

# **Gender segregation in apprenticeships**

**Linda Miller, Emma Pollard,  
Fiona Neathey, Darcy Hill  
and Helen Ritchie**

Institute for Employment Studies



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Social Fund



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2003, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) launched a General Formal Investigation into gender segregation in five occupational areas where there are skills shortages: construction, engineering, information and communication technologies (ICT) and plumbing (all male-dominated), and childcare (female-dominated). The investigation is being undertaken with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).

This research focuses on apprenticeships. Previously called Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), these are currently the main vocational training route into work for young people in Britain.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the research was to investigate what the National Learning and Skills Council (NLSC) and its local arms (LLSCs) have done within the 'investigation sectors' to address gender segregation in MAs. A further aim was to consider the actions taken by partner organisations that work with LLSCs, such as training providers, employers, the Connexions service, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the Education Business Partnerships (EBPs).<sup>2</sup>

The research had three elements: interviews with representatives of the sectors, the National LSC (NLSC) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI); a survey of all LLSC offices in England (42 out of the 47 responded); and case studies conducted in five LLSC regions (Birmingham and Solihull; North Yorkshire; London North; London South; and Devon and Cornwall).

## KEY FINDINGS

### Gender segregation in apprenticeships

Patterns of gender segregation in MA registrations across Britain mirror those seen in employment. The five investigation sectors are both amongst the most strongly segregated and those in which substantial skills shortfalls are reported. Indeed, at least two-thirds of the LLSCs that were surveyed reported some or extreme skills shortages in four of the five sectors: childcare, construction, plumbing and engineering. The majority of LLSCs also reported similar findings for ICT.

Sixty per cent of LLSCs regarded gender segregation as one of their priority issues. Nearly half (20) had taken action to address segregation in MAs in one or more of the investigation sectors. However, the proportion that had done so was much higher in

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<sup>1</sup> Partway through the research, Foundation Modern Apprenticeships were renamed Apprenticeships and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships were renamed Advanced Apprenticeships.

<sup>2</sup> A few EBPs are now called Business Education Partnerships (BEPs).



some sectors than in others. Around two-fifths of LLSCs had taken some action in engineering and construction; however, only about a quarter had done so in childcare, a fifth in plumbing and 12 per cent in ICT.

Some LLSCs were also involved in national projects, such as JIVE and GERI, or were working with SSCs, while a number reported taking action to address gender segregation in non-investigation sectors.

Thirty LLSCs were able to provide data on the numbers of females and males starting and completing MAs in the five investigation sectors. However, many were unable to do so for all five, in particular for plumbing and ICT, in part because the various systems to collate and report statistics were not fully compatible.

No LLSC reported that it collected pay data for apprenticeships.

Three-quarters of LLSCs with Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) in place had developed one or more of these measures to address gender segregation. However, many of these either related to general intentions to raise the participation and attainment of young men in education and training, or were not focused on work-based learning.

LLSCs also experienced some conflict in prioritising their efforts, and reported that a lack of time, resources and specialist knowledge impeded their efforts to address gender segregation.

It was thought that the newer emphasis on completions, rather than starts, might make providers more cautious about recruiting apprentices from under-represented groups, since they might be perceived as being less likely to complete.

In addition to the systemic barriers identified above, interviewees and respondents in all stages of the research were agreed that there are a number of major barriers confronting organisations seeking to challenge gender segregation, both in general and specifically in MAs. These are:

- Traditional attitudes regarding the proper jobs for women and men.
- Social stereotypes.
- The poor image of some sectors.
- The attitudes of employers.

Two further barriers affecting MAs were also identified. These were the lack of apprenticeship places, which is likely to impact more on under-represented groups than on applicants from majority groups; and the fact that training providers typically only become involved with apprentices after they have been recruited by employers. This restricts their ability to influence the diversity of apprentices recruited.

LLSCs, SSCs and training providers were agreed that funding incentives need to be put in place to encourage efforts to attract apprentices from under-represented groups.

### **LLSCs partner organisations**

The case study research revealed a range of activities being undertaken by LLSCs, training providers, EBPs, SSCs, employers and the Connexions service. These actions included developing publicity materials; commissioning drama productions to raise the profile of the sectors and encourage applications from under-represented groups; and providing hands-on experience of these sectors to young people at school. Difficulties encountered by organisations in undertaking this work included a shortage of funding for the development of publicity materials (and a lack of knowledge regarding where to seek such funding), and a shortage of role models to feature in publicity materials.

LLSCs have contractual relationships with colleges, work-based learning providers and EBPs and were able to use this means to influence these partners. However, they saw employers, the Connexions service, SSCs and parents as being particularly well-placed to help reduce gender segregation in training and employment, but felt that they themselves were largely not able to influence these groups.

A number of LLSCs identified projects initiated in their regions by partners such as SSCs and training providers. Case study visits provided examples of providers' activities that were designed to recruit atypical groups. Some providers had also designed new 'feeder' programmes to encourage women to take courses that could provide entry routes to MAs or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), while others were offering training and support to employers in equal opportunities and diversity.

The survey and case studies revealed a range of practice amongst Connexions services. Some were actively seeking to challenge gender stereotyped views amongst the young people with whom they worked, but others did not believe it was appropriate either to do this, or to suggest that young people consider atypical areas of training or employment.

### **Government programmes**

As part of the survey, LLSCs were asked whether various government programmes that were being piloted, or had recently been introduced, would contribute towards challenging gender segregation in apprenticeships.

LLSCs were cautious about the extent to which the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme would result in more atypical recruits to apprenticeship programmes. However, several noted that it was helping to provide young people with the opportunity to experience a wide range of employment opportunities and evidence from the case study interviews with providers indicated that the initiative is proving successful in encouraging young people to try out atypical areas of work. In some cases, young people were gaining NVQ units in non-traditional areas while on the programme, and there were examples of them subsequently moving into apprenticeships.

There was no evidence that the Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) were providing an entry route into apprenticeships for atypical groups. Given that this programme is focused on older workers, it is unlikely to provide an entry route to apprenticeships in general until the age cap on apprenticeships has been removed.<sup>3</sup>

While the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) could be focused towards the needs of priority groups, only one LLSC had used the funding to encourage women to consider an atypical area, and so it was not possible to determine whether the programme would have any longer term impact on the recruitment of atypical groups.

### **Recruitment and employment of apprentices**

Since 2003, apprentices have mostly needed to be in employment in order to commence an apprenticeship. Almost all partners saw this as a barrier to increasing the diversity of the apprentice population. A shortage of starter jobs limited the number of apprenticeship places available, and any such shortage of places was likely to impact more heavily on under-represented groups. The large number of small employers in construction and plumbing also restricted the availability of places. Providers and SSCs were nonetheless keen to retain employed status for apprentices.

The research revealed that some employers continue to discriminate against apprentices from under-represented groups in both overt and more subtle ways.

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<sup>3</sup> In May 2004, two months after the conclusion of the fieldwork for this project, the government announced that it was scrapping the age limit on apprenticeships.

A number of apprentices who were interviewed reported that they lacked information about vocational options. This could in part be a reflection of the lack of consistency across LLSCs in terms of the provision of local labour market information (LMI). Only 17 made LMI available.

Funding problems had led to shortages in the numbers of college places available in some vocational areas. In one of the case study areas, a new feeder route programme had been designed to encourage women to move into construction trades, only for the intended destination NVQ programmes to close at the college.

Several young female apprentices had experienced bullying from other apprentices and one had been driven from her apprenticeship as a result. Training providers and LLSCs were concerned about the social isolation of apprentices from under-represented groups and some had taken actions to address this issue.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

On the basis of the evidence presented in the report, the authors make a number of suggestions:

### **Sound data collection**

- LLSC management information systems are upgraded as a priority.
- Staff development is provided for LLSC staff to ensure that they are fully able to utilise existing systems and, subsequently, any new system introduced.

### **Targets**

- The NLSC and LLSCs make better use of EDIMs to tackle gender segregation in sectors experiencing skills shortages.

### **Careers advisory roles**

- Induction, training and continuing development programmes for those in careers advisory roles are reviewed to ensure that a proactive approach is taken to promoting young people's options.

### **Information on vocational options**

- Further research is needed with young people to determine the extent to which they currently obtain information on vocational options, the routes they use to do so and the ways in which access to information may be improved.

### **Funding issues**

- Specific, ring-fenced, targeted, premium funding is provided centrally to enable LLSCs to take action to address gender segregation in apprenticeships. This is in line with the arguments made by the LLSCs themselves

### **Pay data**

- The NLSC considers the best way in which to collect and report data on pay rates for apprentices; this might be possible through slight changes to the Labour Force Survey, or more readily obtained directly from employers as part of the apprentice registration process.
- Whichever approach is adopted, such data should be reported by gender, ethnicity and disability.
- All other SSCs are encouraged to follow the good example of those sectors which have ensured that there are publicly reported pay rates for apprentices.

### **Key role for employers**

- LLSCs work with employers to encourage them to make a commitment to interview atypical applicants who meet selection criteria.
- LLSCs investigate the possibility of bringing together small employers to share the costs and benefits of an apprentice and co-ordinate this process if it is feasible.
- LLSCs and training providers work with employers to improve workplace culture and support mechanisms for trainees from under-represented groups.

### **Good practice dissemination**

- The NLSC should take the lead in facilitating wider national dissemination of local successes. For example, it could establish a web-page at which LLSCs, training providers, EBPs and SSCs can post details of actions that are being tried out around the country, details of how they are being monitored, and, in due course, the extent of their success.
- Ideas for sources of funding for actions could also be placed on this web-page.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

In June 2003, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) launched a General Formal Investigation into gender segregation in five occupational sectors where there are skills shortages: construction, plumbing, engineering, information and communication technology (ICT), and childcare. These five 'investigation sectors' remain amongst the most strongly segregated. In the case of construction, plumbing and engineering, and to a slightly lesser extent in ICT, the vast majority of the workforce is male. In contrast, in childcare, women account for the overwhelming majority of employees. The investigation is being undertaken with funding from the European Social Fund (ESF).

Gender segregation in employment is of concern for two other reasons: segregation into different areas of work remains a key factor contributing to the gender gap in earnings (Forth, 2002); and gender segregation contributes to continuing skills deficits in the UK (Hewitt, 2001).<sup>1</sup>

The remit of the investigation also includes education and training. Previously called Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), apprenticeships are currently the main vocational training route into work for young people in Britain.<sup>2</sup> The White Paper *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills - Realising Our Potential* (DfES, 2003) identified particular skills deficits in intermediate skills at apprenticeship, technician, higher craft and associate professional level. These are the levels for which MAs prepare young people.

The EOC has commissioned a series of research studies to support the investigation. The first of these was carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES). This work consisted of a review of research and an analysis of current labour market and training statistics in the five investigation sectors (Miller, Neathey, Pollard and Hill, 2004) and confirmed the extent of gender segregation in employment. It also revealed that MAs in these sectors remain extremely gender segregated.

In August 2003, the EOC also commissioned IES to conduct the second of the investigation research studies. As outlined in Chapter 2, its aim was to build on

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<sup>1</sup> On the basis of an analysis of the National Employers Skills Survey (Institute for Employment Research and IFF Research Ltd, 2004), the EOC concluded in its Phase One investigation report that there was a relationship between the under-representation of women in occupations and skills shortages (EOC, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Part of the way through the research, the names for these awards were changed to apprenticeships (formerly Foundation Modern Apprenticeships) and Advanced Apprenticeships (formerly Advanced Modern Apprenticeships).

earlier research on MAs, as well as the evidence uncovered in the first study, by investigating the actions that have been taken within these five sectors to address gender segregation in MAs. The main focus of the research was the actions taken by Local Learning and Skills Councils (LLSCs) in England to tackle gender segregation in MAs, since LLSCs have the primary responsibility for funding training and overseeing provider performance. A further aim was to consider the actions taken by the partner organisations that work with LLSCs, such as training providers, employers, the Connexions service, Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the Education Business Partnerships (EBPs).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Gender segregation in MAs

At present, patterns of gender segregation in registrations for MAs mirror those seen in employment. This has been the case since the introduction of MAs in 1995, as previous research has shown.

In May 1998, the HOST consultancy examined gender imbalances in MAs for the, then, Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Local Government National Training Organisation (LGNTO). The researchers concluded that, rather than helping to break down gender stereotype barriers, MAs were adding to the problem of gender segregation in the labour market. The research indicated that social conditioning, parental and peer pressure, and fear of being 'different' from their friends, were barriers to young people moving into 'atypical' apprenticeships; while resource pressures, competing priorities and lack of monitoring information restricted the attempts of the, then, National Training Organisations (NTOs) to take action on gender imbalance. The study also found that, where action was taken to tackle gender imbalance, most often this was 'unilateral' - it was taken by NTOs, or by providers working on their own. The study observed that, to be most effective, initiatives needed to be co-operative and involve several stakeholders. In addition, the report observed that effective action would most likely be locally based and:

*... informed by sound intelligence and in particular mapping the nature of imbalances and defining key sectors or geographical areas that need to be targeted.*

(DfEE/LGNTO, 1998, p. 29).

A memorandum submitted to the Select Committee on Education and Employment by the NTO for engineering manufacturing (EMTA) also noted the strong gender segregation in the engineering sector (EMTA, 1998). It observed, furthermore, that while the image of engineering is a barrier to both women and ethnic minority groups,

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<sup>3</sup> A few EBPs are now called Business Education Partnerships (BEPs).

discrimination by some employers might also be a factor, particularly discrimination based on the belief that women are 'not suitable' for engineering. Its report concluded with a list of the various initiatives EMTA had undertaken to promote careers in engineering. These included the provision of resource packs for primary schools; videos to promote engineering in general and MAs in particular; support for New Deal advisors; and training packages for small and medium-sized enterprises.

In 1999, the, then, DfEE published research on the extent to which TECs (Training and Enterprise Councils, the forerunner organisations to the current LLSCs) were prioritising the issue of gender segregation within MAs (Quality and Performance Improvement Division, 1999). In particular, the study investigated whether TECs felt that they should address gender segregation in MAs and, if so, what their strategy was for doing so. It also considered the extent to which TECs were working with the careers service and with providers to tackle gender segregation and with employers to encourage non-discriminatory practices in recruitment. The research found that:

- The main priority equal opportunities issue for TECs was the under-representation of people from ethnic minorities, with the under-achievement of young males and social exclusion of people with disabilities gaining increasing importance.
- The success in increasing the overall number of females participating in MAs meant that the gender-segregated nature of participation tended to assume a lower priority.
- While gender stereotyping was seen as a constraint on young women, the tendency of men to be clustered in some occupations and absent from others was not seen as being problematic by TECs.
- Not all TECs used their management information systems and monitoring procedures to establish the participation rates of young women and men across different sectors of employment.
- TEC review and audit procedures of providers did not give a high priority to equal opportunities and the challenging of gender stereotypes.

Two years later, the government commissioned Sir John Cassels to head a committee which was tasked with reviewing MAs. At the time of its report (Cassels, 2001), there had been little change in patterns of segregation. The Cassels Review reported the participation rates for male and female apprentices across 20 frameworks, based on DfES data that were then available for work-based training



participation by MA framework and gender (see Table 1.1). Noting the extremely gender-segregated nature of these entry patterns to MAs, the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (MAAC) recommended that:

*... concerted action [be taken] to address imbalances between the participation of young men and young women in particular sectors.*  
(Cassels, 2001, p. 46).

**Table 1.1 Female share of Modern Apprentices in training, England, 2001**

Sector	Per cent:	
	Advanced MAs	Foundation MAs
Engineering manufacturing	2	3
Business administration	81	77
Customer service	69	67
Construction	1	2
Motor industry	1	2
Electrical installation	1	*
Hotel and catering	50	50
Health and social care	89	89
Hairdressing	93	94
Retailing	58	60
Childcare	98	96
Accountancy	61	58
Plumbing	1	1
Travel services	89	84
Telecommunications	14	58
Information technology	22	16
Heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration	1	1
Printing	7	9
Road haulage and distribution	14	18
Management	59	*

*Notes:* Data are for young women.

*Source:* Cassels (2001), *Annex D: participation by framework and gender*.

Since the completion of the fieldwork for this study in March 2004, the EOC has also published its Phase 1 investigation report. This investigated the extent of gender segregation in the workplace and on MAs and its relationship to skills shortages. The

report highlighted sectoral and systemic barriers that are serving to perpetuate occupational segregation in MA training and work and are inhibiting the sustainability and success of local good practice. It recommended a range of early actions to break down these barriers because of evidence that the under-representation of women in key sectors of the economy is a major factor in skills shortages and is undermining productivity. Government and stakeholders have been invited to respond to the recommendations, in particular the call for a new national cross-government strategy to challenge occupational segregation (EOC, 2004).

### **1.3 Current statistics on MAs**

The Cassels Review had been able to obtain statistics for these frameworks broken down to show participation by gender. These statistics were obtained from the DfES. However, between the reporting of the Cassels Review and 2003, when the first of the INVESTIGATION studies was conducted, responsibility for collating and reporting statistics on MAs had passed from the DfES to the National Learning and Skills Council (NLSC).

Miller et al. (2004) found that, as a result, statistics for MAs broken down by gender were no longer routinely made available in the public domain. Since the completion of the fieldwork for this report, however, an important new website has been developed by the NLSC to give up to date information on apprenticeship frameworks.

Data are now available on this website to show the total number of starts for each apprenticeship framework in each LLSC area. In each case, the female proportion of starts is shown (as is the proportion of starts made by people with disabilities and by ethnic minorities).<sup>4</sup> The latest available data on starts in England as a whole are shown in Table 1.2.

In keeping with the observations of the 1998 DfEE/LGNTTO report, these figures still largely reflect the general proportions of women and men employed in these sectors. For example, virtually all those starting construction, electrotechnical, engineering, motor industry and plumbing apprenticeships were male. Conversely, almost all those starting apprenticeship in early years care and education, hairdressing, and health and social care were female. Thus the data show that little progress has been made since the Cassels Review concluded and suggest that, at current rates of qualification and entry to the labour market, and in the absence of any further action,

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<sup>4</sup> The website is available at: <http://maframeworks.lsc.gov.uk/cgi-bin/wms.pl/26>

apprenticeships will have little impact on the current segregation of the labour market.

**Table 1.2 Modern Apprenticeships starts, England, 2002-03**

Sector framework	Advanced MAs		Foundation MAs	
	Total starts	Female share	Total starts	Female share
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Accountancy	1,337	63.1	1,380	63.6
Aviation	1,041	6.0	45	62.2
Business administration	3,081	81.1	15,169	76.1
Construction	1,694	1.9	10,536	0.7
Customer service	4,216	68.4	12,054	67.9
Early years care and education	3,360	97.5	5,324	97.0
Electrotechnical	3,491	0.4	881	1.0
Engineering	5,842	3.1	5,768	6.0
Hairdressing	1,798	92.8	12,096	92.3
Health and social care	2,774	87.7	6,976	90.0
Hospitality	4,352	49.0	20,608	52.1
Information technology and electronic services	697	13.2	2,925	17.2
Management	1,241	61.7	34	50.0
Motor industry	5,588	1.4	4,282	1.4
Plumbing	991	0.6	2,094	0.7
Retail	1,660	64.2	12,002	67.4
Road haulage and distribution	254	11.0	820	10.9
Sports, recreation and allied occupations	738	39.7	3,451	37.1
Telecommunications	999	16.1	295	26.8
Travel services	2,023	89.9	177	82.5
Wholesale distribution, warehousing and storage	92	9.8	2,117	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,661</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>129,006</b>	<b>53.0</b>

*Notes:* Data are for periods 1-12 (August 2002 - July 2003). The frameworks shown are those in which there were a minimum of 1,000 MA starts in total during this period.

