

The 'structure of opportunities' available to young people varied, depending on the route taken into the labour market. Modern Apprenticeships offered higher levels of training and qualifications, access to higher occupational levels, guaranteed employed status to the young person throughout the training period and more opportunities for career progression at the end of the training programme. In addition, these opportunities were exclusively open to young people.

In contrast, the opportunities available under the National Traineeship programme, while guaranteeing training and qualifications to NVQ 2 or equivalent, gave young people access to a more restricted range of occupations. Since young people were not guaranteed employed status under the terms and conditions of the scheme, the opportunities for progression and career development within the company at the end of the training period were more tenuous. A number of young people, particularly in Sunderland, were participating in National Traineeships without employed status.

While the range of job opportunities available to young people who entered the labour market through direct employment was wider than that available with the support of government training, the level of training offered was generally much lower and the opportunity for qualification attainment and career progression much more limited. In addition, young people found themselves in competition with other groups of workers for entry into employment through this route and this segment of the labour market was not exclusively available to young people.

Employers were asked to state into which types of full-time jobs they recruited young people – other than for government supported training programmes. While the overall number recruited on an annual basis was small in most firms (typically two or three young people), the range of jobs available in all industrial sectors was contained within a limited group of occupational areas - clerical and customer service work, sales and warehouse work, catering and nursing assistant roles, garment machining and cleaning.

A much smaller number of young people were employed as 'trainees' in sectors such as accountancy, surveying and medical services, where qualification levels for entry into the job were higher. Recruitment to these jobs was restricted to school leavers. There was no evidence among the sample of firms in Leicester and Sunderland that increases in the number of part-time jobs had come about through a massive reduction in the number of job opportunities open to young people. On the contrary, a small number of firms had moved towards part-time working because they were finding it increasingly difficult to recruit school leavers, due to increasing levels of participation in post-compulsory education.

Finally, while the highest levels of training and development were available to young people under the Modern Apprenticeship programme, employers found it most difficult to recruit young people for these vacancies. For Modern Apprenticeships, employers were demanding higher levels of entry qualifications in comparison to those demanded for National Traineeships and for jobs available through direct employment. Also, most employers would only consider 16-year old school leavers. Thus, they found themselves in direct competition with schools and colleges which sought to retain young people in post-compulsory education rather than to encourage entry into the labour market through the work based training route.

Differences emerged between the two labour markets in relation to employers' abilities to attract young people into the job opportunities that were available. Staff recruitment problems for all groups of workers were far more acute among firms in Leicester. High levels of unemployment in Sunderland enabled firms in the area to experience few recruitment difficulties, and those firms which had experienced or anticipated a growth in their business activity recognised the need to recruit and train young people to meet future skill needs. However, in Leicester, a number of firms reported that their plans had been thwarted, because of an inability to recruit young people with qualifications (four or more GCSEs) due to increasing levels of participation among young people in full-time post-16 education.

### Methods of recruiting young people

Table 1 outlines the methods used by employers to recruit young people. In the two areas, a similar pattern emerged in relation to recruitment into manual and non-manual occupations. Those companies which recruited young people did so to a much greater extent into non-manual as opposed to manual occupations. This is demonstrated by the increased response rates to the methods used to recruit into non-manual as opposed to manual occupations (see Table 1). In Sunderland, three methods of recruiting young people were mentioned more often than any others for both manual and non-manual occupations – the Job Centre, the local press and personal recommendation. While a similar pattern emerged among employers in Leicester for recruitment into manual occupations, some differences emerged between the two labour markets in terms of employers' recruitment patterns into non-manual occupations. Employers in Leicester relied far more heavily on local press advertising and much less on government agencies such as the Job Centre. In Sunderland, employers utilised the Job Centre as a recruitment mechanism for both young people and all groups of workers to a much greater extent. This may be attributed to the local employment situation in Sunderland, with the Job Centre being perceived by employers as being able to submit a ready supply of labour, while at the same time avoiding the expense of dealing with large numbers of applications which could be expected from local press advertisements.

Companies which recruited young people into full-time work through the promotion of existing staff did so through one of two ways. Some employers recruited young people into government supported training provision and encouraged them to apply for vacancies that were advertised within the organisation in the first instance. In Sunderland, public sector employers in particular viewed this procedure as a way of nurturing and developing the talents of young people, while at the same time helping the organisation to replenish the skills of an increasingly ageing work force.

