

14-19 Learning Pathways

Chwarae Teg Consultation Response

28th April 2008

Introduction

Chwarae Teg promotes supports and develops the role of women in the Welsh economy. We do this by raising awareness of the positive contribution of women to the Welsh economy, and sensitising government strategy and policy to the barriers confronting women who wish to fully participate in the labour market and economic development programmes. We are funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to provide expert advice to Ministers and policymakers on these matters.

The persistency of occupational segregation, the over representation of women amongst the working poor, the under utilisation of women's skills, the gender pay gap, the lack of women in senior and management level positions and the limited number of women in decision making roles presents a challenge to Welsh policy and practice.

Chwarae Teg also designs and manages significant projects that support women's participation in, and the development of, the Welsh economy. This includes working with women entrepreneurs on business starts and managing early stage enterprises, and providing pre-employment training for economically inactive women in their communities. We also work directly with employers and training providers to support the design of gender sensitive employment and training programmes.

Consultation Response

Chwarae Teg welcomes the new strategy, *14-19 Learning Pathways*, in particular the potential for increased choice in academic and vocational learning that may be afforded by the portfolio approach. Further, we note reference in the consultation document to the need to tackle the inequalities brought about by the gendering of subject choice and mode of study. However, Chwarae Teg, in its role as expert advisor to Welsh Assembly Government, is obliged to address the strategy's neglect of a gender perspective throughout.

There is no information specifying how the strategy will address gendered subject choice, which contributes to gender segregation by industry sector, occupation, and levels of professional and management hierarchy and employment. In the absence

of such information Chwarae Teg is concerned that the strategy, attendant partnership formation, and implementation plans are unlikely to provide any assistance towards reducing gender inequality.

The strategy should incorporate gender sensitive programme design, and gender equality indicators, into the development of learning pathways and training provider/partnership plans, as well outcome evaluations. We outline here the available evidence base to support this conclusion and highlight where data should already be routinely gender disaggregated in order to better inform this and future policy.

1) Data Omissions

The following is a brief list of publications, tables and statistical releases readily available to education professionals, training providers and the public where gender data is absent. Such absences signal that gender is not important and as such provide a misleading picture for policymakers, who use such data for planning.

GCSE Examination Performance statistics available as reports on Stats Wales website going back to 1998, no gender data.

Schools in Wales: Examination Performance 2006
(<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/swep2006/?lang=en>), no gender data.

Statistics for Wales – First Release, 27th March, ‘Student Finance: Assembly Learning Grants Awarded to Welsh Domiciled Students in Further Educations 2007/8 (Provisional). SDR 45/2008. No gender data.

Statistics for Wales – First Release, 8th January 2008, ‘GCSE/GNVQ and GCE A, AS and AVCE results in Wales, 2007 (Revised). SDR/84/2007(R). Gender observation limited to total number of attainments between girls and boys.

International comparisons of education indicators, Analysis Report, Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government, December 2007. The statistical article accompanying this report states only that boys outperformed girls in science and mathematics but not in reading at GCSE. Such a ‘headline’ suggested the full report might contain more gender data but on inspection only one education chart had been disaggregated: ‘Chart 6: Percentage of 20-24 year olds having completed upper

secondary, by gender, 2005. This reveals that slightly more girls than boys have completed upper secondary education in Wales, girls being at the EU25 average and boys in Wales just below it. There is rather more gender disaggregated data when the report discusses the labour market. Amongst the data is the information that low skilled women do rather better than low skilled men in Wales in acquiring employment - not necessarily a cause for celebration, as it indicates the continuing use of women's labour as the 'cheaper' option in low skilled occupations.

Recommendation: That Statistics Wales undertake an immediate analysis of subject choice and educational outcomes, and consequent labour market destinations economic activity over the lifetime to inform the design of 14-19 learning packages. Gender data should in future routinely be included in Statistical Releases and available in the published tables so that researchers can easily undertake secondary analysis.

2) Gender Segregation in subject choice

Girls attain more awards than boys from Key Stage 1 to higher education:

In 2005/06, 64 per cent of girls in their last year of compulsory education achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to C, compared with 54 per cent of boys.

The subjects selected for vocational qualifications differ between men and women. Men are more likely to study vocational qualifications for construction, planning and the built environment (with almost 100 per cent of these awards going to men), or engineering and manufacturing technologies (89 per cent of all awards), whereas women are more likely to study health, public services and care related vocational qualifications (around 86 per cent of all awards).