*Source:* National Learning and Skills Council website.

Similar figures for the five investigation sectors were reported for Scotland by Miller et al. (2004). Further evidence was provided by another recent study (Thomson, McKay and Gillespie, 2004), which was commissioned by EOC Scotland to support the investigation. This found that, in Scotland, men predominate in the sectors in which apprenticeships have traditionally been found, such as engineering and plumbing. However, women form the majority of those in MA frameworks for occupations in which the notion of training through apprenticeship is a new one, such as business administration and hairdressing.

#### **1.4 LLSCs and their partner organisations**

##### *Learning and Skills Councils*

In April 2001, the National and local Learning and Skills Councils were formed and took on the majority of the responsibilities that previously were the remit of the Training and Enterprise Councils. They fund all post-16 provision outside HE. Thus their remit extends to school sixth forms and sixth form colleges as well as further education colleges, specialist colleges and work-based learning providers.

The NLSC sets policy and takes a strategic role nationally, while its local offices (there are 47 at present) implement those policies locally within the region they serve. However, LLSCs are able to take strategic decisions that relate to the particular needs of their locality. This includes taking actions to respond to local skills needs, for instance by deciding to fund more courses or places in particular occupational areas in which there are local skills deficits.

In addition to funding post-16 continuing education, the other key role of LLSCs is to oversee the performance of local providers (colleges, work-based learning organisations etc.) including the way in which these providers are promoting equality as part of their provision. LLSCs are the co-ordinating bodies to which providers submit self-assessment reports and to which the Adult Learning Inspectorate and (for some institutions, primarily but not exclusively, school sixth forms and sixth form colleges) Ofsted submit their post-inspection reports.

It should also be noted that the NLSC is one of the few public sector bodies which has a duty to promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

##### *Adult Learning Inspectorate*

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) undertakes inspections of post-16 vocational training provision. Its role is the same as that of Ofsted within the schools sector. Some institutions (those running both academic and vocational stream qualifications) may be inspected by both ALI and Ofsted.

The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) sets out the seven areas within which inspectors will consider the performance of training providers. The seven questions that inspectors consider are as follows:

- How well do learners achieve?
- How effective are teaching, training and learning?
- How are achievement and learning affected by resources?
- How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learning?
- How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?
- How well are learners guided and supported?
- How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

The area of 'leadership and management' includes consideration of the extent to which institutions are achieving equality objectives. Post-inspection reports on training provider performance are forwarded to LLSCs to inform their decisions regarding provider performance and funding.

#### *Education Business Partnerships*

Although some EBPs have a longer history, the majority were established during the 1990s, with the following aims:

- Preparing young people for the world of work in particular and adult life in general.
- Raising teacher awareness of the world of work and the work-related curriculum.
- Contributing to the raising of standards of achievement via work-related contents.
- Supporting the business community in its need to create a world class competitive workforce for the future.
- Promoting the benefit of lifelong learning.

There are now 138 EBPs across the 11 regions of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There is a range of models for their operation, but in general the term refers to a partnership between educational and business organisations aimed at developing and promoting sustained links for the benefit of students, local schools and colleges. They contract with LLSCs to offer the following services:

- Work experience.
- Mentoring.
- Visits to the workplace.
- Enterprise activity.
- Professional development for teachers.

### *Sector Skills Councils*

At the time of the research, the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were being formed. Their role will be to take on the responsibilities that had previously been the remit of NTOs and, prior to that, of the Occupational Standards Councils, Industry Lead Bodies and Industry Training Boards. This includes overseeing qualification development, so that awards are appropriate for the purposes of their sector, and training provision. Of particular interest in the context of this research is the role of SSCs as overseers of the frameworks for MAs, and their relationships with employers in seeking to promote the availability and uptake of MA training places. Their contract with the NLSC includes agreements regarding target intake numbers for MAs in any one year.

A formal proposal from the intended sector body to the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) is required before an SSC can be established. The proposal includes the details of any targets to be achieved by the SSC for apprenticeships. If this is approved, the SSC receives a licence. At the time the interviews were conducted, only three SSCs, SEMTA (covering engineering), ConstructionSkills (construction) and e-skills UK (ICT) had attained SSC status. The SSC licensing process in plumbing and childcare had been significantly delayed and was still ongoing, although there was optimism that SummitSkills (plumbing) would receive its licence in the next few months. During the transfer period, most of its resources had been focused on the requirements of the licensing process and with maintaining existing projects. Uncertainty remained regarding where childcare would fit within the future SSC structure and when an application for approval would be submitted. At the time

of the interview, therefore, the Early Years National Training Organisation (EYNT0) was engaged in a holding operation to provide some continuity in the sector.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.5 Structure of the report**

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used in the research. Chapter 3 discusses which groups should play the key role in tackling gender segregation and considers their incentives for action. Chapter 4 describes what LLSCs and other bodies have done to tackle gender segregation in MAs. Chapter 5 examines barriers to progress, both generally in reducing gender segregation and specifically in MAs. Chapter 6 discusses the actions taken by stakeholders to challenge stereotypical views. Chapter 7 considers issues affecting the recruitment and employment of apprentices. Chapter 8 presents the conclusions and outlines the suggestions of the research team regarding the way forward.

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<sup>5</sup> SummitSkills has now been licensed as the SSC to cover plumbing.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The current study consisted of three components:

- Interviews were conducted in September or October 2003 with key stakeholders within the sectors, the SSCs and the NTOs; the NLSC; and the ALI.
- A survey was carried out of all 47 LLSCs in England in late 2003.
- Case studies were undertaken between January and March 2004 in five LLSC regions in which good practice had been identified by the survey.

### 2.1 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with:

- SEMTA - the science, engineering and manufacturing SSC.
- CITB-ConstructionSkills - one of the partner organisations within ConstructionSkills, the construction industry SSC.
- e-skills UK - the SSC for the information technology and communications sector.
- SummitSkills - the organisation that was in the process of submitting a proposal to become the SSC for the plumbing, heating and ventilation sector.
- EYNT0, which was fulfilling a 'caretaker' role while issues concerning the composition of the SSC for the childcare sector were being resolved.

Seven representatives of the SSCs/NTOs were interviewed face-to-face about the issues relating to MAs and gender segregation within their sectors, with a further three contributions by telephone interview and e-mailed questionnaire. In the following sections, we typically refer to the sectoral interviewees as 'the SSCs' or 'SSC representatives'; where we do so, we mean by this the representatives of the three sector skills councils, the provisional sector skills council and the NTO.

#### *Interviews with the NLSC and ALI*

The NLSC and ALI representatives were asked more general questions about their priorities and actions relating to MAs and gender segregation and issues regarding implementation and quality assurance.



## 2.2 Postal survey of LLSCs

A postal survey of all 47 LLSCs in England was conducted. The draft questionnaire had been piloted with officers of four LLSCs prior to distribution and some modifications were made to it as a result of this process. The option of electronic completion and return was also made available where required. The survey returns were confidential and responses from individual LLSC survey responses are not identified in this report.

The survey asked for five types of information:

- Estimates of skills gaps and the ability of local providers to meet training needs.
- Data relating to numbers of females and males in MAs in the locality and current pay rates.
- Descriptions of local initiatives undertaken by the LLSC and/or by partner organisations.
- Any evidence that national pilots operating at the time of the survey were impacting on gender segregation.
- Views on the parties best placed to counteract gender segregation and the methods that LLSCs found most effective in encouraging partner organisations to take action to challenge gender segregation.

At the suggestion of one of the LLSC officers who had piloted the questionnaire, questions on the Adult Learning Grant and on special projects were also included. Another suggested requesting information on modern apprenticeships separately for the age groups 16-19 and 19 and over, as LLSCs themselves reported these groups separately. In order to meet a request from the DfES, questions were also included about the extent to which the Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) and Entry to Employment (E2E) had revealed examples of good practice in addressing gender segregation. It should be noted that both were relatively new government initiatives and that, as their name implies, the ETPs were still being piloted at the time of the research.

The survey was circulated in October 2003. For a number of reasons, that included the survey coinciding with the provider performance review, the initial response rate was disappointing and the survey was therefore re-circulated at the end of November, this time with a request from the NLSC that those LLSCs that had not so

far responded should do so. This generated further responses and in total, 42 questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 89 per cent.

### **2.3 Case study research**

The information from the LLSC survey was used to identify five regions for the subsequent good practice case studies. While the research was primarily designed to gain information on the actions taken by LLSCs themselves, the EOC was also interested in gaining information on actions taken by other organisations in the region (primarily providers). This information was therefore also taken into account in the selection process. The three considerations influencing the selection were:

- The range of initiatives reported by each LLSC in its survey response.
- The number of atypical apprentices (i.e. apprentices from the under-represented gender) currently registered in each LLSC region.
- The geographical distribution of the LLSCs.

Using this information, the EOC selected five LLSC regions for the case studies in discussion with the research team: London North, Birmingham and Solihull, North Yorkshire, Devon and Cornwall, and London South.<sup>6</sup>

In each case study, the intention was to interview, where possible:

- Representatives of the local LSC.
- Representatives of the local Connexions office.
- Representatives of the local college or training provider at which the atypical apprentices were registered.
- Employers of the atypical apprentice(s).
- Apprentices.

### **2.4 Reporting data**

Throughout the report, we adopt the following convention in reporting data obtained in the various phases of the work:

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that, due to the research being funded through the ESF Objective 3, regions that are in receipt of Objective 1 ESF funding (e.g. South Yorkshire and Merseyside), had to be excluded from the case study phase.

- As indicated in section 2.2, responses to the postal survey of LLSCs were anonymous, and therefore are not attributed to individual LLSCs, except where specific good examples of information or practice already in the public domain are cited.
- Comments from interviews with SSC representatives are attributed to the relevant SSC.
- Where information on good practice from case study interviews with LLSC, provider, EBP and Connexions representatives is cited, these are identified in the report.
- Where examples of poor practice were identified during the case study visits, we have not identified the region from which the comment originated.
- The very small numbers of female atypical apprentices in the regions visited would render them particularly prone to identification were either the location or the occupational sector to be given. For this reason, we do not give any details regarding our female apprentices other than whether they were undertaking a foundation or advanced modern apprenticeship.
- The quotes from interviewees were checked with respondents in July and August 2005 and were subsequently modified as necessary; thus all the statements made relate to that period.

### 3. THE CONTEXT FOR ACTION ON GENDER SEGREGATION

Chapter 3 sets out the broad context within which the local and national stakeholders operate. It starts by considering the nature of local skills shortages, training capacity and the provision of labour market information, as these factors can influence the ways in which LLSCs can address gender segregation. Next, we examine, from the perspective of the LLSCs, the contribution of key groups and organisations in tackling gender segregation at a local level. The final part of the chapter considers the priorities and targets of the local and national stakeholders to assess the degree of priority given to work on segregation.

#### 3.1 Tackling skills shortages

Given that gender segregation has been identified by the EOC as contributing to skills shortages, one of the issues examined as part of the research was the question of whether pervasive local skills shortage led to action being taken either on gender segregation within MAs or in general, and either within the specific sectors examined as part of the investigation or more widely. As demonstrated both by the recent National Employer Skills Survey (Institute for Employment Research/IFF Research Limited, 2004) and the first IES study (Miller et al., 2004), some of the sectors identified for study by the EOC were those for which amongst the most extreme skills shortages had been reported nationally. In some cases, national bodies (such as CITB-ConstructionsSkills in construction and both SEMTA and the ETB for engineering) had made explicit reference to the need for a more diverse recruitment pool to be attracted to the sector if current skills shortages were to be remedied.

LLSCs were therefore asked about the extent to which skills in the five investigation sectors were in demand ('extreme skills shortage' or 'some skills shortage'), skills demand was balanced with supply, or there was skills oversupply ('some skills oversupply' or 'skills oversupply and unemployment') within their locality. Their responses are shown in Table 3.1.

Skills shortages were reported in all five of the named sectors. The most extreme shortages were reported in construction and plumbing. In both cases, almost all LLSCs reported either 'some' or 'extreme' skills shortages. In addition, more than three-quarters of LLSC respondents reported some or extreme skills shortages in engineering and childcare, but around a fifth stated that skill supply matched demand for skills.

In ICT, just over a half of the respondents reported a skills shortfall. This was also the only investigation sector for which any LLSCs reported that there was currently an

oversupply of skills, with four LLSCs reporting some skills oversupply and one reporting skills oversupply and unemployment.

**Table 3.1 Skills shortages in LLSC areas**

Category of response	Per cent:				
	Childcare	Construction	Plumbing	Engineering	ICT
Extreme skills shortage	18	34	32	8	3
Some skills shortage	60	63	65	72	54
Balance between skills supply and demand	23	2	3	21	31
Some skills oversupply	0	0	0	0	10
Skills oversupply and unemployment	0	0	0	0	3
<i>Base:</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>39</i>

*Source:* Survey of LLSCs, 2003.

### 3.2 Enhancing training capacity

As indicated in section 3.1, action to tackle gender segregation may arise from an awareness of local skills shortages. However, skills shortages can arise for many reasons. One reason may be the lack of applicants for courses or programmes offered in areas of skills shortage. However, skills shortages may also arise from capacity constraints in the provision of training places in these areas. Where restricted numbers of training places are available, this can make it much more difficult for any atypical groups to gain access to such courses or programmes.

For this reason, LLSCs were asked to comment on the extent to which local training providers were able to meet demand for courses in the five areas. While there are weaknesses with this measure (there may be sufficient places because there is negligible demand, for example), it nonetheless helps to give a more detailed picture of the source and nature of difficulties in meeting skills requirements. Data were requested for two separate age groups, 16-18 and 19 and over, as the LLSCs' own funding structure differentiates between these two.

Table 3.2 shows that more than three-fifths of LLSCs reported that local training providers were able to meet most or all of the demand from young people for training in three sectors: engineering, ICT and childcare. However, this proportion fell to around two-fifths in construction and only just over a quarter in plumbing. In line with this, plumbing, followed by construction, were also the sectors for which the highest

proportion of LLSCs reported that providers were unable to meet the demand from young people for training.

**Table 3.2 Percentage of LLSCs stating whether demand for training could be met by local providers**

	Per cent:									
	Construction		Childcare		Plumbing		Engineering		ICT	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Not able to meet demand	10	10	5	0	20	18	0	0	5	3
Able to meet some of demand	45	50	33	33	50	55	32	34	26	29
Able to meet most of demand	33	28	44	50	20	18	47	45	45	45
Able to meet all of demand	13	13	18	18	10	10	21	21	24	24
'Most' plus 'all'	45	40	62	68	30	28	68	66	68	68
<i>Base (N):</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>38</i>

*Source:* Survey of LLSCs, 2003.

### 3.3 Providing labour market information

Local LSCs are also charged with distributing up-to-date labour market information (LMI) for their region. Provision of information about the sectors in which jobs are likely to be available (and, conversely, likely to be scarce) is intended to help individuals make decisions about training that will maximise their chances of employment. While the provision of LMI is not directly related to the goal of reducing gender segregation, providing such information may indirectly result in more individuals applying for atypical jobs where they are able to see there is a high demand for employees in those areas.

In the survey, LLSCs were asked whether they provided LMI to young people specifically and, if so, in what ways. Only 17 LLSCs (41 per cent) provided such information. Fourteen out of these 17 did so via intermediary organisations, usually Connexions or schools, although some did so directly. However, there was some confusion amongst LLSCs regarding what they were allowed to do. One replied:

*... [via] Connexions - LSC is not permitted to perform direct delivery of services.*

It was clear that some LLSCs had put a great deal of thought into providing up-to-date LMI for young people in an attractive and accessible format. Two that particularly stood out were those from Coventry and Warwickshire and from Hertfordshire:

**Box 3.1 LLSC labour market information**

Coventry and Warwickshire LLSC has produced a floppy disk that sets out labour market forecasts from 2003-10. The envelope features a photograph of a diverse group of young people.

Hertfordshire LLSC has devised a website (which it runs in conjunction with Job Centre Plus) that contains all relevant information about jobs within the region. The current intention is to update the job trends data until 2008. The data forecast Hertfordshire employment trends by occupation across this timeframe, identifying wholly new jobs as well as those arising from turnover. As well as giving information about the qualifications that are required and the average pay levels, the site also gives information on possibilities for training, average length of service and the level of competition that an individual can typically expect when trying to enter an occupation (see [www.jobtrends.co.uk](http://www.jobtrends.co.uk) for further details).

As indicated above, 14 out of the 17 LLSCs that made labour market information available to young people did so via their local Connexions offices. However, the link between the provision of information about areas of skills shortage and potential employment opportunities was not viewed by all Connexions offices as pertinent to the advice they provided for young people:

*Although we do not work in isolation from the local labour market and we do look at the labour market, skills gaps are not so much a concern for Connexions. Society may need more men in childcare but Connexions are there to support individuals not solve society's problems. However we do work with partners who are concerned about skills gaps.*

Case study interview, Connexions PA

### 3.4 Data collection

#### *Starts and completions on MAs*

LLSCs were asked to supply data on starts and completions on MAs in the five framework areas of interest for the most recent year for which they had information. This section of the questionnaire caused the most difficulties for many respondents.

Thirty-eight of the responding LLSCs (90 per cent) reported that they collected data on males and females starting and completing MAs. Thirty supplied data. However, providing the data broken down by framework and gender caused difficulties for many LLSCs. Some were simply unable to supply data at all at present. One response was that:

*This [information] is not currently available using this sector split but will be available shortly.*

For others, while they were able to supply some data, they were unable to disaggregate it to provide information relating specifically to the areas of interest. The two areas that caused most difficulties were plumbing and ICT. Nine of the 30 LLSCs (30 per cent) which provided us with data were unable to report figures for plumbing. Many reported that statistics for plumbing were collected as part of the construction figures and they were unable to disaggregate these.

Similar difficulties were raised for engineering and ICT. One reported that ICT fed into engineering, while another stated that engineering was included within ICT. Similarly, several LLSCs reported that they could only supply data for clusters (e.g. engineering, technology and manufacturing; health, social care and public administration). This led several to provide data for the health, social care and public services grouping because they were unable to provide figures for childcare on its own. Others were more used to providing composite figures for work-based learning, or for various funding streams, rather than for occupational sectors.

These limitations on data had arisen for historical reasons in some cases. For example, plumbing originally had been part of the construction sector, but by the time this research was conducted had been a separate NTO for many years. Nonetheless, as indicated above, many of the LLSCs continued to collect and report data for plumbing combined with construction. This did not facilitate monitoring by the various sector skills councils:

*I need data on plumbing, not construction. But the construction sector data is all aggregated together ... It means more work for me to get the right stats. So we [SummitSkills] intend to take on registration because we do not get the right stats from the [N]LSC and they say they do not intend to change because of the implications for long-term statistics.*  
SummitSkills

*We are provided with data by the [N]LSC but it is in sector groupings, [engineering in with manufacturing etc.] so we collect our own data by visits to the [L]LSCs ...*  
SEMTA



Attempts were being made to address the difficulties at the time of the research:

*In transferring data collection responsibilities to the [N]LSC, the agreement was to continue with reports in the same format for one year. The data came in from the local TECs, but they all had different computer systems. Data could be broken down by starts, age etc., and this information was sent on to the SSCs.*

*Responsibility for the Statistical First Return was passed to the [N]LSC. But with Modern Apprenticeships the data now need to be interpreted in a more useful way. We are currently trying to resolve this in terms of resourcing.*

*We want to be able to analyse by framework crosstabulated with, for example, ethnicity and local area. But we have not yet reached a decision about how to arrange this. We are intending to set up an Equal Opportunities Working Group with regard to MAs.*  
NLSC

As noted in 1.2, since the completion of the fieldwork, an important new website has been developed by the NLSC to give up to date information on apprenticeship frameworks, including by gender, ethnicity and disability.