*'We realised that as an organisation, we were not recruiting young people, so we have used Modern Apprenticeships as a way of reversing this trend ... Every post is advertised internally first as part of our staff development strategy and 50 per cent are filled by our Modern Apprentices.'*

*(Public Sector Employer, Sunderland)*

Employers in the retail and consumer services sectors (hotel and catering in particular) recruited some young people who worked in part-time jobs within the organisation and then moved into full-time positions when they left school or college. Thus, a proportion of young people moved into full-time work within the organisation as a result of either finishing or dropping out of school or college. In Sunderland, some young people had a number of part-time jobs in order to 'make up' a full-time job and moved into a full-time position with one employer when a vacancy became available.

*'Young people make up a full-time position out of part-time hours, that is 39 hours each week. They combine working here with, say, working in a pub ... It is becoming more common.'*

*(DIY Store, Sunderland)*

**Table 2 Employers' Methods of Recruiting Young People for Government Supported Training Provision**

Recruitment method	Leicester	Sunderland
Job Centre	0	2
Private employment agency	0	0
National press	1	0
Local press	3	1
Notice board	0	1
Recommendation	1	3
Direct application	2	2
Internal advert	1	2
Careers Service	4	4
Trade union	0	0
Internal promotion	0	1
Back files of previous applicants	0	1
Training provider	2	6
Other	0	1
Total number of firms who recruited into government supported training provision: Leicester 17 Sunderland 12		

In both areas, employers predominantly used training providers or the Careers Service to recruit for government supported training provision. Employers in Sunderland also relied upon personal recommendation to fill vacancies on government supported training programmes (Table 2). In Leicester, where employers reported some difficulty in finding suitable young people to complete Modern Apprenticeships, a number of employers advertised in the local press in an attempt to widen the net for potential applicants.

In addition, employers in the sample were asked to state which method they used most in order to recruit young people for full-time employment, government supported training provision and part-time employment. No significant variations could be identified within the analysis between industrial sectors, although some distinctions between the two labour markets were evident. The preferred recruitment method for young people for full-time employment among employers in Leicester was the local press. In Sunderland, employers reported that the Job Centre was the most frequently used method to recruit young people to employer-led vacancies. While the use of the local press to recruit young people in Leicester is consistent with the findings of the earlier study, the picture in Sunderland has changed. Ashton *et al.* reported a high usage by employers of the Careers Service to fill vacancies. This was linked to the widespread use of government supported training and to the high level of unemployment in the area, with the Careers Service being used by employers as a screening mechanism to avoid having to cope with vast numbers of job applications in response to advertised vacancies.

However, while both the use of government supported training remains widespread and levels of unemployment remain high in Sunderland, employers in the sample did not make widespread use of the Careers Service to fill employer-led vacancies.

Employers in both locations stated that local training providers recruited most young people for government supported training provision. In Leicester, companies relied heavily on young people writing directly to the firm to fill part-time vacancies, while in Sunderland, the Job Centre was regarded as the most effective method for the recruitment of part-time staff. Part-time vacancies for young people in both areas were concentrated in the retail and hotel and catering sectors.

### Summary

In the recruitment of young people, while the Careers Service was regularly used by employers to fill vacancies on government supported programmes, very few respondents used the Careers Service as a source of recruitment for full-time jobs. This is significant, given that the majority of respondents recruited young people into jobs, as opposed to government supported training.

The Job Centre, the local press and personal recommendation were the three recruitment methods most frequently reported by employers, which may suggest that the majority of respondents in the sample were either unaware of, or unwilling to use the Careers Service as a source of recruitment to full-time jobs for young people.

This could be linked to the changing role of Careers Services in recent years, whereby increasing emphasis has been placed on careers advisers working with young people in schools. In addition, this suggests that, while Job Centres have continued to market their placement function, employers may no longer be aware that local Careers/Connexions Services can offer a similar service in relation to young people. Indeed this trend may have been exacerbated by the requirement placed on Careers Services to 're-focus' their priorities on those young people at risk of exclusion from participation in education, training or employment.

### References

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### Correspondence

Dr. Sue Maguire  
Research Fellow  
Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP)  
Department of Social Sciences  
Loughborough University  
Schofield Building  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE11 3TU

Tel. +44 (0)1509 223372  
Fax. +44 (0)1509 213409  
<http://www.crsp.ac.uk>

## Gender Stereotyping and Career Expectations

Susan Askew

**This research investigates the efforts of schools and others to counter gender stereotyping in relation to career aspirations and identifies issues involved for careers education programmes in secondary schools.**

### Men and women in the labour market

More than twenty years after equal opportunities legislation was implemented in the UK, the position of men and women in the labour market shows resistance to significant, positive change (EOCa, 1999). Young women have made gains in education, especially pre-16, but there is little evidence that these have been translated into changes when they join the workforce. Jobs are still segregated along gendered lines.

