

Sex Equality

Equality and Diversity Guidance 05/2002

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Executive Summary

Equality and Diversity Guidance 05/2002

Date:

April 2002

Subject:

Sex Equality

Name of sender:

Ian Gittens - National Learning and Skills Council, Equality and Diversity Team

Intended recipients

Local LSC strategic planners, equality and diversity specialists, research and evaluation staff, staff in policy and development, those with responsibility for Education Business Links (EBL) and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and those involved with provider performance review to encourage colleagues in these areas of activity to consider how LSC policies and practices might impact differently on men and women learners.

Status of document:

For information and action.

Summary content:

This guidance sets out the Council's approach to mainstreaming sex equality. Its purpose is to establish a framework for action, within which all Council activities can contribute towards eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men. It uses illustrative examples to show how local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) might meet the requirements set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and other relevant statutory and non-statutory regulations that impact on sex equality.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) is the primary statutory instrument for tackling sex inequality. The SDA applies to both women and men and impacts on the work of the Council as it makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment and vocational training, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY GUIDANCE 05/2002

Guidance on meeting the Learning and Skills Council's duties in relation to Sex Equality

Linkages to:

Learning and Skills Act 2000; Sections 13 and 14

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Equal Pay Act 1970

Treaty of Amsterdam (Article 2, Article 3, Article 13 and Article 41) 1997

Learning and Skills Council Corporate Plan - Strategic Framework to 2004

National Learning and Skills Council Equality and Diversity Strategy: widening participation and promoting inclusion 2002-2004

Modern Apprenticeships: the way to work, September 2001

Modern Apprenticeships Equal Opportunities Action Plan

14-19 Green Paper – a radical new look to education 2002

Workforce Development Strategy

Equality and Diversity guidance on:

Equality and Diversity Impact Measures 01/2002

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; 02/2002

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; 03/2002;

and other relevant statutory and non-statutory instruments.

Introduction

1 This guidance is a resource to help local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) to meet the requirements set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and other relevant statutory and non-statutory regulations that impact on sex equality. Its purpose is to establish a consistent and coherent framework for action, within which all Council activities can contribute towards eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women. This guidance sets out the Council's approach to mainstreaming sex equality as highlighted in the national LSC equality and diversity strategy.

The target audience for this guidance

2 This guidance is targeted at local LSC strategic planners, equality and diversity specialists, research and evaluation staff, staff in policy and development, those with responsibility for Education Business Links (EBL) and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and those involved with reviewing provider performance. It will help them to ensure that sex equality is prioritised in their planning and operational activities. It encourages staff in these areas to

consider how LSC policies and practices might impact differently on men and women and to implement actions to address sex inequality.

The purpose of this guidance

3 This guidance will help LLSCs to identify, highlight and address issues of sex inequality in learning provision. It will help them to develop mechanisms to challenge learning and occupational sex stereotyping and contribute to reducing skills gaps and challenging curriculum and occupational segregation by sex. This guidance outlines the Council's commitment to tackling the circumstances that lead to inequalities in women's and men's learning and work experiences. It highlights also some of the equality issues surrounding the Workforce Development Strategy.

4 In preparing this guidance, the Council examined key aspects of policy and action and their potential impact on sex equality. The results show that LSC tools such as contracting and mechanisms such as partnership arrangements with schools, providers, Connexions Partnerships, employers and Sector Skills Councils, for example, are crucial for tackling sex inequality in the learning and

labour markets. This guidance focuses on the service delivery rather than human resources aspects of the national LSC equality and diversity strategy.

5 This guidance features examples of approaches to achieving sex equality. The examples showcase a wide range of effective practices that are transferable to bring the value of lessons learnt and experiences gained to different learning contexts to assist LLSC staff with their equality and diversity work. The majority of the examples focus on addressing inequality for the benefit of women, as they tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged in the workforce.

6 The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) is the primary statutory instrument for tackling sex inequality. The SDA applies to both women and men, and impacts on the work of the Council as it makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment and vocational training, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services. The SDA also makes it illegal to discriminate in employment or advertising because a person is of married status.

7 There are two kinds of unlawful sex discrimination; direct and indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourable than others on grounds of sex, marital status etc. and indirect discrimination occurs when a rule, condition or requirement, which applies equally to everyone, has a disproportionate adverse impact on one sex, or a married person of the same sex, and there is no objective justification for the requirement.

8 The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established under the SDA. This statutory, independent body works towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between the sexes. It reviews the working of the SDA and Equal Pay Act. The EOC is

the main source for information and advice relating to sex equality to the general public, to education, training and service providers and to business.