#### *Use of data*

LLSCs were asked the purposes for which they used the data that they collected relating to MAs.

**Table 3.3 Use of data collected by LLSCs**

LLSCs using data on	Per cent:			
	Report to National LSC	Evaluate success of local initiatives	Monitor employer performance	Monitor training provider performance
MA registrations	38	57	17	88
MA completions	36	55	17	83

*Notes:* Base = 42.

*Source:* Survey of LLSCs.

Table 3.3 shows that the most frequently-reported use of MA registration and completion data was to monitor training provider performance. The second most frequent use was to evaluate the success of local initiatives. Just over a third used the data to report to the NLSC. Approximately a sixth used the data to monitor employer performance. No LLSC reported that they used this data to report to SSCs.

*Rates of pay*

Earlier research conducted by the EOC in 1999 revealed that rates of pay for apprentices in female-dominated sectors are lower than in male-dominated sectors (EOC, 2001). The EOC had obtained data on pay from a small number of TECs that had collected this information. It is currently not possible to obtain this information through analysis of the Labour Force Survey; neither is it a requirement for LLSCs to collect or make available as part of LMI, information on rates of pay in MAs. However, given that at least a small number of the TECs that had preceded the LLSCs had collected this information, it was of interest to determine whether any LLSCs were in fact currently collecting data on rates of pay for MAs. However, no LLSCs that responded to the survey reported that they were collecting these data.

**3.5 Key groups for tackling gender segregation**

A wide range of groups and organisations other than LLSCs can play a part in challenging gender segregation at a local level. These include parents, schools, colleges, employers, work-based learning providers, the SSCs and NTOs, EBPs, and Connexions. LLSCs were asked in the survey to identify how influential each of these partner organisations was considered to be in challenging gender segregation. While the survey findings confirmed the importance of all of them, some were considered more influential than others.

LLSCs saw three of these partners - employers, Connexions, and SSCs - as being particularly influential, but other groups, including colleges, work-based learning providers, the NLSC, schools and EBPs were also viewed as being in a strong position to challenge gender segregation. Parents were seen as very influential, and many acknowledged that LLSCs themselves could be influences in this regard. However, there was no clear consensus regarding the extent to which any one group or organisation might be in the strongest position to challenge gender segregation, and this probably reflects that fact that all parties have a role to play. The need for all parties to be involved was reflected in the comments made by respondents:

*All of the above organisations/agencies are in a strong position to challenge this issue. Improvement would be most quickly achieved if all of the above worked together to effect change.*

*There are a significant number of people that influence individual learners as they undertake the process of deciding upon their career and any future learning. Therefore, work should be undertaken on a collective basis between the full range of partners involved in the decision making chain to address the issues faced in challenging stereotyping.*

LLSC survey responses

Other points that emerged from the comments included the key role that Connexions can play in challenging young people's choices. While employers are seen as being in a potentially influential position, respondents also acknowledged that there was also a need to influence and challenge the views of some employers. One noted that:

*SSCs/NTO should be able to challenge employers who are probably the main organisations that need to be challenged regarding working practices and cultures. They could have the biggest effect on changing current practices.*

LLSC survey response

LLSCs were asked whether they had tried to encourage any of their various partners to address equality issues. Most had tried to encourage a number of different partners. However, as Table 3.4 shows, colleges, work-based learning providers and employers were most frequently the target of such actions.

**Table 3.4 Attempts to encourage partners to address equality issues**

Group/organisation	Number	Per cent
Work-based learning providers	39	93
Colleges	38	91
Employers	30	77
Education Business Partnerships	25	60
Schools	21	50
Connexions	21	50
Parents	9	21
Sector Skill Councils	6	14
<i>Base:</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Survey of LLSCs, 2003.

LLSCs were also asked if they had found any effective ways to encourage the various groups to consider equality issues. Most LLSCs (over 90 per cent) reported that they had found effective methods to influence work-based learning providers and colleges, but fewer than half had done so for the other partners. Comments made by LLSC survey respondents indicated that the most frequently-cited way of encouraging work-based learning providers and colleges to consider equality issues was through the provider performance review process (a contractual obligation). Other important methods were direct support for change through advice, training and funding; and encouraging development of good practice through networking and the sharing of practice. LLSCs also found that contractual relationships were the most

effective means of encouraging EBPs to take action on equality issues. There is no contractual relationship between LLSCs and Connexions offices, although the survey provided some evidence of the development of shared strategies and close working links between a minority of Connexions and LLSCs. For employers and schools, there was less direct LLSC involvement and more examples of the LLSC trying to influence these partners via intermediaries.

Asked if they had found any of these groups or organisations to be particularly helpful to them in addressing gender segregation, 22 LLSCs (52 per cent of respondents) identified one or more of their partners. Connexions was named by six LLSCs and SSCs by five. Five LLSCs mentioned that providers were particularly helpful, while four mentioned EBPs.

### **3.6 Priorities and targets**

The current priorities and targets of the LLSCs and their relevant partners are likely to have an impact on their capacity to take action to address gender segregation. Priorities may be influenced by a range of considerations: targets set by government; limited resources; and the employment and training situation within the location or the occupational sector. The earlier work by DfEE/LGNT0 (1998) had indicated that competing priorities could lead to gender segregation 'dropping off the agenda'. The main priority issue for TECs then was the under-representation of people from ethnic minorities, with the under-achievement of young males and social exclusion of people with disabilities assuming increasing importance.

For this reason, we explored the priorities and targets of the LLSCs and the five SSCs/NTOs with regard to gender segregation, MAs, and the investigation sectors.

#### **LLSCs**

##### *Gender segregation and other priorities*

LLSCs were asked in the survey whether addressing gender segregation was a priority issue for them at present. Sixty per cent of those who responded said that it was. In addition, LLSCs were asked whether they had identified any other issues as priorities. Those identified by at least four LLSCs were:

- Disability/special needs/learning difficulty.
- Race/black and ethnic minority participation/attainment.
- 14-19 or 16-18 agenda.
- Basic skills/life skills.

- Male participation/achievement.

A number of these were similar to those noted in the 1998 DfEE/LGNT0 study.

### *Equality and Diversity Impact Measures*

In 2003, the NLSC gave all LLSCs the task of developing Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) by which progress in meeting equality targets could be assessed for their locality. It was left to each LLSC to decide appropriate EDIMs for their locality and therefore they reflect perceived local priorities in terms of targets to be monitored. Thirty-six LLSCs (86 per cent) had EDIMs in place at the time of the survey. Of the remaining six, five had target dates for introducing EDIMs. Thirty-one LLSCs (74 per cent) were using EDIMs to address gender segregation, a higher proportion than rated gender segregation a priority issue. However, in many cases EDIMs related to attempts to improve the participation of young men generally in comparison with young women, but not in specific sectors and/or did not relate to work-based learning. Some examples of EDIMs are shown below:

*Address gender/ethnicity/disability imbalances in work-based learning occupational areas [by measuring] percentage increase of representation of identified groups in each occupational sector each year.*

*Reduce the participation gap between males as opposed to females in engaging on structured council funded learning at the point of transition from Key Stage 4 (year 11, 16 year olds) [by aiming to increase] male entry to 90.0 per cent by November 2004.*

*Increase participation of female learners in the construction and engineering sectors and male trainees in the health care sector.*

*[Increase] participation of females in advanced modern apprenticeships in construction and engineering by 2 per cent per year and males in advanced modern apprenticeships in hair & beauty and Healthcare and Public services by 3 per cent per year.*

LLSC survey responses

Twenty-eight LLSCs (67 per cent) reported that providers were, or would be, using the EDIMs, and the LLSCs would be using the EDIMs as part of their Provider Performance Reviews and provider three year development and action plans. One commented:

*We noted that, in one of our providers, participation of females in engineering was low, so we set a target and the provider drew up an action plan. The provider then reviewed its marketing materials to ensure there were images of females in the roles, and targeted local girls schools.*

Case study interview, LLSC London South

The same LLSC also reported that colleges and other providers were being given money through the Local Interventions and Development (LID) Fund to address equality and diversity issues.

The introduction of the EDIMs clearly has been an important step forward. However, at present the impact measures do not appear to carry the same weight as do the targets for overall rates for starts and completions.

### *Sector priorities*

LLSCs were also asked in the survey if there were any priority sectors in their localities on which resources were being focused at present. The aim here was to assess the extent to which the investigation sectors were priorities (Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5 Sectors identified as priorities by LLSCs**

Sector	Number	Per cent
Health, social care and public administration	23	55
Construction	18	43
Engineering	16	38
Hospitality, travel and tourism	16	38
Manufacturing	11	26
Retail	10	24
Transport and distribution	7	17
Manufacturing food and drink	6	14
Financial and business services	6	14
Creative/cultural industries	4	10
ICT	3	7
SME management/leadership	3	7
Voluntary and community	3	7
Childcare	3	7
Call centres	2	5
Plumbing	2	5
Biosciences/bioengineering	2	5

Source: Survey of LLSCs, 2003.

Table 3.5 shows that while construction and engineering were listed as priority sectors by a large proportion of responding LLSCs, ICT, childcare and plumbing were currently considered priority areas by only a small minority of LLSCs. However, it

should be noted that plumbing is treated as a sub-section of construction by many LLSCs, and childcare may be classed as part of education or care (see Section 3.4 for details of the difficulties with the data). Thus it is possible that plumbing and childcare have not shown up as priority areas since they are included within these other sectors, which were flagged up as priority areas.

### **SSCs/NTOs**

Several of the SSC representatives to whom we spoke have set their own targets (either within their business plans or in other documentation), for increasing the proportion of atypical trainees. Amongst the five SSCs interviewed as part of the research, three had independently set targets for addressing gender segregation either within apprenticeships or within the wider workforce: the CITB-ConstructionSkills had set targets for increasing the number of female CITB Managing Agency first year trainees within their business plan by 50 per cent; SEMTA was planning to raise participation by women by one percentage point a year; and SummitSkills had set a target to double the number of women in plumbing over the next three years as part of its licence bid. The EYNTO representative stated that the organisation would set targets for addressing gender segregation in the future, but was not able to pursue them actively yet, since it was in the transition phase between NTO and SSC.

For most of the SSCs, however, their main priority was to increase uptake and completion of MAs. The NLSC confirmed that the target against which the performance of SSCs would be assessed was a target rate of 24 per cent of people entering MAs.<sup>7</sup> For most of the sectoral representatives interviewed, recruitment to the MAs (and to the sector more generally) was indeed a matter of some concern. One problem was the availability of MA places with employers; that is, the number of jobs available. A second problem concerned the provision of training places, both on-site or through college places.

Each sector had targets focused on promoting growth in the sector. For sectors such as engineering, such targets were set against a history of falling interest in this subject (and in science based subjects more generally) amongst young people, at HE level as well as at intermediate level. Such difficulties led to something of a 'double bind' situation. The sector organisations could see that increasing the pool of recruits was going to be necessary if they were to meet skill needs, but this goal also to some extent constrained their ability to focus on targets seen as desirable but less pressing. The pressure to meet recruitment targets needed to be prioritised over other targets:

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<sup>7</sup> These targets have recently changed to give more attention to achievement rates.

*The key issue is motivating young people to apply, to get interested ... Currently, there are 7,200 starts on AMAs. The target is to reach 10,000, so we have got to increase recruitment to reach this by 2005 (as set out in the sector workforce development plan). We have not seen the women and ethnic minority ratios improve over the last two to three years. We are putting the SSC resources into meeting the skills requirements of the sector. Doing that is the key priority, irrespective of how we meet that target.*

SEMTA

*The target is to increase numbers [coming through the MA route] by 29 per cent next year. The target is to get 40,000 over the next three years, although there is no set target for women, they are considered important for future skill needs.*

e-skills UK

### **3.7 Conflict and pressure in priorities**

The survey revealed that LLSCs have many competing priorities. Eight LLSCs stated that they were not at present taking any actions directly to confront gender segregation in the five identified sectors. However, one of these was clearly intending to do so in the future and others were taking indirect action to combat segregation; for example, one LLSC had invested significantly in equality and diversity training and auditing.

The LLSCs that were not currently tackling gender segregation in the investigation sectors stated that this was because:

- There was a lack of time, resources and specialist staff/specialist knowledge.
- Other priorities had been more urgent (e.g. supporting learners with complex needs and learning difficulties; supporting providers in complying with equality legislation).
- Emphasis had been placed on improving achievement rates across the board in MAs and also improving learner numbers.
- There was a lack of appropriate data.

#### *Funding incentives*

Where SSCs and providers were taking action to attract and recruit women, typically they were funding such actions themselves. A number of the LLSCs noted the issue of no specific funding being available for equality projects and several made suggestions regarding incentives to address this difficulty:



*The [N]LSC, as the funding organisation, could choose to introduce policy changes that provided incentives to providers who are achieving good results in addressing gender segregation. Perhaps a change in funding rates for females in construction/engineering and males in care professions could be trialled to see if this makes a difference.*

*Specific funding could be provided for this [addressing gender segregation] like the Ethnic Minority Student Achievement Grant.*

*Premium funding for under represented groups, to enable providers to take more action to influence employers and parents etc.*

*Designated non-core funding, i.e. target driven funding to challenge gender stereotypes.*

*Ring-fenced funding to support initiatives.*

*Policy and funding rate changes may be required to provide the catalyst for change. The [N]LSC would be the agency to do this, premium funding rates for trainees who have made non-traditional choices may provide the required impetus. Perhaps trainees who select skills shortage areas could receive incentives, this may tip the scales for those who have considered a non-traditional careers choice.*

LLSC survey responses

*Another way of encouraging the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities is to apply financial strategies, for example in the States, they give grants - financial incentives - for taking them on.*

SEMTA

Such policy changes could provide incentives for providers and trainees, and acknowledge the work of those providers already engaged in such actions. This would encourage the various parties, particularly in the early days, when progress may be slow and organisations may question the wisdom of committing the resources required to achieve any significant impact:

*When setting measures it is difficult to discern what appropriate progress might look like, for example, is getting a small number of additional trainees in a particular area a sign that progress is being made and can be sustained? Progress, realistically couched in small numbers, starts to look expensive if disproportionately large resources are committed to it. This is a complex area which requires consistent action across a number of fronts. It is not always feasible to achieve this at local office level. A national plan might be more effective.*

LLSC survey response

*Achievement rates*

The survey responses pointed to the potential conflict between the need to improve achievement rates and the drive to challenge segregation. The ALI interviewee commented that LLSCs appeared to be under most pressure (in terms of their own performance targets) with regard to the key targets relating to the number of people participating in MAs (rather than any equality indicators). There is also a potential conflict between increasing participation rates and improving achievement. This conflict has similarly been mentioned by participants in several other recent IES projects. Increasing diversity of participation, and particularly extending opportunity to disadvantaged groups, brings with it an increased possibility that these groups - by dint of their additional disadvantages - may not complete the course. The focus on target achievement rates thus encourages providers to restrict recruitment to those who are most likely to complete, which is most often the current learner group profile. Therefore, there is some tension between moves to widen participation and improve achievement rates.

## 4. EXTENT OF ACTIONS TO TACKLE SEGREGATION IN MAs

Chapter 4 examines the extent to which the LLSCs and their partners were acting to tackle gender segregation in MAs. The chapter focuses on the initiatives the LLSCs had undertaken in each investigation sector and, more briefly, in other sectors. This is followed by a section that considers the actions taken by partner organisations.

### 4.1 LLSC actions

#### *Investigation sectors*

LLSCs were asked if they had taken any actions to address gender segregation in Modern Apprenticeships in the five areas of interest.

The first row of Table 4.1 shows the percentage of LLSCs that indicated that they had taken some action in each of the sectors of interest. A total of 20 LLSCs reported that they had taken action in one or more of the sectors. However, further inspection revealed that four LLSCs meant by this that they had drawn up EDIMs to assess provider progress in these (and other) areas. Therefore the second row of the table shows the percentage that had taken some action over and above setting EDIMs, while the third row shows the percentage of those who had only set EDIMs.

**Table 4.1 Percentage of LLSCs taking action to address gender segregation in MAs**

Action taken:	Per cent:									
	Construction		Childcare		Plumbing		Engineering		ICT	
	FMA	AMA	FMA	AMA	FMA	AMA	FMA	AMA	FMA	AMA
Any	40	38	26	24	21	21	40	38	12	12
In addition to setting EDIMs	31	29	17	14	12	12	31	29	2	2
Only setting EDIMs	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

*Notes:* Base = 42.

*Source:* Survey of LLSCs.

The data show that in ICT, the sector with the lowest skills shortages and the highest proportion of the under-represented group (females), there were the fewest reports of actions being taken by LLSCs. Engineering and construction were the two sectors in which the most actions had been taken to address gender segregation, followed by childcare and then plumbing in which some of the acutest shortages are reported.

A range of actions were described in more detail by LLSC respondents. Some of these included taking part in national projects that are led by other organisations, such as the JIVE and GERI projects (see section 4.2 for details).

Actions included:

- Working with other organisations such as SSCs to raise awareness amongst atypical groups of opportunities in the sector through, e.g. hands-on activities, work experience and taster days.
- Encouraging providers to tackle segregation through setting targets for reducing segregation and monitoring employer strategies and actions.
- Facilitating development events and providing consultancy support for providers.
- Providing local development funds to support proposals to address segregation issues.

The majority of respondents who indicated that their LLSC had been involved in some type of action reported that partner organisations had been involved in the initiatives. The majority (11 out of 16 reporting that they had taken action) stated that providers had been involved, while eight of the 16 stated that the relevant SSC or NTO had been involved.

#### *Other sectors*

LLSCs were asked whether any steps were being taken to address gender segregation in MAs in any areas other than the investigation sectors. Six stated that action was either already being taken or was being considered. The areas mentioned included one predominantly male area, the motor industry, and three predominantly female areas, hairdressing, business administration, and health and social care. One LLSC was working with male salon owners as role models as a way of seeking to attract men into the hairdressing industry. One LLSC had identified areas that were strongly segregated, but reported that action was restricted because it did not have the necessary resources at present.

#### *Young people*

Eleven LLSCs reported that they were running special projects that were aimed at helping young people progress onto MAs; these were in addition to E2E, which is discussed below. They included analysing progression routes from compulsory education through post-16 provision and entry to employment and a pilot project to

address gender stereotypes and provide opportunities for young people to experience a range of occupational areas.

#### **4.2 Actions by partner bodies**

LLSCs were asked if they were aware of any good practice examples by other organisations that were aimed at challenging gender segregation in MAs. Two of the LLSCs were involved in the GERI (Gender Equality and Race Inclusion) project. Another was involved in the *Let's Twist* and JIVE (Joint Interventions) Partners projects at Bradford College (see Miller et al., 2004, for brief details of these initiatives).