European legislation now requires that in principle all jobs in whatever sphere, should be equally open to women and men, and women and men undertaking those jobs should not be discriminated against in terms of pay or conditions of service. However in the workplace:

- 96% of engineering apprentices are male
- 89% of health and social care apprenticeships are female
- 79 % of computer analysts and programmers are men
- 86% of primary and nursery teachers are female (EOC, 2001)
- 4% of employed graduate engineers are women (WISE, 2001)
- 1% of those working in childcare are men (DfEE, 1997)

Despite legislation, both young men and women fail to apply for or secure jobs for which they are suited and where they are needed. Women are still less likely to advance to higher levels in their occupational choice and still continue to bear primary responsibility for childcare and continue to earn less than men in all ethnic groups (EOC, 2000). Women in Britain working full-time earn on average 19% less than men (EOC 2000). However, women's employment patterns have changed. The total number of 15-59 year old women in the labour market who are economically active in England and Wales has increased from 38% in 1931 to 68% in 1999 and more women work part-time, flexi time and job share (Bimrose, 2001).

While the number of women employed has increased dramatically, since the 1970s the number of men in employment has remained the same. This has reflected a shift in the type of jobs available, away from manufacturing

towards service jobs. Because of gendered 'scripts' men may be restricted in terms of obtaining jobs in expanding sectors of the economy. Until the early 1970s, there had been a 'natural progression' for most young men moving from school into work. Irrespective of educational achievement, if young men stayed broadly within an acceptable framework of behaviour then work would be available to them (Lloyd, 1999). It has also been argued that men may not have the same lifestyle choices because of the social pressure exerted upon them to work (Hakim, 1996).

While a great deal of statistical information relating to gender is available, the relationship between gender and other important variables, particularly class and ethnicity is unclear. Most published data takes only one variable into account. The EOC confirm that 'One of the most important omissions is the lack of good quality, accurate data on the qualifications, performance and employment experience of young people disaggregated at the very least, by gender and preferably also by ethnicity and social class.' (EOC, 1998). Ethnicity and class intersect with gender to reduce or compound disadvantage. For example:

- White women earn more than women from minority ethnic groups in London, but outside London women from Chinese and 'other' ethnic groups have highest earnings. Men display similar earning patterns.
- Minority unemployment rates are usually at least twice as high as those for white people, and highest for Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black-African people. However, Indian and Chinese people tend to experience relatively low unemployment rates.
- 85% of white men aged 16-64 are economically active compared to 77% for all minority groups, while 74% of white women of the same age are economically active compared with 56% of minority ethnic women. (DfEE, 2000).

The cost of segregation in work includes:

- Discrimination - leading to isolation and harassment.
- Wasted talent - people cannot fulfil their potential and individual ambitions of both men and women are limited.
- Skills gaps - some industries with skills shortages are recruiting from a restricted pool. For example, there is a skills shortage in the computer industry yet the number of women entering this industry is falling.

The next section turns to a consideration of qualifications gained by young people to explore the extent to which segregation in the workplace is mirrored by segregation in education and training.

## Young people, qualifications and career routes

### Achievement at GCSE

At the end of the 1980s GCSEs were introduced into schools in England and Wales, establishing a common award scheme for all young people, where previously there had been a range of possible qualifications. Since then, while the performance of both young men and women has improved, young women have consistently performed better than young men in the majority of subjects. For example, in 1990/91 44.0% of girls achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades compared with 36.0% of boys. By 1998/9, the results were 53.2% of girls and 42.6% of boys. Girls outperformed boys in English, maths, joint science, design and technology, history and all modern languages. Boys outperformed girls in physics, chemistry, biological sciences, IT, geography (DfEE, 1999).

However, gender intersects with socio-economic class and ethnicity to produce a more complex picture. For example:

- White students perform better than those from minority ethnic groups overall, but fewer achieve 5 or more passes at GCSE grade A\* to C than those from Indian and 'other' ethnic groups.
- The most common level of achievement for Black males is 5 or more passes at grade D to G.
- Two-fifths of Black females achieve 1 to 4 GCSEs at grade A\* to C compared with an average of just over a quarter for males and females from all ethnic groups.
- Across all ethnic groups, 69% with a father in a managerial or professional job achieve 5 GCSEs at grades A\*-C compared with 36% with a father in manual profession.
- Young people from minority and ethnic groups are more likely to remain in full-time education than their white peers.