Sex equality in the learning and labour markets

9 Sex equality is still undermined by the fact that women and men do not enjoy equal rights in practice. Persistent underrepresentation in some curriculum areas and occupational sectors suggest that there are still structural sex inequalities to address in order to enable women and men to benefit equally from council funded activities. The following points highlight some characteristics of women's and men's involvement in the labour market, many with significant implications for LLSCs, providers, employers and learners.

- In Spring 2000 there were a record 12.5 million women (aged 16 plus) in employment in the UK.¹ The number of women in employment has risen by 843,000 since 1990, while the number of men is only 33,000 higher.¹ However, over the last 3 years, the growth in employment has been higher among men than women.¹
- The employment rate ranges from 75% for women aged 35-49 to 46% for women aged 16-17. The employment rate for women increases with the age until the 50-59 age group, where it falls to 64%.¹
- Employment rates are higher for women without children. For those with children, employment rates are much lower for lone mothers than for mothers who are married or cohabiting. However, employment growth in the last three years has been higher among lone mothers. The

¹ See Source 1, page 12 of this document.

employment rate for men is higher for those with children than without.¹

- Women's employment is concentrated in non-manual occupations, in particular clerical, sales and personal/protective occupations.¹ 88% of jobs taken by women are in service industries - particularly the public administration, education and health industries.¹
- A gap in lifetime earnings of £140,000 is experienced by a mid-skilled mother of two in addition to a gender earnings gap of £241,000, a total of £381,000 earnings foregone over a lifetime compared with an equivalently educated man.²
- Over half of all those people who graduated with a first degree in 1999 were women. However, there were sex differences in degree subject: approximately 15,000 men aged 18-24 obtained a first degree in engineering and technology, compared with around only 3,000 women.⁵ Employment rates are higher among women with a higher level of qualification.¹

10 The proportion of female executives is increasing – the level of 22% (April 2000) is more than double that recorded five years prior.³

Why this guidance is required

11 The Council's duty to address sex equality is set out in the Learning and Skills Act. The Council's commitment to address sex equality is detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan and Equality and Diversity Strategy. LLSCs have taken equality of opportunity forward in their strategic plans. Equality and diversity is

also an integral part of the provider performance review process. Its full realisation requires the integration of sex equality objectives into policies and actions that have direct or indirect impact on the opportunities available to women and men. Women's and men's needs and aspirations should be given equal importance in the design and implementation of Council policies. This approach underpins the mainstreaming of sex equality that the Council intends to operationalise and consolidate through the application of this guidance. The Council's policy to promote equality informs approaches involving:

- mainstreaming sex equality
- sex 'equality proofing'
- positive action; and
- impact assessment.

12 In addition, the Council's Race Equality Scheme (RES) when implemented at local LSC level will be a tool to guide work on sex and race equality simultaneously. All the above elements are complementary and ideally should be included in LLSC approaches to assessing the extent of and tackling sex inequality in all aspects of their work.

13 The Council sets out its commitment to mainstreaming equality in all its activities in 'Equality in Practice': Central to this process is 'sex equality proofing'. Equality proofing is important for identifying the extent of sex inequality and informing actions to address it. It involves breaking down local demographic and learner data by sex to identify differences in access, participation, retention and achievement by level, curriculum areas and occupational sectors. The analysis should be primarily by sex, but also other characteristics, for example, race, disability and single parent status; and setting impact measures to redress any imbalances for men or women.

14. Positive action (SDA secs. 47 and 48) relates to targeted measures to counteract specific disadvantages experienced by women and men. In parallel to mainstreaming sex equality, persistent inequalities in access, participation and outcomes from learning provision continue to require the implementation of specific actions in favour of women or men. Positive action is different from positive discrimination, which is unlawful.

15 The impact assessment element is already built into the Council's Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs). EDIMs are the mechanism that will enable LLSCs to manage and drive inclusion in a consistent and coherent manner by identifying the profile of learners at different stages of the system; and devising methods to challenge underrepresentation and stereotyping by sex and other characteristics in key curriculum and occupational areas.

16 Traditional male dominated industries/occupations attract few women. In engineering for example five times as many men as women opt for engineering degrees. In addition, the reduction of jobs in manufacturing and growth of the service sector determine changes in women's and men's employment.

The impact of industrial changes

17 The industry sectors employing the highest percentage of women are the ones expected to grow. There will be many more job opportunities relating to caring, nursing childcare and play work which have traditionally employed women, but which also need to employ more men to create a better gender balance in these sectors. These are some of the areas in which opportunities for men will open up.