A number of LLSCs (15) also reported a range of initiatives being undertaken by local providers, EBPs and NTO/SSCs:

- Use of LID funding to identify and train atypical employees to act as role models for young people.
- Provider targets for improving participation by atypical groups.
- Local marketing activities by SSCs.

The case study research provided more details of these types of activities. In *Birmingham and Solihull*, Bill Nicholls, the Director of Education and Training Development of EEF West Midlands Technology Centre, described the actions that his organisation had taken to encourage women into engineering. The example shows how prioritising and setting targets can also serve to indicate what other actions need to happen:

**Box 4.1 EEF West Midlands Technology Centre - Birmingham**

'Why are we successful? We target. We set targets. At present, our target is to recruit 5% female apprentices, we try to set ourselves double the national average. And for all the applicants that come in, we keep the statistics. The application form has an equal opportunities monitoring section. The applicant indicates what company they want the application to go to, and we track and monitor their applications. That way we get very good and reliable stats regarding for example the number of applications from women versus the number that get jobs.'

Girls are 2.5% of applicants to Engineering Connections (a website run by EEF for apprenticeship applications), and they are 0.7% of recruited applicants generally (across England). But for EEF, there were 281 male applications, seven females (2.5%) and from these we recruited one FMA (2.7%) and three AMAs (3%). In effect we are well ahead. Our target for 2004 is to increase the number of females to 10% and ethnic minorities to 20%.

But then we have to ask, how are we going to do this? We make contact with local girls' schools. We have had a whole class come here for a week. Because that is where the changes will come – by breaking down the stereotypes. The only way you will change hearts and minds is if you start young and encourage opportunities. We are prepared to do this and they are delighted to receive the opportunity. We invite teachers into the centre, Connexions staff come in, we explain about MAs, and get them involved in [a] practical issue.'

A similar example was provided from the case study in *London North* LLSC. The Chief Executive of the North London Garages GTA, Trevor Platups, explained how his organisation was trying to tackle female participation:

**Box 4.2 North London Garages Group Training Association**

'The SSC is looking at female participation. The year before last, the figures for the awarding body (the Institute of the Motor Industry) for the country as a whole showed that recruitment of females was 3.9 per cent nationwide, so at 2-3 per cent [female recruitment] we are not doing badly.'

We try to target, for example, by attending at all-girl schools and mixed schools. Adverts mention that applications from women will be very welcome. When a woman applies we give her the assessment test and then give her feedback. If her grades are low we offer the E2E programme (NVQ L1). If her grades are acceptable we offer her a place on the MA programme.

Over the last 7 months we have had 10 applications from females. Of these, 3 were accepted, (of whom one started), and 3 are on the waiting list to start.'

This provider, too, was able to produce up-to-date monitoring data on applications, success rates in the assessment tests, and acceptance and start rates for apprentices by gender and race. In both these examples of provider action, setting their own targets and monitoring recruitment had led them to consider the actions

they could take to encourage more applications from the minority group, in this case, females.

Other regions had looked at increasing the routes that fed into MAs and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). In *London South*, the LLSC had invited organisations to apply for ESF funding for projects that would address the under-representation of women in occupational areas such as engineering, plumbing and construction by designing feeder schemes. Both introductory and accredited schemes were considered under the initiative. Details of one scheme funded under the initiative are given below:

**Box 4.3    Horizon Housing Group Ltd, Changing Rooms Project**

Horizon Housing Group is an umbrella organisation for a number of social landlords and businesses that provide affordable housing in London and the South East. It has a reputation in estate regeneration and operates a number of funded Community Involvement and Training initiatives through its People for Action (PfA) team.

In 2003, PfA developed a training programme called 'Changing Rooms' in Southwark offering basic DIY and Home Maintenance skills to men and women who are interested in developing basic construction skills. PfA then applied to the LLSC for ESF funding to run a women-only Changing Rooms course after their own research highlighted a particular demand amongst women in Croydon. They currently run three highly successful changing rooms projects in Southwark, Lambeth and Croydon, targeted towards unemployed women, and women drawn from BME groups.

Each Changing Rooms course runs for two days a week over five weeks, offering training in Painting & Decorating, Carpentry, Tiling, Plumbing, Electrics and Health and Safety in the Home. The Croydon training takes place in a property in New Addington similar to that of the learners' own homes. The learner's progress is monitored throughout the course and on completing, the learners receive a tool kit and a decorating grant, together with a completer's certificate endorsed by Horizon Housing Group and the local college. The project continues to work with the learners even after they have completed the course. The Changing Rooms project team works in partnership with Continuing Education and Training Services, who provided the training venue and helped to promote the course, and Croydon College, who provided the tutors to deliver the courses.

To date, from a total of 49 completers, 14 have passed the CITB Construction Skills Health and Safety test and 12 have gone on to further training and employment. The Project is currently working with local employers to provide work experience placements covering basic maintenance and refurbishment schemes.

PfA received funding to provide training for 60 women in New Addington, Croydon, and they are currently facilitating their last course. They plan to apply again to the LSC for funding in October 2004, but hope to widen the scheme to make it available to more women, and women across Croydon - *'we want to go bigger next time...the whole of Croydon next'*. They also hope to gain funding to run short 'taster' sessions where they will introduce different trades and encourage individuals to move onto the five week course.

### 4.3 Connexions

As noted in Chapter 3, six LLSCs identified Connexions as an organisation that was particularly helpful to them in challenging gender segregation. In addition, we also saw in Chapter 3 that Connexions was rated by LLSCs as potentially the second most influential party (after employers) with regard to being able to challenge gender segregation in apprenticeships. One commented on this:

*Connexions can play a pivotal role working with young people in schools. Perhaps this activity should occur with young people below Year 9 and even in primary school education.*

LLSC survey response

However, not all LLSCs believed that Connexions was making gender segregation a sufficient priority, while SSCs expressed concerns about the information that young people were receiving from some Connexions offices:

*This agenda item should be higher up the priority list with the Connexions Service both locally, and nationally (CSNU) in terms of information, advice and guidance.*

LLSC survey response

*[Connexions] are not helping [encourage young women to consider IT as a career]. There is concern over how much career information they pass on.*

e-skills UK

*Connexions we find a barrier to what we want to achieve. They are working counter to all we are trying to do and trying to counter both with regard to gender and ethnic segregation... Connexions produced a publication on working in childcare that contains case studies, and the only male featured is a manager! And Connexions did not tell us they were producing this.*

EYNTU

#### *Challenging stereotypes*

One of the most proactive Connexions offices visited during the case studies was in Tottenham, which is within the *London North* LLSC area. We interviewed Sharon Glover, Operations Manager at Prospects, a company which is sub-contracted to deliver the careers advice service on behalf of Connexions in a number of areas, including Tottenham. She described in detail how Prospects works with young people and their families to explore issues in occupational segregation and to challenge young people's views on who should perform various jobs:



**Box 4.4    Prospects, Tottenham Connexions Service**

'We have always tried to promote all of the occupational areas to the different genders, and in the last five years we have tried to pursue this more. Staff would go through the various occupational areas available with the young person irrespective of gender.

When young people use the careers information software packages, they find this very useful in terms of looking at a range of occupational areas which they may be suited to. Two of the main packages we use are *Fast Tomato* and *Morrisby*. These are two very good software packages promoting EO. We also have packages such as KUDOS and Key Klips. These are available to young people in the reception area and give occupational information to the young person. The PA [Personal Advisor] would as appropriate then do a one-to-one with the young person working on that information. For example, if a boy said he was interested in "practical work" we would suggest, for example, have you considered working with the elderly? We would not restrict suggestions to typically male areas of work. Using these software packages followed by one-to-one discussion is an excellent way of promoting EO with the young people.

Other approaches we use include group work with year 8 children onwards (age 12). We have piloted the activities in primary schools too. For example, we ask groups, "Who would do this sort of job, a male or a female?" and then we would ask them, "Why?" In one session we showed them pictures in which there was a girl doing mechanics and a boy looking after a baby or being a midwife. They all laughed, and they asked, "Why are they doing that?" In groups it is more effective to challenge such ideas and the message gets through more. Attitude is to do with a variety of influences including their family. The community in which they live and friends and families are very important when addressing choices for their sons/daughters.

PAs work with schools including work with families. We run three evenings a year for Year 11 families, with training providers, colleges, and voluntary and community groups represented. The last evening drew 240 people. Each young person had at least 10 minutes with a PA. I had a conversation with a father whose son was doing work experience in childcare which I encouraged by looking at social care courses in further education options as a basis for their subsequent choice of job. We encourage family members to sit in on PA interviews with their sons/daughters in school so they are actively involved, so that the young person has holistic support in their choices.'

Other Connexions interviewees from the case studies made similar points:

*The process would be the same if the young person was male or female. However if, for example, a boy said, 'I'd like to do x but it's a girl's job', the PA would challenge their opinions.*  
Connexions PA, North Yorkshire

Perhaps the best example of partnership working was found in Lincolnshire and Rutland, where the LLSC and local Connexions offices across the region had worked together to produce the 'Break the Mould' campaign. This campaign is aimed at getting young people to think about atypical jobs. Posters, teacher resource packs,

mousemats and leaflets had been produced to get across the message, 'You can dare to be different!' The leaflets advise young people, 'Don't let outdated ideas about the role of men and women narrow your job choice!' and actively challenge the idea that boys and girls are better at different things.<sup>8</sup>

Less proactive approaches, however, were being adopted by Connexions offices elsewhere. Stereotyping and segregation were viewed as an issue only where they constituted a barrier to a young person's career intentions, and it was not thought appropriate actively to encourage young people to consider employment in atypical areas:

*Gender segregation certainly exists. If we set up a session at school about training for childcare, and it was self-referral, all those who attended would be girls. Whether it is a problem or not is up for debate. Connexions' view is very centred on the individual. Therefore every individual should feel supported in doing what they want to do. However, if gender segregation causes barriers for people, then it is a problem.*

Case study interview, Connexions PA

*If a young person wanted to choose an atypical type job, we would back them, but I don't think we would go out of our way to encourage [youngsters] into non-stereotyped jobs.*

Case study interview, Connexions PA

As noted above, Prospects is sub-contracted to deliver the careers advice service on behalf of Connexions in some areas. The company's EO policy states that it is its role to challenge stereotypes and promote equal opportunities. In *London South*, a Prospects personal advisor commented that their equal opportunities culture probably dates from their historical roots in the Careers Service. Given this observation, it may be the case that PAs who have been recruited from other backgrounds may not have such a strong grounding in, or understanding of, equality issues. This in turn may have implications both for the type of approach taken and for the induction and training provided for individuals on entering the profession.

In *Birmingham and Solihull*, the LLSC was working with Connexions and with teachers to look at the quality of advice and guidance which was available. This was in response to work conducted in the area that had looked at barriers to new ways of working. The evidence gathered by the LLSC indicated that young people were not being given sufficiently open-ended - i.e. broad rather than restricted or confirmatory - guidance. At the same time, the LLSC was also looking at the careers preparation

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<sup>8</sup> The campaign website address is <http://www.datadrum.com/> and the marketing materials can be viewed at <http://www.datadrum.com/marketing.php>

and work experience from a black and ethnic minority perspective, to unpick how careers advice is given to this group of young people.

#### *Careers advice and guidance from other organisations*

It should be noted that many of the other organisations which we interviewed during the case study phase of the work were actively engaged in trying to promote the full range of vocational and career options to young people. For example, the North Yorkshire Business and Education Partnership (NYBEP Ltd)<sup>9</sup> encourages the training providers with whom they work to participate in parent/student options meetings in year 9, which is the year in which students choose the subjects they will take for GCSEs. In Chapter 3, we described how some providers are working with schools to provide information on the range of careers available in these sectors.

#### **4.4 Government programmes and initiatives**

The research sought to provide an early indication of whether a number of new government initiatives and programmes were helping to reduce gender segregation either in training or in employment.

##### *Entry to Employment*

The Entry to Employment (E2E) programme is a relatively new scheme that aims to prepare young people either for work or for entry to an MA. E2E programmes typically consist of a variety of modules, which can include craft and vocational training (including level 1 NVQ units), personal development, key skills and work experience.

LLSCs were asked in the survey whether the E2E programme in their region had included encouraging young women or men to consider atypical areas of training or employment. They were also asked if they had found any approaches adopted within the E2E programme to be effective in encouraging young women or men to undertake training or consider employment in non-traditional areas.

The LLSC survey occurred not long after the start of the implementation of the E2E programme nationally, following a year's piloting (the 'Pathways' project) in 12 regions. The initiative was therefore in its infancy and many LLSCs (even those that had been involved in the initial pilot stage, i.e. those that had been operating the scheme for over a year) felt that it was too early to tell if it would succeed in persuading trainees to consider atypical areas of work. One LLSC did, however, describe the following example of an E2E initiative that was aimed at atypical groups of learners:

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<sup>9</sup> In Yorkshire and the Humber, EBPs are called Business Education Partnerships (BEPs).

*Our E2E providers produced learning plans that were individually tailored to each learner. Acorn E2E has run two 'construction-tested licences' which included female trainees gaining fork-lift truck licences. Another became a motor mechanic at a motorcycle shop. The Learning Works E2E/DESI project challenges the traditional role of Muslim women, why office work and fashion might not be gender specific - in the context of the Muslim community this was significant.*

LLSC survey response

In addition, several of the providers interviewed in the later case study phase of the work were more optimistic regarding the longer-term impact of the E2E programme. Several providers were offering work 'taster' sessions as part of their E2E programmes. Trevor Platups of the North London Garages Group Training Association explained in detail how this was working and described the programme's potential for providing new routes into MAs:

#### **Box 4.5 North London Garages Group Training Association**

'We are setting up systems so that young people can get "tasters". Trainees from other E2E programmes are offered one day a week for six weeks. It has the additional benefit for us that it gives us an extra chance of recruiting people from other programmes. Those on the "tasters" programme come in from a wide range of providers/other occupational areas - they might come in from retail, care, customer service. We offer them the "tasters" to widen their outlook.

We are also offering this service to schools. We have been doing this for two years. The first year we did this for free - it cost us £200 a week to run, and we paid this out of our reserves. There are staff resource implications - for every 10 people (students) on the awareness programme, we need two members of staff.

We ran the scheme through one of the EBPs, but we found that schools in that borough tended to send us the pupils who could not be persuaded to stay in school. But the students they sent enjoyed it as it's practical. And one who was "missing" from school actually turned up at the scheme!

We did get females registering on this programme, and also on the E2E programme. And we have had some people progress onto MAs. The second year we did get some funding, but we have not yet resolved the issue of the schools sending us low performing students. We recently received an award for offering outstanding business opportunities, and since then we have moved on to work with another EBP in a different borough who are sending us higher grade students, ones who are doing GCSEs and these are more keen about careers. We are still funding the initiative ourselves and we are optimistic that this will feed through in the long-term into applications for the MA.'

In another case study area, *Birmingham and Solihull*, one of the providers, 3Es, had discussed and challenged the views of young people going through the E2E programme about who should do various jobs:

**Box 4.6 3Es programme in Birmingham and Solihull**

3Es runs a tutorial session on equal opportunities and, as part of this, the group takes part in an exercise called 'what's my job?'. Participants are asked to match pictures of individuals with a range of jobs: model, doctor, nurse, cleaner, chief executive, etc. The tutor then uses this as a basis for explaining issues around stereotyping and to challenge the young people's ideas about who does certain jobs.

One young man on the E2E course was taking an NVQ level 1 unit in childcare. He intended to continue onto the Foundation MA when he had completed the course. This suggests that E2E may indeed be successful in providing an alternative route into MAs for atypical groups.

*Employer Training Pilots*

At the time of the research, the DfES was piloting Employer Training Pilots (ETPs) in 12 LLSC regions.<sup>10</sup> ETPs are an initiative aimed at qualifying those aged over 19 and in employment to level 2.

While several of the LLSCs in ETP pilot regions reported that the initiative had been successful in encouraging uptake of qualifications amongst groups who would not normally be interested in training, just one reported that the scheme had encouraged women to take up non-traditional awards:

*[A local employer] had been particularly successful in attracting women in taking a manufacturing qualification.*

LLSC survey response

There is little evidence at present that the ETPs provide a route into apprenticeships. The ETPs were in their second year of operation at the time of the LLSC survey and were operating in 12 LLSCs. The main aim of these pilots is to allow people aged over 19 who are not qualified to level 2 to gain qualifications. The training and qualifications offered in the ETPs can be either a basic skills award, or a work-relevant qualification (typically an NVQ) at level 2. The pilots are not focused on facilitating job change or on the provision of training in an area different from the individual's current job.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that this was subsequently extended to a further five LLSC regions and the whole of the North East following the budget announcement in April 2004.

Just one LLSC in a pilot area reported that the initiative had resulted in women gaining NVQs in an atypical area. At present there is no evidence, either from the work reported here or from the national evaluation of the ETPs, that they are currently providing a feeder route through to apprenticeships, for either typical or atypical learner groups. It is possible that people who gain a level 2 qualification through ETP may then go on to take an apprenticeship (and there is some evidence from the national evaluation that participation in ETP increases employees' likelihood of participating in further training e.g. at level 3). However there is no evidence to suppose that this route will lead to increased numbers of under-represented groups seeking to enter atypical apprenticeships. While the government has expressed its intention to raise the age-cap on apprenticeships, to date this has led only to the raising of the entry age to 25;<sup>11</sup> for the majority of individuals going through the ETP training, for whom the modal age is between 30 and 50, there would need to be a far more substantial revision of the age restrictions to allow them to move into apprenticeships.

#### *Adult Learning Grant*

During the LLSC survey pilot stage, one LLSC suggested that the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) pilot<sup>12</sup> might have implications for gender segregation. The ALG provided a sum of money to encourage young people to stay on in education and participating LLSCs were being asked to identify certain segments of the learner market in their locality to target. Therefore those LLSCs that were participating in the ALG pilot were asked about the groups they had chosen to target for funding.

In practice, however, just one LLSC indicated that ALG funds had been targeted on some of the areas of interest (childcare, ICT and construction). The same LLSC also reported that the funding had been targeted on encouraging particular groups of women, including young mothers and women returners, into education.

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<sup>11</sup> In May 2004, two months after the conclusion of the fieldwork for this project, the government announced that it was scrapping the age limit on apprenticeships.

<sup>12</sup> The pilot stage has now concluded and the ALG has been introduced nationally since the conclusion of the research.

## 5. WIDER BARRIERS TO PROGRESS

Chapter 5 explores wider barriers to progress in reducing gender segregation in employment and training. The first part of the chapter examines the significance of traditional attitudes. The second part focuses specifically on barriers to progress in MAs.

### 5.1 Traditional attitudes

Previous research indicates that stereotypes about jobs start to be formed very early on in life, with children as young as six being able to say whether men or women are more likely to perform certain jobs. While children do tend to become more liberal in their views about the appropriateness of different jobs with age, early perceptions of the appropriateness of various jobs can restrict long-term options through their influence on subject and qualification choice at age 14 and 16. In addition, circumscribed ideas of their possible career options lead young people to restrict the careers they investigate and seek information about (see Miller et al., 2004, for a discussion).

When LLSCs were asked their views about the factors that act to reinforce and preserve gender segregation, a high proportion of the respondents (62 per cent) identified stereotypes and attitudes as well as the image of these sectors:

- Traditional attitudes amongst the local population regarding what constituted appropriate jobs for young women and men.
- Social stereotypes that develop early and are reinforced by family, school, media and peers.
- The poor image of some sectors.
- Employer attitudes.