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1892>

The introduction of the National Curriculum, and attendant changes to the curriculum in Wales significantly reduced the highly gendered subject choices previously made by GSE students in the 1970, and 1980s (The journal of *Gender and Education* provides extensive discussion of the gendering of the curriculum over time). There is now less opportunity for gendered subject choice. Most students study a core programme, with the choice of 2 or 3 extra awards. These show some gender variation but it is in post -16 education when choice increases, that gender

divergence clearly re-emerges. The new pathways must encourage students to match subject choice to their own aptitude and inclinations unfettered by gender stereotypes, ultimately contributing to the reduction of gender segregation in the labour market by industry, occupation and pay.

3) Further Education and Modern Apprenticeships.

Currently available data provided by *Stats Wales* provides enrolments in post 16 education and training by gender and mode of study (full time, part time), and whether FE based or workplace based, but does not provide the opportunity to assess subjects studied by gender. Again Chwarae Teg suggests that WAG immediately undertakes a gender analysis of pre and post - 16 education by subject choice and gender. The new portfolio learning packages under the 14-19 Pathways are an opportunity to address entrenched gender disparity in labour market destination, and rewards. If nothing is done, the programme will maintain a gender divide, and will fail to meet the goals for the new the skills agenda.

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and Foundation Modern Apprenticeship (FMAs) underpin the success of the new strategy *Skills That Work for Wales*, to which outcomes for students following the *Learning Pathways* programmes must contribute. And yet a recent TUC Report (2008)¹ for England and Wales echoes the findings of the EOC General Formal Investigation into Occupational Segregation in 2004, and the conclusions of the Women and Work Commission 2006. The report reiterates the characterisation of Modern Apprenticeship programmes as capable of addressing skills gaps but failing to do so because the operation of the programmes is maintaining gender inequality.

Indeed, in male dominated occupational sectors, the disparity has increased over recent years. Of the 2006/7 most common apprenticeship programmes, women are only 1.3 per cent of construction apprentices, 1.4 per cent of vehicle maintenance, and 2.5 per cent of engineering, whereas in 2002/3 they were 4.5 per cent of apprentices in engineering and 2.9 per cent of vehicle maintenance apprentices.

¹ Trades Union Congress (2008) *Still more (better paid) jobs for the boys*, TUC: London
www.tuc.org.uk/extras/genderreport.pdf

Men were only 2.9 per cent of Children Care and Learning Development apprentices.

According to findings from a qualitative survey asking why young people they feel uncomfortable crossing gender barriers, low pay was one of the main reasons boys do not opt for 'girls' sectors (Fuller *et.al.* 2005).²

Women make up a disproportionate majority of the most poorly paid apprenticeships - hairdressing, business administration, customer service, health and social care, retail, and child care and learning development. Findings from a Department for Education and Skills Apprentice Pay Survey 2005, give the average apprentice pay as £137 per week. However, twenty two per cent of Business Administration apprentices were earning less than £80 per week, and the average pay for hairdressers was £90 per week, translating to an average of £2.37 per hour (in TUC 2008). The TUC report finds that large employers are no better at halting this flow of gendered training for gendered jobs. Men dominated six of the ten most popular apprenticeships for large employers. Women represented less than 3 per cent of apprentices on three of the top six most popular programmes.

Recommendations: The Government Apprentice Review 2008 calls for a significant expansion of apprenticeships, ensuring there is an apprentice place for every 16 - 18 year old should they want it. Chwarae Teg also supports the TUC call, for 'piloting to achieve a 'critical mass' in 'atypical apprenticeships' (2008:8). Such a challenge could also be set for the various routes offered in the *Learning Pathways* strategy.

In support of this, findings from current WAG (DCELLS) sponsored research on equality work in Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) in Wales, managed by Chwarae Teg, may contribute to the planning for *Learning Pathways* partnerships. The research seeks to understand what, if any, equality focused provision is occurring in SSCs, and how to address skills gaps, improve recruitment and retention, and institute flexible working as a 'norm' for all.

² Fuller, A., Beck, V., and Unwin, L. (2005) 'The gendered nature of apprenticeship: employers' and young people's perspectives' (in special issue on apprenticeship), *Education and Training* 47 (4/5) 298-311

Key to bringing about gender neutral training and occupational outcomes is the advisory work of Careers Wales, and the new Careers Ladders. Successive reports have called for that organisation to tackle gender segregation and it is time for an assessment of their achievements in this regard.