18 Qualification levels for women and men in the workforce continue to increase. Women in particular are better educated and qualified than before but still are not shifting their subject choice towards the sciences, maths and technology. Conversely, men generally tend to pursue traditional qualifications and occupations. In addition, there is clearly a need to challenge the negative views attached to what is considered 'women's work' and the low levels of pay associated with it relative to 'men's work' (see Annex 1, 2, and 4).

Workforce development and sex equality

19 The Council has a statutory duty to promote equality and responsibility for developing a national framework for workforce development and therefore has an opportunity to lead on sex equality issues in workforce development. Sector workforce development plans provide a good opportunity to re-assess training and development provision and needs in line with a new workforce development strategy.

20 Action is needed to reduce the potential for indirect sex discrimination in the way that training and development is made available in the workplace as part of workforce development. Potential exist for part-time workers and those on flexible contracts, older learners, those with low or no qualifications and those working for small employers – all of whom are less likely to receive training. Women predominate in these categories.

21 Skills shortages are a key driver for workforce training and development. However, to be effective, sector workforce plans would need to target currently under-represented groups. Work-life balance also affects access to training and development at work. While employers are encouraged to adopt family friendly practices, part-time workers and low

¹ See Council Equality and Diversity Guidance 01/2002 on EDIMs.

skilled workers are less likely to access training opportunities.

22 Industries providing traditional male employment such as manufacturing, coal, steel, shipyards and automotive sectors continue to decline resulting in limited opportunities for men.

23 LLSCs, SSCs and training providers are in the ideal position to use economic analysis and workforce data and to set impact measures to recognise and work towards reducing equality gaps in the training they fund and provide and to share effective practice through local networks. The EDIMs framework supports this activity within the wider equality of opportunity perspective.

Sex stereotyping in early career choices

24 EOC research identified that the younger the age at which vocational choices are made, the more likely those choices are to be stereotypical by sex. Young people need wider knowledge of the careers available to them, especially in non-traditional curriculum areas, vocational learning and occupational sectors. Council funded Year 10 and Year 11 work experience is an initiative that might offer options that allow girls and boys to gain placements that are not based on traditional sex stereotypes.

25 Sex stereotyping and segregation is reflected in, for example, the occupational profiles of young women and men learners on MAs (See Annex 1). Girls' superior examination performance relative to boys at GCSE seems not to translate into post-16 learning. In vocational training, boys tend to gain better apprenticeship placements. Moreover, at all qualification levels, despite girls doing as well as and often better than boys, sex stereotyping is still prevalent where choice is allowed. There seems to be no academic reason for this.

26 The MAs Equal Opportunities Action Plan launched in June 2000 identifies the need to break down long-standing sex stereotyping that prevents young people from entering apprenticeships in occupations for which they have the necessary aptitudes. The Council is required to promote and monitor equality of opportunity within MAs.

Positive action initiatives

27 The SDA allows positive action initiatives to enable men and women to compete on equal terms in sectors where either sex is underrepresented. Positive action might involve single sex training courses. One such example exists in Birmingham where City College Birmingham provides single sex courses for Muslim women that meet their cultural needs and provide learning in a range of curriculum areas. Another example in Tyne and Wear enabled women, especially ethnic minority women, who also experience disadvantage on grounds other than sex, to enter the labour market through non-traditional vocational occupational routes. The employment rate for ethnic minority women at 49% is about 20 percentage points lower than the rate for all women in Great Britain (GB).¹ Such provision should have a direct positive impact on this statistic. Some LLSCs and providers are currently running initiatives that encourage women and men to broaden their range of curriculum and vocational choices.

Examples of local initiatives to tackle sex inequality

Example 1

28 Lakes College, West Cumbria is working on breaking down stereotypes by focusing on recruiting men onto care and childcare courses. Given the very heavy industrial culture in West Cumbria, which is now in decline, this is a very significant

breakthrough in challenging stereotyping in career choices.

Example 2

29 Lakes College, in conjunction with Connexions Cumbria and Cumbria Employment Service also offers a course for young mothers that is proving very successful. The retention rate reached 90%, and the course is successful for moving the often isolated young women into further learning. The college is trying to roll out this course to another area with a teenage pregnancy rate 5% above the national average.