The comments of an LLSC respondent and a Connexions interviewee were that:

*It is difficult to challenge gender stereotyping at age 14-16 when many of the cultural attitudes have become engrained. It needs to be a cohesive effort from early schooling etc. to engender change.*

LLSC survey response

*Occupational gender segregation is a 'society issue' right from birth. Connexions come in at 13 and a lot has already happened, it is ingrained in society. But we should strive to challenge these stereotypes.*

Case study interview, Connexions, London South

The role of stereotypes and perceptions - of young people, employers, parents and teachers - therefore is a key issue affecting recruitment to these sectors in general, not just to the MAs, and emerged as a theme in all sections of the work. Comments included:

*The problem is with engineering more generally, the dearth of young people entering the area ... The primary real problem with engineering is its oily rag and spanners image which puts the whole cohort off. And in addition, there is particularly a problem with females from ethnic minorities ... because of the male-female divide - parents see it as inappropriate for their daughters. In general they want to be professionals, lawyers etc., not engineers. Yet the wages of engineers compare favourably with those of lawyers, they can reach £50-£90k a year. People (employers) are desperate to get engineers, but pupils are advised by their teachers, who do not recommend engineering as a career.*

SEMTA

*The image is unexciting but we need to make young people aware of the range of potential stimulating jobs, we need schools and Connexions to provide guidance on careers and skill development.*

e-skills UK

*The major barrier within engineering and the obvious gender segregation is the perception of engineering that is publicised through the media, and a general ignorance of career routes by careers teachers in schools and careers organisations. Some ethnic groups are reluctant to accept engineering as a profession, especially for women, in a male dominated profession.*

LLSC survey response

*Removing some of the stereotypical images and misconceptions that surround sectors like engineering and construction [could make] a positive difference in terms of the image that surrounds certain sectors. Exposing young people to non-traditional occupations before subject choices are made would seem a good way of allowing young people to make informed decisions, but as we know peer pressure/media portrayal is an important factor in the choices made by young people, and this is more problematic to change.*

LLSC survey response

The main problem with such perceptions is that any marketing or publicity efforts have to overcome these ideas before they can convey information about the jobs. No matter how positive the subsequent marketing attempts, this is a difficult hurdle to overcome:

*We need to challenge the stereotypes at an early age to create the demand from young men/women into non-traditional sectors. Clearly we need to tackle any barriers that exist [and] prevent young people following*



*their chosen route, but often the demand is not there despite positive marketing. Some of the issues are cultural or perceptions that exist within certain sectors. Given that MAs are predominantly employed, the climate within the employer will have a stronger influence than the provider.*

LLSC survey response

*We need to encourage young people to try different things. Start trying to change attitudes at an earlier age. What influences young people most is seeing a female doing an atypical job, and having 'role models' go to talk in schools.*

Case study interviews, North Yorkshire Connexions PA

Stereotypes consist both of views about the nature of the job and also about who should perform it (see Miller et al., 2004). Therefore, in addition to ideas regarding the nature of the skills or attributes needed within a job (strength or manual dexterity for example), stereotypes also convey expectations about the status of the job and (therefore) the likely social group(s) that should be interested in, and appropriate for, the job. A high proportion of parents from ethnic minority backgrounds are keen to see their children do well and move into the professions. In view of this, with many of these jobs, there was a particular problem in persuading parents from ethnic minority groups that the occupation presented an attractive option compared with other professions and was appropriate as a career for their daughters. One apprentice described the attitude of her family:

*With my family I got the whole Asian thing. I will be doing this for four years and then I will be ready to do the degree, but they think you must have a degree by 22. It could be in anything, but it must be a degree! They don't understand the apprenticeship. They think it is just cheap labour. It's the whole culture thing. Me not having or starting a degree by 23, they just say, 'What are you going to do with your life?' There is an immense pressure to succeed.*

Female apprentice

The Sector Skills Councils were battling to overcome negative stereotypes of jobs in their sectors and of vocational qualifications in general:

*It's almost a bridge too far to focus on including women and ethnic minorities. We have to deal with the poor image of [vocational education and training], the poor image of engineering, and on top of this there is the poor view that women and ethnic minorities hold of VET and engineering. But basically it's an extreme form of the barriers there are to getting anyone into engineering.*

SEMTA

Teachers too appear to share the same misunderstandings of employment in these sectors (Munro and Elsom, 2000; Edwards and Stephenson, 2002). This emphasises

the need for access to accurate and up-to-date information regarding jobs in these sectors. However, it should be noted that in ICT, this problem exists despite some years of promotional campaigns aimed at changing perceptions of jobs in the sector. In addition, schools are keen to retain pupils into the sixth form, which can make it difficult for work-based learning providers to make information about MAs available to schoolchildren:

*Schools do not want MA information because they want young people to stay on and do 'A' levels - MAs are seen as 'also rans'. This makes it difficult to get the information into schools.*

e-skills UK

*We have very little information about MAs for young people. They are not marketed enough in schools. One girl was considering doing an MA but didn't have any information and she asked me to help. I provided the girl with contact details for the LLSC and Connexions but the girl found them unresponsive and continued to find it hard to access the information she needed.*

Case study interview

This was confirmed by the reports of apprentices (their comments are reported in more detail in Chapter 7) who said that they had not heard of, or had difficulty obtaining information on, apprenticeships, prior to applying for jobs that subsequently transpired to be apprenticeship positions. In one case, an apprentice reported being met with bewilderment from pupils and teachers alike upon returning to school and saying that she was intending to undertake an apprenticeship. In that case, the apprentice herself had placed information on apprenticeships on the careers notice board for the benefit of other pupils.

For the childcare sector, there is the particular problem that childcare is perceived as being integral to the female role, making it difficult to attract men to the sector. However, even if such perceptions are overcome, there can be a further obstacle to the recruitment of males. Recent research has indicated that parents believe that men are more likely to abuse children and may decide against using nurseries or playschools that employ men (Miller et al., 2004). Clearly, if this is the case then the perceptions of parents (i.e. clients) could lead some employers in the childcare sector to be reluctant to take on male apprentices:

*[Childcare] employers are reluctant to take on men because there is a parental backlash against men - they are seen as more likely to abuse.*

EYNT0

## 5.2 Segregation in MAs

LLSCs were also asked to state their perceptions of barriers to success in reducing gender segregation in MAs. The issues that were flagged up repeated those that were identified as critical in challenging gender segregation in general. These included:

- The poor image of the jobs (and lack of demand for employment in these sectors from the atypical group).
- Traditional attitudes and social stereotypes.

However, in regard to apprenticeships, respondents identified these additional barriers:

- The lack of apprenticeship places on offer.
- The fact that providers usually become involved only after young people have already been recruited into apprenticeships by employers, thus restricting provider ability to influence the diversity of apprenticeship groups.

In addition, several LLSCs indicated that employers were reluctant to take on atypical apprentices, while one questioned whether it had sufficient in-house expertise to monitor and analyse developments and believed that this might be a barrier to developments.

In addition, 26 per cent of LLSCs stated that there were aspects of MA national frameworks that hindered attempts to challenge gender segregation. In general, there were three main themes to these replies:

- The nature of the frameworks themselves.
- Funding and financial arrangements.
- The requirement for apprentices to be in employment (and employer reluctance to take on apprentices).

## 6. CHALLENGING STEREOTYPICAL VIEWS

Providing young people (and employers) with information about MAs in non-traditional occupational sectors is an essential stage in challenging segregation and raising awareness about this potential training route. In this chapter, we examine the attempts that have been made to make young people aware of the range of jobs potentially available in these sectors and to change their views about the nature of these jobs.

### 6.1 Developing publicity materials

SSCs were asked about the extent to which they had received help from, or worked with, the LSC (nationally or locally), the DfES or with Connexions to develop publicity materials to attract apprentices. The responses on this point were not very positive. CITB-ConstructionSkills, SEMTA and e-skills UK each spoke of occasions when either the NLSC or DfES had produced customised publicity material for their sector, without consultation with them, with the result that in some cases the material was felt not to give the right ‘message’:

*Well they did produce some materials, but the industry was not told of the initiative. More dialogue with joint campaigning in the future would be more impactful.*

CITB-ConstructionSkills

*The IT/telecoms info they produced was all male [images] - there was no consultation with e-skills UK, so perpetuates negative images of ‘geeks’ in a male dominated environment.*

e-skills UK

*Cartoons were produced by the DfES [to promote engineering]. They were an abomination. We need to find out what really works.*

SEMTA

In the survey of LLSCs some similar concerns were raised:

*The DfES produced materials for children in response to skills shortage of plumbers - entitled ‘Pete the Plumber’!*

LLSC survey response

However, set against this, SEMTA reported that Sheffield LLSC had contacted it to ask for up-to-date information on engineering to put into publicity leaflets that it was producing.

Perhaps the best example of an LLSC liaising with a Sector Skills Council found during the case studies was the example of *Birmingham and Solihull* LLSC, which

had worked closely with local training providers to produce a range of new brochures and posters to publicise MAs in construction. Its Marketing Executive, Mark Chambers, outlined the process by which a range of new publicity materials for MAs in construction had been produced:

**Box 6.1     Birmingham and Solihull LLSC**

'The project consisted of the development of posters, leaflets and gifts on the one hand, and a theatre production on the other and was prompted by reports and local market intelligence coming in during 2002-3 that indicated that we were not reaching enough females and ethnic minorities in line with the future demography of the sub-region. The projects were inspired and led by a project leader within the Quality Team.

The project started with a focus group held at a local school with 14 year olds. The group of young people was asked their views of construction, and these could be summed up as: "It's not for girls, it's not for ethnic minorities, it's a crap job, there's no prospects, and you don't get paid very well!" Therefore, the rationale for producing the poster and leaflets, and for the play, was to quash these negative perceptions and develop strong positive perceptions (*NB details of the play are given later in this chapter*).

We have produced a new set of publicity materials for MAs in construction. We commissioned an agency to do the photo shoot and used "real" construction apprentices and also some [L]LSC staff as the models. The photos were taken on a bright, clear and sunny day, with all of the models wearing bright clothes to develop an image in the readers' mind. We made sure the photographs showed local landmarks in the background, to "localise" the picture. A diagram in the booklet shows all of the different roles in the building and construction industry that would contribute to building a house, to show the great range of careers potentially available.

The "look and feel" of the materials is so attractive, it is now being used in producing other, more general purpose (i.e. non-sectoral) publicity materials. The look/image is being repeated in all their leaflets, and a range of case studies is provided for example in the general MA literature.

The new materials were then piloted with current MAs. The feedback was positive and only minor parts of the text needed modification before "going live". The materials were finalised July/August 2003 and distribution of the materials started in August-September. Empirical evidence highlights that training providers were very positive about the materials, as are Connexions staff. The materials seem to be proving popular but it is too early really for feedback/evaluation at present, although there has been increased demand for construction MAs over the last four months. At present we have no idea about the gender breakdown in this surge of enquiries (an 0845 number was provided for enquiries) but we have had hundreds of young people applying for limited number of places. Our customer services team will collect information and will be able to report on the numbers of info packs being sent out as a result of enquiries to the 0845 number.'

*Funding for publicity*

The interviewee at *Birmingham and Solihull* LLSC further explained how the initiative would not have been possible - or at least, would have been significantly delayed - if it had been necessary to use core LLSC funds. Lack of funding for publicity is a central issue for SSCs and providers also. While any constraint in the production of publicity materials is likely to affect the promotion of apprenticeships in general, this issue can have a particular impact on their ability to recruit atypical apprentices who may have greater need of information than more mainstream applicants would require.

Although LLSCs are able to fund specific projects, this depends on their priorities, and we have already seen that they have only limited amounts of money, even for developing their own publicity materials. In addition, local priorities dictate funding decisions, and we have already seen that there may be conflict between priorities:

*The local office marketing plans identify their own local priorities and they may fund these. Also, LLSCs had implementation funding to set priorities for local initiatives, some may have used this to put in initiatives to do with EO.*

NLSC

Amongst providers, few reported receiving any funding to help with the production of publicity materials to challenge segregation:

*We are not very good at tapping into the funding available, and we do not have the expertise in being able to identify and tap into funding. We should not be having to fund this ourselves.*

Case study interview, training provider

In one case though, in *London North* LLSC, shortage of funds had been overcome by a provider in a creative way that also provided a learning opportunity for apprentices. Linda Petts, Chief Executive of Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust, described an initiative to produce new publicity materials:

**Box 6.2 Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust**

'Recently there have been no females at all [in atypical sectors] so we have been reviewing our publicity material. We wanted it to include images of women, but we also wanted it to look natural. We have a fairly small budget for funding marketing and we are therefore constrained with what we can afford to do.

The [L]LSC does have the national marketing campaign for apprenticeships, but it is not occupationally specific. Marketing is about quality, image and design. We do not have the budget that could fund a professional looking campaign. In a way, we are in competition with schools and colleges, and we need to design high quality publicity materials to compete with them. And ideally we need to have positive images for posters for when we go out to visit schools etc., pictures that show a good gender and ethnic mix across all occupations.

I currently chair the Waltham Forest Providers Group and the group is looking at how work-based learning is marketed within Waltham Forest. We are starting to develop joint marketing materials. We will fund this initiative out of the area inspection funds. One of our providers offers training in magazine production as part of their E2E programme. They have set a project for their learners to produce a prospectus for work-based learners in Waltham Forest. So they will benefit from gaining the experience, and it keeps the costs down for the Group.'

In one case study region, one of the local employers that was also a training provider offered MAs in childcare. This organisation was specifically trying to target males in its recruitment literature and was making efforts to offer work experience opportunities to young men:

*We are making an extra effort to recruit males into childcare, as traditionally childcare is not seen as a male profession. This is done through recruitment days run at schools, targeting 14/15 year olds who are taking work placements. We also make a point of offering work experience opportunities to young men. We are currently developing a recruitment leaflet aimed specifically at males, which describes the training and work experiences of other professional childcare specialists (male).*

Case study employer and training provider

London South LLSC also reported that one of its providers had involved males in play work to give them practical experience of the area, and had used male care workers as ambassadors, attending various events 'to send out the message that it is not just for females'.

**Role models in publicity materials**

All of the organisations involved in developing new publicity materials were keen to produce materials that showed a diverse range of young people. For example, the

CITB-ConstructionSkills has produced a range of portraits for its website that feature apprentices (and young people who have gone through other routes, such as HNC and degree programmes) to illustrate the range of career routes and options available.

For obvious reasons, providers and SSCs are keen to publicise atypical apprentices who do well and often will seek out apprentices to feature in such publicity. However, we found that, in some cases, this attention could have unintended negative effects. One provider told us that while the organisation had a young woman currently undertaking an MA in motor vehicle mechanics, she would probably not wish to be interviewed because numerous organisations including the NLSC, City and Guilds, and QCA had been in touch with her, each wanting her 'story' for publicity purposes. The programme co-ordinator had been asked by the college to ask her if she would agree to be photographed for the college prospectus in her overalls, with spanner in her hand etc., and she became quite upset. She said she had felt 'normal' and 'equal' with regard to the other students until these various organisations had got in touch with her and made her feel that she was different or a special case.

## 6.2 Drama and discussion

In addition to the development of publicity materials, some of the case study organisations were developing other means to raise the profile of these sectors and encourage applications from under-represented groups. Drama and discussion have been utilised in two of the case study LLSCs. The first example was provided by an interviewee from *Birmingham and Solihull* LLSC:

### **Box 6.3 Impact Theatre Group, Birmingham and Solihull**

'We gave a brief to the Impact Theatre Group to "improve the image of construction among young people in general, but amongst females and ethnic minorities in particular". Emphasis was to be on the need to recruit to construction. The theatre group put together the "bare bones" of the script, and Birmingham and Solihull LSC then helped them to flesh this out.

At the time the research was conducted, they had run the play just once, to pilot it and see how effective it would be. They evaluated its impact amongst the members of the "audience", and it appears to have been very effective in changing attitudes immediately post-performance. However, at present it is too early to assess its impact in terms of moves into construction.

We have also used the theatre group to educate training providers. We had a day's training session for around 16-17 local training providers at the LSC. The focus was on gender and ethnicity in their fields of work/coverage and again, this was run by Impact Theatre Group. The feedback was excellent, attendees said it had opened their eyes to the issues, for example, of being a lone female in a male training group.'



In *North Yorkshire*, NYBEP had been requested by the LLSC directly to challenge the normal stereotypical work placements usually opted for by young people in this region. The NYBEP representative, Stella Ward, explained how the organisation had started working with young people to challenge gender segregation (see Box 6.4). She added that North Yorkshire LLSC had worked closely with the NYBEP and funded their pre-16 initiatives in local schools for a number of years. The BEP worked as an agent for the LLSC and generated project ideas that contributed towards the LLSC's business plans. The LLSC drove the initiative and asked NYBEP to use its funding to produce the play as part of its business plan.

**Box 6.4 North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership**

'We worked with a school that has specialist status for the performing arts. A group of 15-20 youngsters, as part of their GCSEs course work, wrote a 15 minute play that they then performed to schools in 3 different schools in the region. The content of the play focused on young people choosing to do non-traditional training and work and the reaction of their friends, families and employers.

We targeted year 10 students who were at the stage of selecting work experience. Furthermore, when the play was performed we arranged for ten people who worked in "non-stereotypical" jobs and sectors to be present in the audience, including: female police and Navy officers, a male hairdresser, a female chef, a female [managing director], male nurses, and a female engineer. These people were available to talk with the young people at the end of each production about their roles and their progression in their selected professions.

North Yorkshire is a rural county with very traditional attitudes. The aim of the initiative was to encourage both boys and girls to undertake work experience in areas, such as the construction industry, which they may not usually consider. One girl who saw the play went on to do painting and decorating work experience. She is now working in that field and doing very well. However, it is hard to isolate the impact of the play from the decisions that individuals might have made otherwise.

There seems to have been less impact on the boys. In keeping with previous research, the NYBEP has found that it seems harder for boys to break out of traditional roles, preferring instead to stick to "manly" occupations. Work experience co-ordinators in North Yorkshire schools are finding this is a hard "nut to crack" and a slow process. Parental influence has a great effect on the students. The initiative was to challenge young people's attitudes and show them that boys don't necessarily have to work as engineers, farmers, garage mechanics and girls don't have to work in hairdressing, the caring professions etc.

NYBEP is working with York and North Yorkshire Careers and Guidance Services to assess the impact. The play was well received and having the role models there to offer additional information worked well, with many young people going to talk to them. We will be assessing the impact of the initiative through the number of young people who have gone for atypical work experience. We believe that the play did have an impact on some girls.'

In *Birmingham and Solihull*, the theatre workshops had been used as the basis for discussion to challenge ideas about the various jobs amongst young people and also to promote understanding amongst providers, while in *North Yorkshire*, young people had been able to discuss career issues with ‘atypical’ representatives of a range of sectors at the end of the performance.

### 6.3 Vocational options

Most respondents to the LLSC survey considered that the most effective way to start to challenge gender segregation was to work with children to make them aware of all their options before they had formed firm ideas about occupational stereotypes, or had made decisions about the qualifications they intended to take. Waiting until young people were at the point of making qualification decisions was too late to have a significant impact.

