclusion (GERI) Project**

Produces careers resources to challenge gender and ethnic stereotyping covering those areas where there is a gender or ethnic bias, for example in hair and beauty, health and social care, construction and engineering. These resources include CDs, printed guides and web-based learning.

www.geriproject.org

■ **National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services: Equality and Diversity Competence online module**

Allows learners to register to the virtual learning environment and access the Equality and Diversity Competence online module.

<http://lmdp.14-19support.org/>. This new website replaces the NCSL website and is currently under development.

Useful publications

■ **Kate Myers and Hazel Taylor with Sue Adler and Diana Leonard, *Genderwatch: Still Watching* (Trentham Press, 2007)**

Contains over 60 sections which address gender equality issues in all aspects of school life.

■ **Francis B, Osgood J, Dalgety J and Archer L, 'Gender equality in work experience placements for young people', *Occupational segregation Working Paper Series*, no. 27 (London Metropolitan University/ Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005)**

Discusses gender equality in work experience placements for young people

■ **Newton B, Miller L, Page R and Tuohy S, *Building on Young Apprenticeships: Equal Opportunities* (Institute of Employment Studies/ Department for Education and Science, 2007)**

Includes practical advice about IAG and organising tasters.

■ **Closing the gender skills gap: A National Skills Forum report on women, skills and productivity** (National Skills Forum, 2009).

This report, published in February 2009, makes recommendations aimed at tackling the barriers faced by women who want to train, get back to work and improve their skills.

www.policyconnect.org.uk/docs/consent/closing_the_gender_skills_gap_1.pdf

Case studies

Below are references to other case studies not detailed in this guide.

Tasters

The Ashfield Music Festival in Leeds was part of the Stimulating Physics project. It provided mixed and single-sex activities to engage both boys and girls. For more information, please contact Taj Bhutta at taj.bhutta@iop.org.

Peer ambassadors

Girls on the IT Diploma at the Bluecoat School in Nottingham act as peer ambassadors by promoting the Diploma to younger girls. For more information, please contact Catherine McCarney at cmccarney@bluecoat.nottingham.sch.uk.

Learner voice

George Spencer School in Nottingham ran a focus group to find out how industrial visits can best meet their needs. For more information, please contact Marion Hamshere at mhamshere@hotmail.com.

Industrial visits

Holgate School in Nottingham carried out a girls-only industrial visit to the Confetti Sound Recording Studio. For more information, please contact Marion Hamshere at mhamshere@hotmail.com.

Promoting Diplomas to atypical learners

Sheffield Children's Centre has worked with a training provider, In Touch Care, to promote childcare by using high-tech simulators and interactive learning materials. For more information, please contact Jo North at **jo.north@intouchcare.co.uk**.

Barnsley College promoted atypical jobs to girls as part of the Wider Horizons Work Placement Scheme. For more information, please contact Peter Roberts at **p.roberts@barnsley.ac.uk**.

Macclesfield College is implementing a national innovation project, 'Engineering – Girls Can Do It Too!' For more information, please contact Kay Lees at **Kay.Lees@macclesfield.ac.uk**.

Embedding gender equality into the Diploma curriculum

Leeds College Building has integrated gender equality into an Employment Rights and Responsibilities module. For more information, please contact Jubar Miah at **JMiah@lcb.ac.uk**.

Supporting learners

The Brightside Trust provides mentoring services to increase the participation of girls in engineering and physics. For more information, please contact Libi Hutchin at **libi.hutchin@thebrightsidetrust.org**.

Recruiting atypical practitioners

Barnsley College supported the recruitment of a female construction lecturer. For more information, please contact Peter Roberts at p.roberts@barnsley.ac.uk.

Working with employers

Leeds College of Building helps companies to meet their equality and diversity targets by offering training, work placements and other practical assistance. For more information, please contact Jubar Miah at JMiah@lcb.ac.uk.

Sheffield Children's Centre have introduced a Witness Policy to protect all staff from accusations of paedophile incidents. For more information, please contact Chrissie Meleady at cm.eyequality@btinternet.com.

Positive role models

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology sourced female Ambassadors in the Yorkshire and Humber Region for careers events with girls in Leeds Schools. For more information, please contact Lynden Cable at lynden.cable@wyg.com.

Working with partners

Early Years Equality (EYE) is a national and international charity that intervened when a school wasn't providing impartial IAG. For more information, please contact Chrissie Meleady at cm.eyequality@btinternet.com.

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology operates as a 'gender mentor' for the London Engineering Project. For more information, please contact Rachel Epton at info@ukrc4setwomen.org or rme@rachelepson.co.uk.



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Published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

DCSF-01024-2009

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