Example 3

30 Bristol Community Education has been running a similar course for young mothers since 1997. The courses run for 10 weeks in community venues and target young mothers or mothers to be aged 16 to 30, single parents, black and ethnic minority women, women with few qualifications, low literacy and numeracy levels, low confidence and low self-esteem. The beneficiaries have been out of employment for some time, or have never worked due to family responsibilities. Co-funded by the European Social Fund, it gives mothers access to education and training opportunities and enables them to identify and work towards their career goals. The funding allows them to offer free creche provision and transport. This work is undertaken in partnership with the Meriton (school for schoolgirl mothers), City of Bristol College, Young Mothers Group Trust, YMCA and Connexions, the participants can therefore access progression routes from this course through the partners' activities.

Example 4

SHOCK WAVES project

31 South Yorkshire LSC is using ESF Co-financing to address sex inequality and labour market segregation that is prevalent in the electrical installation industry. Employment of women in this

industry is very low, and take up of Modern Apprenticeships, the main route into the industry, by females is also low. The national provider JTL has around 6500 apprentices; only 12 of them are women.

32 Working with JTL, Sheffield College, Local Careers Guidance Services, The Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU), The Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) and National Electro technical Training (NET) a project named SHOCK WAVES has been developed. SHOCK WAVES will provide a fast track training course for entry into the electrical installation industry, targeting women aged 24 and over. The aim of the SHOCK WAVES Project is to deliver the full job-training package including qualification to NVQ level 3 currently delivered through the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship Programme. This will be achieved within a two-year programme.

Example 5

Women in the built environment

33 South Yorkshire LSC is also using ESF Co-financing to address sex inequality and labour market segregation that is prevalent in the construction/built environment sector. They are collaborating with Sheffield Hallam University which will link with the South Yorkshire Women's Development Trust and other voluntary and community sector organisations, FE Colleges and training providers, Property Services NTO, and professional bodies - Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). The project aims to increase, and ensure the long-term participation of women from the South Yorkshire region in training, education and employment in the construction and built environment sector.

34 The project will provide built environment professional guidance, through the creation of an innovative

Technical Support and Design Service, for women in Voluntary and Community Sector organisations within the region. It will also deliver accredited courses in construction and the built environment. These courses will consist of taster courses, follow on short introductory courses within the built environment disciplines (to facilitate progression to undergraduate or craft and technician level) and professional development courses to up-skill women currently employed in the sector in response to the national skill shortages.

Example 6

Break the Mould

Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC in partnership with Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland is developing a 'Break the Mould' initiative to promote non-stereotypical career choices for women and men. The project aims to raise awareness of career/job options beyond existing stereotypes, and raise awareness of equal opportunities issues among a range of target audiences including 14-16 year olds in schools, employers and training providers, teachers and careers advisers. It consists of case studies of women and men in non-stereotypical roles and will be used in a variety of formats. Email: emma.davies@connexionslr.co.uk

Example 7

35 JIVE (Joint Interventions) Partners - partnership working to create change for women in traditionally male dominated sectors

36 JIVE is a national Development Partnership, which aims to break down gender segregation in the engineering, construction and technology sectors by developing and piloting new approaches that tackle the barriers preventing women from pursuing careers in these sectors:

- gender stereotyping in careers advice and recruitment
- unsupportive environments in education and training institutions
- organisational culture and attitudes of businesses
- lack of peer-group support.

37 JIVE will build on successful experience developed in the Let's TWIST (Train Women In Science and Technology) partnership that developed a holistic approach to tackling gender segregation in these sectors. JIVE will operate in some of the most segregated sectors in the labour market - Engineering Construction, the Built Environment and Construction and Technology, including technical ICT - which are also experiencing skill shortages. JIVE will operate through four regional (Yorkshire and the Humber, London, the South-East and Wales) and one sectoral (engineering construction) hub. The project will involve:

- further developing and delivering Let's TWIST training to lecturers, trainers and careers advice and guidance staff to overcome gender stereotyping in these areas
- developing and piloting a new equality cultural audit tool with employers in engineering, construction, property services and ICT sectors
- developing mentoring networks to provide peer-group support to girls and women
- delivering positive action training to upskill women users of ICT applications to work as Microsoft Engineers

- sharing experience in tackling segregation in highly-segregated sectors through joint working with partners in Germany, Austria, France, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

the County for women using a national training organisation which specialises in training for women. This is a good example of equality proofing leading to positive action.

38 The project will assess the recruitment process, the training environment and the employers who offer placements for these women and involve them in mentoring as both mentees and mentors. It will contribute to equality of opportunity by providing a model for breaking down barriers and tackling stereotyping in some of the most male-dominated environments in Britain.