This point emerged as a clear message at all stages in the research. The comments from the LLSC participants regarding what would help challenge gender segregation included the following:

*This issue must be tackled at a very early age, i.e. Junior School age. The introduction of vocational options at the age of 14 will help and must be supported by the schools to ensure gender stereotyping is avoided.*

*... for young people's attitudes to be influenced much earlier than post-16 e.g. at Junior School age.*

*... [there needs to be] further promotional work with parents and activity in schools to challenge stereotypes and promote vocational routes.*

*... provide opportunities to experience an engineering environment, and undertake design and make projects using modern engineering techniques.*

LLSC survey responses

*Early careers education is the most important and potentially most effective way to address gender segregation. Young people need to be convinced at an early age that they genuinely are able to work in any industry, and that they can do any job. As it stands, young people have to be very confident, and brave, to choose an atypical career, because they may have to stand up to peers, parents and employers to show they can, indeed, work in construction (females) or childcare (males).*

Case study interview, LLSC Devon and Cornwall

The views of the ALI and Sector Skills Council representatives were very similar to those of the LLSC respondents:

*None of the national partners can do much about the view of young people as to what is appropriate - the key influence on career choice is parents, perhaps followed by the media (so partners could try to get some more, but subtle, messages into the media, which might have a bit of influence e.g. a female mechanic in Eastenders); next is probably teachers. By and large those involved in careers education just tend to reinforce stereotypes - this is probably where pressure should be exerted which could have some influence on the problem.*

ALI

*The issue is the numbers of young people coming forward into the career structure. We need to change hearts and minds at an early age.*

SEMTA

It can be seen that there are two general themes to the suggestions. First, that the most effective way of bringing about change in attitudes is to give hands-on experience of the various occupational areas, and, second, that it is necessary to do so early on in life. A range of actions is required, which should be focused on the early cultural and environmental influences on the young person as well as on learning providers and advisors. At present, it is more often the case that young people do not gain any knowledge or experience of, and therefore do not consider, work-based learning options until the point at which they leave school:

*I am currently trying to link [work-based learning] providers with schools earlier than the statutory school leaving date. The main problem is, for young people thinking about work-based learning, it all tends to be planned 'after the event', after they have left school.*

Case study interview, LLSC Birmingham and Solihull

In line with this thinking, many of the providers interviewed as part of the case studies were working with schools to give hands-on opportunities. This took the form of taster days or weeks, summer schools or even 'student apprenticeships'. For example, in *North Yorkshire*, David Sanderson of Derwent Training Association described initiatives to introduce girls to engineering:

**Box 6.5 Derwent Training Association**

'In North Yorkshire, Derwent Training Association has arranged a number of taster days and summer schools for young people, opening up our training facilities for the day and taking visitors through all aspects of engineering. For one taster day there were 68 young people in total, including around 30 girls. We also invited the WISE bus, which has such facilities as computers and small pieces of equipment etc. At the end of these sessions the young people are given a certificate.

We evaluated the impact of the visits and asked what aspects of the visit the young people had enjoyed the most. The majority of the girls said they had enjoyed [computer aided design] the most, but a significant number said that they enjoyed pneumatics and welding. Analysis of feedback questionnaires also reveals that young people report that their interest in engineering has increased as a result of the day.

Through careers officers in schools we arrange to visit schools to talk about working in engineering and have female-only sessions. We find that girls will ask more questions if there are no boys in the group.

Another initiative we have introduced is "student apprenticeships", for sixth formers doing A-levels. The students spend a day a week with an employer and also work towards an industrial qualification, with the possibility that this may lead to jobs when they finish school.'

In Chapter 4, there was a description of similar work being undertaken by the engineering provider, EEF West Midlands Technology Centre, which was working with local schools to offer hands-on experience for teaching and Connexions staff as well as for pupils. By providing such experiences, the intention is to increase the awareness of the atypical group to the potential range of qualifications and jobs available. The same philosophy underlay the actions of *Birmingham and Solihull* LLSC, which was involved, either directly or in partnership, in several new developments which were aimed at widening the availability of work-based learning opportunities for young people. One of these - 4Real - was an example of partnership activity being funded through the European Social Fund. Simon Griffiths, Operations Co-ordinator at the LLSC, explained how this was working:

**Box 6.6     4Real project, Birmingham**

'4Real is an ESF co-financed project. In this project, learners are following an alternative curriculum for one day a week, when perhaps they will take part in an employability/key skills programme or undertake an Extended Work Experience Placement. The project operates within geographical areas - it links young people, colleges or pupil referral units to employers in the region. Some of these learners will transfer to E2E after school or may even continue into full-time employment with their placement employer. The scheme means that providers are invited in to give the young people an overview of [work-based learning] and guarantee them an interview for placement.

Importantly, the LSC has the names of the pupils who participate in the scheme and will be able to follow them up to assess the impact it is having in terms of learner cohort composition and the choices made by young people taking part in the scheme. 4Real forms part of a wider curriculum offer being developed and informed in Birmingham and Solihull through Local 14-19 Area Planning arrangements; with the resulting curriculum seeking to cover the whole ability range and meet the needs of 100 per cent of the cohort.'

*Birmingham and Solihull* LLSC was generally at the forefront of attempts to improve access to vocational provision. This LLSC is one of the test-bed 'fast-track' regions that is looking at different ways of working with the 14-19 sector. It has been setting up 'collegiate' arrangements. These are partnerships through which LEAs, schools, colleges and the local work-based learning provider network collaborate to undertake activities relating to broader curriculum offers, continued professional development and joint planning. Integrated information, advice and guidance is also offered, with the involvement of Connexions. A particular focus is on 'growing the work related curriculum' and ensuring a variety of options are available at age 14. With colleges offering a forum for joint planning arrangements, it enables partners to share current delivery practices: offering opportunities, for example, of joint timetabling and innovative teaching practices across partners. These arrangements are being set up in six areas across the LLSC area. There are ongoing plans for all schools to encourage a number of new colleges to be formed. While designed to address a whole range of activities, one obvious benefit will be to engage learners through work related learning that aims to see increased participation rates post-16.

Such changes clearly aim to raise awareness and improve access to information about vocational options for schoolchildren. In Chapter 5, a representative of e-skills UK and one of our case study interviewees both commented on the difficulty that both they and providers had in providing information to young people in school. Difficulties in gaining access to schools in order to provide information to young people were also mentioned by a provider interviewed as part of the work:

*I would like to be able to be more active in promoting work-based learning in schools, and feel that this is where I could help have an impact on gender segregation, however, our company hasn't been granted access. I feel that there is generally a lack of awareness of MAs and work-based learning (NVQs), and that school teachers, especially, do not discuss the possibilities of MAs/work-based learning with their students.*

Case study interview, training provider

Such comments are in line with the reports of apprentices that can be found in Chapter 7. The moves towards collegiate arrangements and the 14-19 Pathfinder programme may lead to improved information on the range of options being made available for young people; a team from the University of Exeter are currently examining the equality aspects of Pathfinders for the EOC.

## 7. RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF APPRENTICES

Chapter 7 considers the barriers to the recruitment and employment of apprentices, including the actions that have been taken to overcome any difficulties. It also describes the experience of the apprentices themselves.

### 7.1 Employment of apprentices

The Cassels Review recommended that, by September 2003, all apprentices should have employee status while they are apprentices<sup>13</sup> (Cassels, 2001; NLSC, 2002). Therefore, since 2003, the entry to apprenticeship training for the majority of modern apprentices has been through employment. It is really only at foundation level that there remain pockets of apprenticeships for individuals who are students rather than employees. In turn, this means that the majority of providers (and particularly work-based learning providers) often are limited in the actions they are able to take.<sup>14</sup> The essential first stage in gaining entry to an apprenticeship is to obtain employment:

*The TV advertising campaigns generated a lot of interest and the leads were passed on to local [LSC] offices. But the campaign was a victim of its own success. There was much interest from potential trainees but the problem was we had no employers offering training places.*  
NLSC

*The majority of providers work with trainees [who are] already employed, which makes it difficult for them to address gender imbalance. This means that more needs to be done on getting employers to address this issue.*  
LLSC survey response

In view of this, a primary concern for many of the individuals and organisations that were interviewed was how best to persuade employers to provide the necessary number of apprenticeship places. While this issue concerns the recruitment of apprentices overall, the absence of places is a necessary first hurdle to overcome before there can be any attempt at addressing gender segregation:

*The problem is the waiting list [for jobs] is quite long. There is light at the end of the tunnel if the apprentice goes looking for a job as well, so we arm them with information on job search. But it can be disheartening that we get them through the first stages and we can offer them a place on the course, but we can't start them until they find an employer. It is a headache.*  
Case study interview, training provider

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that apprentices may not subsequently be retained as employees after the completion of their MAs.

<sup>14</sup> Although Group Training Associations seem to be in a better position in this respect than other types of training provider, because of their close and extensive links with employers.

In order to try to get around the difficulties associated with finding starter jobs for young people, one LLSC had tried introducing an award scheme that allowed the young person to commence training before gaining employment:

*In 2003/04 we introduced award schemes. This enables young people to start a Foundation MA without [needing to have] employed status from day one. Typically there is an upfront off the job element during which time the young person receives a training allowance. At the end of this period the young person has gained skills that make them more appealing to a potential employer. The scheme is currently offered in engineering, building services and care. It is too early to assess the impact of the programme yet.*

LLSC survey response

In construction and plumbing, the employment profile of the sectors exacerbated these problems. In both, a very high proportion of employers are small employers or micro-employers. In construction, it is estimated that around 60 per cent of enterprises employed fewer than ten people, while in plumbing, the SSC estimates that 85 per cent of employers employ fewer than five employees. It is difficult to persuade small employers of the business case for taking on apprentices:

*We are finding it difficult to increase the number of starter jobs in the industry, particularly in the south of England - there is a huge percentage of self-employment. This means there are too few [starter] jobs, and for those who have jobs available, it is a very thin business case to invest in apprentice training, where it is likely that in the region of 80 per cent of trainees will turn to self-employment and [the employer] will not benefit in the long-term.*

CITB-ConstructionSkills

*Today's apprentice is tomorrow's competition.*

SummitSkills

Difficulties in persuading employers to provide starter jobs apply in general across these sectors. These general problems with the provision of starter jobs do not help with attempts to bring in atypical apprentices. In addition, the fact that apprentices are mostly recruited by employers may constitute an additional hurdle:

*Employers are (according to training providers) reluctant to take on non-traditional candidates.*

*It is an employed status programme. Employers' [attitudes] to gender at recruitment inhibits gender [composition].*

LLSC survey responses



*It is the employers you have to get to, changing their hearts and minds, it's about training employers too.*

Case study interview, LLSC London South

Larger employers, particularly those sufficiently large to have personnel or HR departments, are likely to have enlightened recruitment policies. Representatives of the ICT and engineering sectors, which were more likely to have a higher proportion of medium-sized or large employers, reported far more interest in recruiting atypical apprentices (in these cases, women) in their sectors than did representatives in the other three.

While some of the larger employers may have been won over to the diversity argument, many remain to be convinced. On this point, all of the various parties were agreed:

*When you're taking the vacancy details down for an employer, the employer says that they want a 'lad', and we say 'you can't ask for that'. At one time we had a roofer ring up to advertise for an apprentice, and he said, 'Well I don't think my wife would like it if I had a nice young dolly bird up on my roofs.'*

Case study interview, Connexions PA

*In certain industries, the barrier does exist with the employer, in that they just don't consider women as potential employees. And they'll cite the example of a 'one man band operation', one guy who has his own business... how comfortable does everybody feel that he has a female apprentice working with him? It's a complex issue, and it's very difficult for us to tackle.*

LLSC survey response

*Employers are aware of the EO legislation and know that they cannot say that they want a boy/man etc., but discrimination or stereotyping happens more subtly than that.*

Case study interview, Connexions, London South

*One of the biggest problems we have is employers' reluctance to take on atypical employees. We know that employers' attitudes is one of the big issues.*

LLSC survey response

*Our company is very conscious of equal opportunities, and supportive of the EO agenda. We do sometimes get requests from employers looking for 'a lad', and we tell them that advertisements cannot restrict applicants in this way.*

Case study interview, training provider

*The potential employer said, 'This is a job for big strong men. We don't want women coming in here with their hormones. You can't keep your nails clean if you work here, you know. We want to keep this factory all male.' Then he took me around the factory and introduced me to all the workers, and every man he introduced me to, he made them show me their hands to show how dirty they were.*

Female apprentice

*In the main, the companies that recruit apprentices are not grubby little back street companies, they are normally the better employers, the better providers of education and training, there is less discrimination. One of the worries and concerns is, you do meet the barriers. If a production manager or personnel manager is sexist or racist, it doesn't matter what the business is like, if they have the last say then you are stuck.*

Case study interview, training provider

Clearly there remains a need for some future actions to address gender segregation to be focused on employers. However, set against this, the case studies showed that some employers were happy to take on atypical apprentices, if they considered that there was a business need to do so, even if they had no explicit policy regarding this:

*There was a need for properly trained and qualified childcare specialists, and the easiest way to supply our own demand for childcare workers was to recruit and train ourselves ... While there isn't a written policy as such, we strongly believe that our workforce should be balanced between males and females. In practice, this translates to making an extra effort to recruit males into childcare, as traditionally childcare is not seen as a male profession.*

Case study interview, childcare employer

*There was a skills shortage in the area so we decided to take on apprentices, and to train and reward them well in the hope that they would stay on ... We have no general policy but we have taken on two female apprentices in the past. It is a question of taking on the right calibre of person, whether male or female. If female candidates are of the right calibre they can come along, no problem.*

Case study interview, engineering employer

*The decision to take on the apprentices last year was to do with the order book and business plan. We will need the extra staff in four years' time. We will be taking on another two this year. We did not make a decision to recruit females, it is just that no females had applied before.*

Case study interview, engineering employer

Some of the providers whom we interviewed in the case study areas were actively trying to help employers to understand the issues involved in equality of opportunity, recruitment and selection. The EEF West Midlands Technology Centre in *Birmingham and Solihull* runs a free seminar on fair recruitment once a year for

employers, which focuses on gender and race. The seminar introduces them to aptitude testing, the concept of norms in society (for the tests/statistics etc.) and generally tries to 'open people's eyes to best recruitment practice'. Similarly, in *North Yorkshire*, the training provider, PBS, provides all of its employers with a 'toolkit' including a handbook on equality and diversity issues. It also has a helpline that employers can call if they have any queries.

There is evidence, therefore, that requiring apprentices to have employed status places an additional barrier in the way of atypical apprentices for, despite legislation, many employers still seek to recruit 'typical' apprentices. However, despite problems with finding jobs for apprentices, providers nonetheless generally were keen to retain employed status for them:

*We have unemployed young people doing FMAs - how are unemployed people supposed to do an apprenticeship? It weakens the apprenticeship model. They should have kept 'apprenticeship' to mean someone employed full time to learn a skill, then going on to do the HNC or degree. We need exclusivity for the apprenticeship. Personally I rue the day they introduced the FMA. We are paying FMAs [an allowance] in the hope that they will go on and get a job with a company and then do an AMA.*

Case study interview, training provider

*Apprentices must have employed status, work experience is not enough. So you have to have the employers on side.*

SummitSkills

In addition, one of the providers to whom we spoke had experience of the earlier apprenticeship scheme which had operated prior to the drive to provide employed status for apprentices, and felt this had led to some apprentices being poorly-treated:

*It seems to me that when apprentices had trainee status the employers were far less committed to the process and the young people were much less likely to be employed at the end of the scheme. While they had an apprentice, employers were paid an incentive, and then at the end many would find a reason not to keep the apprentice on or pay a proper wage; they would simply get a new apprentice. From the beginning, our College bought into the government's drive to encourage employers to take on apprentices with employed status.*

Case study interview, training provider

Despite the acknowledged additional difficulties this causes them in trying to persuade employers to take on atypical recruits, nonetheless providers and SSCs felt that it was important that apprentices should continue to have employed status.

## 7.2 Engaging with employers

If the number of apprenticeships from atypical groups is to be increased and less entrenched attitudes towards minority groups are to be encouraged, it is essential that employers should engage with this process. How have case study organisations tackled this issue? On page 62, we reported that one provider (a Group Training Association) offered free training in the use of assessment instruments and recruitment practice once a year to employers in the region. David Hart, the Equality Manager at *London North* LLSC, explained the rationale for the forthcoming 'Transition to Employment' conference as part of the 'Transitions for Young People' model:

### Box 7.1 London North LLSC

'LSC London North will be working with a team of specialist consultants on a high profile conference on the transition from learning to work. The focus will be on student experiences in FE and how people are then prepared to go into work or into the MA role. It is aimed at employers to provide them with a toolkit on working with young people. The event may be held at a local college and will address issues such as gender, race and disability and look at what happens when young people move into the workplace.

[The LSC was] looking for exemplar employers to take part in the initiative at the time of the research. They were intending to provide all attending employers with a resource pack. By providing this awareness-raising event and the toolkit to take away, they were hoping to improve the range of employers prepared to offer MAs and improve the experiences of the young people who were recruited.

The initiative has been funded using TEC legacy funding and is the first stage of the forward strategy for the North London Cultural Diversity Forum.

An Employer Engagement Manager, employed by the North London Learning Partnership, encourages employers to become involved in training and to consider taking on apprentices. While this role is not aimed directly at confronting gender segregation, the intended outcomes - a wider range of employers offering more apprenticeships in the locality, with a better understanding of diversity issues - should make it easier for all young people in the four boroughs represented by [the LSC] to obtain apprenticeship positions.'

## 7.3 Advertising apprenticeship positions

In Chapter 6, we considered issues of design in publicity materials for apprenticeships. However, there are more basic problems to be addressed. In many cases, we found that apprentices did not know where to obtain information on MAs, or had not known about them until they applied for a job:

*I didn't hear or see anything about the apprenticeship before starting work. It was first mentioned to me by my employers at the youth club, and the course started one week later.*

Male apprentice

*I saw the 'nursery care' vacancy for [name of training provider] and I talked to the Connexions staff about it. They then set up an appointment for me. But I didn't realise it was a course until I got there, I was looking for, and thought it was, a full time job. But I was pleased that I would be getting a qualification.*

Male apprentice

*I did not know where to look for info on MAs - I knew they existed but they are not advertised. Then one day I saw the [training provider] leaflet and phoned them. They should advertise them.*

Female apprentice

*It said in the advert that it was an MA but I had to research what an MA was because school was just, like, 'Get your GCSEs, get your 'A' levels, go to university ...' and when I went back to school [after getting onto the MA] the reaction was 'You're doing a what?' from both the pupils and the staff, because they had no idea what an MA was. So I printed out the Connexions web page on MAs and pinned it up on the board and wrote 'if you are thinking about not going to university think about this!' Because the school just had no idea.*

Female apprentice

Where apprenticeship positions are available, actions to help young people find out about their availability can be helpful. The following example from *Birmingham and Solihull* shows how one provider has set up a central resource to advertise all MAs in the West Midlands. The venture was jointly supported by EEF West Midlands Technology Centre (the provider), EMTA (now SEMTA, the SSC) and the West Midlands Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands). Bill Nicholls, Director, Education and Training Development of EEF West Midlands Technology Centre, describes the initiative:

**Box 7.2 EEF West Midlands Technology Centre - Birmingham**

'There was no market place for apprentices, we had to create it. With support from EMTA and Advantage West Midlands we produce a directory called Engineering Connections that shows all the engineering apprenticeships in the West Midlands. This is circulated to every school, to Connexions offices and community centres and libraries. We also set up and run a website called apprentices.co.uk, and all the vacancies are also listed on the website. There is also a marketing leaflet to tell people about the website. We include women and ethnic minorities in all publicity material. The Directory and website have particularly impacted on the market. All the applicants that apply through the directory and website, we keep the statistics. The application form has an equal opportunities monitoring section. They indicate what company they want the application to go to, and we track and monitor their applications.'