4) Higher Education

Gendered outcomes from 16 -19 learning are reflected in the division of subject choice by gender in Higher Education. These are UK figures - the dearth of easily gender disaggregated data sets in Wales is again disappointing.

Table 1. HE Students by subject and gender

Subject	Women	Men	Total
Subjects allied to medicine	241115	49475	290590
Engineering and Technology	14320	81785	96105
Social Studies	108810	62455	171270
Computer science	23370	75360	98725

Source: Table 2e - All HE students by level of study, mode of study, subject of study (#1), domicile and gender 2005/06. HESA

Women were fifty nine per cent of all Higher Education students.

Whilst gender segregation in subject choice is apparent between subjects; with men dominating Engineering & Technology and Computer Science; it also evident that within subjects that women dominate, for example subjects allied to Medicine, (Anatomy, Pharmacology, and Ophthalmics), their domination of this subject area is due to 69% of the women students studying Nursing. In addition although women

dominate Social Studies as a subject area, men dominate the often termed 'hard sciences' within social science, such as Economics and Politics.

5) Gender Segregation by industry sector

Learning Pathways, *Skills that Work for Wales* and *WAVE* can all contribute to change the current disproportionate lack of benefit to women from mainstream programmes. *Communities Next* in particular expends considerable effort on explaining how 'programme bending' (collaboration between programmes to address economic injustices in the share of rewards and resources) must support each other. However, the skills strategy (to which participants from *Learning Pathways* will progress) states that it will focus upon the sectors described in *Wales: A Vibrant Economy* (WAVE), as most important to the Welsh Economy.

WAVE highlights ten sectors key to growth in Wales, automotive, aerospace, agri-food, high technology, pharmaceuticals/bio-chemicals, financial services, creative industries, construction, hospitality, leisure and tourism and social care. All are currently 'men's' sectors apart from the last two, which leads us to ask who will benefit from this investment in skills, and critically, where will the future workforce come from if gender segregation stays constant?

Whilst the gender gap between educated professionals has narrowed in recent years, the distinctive effect of subject choice by gender translates to horizontal gender segregation by industry, shaping who works where and under what conditions. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 2. Table to show proportions of men and women of working age in different industrial sectors (actual figures are in brackets). Not seasonally adjusted.

Industry sector	Men (16-64 yrs)		Women (16-59 yrs)	
	% of all in employment *	% of all in this industry †	% of all in employment *	% of all in this industry †
Manufacturing	17.6 (2,782,144)	74.6	7.1 (949,625)	25.4
Construction	13.8 (2,165,772)	90.0	1.8 (240,750)	10.0
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	17.6 (2,782,144)	49.6	21.1 (2,822,125)	50.4
Transport & communication	9.5 (1,490,930)	74.6	3.8 (508,250)	25.4
Banking, finance & insurance etc	16.8 (2,636,592)	56.7	15.1 (2,019,625)	43.3
Public admin, education & health	15.7 (2,463,958)	30.1	42.9 (5,737,875)	69.9

Source: Table abstracted from the *Tackling Occupational Segregation Fact Sheet*, produced by the Women's Economic Participation Team 23 May 2007, published by Department for Communities and Local Government.³ Original data source: Labour Force Survey (the three months ending December 2006).

The majority of employees in the UK work in gender segregated industries. The table above depicts the gender concentration of men in construction, transport and manufacturing, whilst women are over represented in public administration education, and health. Contract segregation can also clearly be perceived where the

³ www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/publications/occupseg_facts_jun07.doc

availability of part-time working adheres to the less lucrative and lower skilled sectors, such as public administration, education and health, with part-time working less used in construction, manufacturing and finance.

Recommendations: We reiterate our call for a thorough data and research review of the gendering of education in Wales, and an assessment of how the proposals for new 14-19 *Learning Pathways* will impact on the current situation; i.e. will it maintain disparity or decrease it. This should include an assessment of Careers Wales success to date on tackling gender segregation, and gender sensitive programme design for Careers Ladders (including gender atypical taster courses).

The new gender equality duty can be used to make specific provision for programme design to assist learners to break down entrenched gender barriers in subject choice, mode of study and investment over time in human capital development.

With women making up a majority of the potential workforce and 59% of HE students, gender sensitive indicators can assist as stepping stones to reaching overall ambitions for learning and skills in Wales.