39 JIVE Partners are Bradford College as lead partner, Sheffield Hallam University, the Open University, Engineering Construction Industry Training Board, Property Services NTO, the Women's Training Network, Oxford Women's Training Scheme, Women's Education in Building, Cardiff Women's Workshop in Wales and the Equal Opportunities Commission. For further details of the JIVE project contact: Annette Williams, Bradford College. Tel. 01274 753355 a.williams@bilk.ac.uk

Example 8

40 Cumbria LSC established a women's group for local women managers chaired by the female manager of the Employment Service to look at issues relating to sex equality in the County. Initial research indicated a very low representation of women at senior management and at the second tier of management in the County. The results suggested that there are six times as many men as women in top management positions and almost twice as many men in the second tier of management. The resulting initiative involved awareness raising work with local radio and local newspapers and a small sub group was set up to look at providing specific training in

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Annex 1

Modern Apprenticeships Participation by Framework and Sex

Sector	Number in training as % of all on:		% of young women in:	
	AMA	FMA	AMA	FMA
Engineering Manufacturing	13	-	4	2
Business Administration	11	15	81	77
Customer Service	8	11	69	67
Construction	7	7	1	2
Motor Industry	7	4	1	2
Electrical Installation and Engineering	7	#	1	*
Hotel & Catering	7	11	50	50
Health and Social Care	6	6	89	89
Hairdressing	6	10	93	94
Retailing	4	13	58	60
Childcare	4	3	98	96
Accountancy	3	1	61	58
Plumbing	2	1	1	1
Travel Service	2	#	89	84
Telecommunications	1	#	14	58
Information Technology	1	4	22	16
Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	1	#	1	1
Printing	1	#	7	9
Road Haulage and Distribution	1	#	14	18
Management	1	#	59	*

Data relates to numbers in training on 25 March 2001 # = less than 0.5% *= not applicable

This table shows the significant imbalances in participation of young men and women across twenty selected sectors. It shows (a) the relative size of each sector in terms of numbers in training as a proportion of all Foundation or Advanced MAs and (b) the proportion of young women in training. For example, 13% of all Advanced MAs are in the engineering manufacturing sector, and 2% of AMAs in this sector are women.

In addition to Equality and Diversity Impact Measures, mechanisms are being put in place across the LSC network to enable colleagues at local LSC level to access standard reports by sex and other learner characteristics. They will also allow cross-referencing to other issues eg disability/ethnicity.

Source: DfES Work Based Training for Young People Trainee Database

Data featured in Annex D: Modern Apprenticeships The Way to Work, September 2001

Annex 2

Occupational Levels of the Workforce by Sex:

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey (Autumn 2001 - United Kingdom)

**Proportion of those in employment who work in the following occupations
(thousands, per cent of all in employment)**

	WOMEN	MEN	ALL
All people of working age in employment (000s)	12126	15299	27425
Higher managerial and professional	903 8%	2608 18%	3511 13%
Lower managerial and professional	3582 31%	3639 25%	7221 27%
Intermediate occupations	2444 21%	967 7%	3411 13%
Small employers and own account workers	523 5%	1663 11%	2187 8%
Lower supervisory and technical	791 7%	2279 15%	3070 12%
Semi-routine occupations	2271 20%	1650 11%	3921 15%
Routine occupations	1047 9%	1980 13%	3027 11%

Base: All people of working age (men 16-64, women 16-59)

Source: Women and Equality Unit, Cabinet Office, February 2002

Sources

- 1 Trends in Female Employment, C Bower, 2000.
- 2 Women's incomes over the lifetime – the mother gap, The Women's Unit, 2000.
- 3 National Management Salary Survey 2000, Remuneration Economics, 2000.
- 4 Recent Research on Gender and Educational Performance, Office for Standards in Education, 1998.
- 5 Social Focus on Young People, Office for National Statistics, 2000.

Other relevant publications

The Work-Life Balance, Equal Opportunities Commission, Women and Men in Britain series.

The Labour Market, Equal Opportunities Commission, Women and Men in Britain series.

Towards a balanced workforce, Austin Knight UK Limited, 1996.

Pay and Income, Equal Opportunities Commission, Women and Men in Britain series.

Reeds Skills Shortages Index, 1998.

Breaking the barriers: women in senior management in the UK, Opportunity Now, 2000.

EOC published a guidance pack on what schools can do to address sex inequality.

This can be located at www.EOC.org.uk

Initiatives to encourage young women into maths and science:-
www.wisecampaign.org.cuk

Useful Websites

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/womens-unit/research

www.equality.org.uk/

www.eoc.org.uk/

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/genderandachievement

www.connexions.gov.uk

www.engc.org.uk

Notes

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