**7.4 Availability of training provision**

Other infrastructure issues exacerbate the situation and this leads to a shortage of training places. For providers, lack of continuity of funding for colleges makes it difficult for them to support expensive departments (such as plumbing) during downturns in the economy. When there is subsequent demand for additional places it is difficult for colleges then to respond, thus limiting the number of apprentices that can be accommodated:

*There are not enough college places and not enough employers prepared to take on apprentices. More people are applying due to the press coverage about £60k a year etc. We try to help them understand what is involved but over and above that we do not have the places ... as a result of the previous downturn, many colleges closed their plumbing departments down, they are expensive programmes to run because of all the consumable materials. So when money was tight, they closed down the expensive departments. So sometimes apprentices who can get an employer can't get into college - so they may just sign up for the NVQ but can't do the whole MA framework.*

SummitSkills

*The target is to increase numbers by 29 per cent next year. The big problem is the AMA. The FMA has improved but there are problems with the delivery of the technical certificate for the AMA. It is a 'Catch 22' situation - the colleges are encouraged to deliver but won't deliver the qualification unless they have the required number of people. They find they either have the trainer but not the number of candidates, or vice versa.*

e-skills UK

Similar problems were also found in the case study research. In Chapter 4, we described an initiative by Horizon Housing in *London South* to provide an entry route

into construction for women. The course had been successful in creating a great deal of interest in the construction trades amongst the participants, but the original intention was for it to provide a progression route into accredited courses, either NVQs (for older women) or, for younger women, apprenticeships. However, at the time of the research, there were concerns over the lack of further training courses available locally. While two participants had subsequently registered for a foundation course in carpentry with the partner college, it was reported that the college had recently set aside plans to run a painting and decorating course, and, despite lots of interest in plumbing, no appropriate plumbing course was available.

### 7.5 Pay and benefits of apprentices

Several issues relating to pay and benefits emerged during the course of the research. Firstly, some employers were reluctant to pay the full rate for the job to apprentices. In keeping with research we have reported elsewhere (Miller, Hurstfield and Stratton, 2002; Neathey, 2004; Miller et al., 2004), work-based trainees were often seen by employers as not fully contributing to a business until they were fully qualified. Even then, with competence-based awards, following qualification there may be a period during which the employee is fully skilled, but not as fast as a more experienced worker. Becoming fully 'up to speed' may take a period of practice beyond the point of qualification:

*Apprentices need to demonstrate their competence on-site, and they need to practise to get up to speed. Yet government funding is given for the training but not for the practical part of the qualification. Why should employers take them on when they are still at the practice stage? Especially for the AMA entrant - the employer needs to pay them the adult NMW.<sup>15</sup> Employers tell us they are not worth this. So we would like to discuss with government how to fund a period of practice during which the trainee would come up to speed; this would be especially helpful to women. Many express interest, get trained, but then encounter the problems of getting the practice.*

CITB-ConstructionSkills

There was evidence from one of the case studies that in less well-paid sectors, such as childcare, it can be particularly difficult to persuade employers to take on apprentices because of the costs involved.

Secondly, in childcare, the low salaries caused problems for some apprentices. The comments on this issue from various sources included:

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<sup>15</sup> Employers are required to pay the NMW to Modern Apprentices aged over 19 after they complete one full year of their apprenticeship.

*The pay is ... only £3.70 an hour and I only do 30 hours so it's not really enough money ... to pay my bills, pay my rent, and buy food and electric and gas, I ain't got no money left for the week.*

Male apprentice

*The pay isn't very good, especially for a man with a child.*

Male apprentice

*We won't fill the vacancies without bringing men in but the salary - around eight thousand a year - is not enough to support a family where the male is the principal wage-earner.*

EYNT0

Thirdly, there is an apparent anomaly regarding the position of 16 year olds and those aged over 17. Whereas the LLSC pays the training fees for all Modern Apprentices, they pay a training allowance (to unemployed apprentices) only to those aged between 16 and 17. At age 17, this allowance stops. One provider noted that a parent had recently telephoned to complain that her daughter had had her training allowance cut off only a few months into her apprenticeship. When it was explained that the allowance stopped once the young person turned 17, the parent pointed out that her daughter had not left school until she was some way through her sixteenth year and could not understand why there had to be this cut-off. The provider suggested that if the NLSC wanted to improve this situation, then whenever the NLSC funds training for those not in employment, the training allowance should be funded by the NLSC too, irrespective of the age of the trainee. It was difficult for the provider (and the parent) to understand why the decision only to fund young people between the ages of 16 and 17 had been taken in the first place.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, as noted in Miller et al. (2004), there are differences between the treatment of work-based and other learners in respect of benefits and grants. Young parents (aged under 19) who attend courses are eligible for childcare payments of up to £5,000 a year under the *Care to Learn?* scheme. These payments can be obtained to cover childcare for time spent in study at any level (including uncertificated taster courses and time spent on homework), even if the parent studies for only a few hours a week and is employed for the remaining time. Apprentices, however, are excluded by dint of their employed status from eligibility for these payments (this affects the majority of those on FMAs and all on AMAs). In the interviews, reports emerged of similar discrepancies regarding other benefits:

<sup>16</sup> It is possible that this problem will have been resolved by the full implementation of the Education Maintenance Allowance in September 2004, but in the meantime issues such as the above were proving problematic. For details of the EMA scheme, see:  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp/ema/index.cfm>



*Another more general principle - Education Maintenance Allowances - they can get these as students but they do not get them if they are employed. But you could [theoretically] see an MA as a part-time student - and [allow them to] get part-time maintenance allowance. Even a full-time student attends college probably for only 24 hours a week, after all, and they can earn a certain amount before it is taxed.*

CITB-ConstructionSkills

In other words, while an apprentice and a student might be spending very similar numbers of hours engaged in learning and in work, there are great differences in the ways in which they are perceived and treated by the government due to their different primary status as 'learner' or 'employee'. Given that the government is trying to encourage more young people into apprenticeships, such inequities in treatment seem not only unjust, but are also likely to be a key factor in discouraging individuals from deciding to take the work-based training route. For females, who are often less financially independent than males, such differences may be magnified. Even for the minority of apprentices who are registered as students, the system can make it difficult to cope:

*I worked in sales earning loads of money, got my own place and left home, then at 19 I made the decision to do the FMA. But it's not tailored to suit people like me very well. It's designed for 16 year old boys living at home. We're here everyday from 8 until 4.30, if we could have a day free we could work and earn money. And because it's not classed as HE you can't get a grant, and because I'm older than 19 I can't get social support. I put off doing the apprenticeship so I could save up and then come back this year. I had enough money saved so I decided to just do it. But I don't want to build up debt. I get £55 a week plus travel costs. So it is tight. I work part-time at night and at weekends - I have three jobs as well as doing the full-time FMA.*

Female apprentice

## 7.6 The apprenticeship experience

The social isolation in which atypical apprentices can find themselves is seen by all parties as a potential threat to their successful completion and to the likely sustainability of initiatives to attract 'atypical' apprentices. This is probably the single biggest hurdle to overcome and was recognised by all parties involved in supporting apprentices:

*Being in a small company usually means dealing with a large number of small sites and projects. The problem for atypical employees with small companies is that you are a role model in continually changing, new surroundings amongst new people.*

CITB-ConstructionSkills

*Our view is that there needs to be a critical mass - once you are over that there would be support within the group - it becomes self-supporting, self-perpetuating. But there are a number of issues: if there is just one man on the course, his peers may say things about him; there is no one on the course to whom the individual can turn to gain help to counter the gossip and rumour; and the girls can gang up on you. There is a certain critical mass - with enough men on the course, they form their own support group and counter the rumours.*

EYNTO

*Young people are often aware of the barriers they may face (and recognise that stereotypes exist) but are not necessarily aware of how difficult it makes things.*

Case study interview, Connexions, London South

*They need to have lots of confidence to go into childcare as a male.*

Case study interview, training provider

*There is a shortage of chefs in the York labour market. Kitchen work is often within a pressurised 'macho' environment, where the issue for females is not whether or not they have the food skills but rather, it's having to battle with that 'macho' environment.*

Case study interview, Connexions, North Yorkshire

Interviews with the apprentices revealed a mixed picture. While much of the previous research (and the views expressed by SSCs and providers) suggests that there may be particular problems with boys entering childcare being viewed with suspicion by colleagues and fellow students, the case studies did not indicate a problem with this. The boys entering childcare had initially had some concerns over how they would be treated, but they had largely been accepted by colleagues and other students:

*I thought I would feel left out but it didn't happen - I am treated like everyone else.*

Male apprentice

*The parents were curious about me because the kids kept [talking about me], and when they came in they would say 'Oh, so you're [name of apprentice].' But I got a good reaction from the parents.*

Male apprentice

However, the experiences of the girls in male-dominated sectors had not been entirely happy:

*I really wanted to do the apprenticeship, it was something different, you know? And I did like it, but the boys were making sexist remarks all the time, telling me what I am, calling me names. I just didn't fit in. In the end I just decided to leave.*

Female ex-apprentice

*I have had to speak to my mentor to get the lads to leave me alone. They play practical jokes all the time. I am the butt of their jokes.*

Female apprentice

*I thought, I'm going to work, it's an adult environment, but with the boys, it's just like being back at school again ... I was so close to leaving so many times, the bullying went on for months, but when I spoke to my employer [they] were very supportive.*

Female apprentice

As indicated above, the SSCs, LLSCs and providers are aware that these issues of isolation are a problem that can affect the learning experience and, ultimately, the retention of apprentices. Below, we describe some of the approaches that have been adopted by the various organisations to try to address this problem. One example was in *London North* LLSC, where Lee Thomas, the North London Learning Partnership Manager, explained how ESF funding had been used to provide support to young people in work-based learning:

**Box 7.3 North London Learning Partnership Manager**

'The idea came out of learner feedback research we conducted - we contacted all early leavers in 2000, and asked them about the reasons why they did not complete their course, and to ask if we could help them to proceed into anything else. The number one reason for learners leaving early was lack of support from providers and/or employers. North London employers are largely small - it's an "all hands on deck" scenario - so learners do not necessarily get all the help and support they need. And training providers are not able to go out to them as much as we might perhaps like, because they are wary of disrupting the relationship with the employer.

Young people aged 16-17 in work-based learning need more support because they are often quite isolated, but they actually get the least support, especially in the context of personal development. And training providers do not necessarily have anyone skilled in personal support. Other issues identified within the leaver survey were problems with housing and at home. These things happen to everyone every now and again. People should be able to address problems and still continue with their training, but young people are often unable to reconcile dealing with problems and the training, and tutors and assessors are not necessarily able to provide welfare support or mentoring. So the young person may, for instance, take a month off to look for accommodation and then never go back.

We also realised that, while Connexions had school and college link PAs, they did not have work-based learning PAs. So the [work-based learning] sector did not have that Connexions link. A potentially good solution then was to employ work-based learning PAs.'

With pooled resources from the ESF, the LLSC and from the Standards Fund, London North was able to employ four work-based learning personal advisors, one of whom is the team leader. The initiative started in June 2003. The initial plan was for the PAs to work with all work-based learners (with MAs, those in E2E and with those doing NVQs in areas for which there is no MA framework) and link one PA with a borough. The LLSC is treating it as a pilot, learning as they go along, changing things they find do not work and hence refining the process. They have therefore made a significant number of changes since starting delivery. Early on they recognised that there was not sufficient capacity to work with all the providers. If there were too many providers in the scheme, then the PAs would only be able to provide piecemeal support. So they are restricting the provision to a limited number of employers at present.

The team leader develops the relationship with the provider, explains the referral process and how they support the staff. As referrals are generated, a team member picks them up. One or two PAs are allocated to each provider to ensure some continuity. Now each PA has 25-30 young people at any one time and they see them weekly or more. The main focus of the support provided by the work-based learning PAs is on motivation and empowering young people to take personal responsibility for their problems, empower them, and help them to solve their problems.

Given that social isolation is one of the main problems for atypical apprentices, any attempt at providing some additional form of social support for these young people in the workplace must be applauded.

In *Birmingham and Solihull*, EEF West Midlands Technology Centre is employing a full-time mentor to support apprentices. Similarly, Derwent Training in *North Yorkshire* ensures that all work-based MAs have mentors in their place of employment. A trainer will go and see each apprentice at least twice a month, which gives the latter an opportunity to discuss any issues. There is also a review every 12 weeks where the young person, the trainer, the employer and an advisor go through a review sheet and the young person can express their opinions. This review also covers equal opportunity issues. The apprentice then talks to the advisor alone without the employer and is given the chance to ask for extra support. This system of support is the same for all apprentices.

In the case of PBS, another provider in *North Yorkshire*, a college mentor would interview the candidates in the first instance. This individual then generally continues their mentoring role for these students at the college, to continue that relationship. Mentors are careful to ensure that young people doing atypical MAs do not stand out as being 'different' and so, partly for this reason, the same support is open to other trainees. Mentors are often present in the workshop, and anyone can approach them for an informal chat at these times.

In each of these situations the support was being provided for all learners, rather than for just the atypical group. While proving to be of particular value in providing support to atypical apprentices, this strategy may also ensure that atypical apprentices are not made to feel 'different' by actions to support them. As one training provider stated:

*The college does have to be careful, why should atypical MAs be treated differently and made to feel different? Extra attention could make the girls feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, we do want to address any problems they have and address equality and diversity issues. It is really difficult to find the right balance. Girls at the college have had the same experience of being contacted by numerous bodies with an interest in equal opportunities; it is a bizarre situation that their interest in equal opportunities is making the girls feel different.*

Case study interview, training provider

These providers had taken action to provide support for young people while they are in employment and training. Under normal circumstances, the young person's friends

might also be expected to provide encouragement and support, but in the somewhat isolated world of the atypical apprentice this is often not the case:

*Female occupancy is low, around 2.5 to 3 per cent [in motor vehicle engineering]. The problem is that, with these small numbers and a rolling programme, when a female joins there are no other females for her to associate with. There are no support mechanisms, for example at lunchtimes they cannot [talk] things over. And it is the same problem when they go to work. There is no female hierarchy they can relate to. And one thing impacts on the next thing. And rightly they would feel disaffected. No matter what regimes you have in place it seems insufficient in terms of social support.*

Case study interview, training provider

*At present we have a roll on, roll off programme, so people can start at any time. We are trying to move over to having monthly enrolments so that groups of individuals can start together which will help them to make friends/support each other. However, this does seem to be against national policy.*

Case study interview, training provider

*It is more difficult with MAs because of the male dominated situation in engineering workplaces, girls don't see an environment that is encouraging for them. It is not so bad in the blue chip companies, but in SMEs maybe there are only 15 people in a company, and, other than the girls in the office, they are all male. It could be difficult for female apprentices and it would be better if they had other females to talk to. It is something that needs to be looked at.*

Case study interview, training provider

There was a general acknowledgement that it can be very challenging and intimidating for young women to go to work in male-dominated spaces such as workshops or garages. Providers have tried to put in place various forms of support (such as mentors) for apprentices, but it was clear that girls in male environments continue to face particular difficulties. When mentors are offered, typically such support is offered to all apprentices, not just to the atypical groups. While extra support may be available to those who seek it, providers are often reluctant to offer extra support to someone just because of their gender. Sometimes they consider that this is contrary to the spirit of equal opportunities, but more often this is due to a wish not to make gender appear to be an 'issue' with the atypical apprentice.

There was, at the time of the interviews, a fairly widespread problem with completion rates of MAs, with some completion rates being only around 35 to 50 per cent. Engineering was reported by SEMTA to have one of the best completion rates, at 60 per cent, but even this had fallen from previous years. Completion is linked to retention, and retention is linked to the nature of the training experience.

In the next example, we describe how the CITB-ConstructionSkills has taken action that attempts to remedy the social isolation itself. Its Chief Executive, Peter Lobban, explains how it is trying to move towards an integrated model of learning and social support:

**Box 7.4 CITB-ConstructionSkills**

'For sectors characterised by small employers there are problems that arise from the fragmented nature of the industry. In construction there are many, very small units. These companies move people around short term, locally based projects. This causes a particular problem for atypical employees - you are a role model in continually changing, new surroundings amongst new people. Programmes such as Youthbuild have used external mentoring professionals to help support young people with these sorts of difficulty. But it is difficult if you have disparate apprentices scattered around sites - it's much easier to organise if they are in a group.

On the other hand, the larger organisations work nationally, but this is no good for trainees as they cannot move around such distances. The larger organisations tend not to employ craftspeople, but instead sub-contract to, for example, a bricklaying sub-contractor. What this means is that the sub-contractors end up with contracts of short length which makes it difficult for them to take on a long term commitment to an apprentice.

But if you can get contractors to form longer-term contracts with their sub-contractors, then you can come to a deal regarding supporting apprentices. We see this as an important way of addressing the government's skills challenge and bringing more women in.

For these reasons we are moving on to tackle the issue on a construction project basis. We look for reasonably large, long term projects where we can then establish a learning centre [at or near that construction site] and have several young women (and ethnic minorities) at that learning centre. We can also arrange for them to have support, put in mentors, and at the same time we can educate the people working on the project, address the cultural issues, and get economies of scale.

By this means we can put several things in place so there is a complete package of support. To allow us to take this approach we need to have large projects available, and we are currently working with the Housing Forum on demonstration projects to show how local labour can be qualified on local housing refurbishment contracts.

This approach also sometimes makes it possible to harness together different sources of funding for the support required for such apprenticeships, mentors etc. There may be additional issues also if the apprentice has some sort of family support role, and needs to take time off because, for example, their child is sick. If the training is being run on a project basis, potentially you can arrange cover in such circumstances and the project doesn't grind to a halt, whereas if they are in a small enterprise, the apprentice would be responsible for a component of the work which would not get done until they returned to work.'

The issues of social and emotional support are clearly key ones to be addressed to ensure the retention of atypical apprentices, in addition to other issues such as funding, that we have identified elsewhere in this report.

The main research findings are summarised in Chapter 8, and we then go on to identify the policy implications that arise from the findings.



## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapters set out the context within which the various partners involved in apprenticeships work, and considered the various themes that emerged from the research. In the first section, we consider the slight differences in the five sectors that lead to slightly different perspectives from each of the SSCs. In the second section, we consider the findings against the five main research questions that were set out in section 2.2 and constituted the main focus for the research. Following that, we assess the findings from the case studies. We then conclude by identifying the main overarching issues that emerge from the work and suggest ways in which these can be taken forward in light of those findings.

### 8.1 The five sector perspectives

The profile of the sector and attitudes of the businesses within it influence both the way each SSC perceives the problem of gender segregation and the appropriate way to tackle it within that sector. Each sector has its own slightly different set of characteristics and circumstances that influence its way of approaching the issues involved in apprenticeships.

Employers within the IT sector to an extent appear to differ from those within the other sectors, because here, the battle for business hearts and minds appears largely to be over, with employers in this sector appearing to have been won over to the diversity argument. The focus for e-skills UK therefore was largely on 'pipeline' issues - ways to encourage more women to apply - rather than on trying to persuade employers to consider women as potential employees. For SEMTA, also, the problem is largely to do with the issue of persuading women that this is a sector worth considering. SEMTA believes that one of the main problems is the out-of-date stereotype of engineering that seems to persist in the public perception. Engineering companies are largely positive about employing women, although there remains some persuasion of employers still to be done.

The situation appears to be somewhat different in construction and plumbing. In the view of the CITB-ConstructionSkills and SummitSkills, the predominance of mainly small employers in these sectors means that apprentices are often not seen as a viable business proposition. In addition, there are logistical difficulties in delivering training given the mobility of much of the work in those sectors. The CITB-ConstructionSkills had been able to move forward with the introduction of 'project-based' training places for apprentices, which linked together several companies on relatively large construction projects, but it is less likely that this approach could be introduced for plumbing apprenticeships.

Although the childcare sector, too, is characterised by predominantly small employers, EYNT0 believes that there are fewer problems with regard to mobility. While many employers in this sector might be keen to take on apprentices, tight profit margins restrict their ability to take on additional staff, and the off-the-job training component may cause problems with the legislation regarding minimum staff:child ratios. Age restrictions (specifically, a minimum age for working with children) are an issue for apprenticeships in this sector alone of the five, along with concerns about some clients' fears regarding males working in childcare.

## **8.2 Overview of the research findings**

### *Skills gaps and ability of local providers to meet training needs*

LLSCs reported current shortages in the supply of qualified individuals in construction and plumbing and, to a slightly lesser extent, in childcare and engineering. Of the five sectors that were the focus of the survey, ICT was the only one for which any LLSC reported that there was no skills shortage, and this would appear to corroborate recent reports of a downturn in the ICT jobs market. Just two-fifths of LLSCs felt that local providers were able to meet current demands for training in construction and even fewer - just over a quarter - in plumbing. Therefore, the sectors in which there were the most extreme shortages were also those in which providers were least able to provide training places.

### *Numbers of males and females in MAs and information on current pay rates*

A significant proportion of LLSCs were unable to provide information on numbers of males and females in the five MA frameworks of interest to this study. Of those who did so, many were unable to disaggregate plumbing from construction, or engineering from IT. This was despite these areas falling under the remit of quite separate SSCs, for whom provision of this information was of some importance.

It is not a statutory requirement for LLSCs to collect data on pay rates. However, since at least some of the forerunner TECs had collected this information, it was thought possible that some LLSCs had continued this function. The survey revealed that none was able to supply the data.

### *Local initiatives by the LLSCs and partner organisations*

The survey revealed that some LLSCs were extremely active and concerned to take action to address gender segregation.<sup>17</sup> In general, it should be noted, such initiatives were to do with gender segregation in general within a particular occupational sector,

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<sup>17</sup> And, it should be noted, to address ethnicity and disability issues also, although these are not touched on much in this report as its focus is primarily on gender.

rather than being focused on modern apprenticeships per se. Many of the LLSCs were also aware of providers and other partner organisations (such as EBPs, Connexions and Sector Skills Councils) within their region that were active in trying to challenge gender segregation.<sup>18</sup> Some LLSCs, though, were not able to report any activity undertaken by themselves and did not report any actions by partner organisations. However, the extent to which this reflects lack of awareness on the part of the LLSC, or lack of action on the part of providers etc., is of course open to question.

### *Impact of national pilots*

At the time of the survey, several national pilots were either on-going or had recently concluded. Three in particular were the focus of questions in the survey: entry to employment (E2E), the adult learning grant (ALG), and the employer training pilots (ETP).

The E2E programme for young people had recently concluded its year's pilot phase and had been rolled out nationally just a month or so prior to the survey. All E2E schemes vary in nature and focus, but most allow for young people to experience 'taster sessions' in different occupational areas and also to gain NVQ units (where this would be feasible). The LLSCs understandably reported that it was too early to detect any impact of this initiative in terms of its effect on subsequent feed-through of atypical entrants into MAs. However, many of the providers to whom we spoke in the later case study phase were operating E2E schemes, and they reported that these were being successful in introducing young people to atypical areas of work, and believed that these schemes would constitute an important access route to apprenticeships in the longer term.

The Adult Learning Grant was nearing the end of its pilot period at the time of the survey. LLSCs in the pilots were able to decide any particular areas or groups on which they wished to focus the ALGs in order to encourage participation. In the event, we found only one LLSC that had used the ALG to focus on any gender-related issue, and so it is difficult to form any view regarding how this might impact in the future.

The ETPs were in their second year of operation at the time of the LLSC survey and were operating in 12 LLSCs. The main aim of these pilots is to allow people aged over 19 who are not qualified to level 2 to gain either basic skill qualifications or NVQs at level 2. The pilots are not focused on facilitating job change or on the

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<sup>18</sup> Again, it is fair to note that where such organisations were involved in actions to address gender segregation, then largely they were also making attempts to challenge racial segregation as well.

provision of training in an area different from the individual's current job. It is therefore unsurprising that at present there is no evidence, either from the work reported here or from the national evaluation of the ETPs, that they are currently providing a feeder route through to apprenticeships, for either typical or atypical learner groups. There is some evidence from the national evaluation that participation in ETP increases employees' likelihood of participating in further training, e.g. at level 3. However, there is no evidence at present to suggest that this route will lead to increased numbers of under-represented groups seeking to enter atypical apprenticeships. The government has stated its intention to change the age restrictions that relate to MAs, but to date has only raised the age limit for entering MAs to 25; for the majority of individuals going through the ETP training, for whom the modal age is between 30 and 50, there would need to be a far more substantial revision of the age restrictions to allow them to move into apprenticeships.

### *Actions to counteract gender segregation*

It became clear during the research that while many of the providers interviewed in the good practice case studies were going to great lengths in their attempts to attract atypical apprentices, their efforts were constrained by the fact that apprentices ideally need to be employed. With the exception of just a few cases in which foundation level apprenticeships are offered on a studentship basis, apprentices cannot start their studies until they have been offered a job, and it was at this point that the main barriers operated.<sup>19</sup> On this point all partners - the LLSCs, SSCs, providers and Connexions staff - were agreed. Shortage of starter jobs was a general problem that affected all apprentices; for atypical apprentices, though, there is the additional problem of prejudice from employers. Connexions workers, LLSCs, providers and apprentices themselves raised this as an issue.

LLSCs believed that employers, Connexions and Sector Skill Councils were best placed to challenge gender segregation, but were more likely to seek to influence the actions of providers and EBPs as they had contractual relationships with these. However, where providers were taking actions, many LLSCs were constrained in their ability to detect any impact of good practice by the limitations of their data monitoring and reporting systems.

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that the introduction of 'programme-led apprenticeships', in which apprentices have a first year of studentship status, following which they would look for employment, may go some way towards addressing this problem. However, programme-led apprenticeships were still receiving opposition from some quarters at the time the research was conducted and it is difficult to predict how they may fare in the future.

*Good practice*

In the case studies we found evidence of many organisations taking action to address gender segregation: providers, EBPs, Connexions and LLSCs themselves. However, in many cases, these actions had been taken because of the commitment of just a few key individuals driving the initiative within the organisation, rather than arising from a specific organisational policy and implementation strategy. While some of these initiatives had involved or arisen from a partnership between two bodies - the case studies found one LLSC that had worked in partnership with a Sector Skills Council, another had worked jointly with a Connexions office, and the survey responses also reported these types of partnerships - it appeared that more frequently the actions were taken by individual organisations working alone.

Providers were often taking positive actions using their own resources without any additional funding. Where they reported receiving some form of support to assist in their efforts, typically this came from SSCs. Where providers were making efforts to recruit atypical apprentices, the impact of their efforts was often reduced by the absence of starter jobs. Their additional recruitment efforts were in contrast to the lack of interest in promoting atypical jobs found in some (although again, by no means all) Connexions offices.

The earlier study by the HOST consultancy had reported that, where action was being taken by providers and the, then, NTOs, this was largely unilateral. The report authors commented that, to be most effective, initiatives need to be co-operative and involve several stakeholders. More than six years later, and despite the current case studies being selected because they were within areas in which actions had been reported as being taken by a range of organisations, there was still little evidence of linked, strategic action. At best, the initiatives involved just two partners. While (as we have already noted) one of these partnerships involved an LLSC and an SSC, in general, the SSCs reported receiving little support from LLSCs.

Although we did encounter examples of partnership working in the case studies, in general, such partnership activities often appeared in the end to depend on, and derive from, the enthusiasm and contacts of just a handful of people within one region. This is a shame, given that we found pockets of real drive and enthusiasm amongst the people we spoke to during the case study visits. One possibility might be to encourage SSCs, LLSCs, Connexions and providers to liaise and cooperate via special interest groups. Nevertheless, this is still likely to depend on individuals being interested and wanting to be involved (rather than nominated), and this would still leave the question of the resourcing for such initiatives to be addressed.

### 8.3 Suggested ways forward

On the basis of the research findings, the authors would like to make the following observations and outline the policy implications that arise:

#### *Key role for employers*

It is important to recognise that employers are the gatekeepers to modern apprenticeships. The move towards all-employed status puts employers firmly in the driving seat with regard to apprenticeships. In general, all parties approved of this, and where providers had been involved with the older system, they felt the current situation gave a better deal to the apprentice. However, while some employers have been won round by the arguments relating to a more diverse workforce, it has to be said that many have not. Small employers, in particular, can be reluctant to take on apprentices and there was some evidence of prejudice regarding atypical employees/apprentices. Providers, by and large, are more convinced of the diversity and equality argument. But they are often in the position that they can only register the apprentices that they are sent by employers and they are therefore often severely limited in the actions they can take to increase the recruitment of under-represented groups after making their recruitment decisions.<sup>20</sup> It is on providers, however, that the majority of EDIMs are focused, because LLSCs do not have a mechanism for engaging with employers.

Therefore, employers control the entry of apprentices into the system, but LLSCs set targets for providers to increase the proportion of atypical apprentices. While some providers recruit potential apprentices and then recommend these to employers, the apprentice cannot take up a training place until they are employed.

Providers have no ability to recruit and start apprentices; nonetheless, the equality and diversity impact measures set targets for the proportion of atypical groups for providers. LLSCs largely reported having no influence with employers.

EDIMs have, therefore, been set for the group that has only indirect ability to recruit apprentices. While most providers are trying to recruit a more diverse group of apprentices, this is limited by employer willingness to hire. LLSCs have no way of working directly with employers on this issue. We would therefore suggest that there should be central funding to enable LLSCs, SSCs and providers to work with groups of employers on a regional basis, to address gender issues in recruitment of apprentices. Ideally this needs to be focused in the first instance on smaller-sized enterprises. Following on from this, we suggest that LLSCs set themselves targets

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<sup>20</sup> It is fair to comment that this applies somewhat less to Group Training providers, but nonetheless remains a constraint to some extent.

for working to increase the numbers of local employers stating that they are willing to interview 'atypical' apprentices. One approach that LLSCs might wish to consider adopting is the approach currently in use by JTL, who ask employers to state their commitment to giving an interview to atypical applicants who meet selection criteria. In sectors characterised by small employers, it would be useful if some means could be found to encourage contractors to come together and agree to share the costs of apprentices. There would be a clear role for the LLSC to play here, in drawing together and co-ordinating such groups, with an obvious potential benefit in increasing the number of opportunities for apprentices in the region.

### *Sound data collection*

Initiatives need to be informed by sound data collection. In our earlier review for the EOC (Miller et al., 2004), we noted the current difficulty in obtaining statistics nationally on MAs for males and females separately for each of the MA frameworks. From the survey of LLSCs, it emerged that there were great differences in practice between LLSC offices so that, while some were able to provide data for the frameworks of interest, others were able to provide only partial disaggregation of the data. Compared with this, providers were able to show us detailed records of numbers and percentages of applications by gender and ethnicity, proportions of offers made, proportion of offers accepted, and completion rates.

It should be noted that, in the survey of LLSCs, some indicated that the lack of accurate statistics was one reason why they had been unable to take action to challenge gender segregation. We note that, to some extent, the difficulties the LLSCs experienced with restricted data monitoring were due to inheriting elderly and non-uniform software from the predecessor TECs. An implication is that, for many LLSCs, their existing data systems do not allow them to obtain sufficiently detailed information to monitor apprenticeships at a level that would permit them to make accurate predictions regarding skills supply in some sectors such as plumbing.

We understand that since the LLSCs inherited their computer systems, there has been little opportunity to upgrade them, and little work to ensure compatibility across LLSC offices. We also are given to understand that this issue was being considered by the NLSC at the time of the research. We also note that some respondents expressed concerns regarding a lack of expertise that might inhibit their ability to monitor the impact of initiatives, and it appeared that in some cases this referred to technical (statistical) capability.

Under these circumstances, therefore, we suggest that the policy implications for the NLSC are that:

- Where appropriate, LLSC management information systems are upgraded as a priority.
- Staff development is provided for LLSC staff to ensure that they are fully able to utilise existing systems (and, subsequently, any new system introduced).
- As a priority, LLSC monitoring data systems are upgraded to provide data that are clearly mapped against Sector Skill Council delineations and MA frameworks, and that these data are reported separately by gender, ethnicity and disability.

As a consequence of seeing the impressive statistics that work-based learning providers and SSCs were readily able to produce, we suggest that the best way to proceed is for the NLSC to hold workshops with providers, SSCs and awarding bodies to consult on their data monitoring needs (e.g. for benchmarking purposes) and to explore the data monitoring systems that are currently in place and used.<sup>21</sup> In our view, if and when the NLSC decides to upgrade its monitoring system, it should consider purchasing systems that are maximally compatible with existing packages in use by providers, awarding bodies and SSCs; it should also investigate the potential for on-line data entry both to local LSCs and to the national office. Given that the ability accurately to monitor data on apprenticeships is a key aspect of the work of LLSCs, we also suggest that the necessary staff and systems development should be centrally funded, and ring-fenced for this purpose.

### *Challenging gender segregation*

Challenging gender segregation means making sure that people know what options are available to them. We found that, in many cases, 'challenging gender segregation' is taken by those in careers advisory roles as meaning that, while one should support people who express a desire to go into atypical area, there is no need to suggest a wider range of options to those young people considering conventional choices. There is plenty of research evidence showing that young people make limited searches for career information. The lack of provision of real guidance from some advisors regarding career options, combined with teachers' lack of knowledge of many vocational areas, leads us to suggest that induction, training and continuing development programmes for those in careers advisory roles need to be reviewed. Where necessary, training and continuing development should be provided to help

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<sup>21</sup> It remains a possibility (and one that was not investigated as part of the research) that the necessary information might be obtained through analysis of the Individual Learner Records, but on the basis of LLSC responses to the survey, this would appear not to be the case.



ensure that advisors are equipped to take a proactive approach to promoting the options available to young people, rather than simply supporting existing choices.

### *Information on vocational options*

Access to information on vocational options needs to be improved as a matter of some urgency. Many interviewees referred to the much greater tendency now to encourage girls to enter HE. In addition, the view still appears to be held that only less able learners should be guided into vocational routes. With the development of Local Action Plans, Pathfinder projects and collegiate arrangements arising out of the 14-19 agenda, we would hope to see increased access to information about, and potentially experience of, a broader range of curriculum topics. We would support this, and suggest that all LLSCs investigate the extent to which schools currently provide information on vocational options to their students and facilitate access to their students for work-based learning providers.

Several of the apprentices interviewed complained about the lack of information about MAs and the majority had not heard of MAs until they applied for a job or a course. This was perhaps the most disturbing fact to emerge from the research. On top of this, one interviewee gave a young person who was interested in gaining more information about MAs the contact details for both the local LSC and Connexions office, both of which failed to provide any information. For obvious reasons, we have not identified the region in which this occurred.

While mistakes will always occur, the case studies showed a real failure in terms of provision of information to young people about the options available to them. We suggest that further research is undertaken with young people to determine the extent to which they currently obtain information on vocational options, the routes used by young people in order to obtain that information and the ways in which access to information may be improved.

### *Funding issues*

We consider that funding should acknowledge priorities and barriers. While some LLSC responses were notably more enthusiastic than others regarding actions to address gender segregation, none of those that were not taking action to address gender segregation (a minority) said that this was because gender segregation was not considered important; rather, it was because other issues (such as a general drive to improve uptake and achievement rates) had to take precedence for the moment. This was similar to the comments made by some of the SSC representatives.

While SSC representatives felt that the NLSC generally could do more to fund promotional efforts, it was clear that many of the LLSC representatives also felt frustrated that more money and other resources were not available to enable them to do more. Therefore we suggest, in line with the arguments made by LLSCs themselves, that there be specific, ring-fenced, targeted, premium funding provided centrally to further enable local LLSCs to take actions to address gender segregation in modern apprenticeships.

### *Pay data*

There is a need for data on pay of modern apprentices. We note the fact that no LLSC was able to supply data relating to the wages paid to apprentices (other than referring to the minimum training allowance of £40 per week). We note that it is not currently a requirement for LLSCs to collect such data. Neither is it possible to extract this information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) at present. Given the drive towards employee status for all apprentices, and the fact that the LLSC as an organisation is charged with overseeing the learning experience for this group of young people, we feel that they should be monitoring a wider range of factors to do with apprenticeship than is currently the case.

As a first step, we suggest that the NLSC considers the ways in which it would be appropriate to collect and report data on pay rates for modern apprenticeships. It may be possible that slight changes to the LFS might facilitate such data collection. Alternatively, such information might be more readily collected directly from employers as part of the apprentice registration process.

Again, we would wish to see any such data that is collected reported by gender, ethnicity, disability and framework. Since some SSCs have set pay rates for apprentices (plumbing and engineering are cases in point here), then there may be some latitude to exempt sectors for which there are publicly-available pay rates for inspection. This might also serve to encourage further SSCs to follow the good example of those sectors.

### *Good practice dissemination*

Access to good practice and wider dissemination of good practice are important. In the survey of LLSCs, several respondents said that access to examples of good practice and accounts of actions that had been found to work would help them to move forward on challenging gender segregation. One reason for publication of this report is to provide such examples of where LLSCs and their partners have taken positive action. The responding LLSCs were also keen to obtain information on strategies that had been successful in addressing gender segregation elsewhere,

guidance and good practice. There was clearly a feeling that there was a lack of information regarding what strategies worked, while lack of expertise in knowing from where specialist funding might be obtained was viewed as a barrier.

However, set against this, LLSC respondents also reported many examples of local actions, often undertaken in partnership with Sector Skills Councils and in many cases with Connexions, providers and employers. While the success of such activities had not so far been monitored, this would be happening, often through the use of the newly-developed EDIMs.

What appears to be needed therefore is a way of sharing information about these initiatives between LLSCs and their partners. While we were told of some attempts to publicise good practice (with one report, for instance, of a conference convened for this purpose by the Learning and Skills Development Agency), what is needed is a coherent national strategy for making the outcomes of such local projects more widely known.

We suggest, therefore, that there is a role for the NLSC to play in facilitating wider national dissemination of local successes. Our final suggestion therefore is for the NLSC to establish a web page at which LLSCs, providers and SSCs can post details of actions that are being tried out around the country, details of how they are being monitored, and, in due course, the extent of their success. Ideas for sources of funding that might be considered could also be placed on the web page.

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