Social class is a primary factor and young people from professional backgrounds have the highest levels of attainment at GCSE and those from manual and unskilled families the lowest (Women's Unit, 2000).

### Pathways after 16

The Careers Service Activity Survey *Moving On* reveals that young women are more likely to be in full-time education after year 11 (75.7% female, 65.8% male). For young people with very good GCSE results the gender gap relating to staying on in education is very small (Payne, 1998). Conversely, young men are more likely to be in the labour market, either training or employment (20.9% male, 13.1% female). Young men are slightly more likely to be 'not settled' in full-time activity (7.9% male, 6.6% female). (DfEE, 2000).

Post-16 education and training offers a wide range of options including 'A' levels, vocational qualifications and modern apprenticeships. Strong gender differences are to be seen in choice of subject in both 'academic' and vocational courses.

### 'A' levels

Research indicates that what students have studied at GCSE and how well they performed dominates their decisions about what to study at 'A' level (Payne, 1998).

There is some evidence that pupils in single-sex and mixed schools make different choices as to what subjects to study at 'A' level. Girls in single-sex schools are more likely than girls in mixed schools to study maths or physical sciences (but less likely than boys). The Youth Cohort Study estimates show that, among 16 year-olds taking at least two 'A' levels, approximately 50% of girls are not taking any science subject (including maths) whereas the equivalent figure for boys is 30% (Payne, 1995).

After the age of 16 pupils appear to revert to traditional choices with girls choosing arts/humanities and boys choosing science/technology subjects. There is evidence that traditional patterns of subject choice may be difficult to alter because girls do well at literacy-based subjects and enjoy them and are, therefore, more likely to pursue arts and social science subjects than science. Recent statistics show that:

- 74% of 'A' level English students are female (EOC, 2000)
- 72% of those taking 'A' level computing are male (EOC, 2000)
- 77% of 'A' level physics students are male (WISE)

### Vocational qualifications

The proportions of young men and women who go on to study for GNVQs is similar. However:

- 90% of GNVQ health and social care students are female (EOC, 2001)
- 81% taking GNVQ IT are male (EOC, 2001)

A similar situation is found with regard to Modern Apprenticeships (DfEE, 1999a):

- 3% of engineering and manufacturing modern apprenticeship trainees are female
- 1% of construction trainees are female
- 1% of engineering trainees are female
- 11% of health and social care trainees are male
- 3% of childcare trainees are male
- 8% of hairdressing trainees are male

Once again it is important to remind ourselves that gender intersects with socio-economic class and ethnicity. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Inaugural Conference on Equal Opportunities, January 2001 warned that:

'Young people from ethnic minority groups are less likely to obtain qualifications and jobs after they complete their training and are seriously under-represented amongst Modern Apprentices, particularly in traditional craft sectors.'

## ARTICLES

The Survey *Moving On* shows the percentage of year 11 students entering training or work by occupation. Some of the statistics for 1999 are entered below:

	% Male	% Female	% Total
Managerial/professional	5.3	2.4	4.2
Clerical/secretarial	8.9	25.2	15.0
Skilled construction	13.3	1.0	8.7
Skilled engineering	5.2	0.3	3.3
Personal services			
7.catering	4.3	5.6	4.8
8.health care	0.3	5.4	2.2
9.child care	0.1	4.9	1.9
10.hairdressing	0.6	16.3	6.5
Sales occupations	7.1	14.2	9.8
Labouring and other elementary occupations	16.2	10.8	14.2

The Early Leavers study (DfEE, 1999b) showed that young women are more likely to leave youth training schemes early. They reported that 'female trainees aged 17 and those with non employed status had the greatest propensity to leave the scheme early'. The same study also reported that young black African and Caribbean students were more likely to leave than young white/Indian/Pakistani or Sri Lankan students. The main finding about the process leading to early leaving was that careers advice provided by schools was a key issue, with the main criteria centring on the provision of advice, its quality and, in particular, the preference given to academic education over vocational courses. Other reasons given for leaving were lack of support from the provider, poor experience on placement and personal reasons. Trainees with prior qualifications and those working toward qualifications at higher level were most likely to complete the course. Research conducted by the Policy Studies Institute (DfES, 2001) also found that in both Advanced Modern Apprenticeship (AMA) schemes and Government Supported Training (GST) schemes young women were more likely to leave than young men.

### Higher education

Women represent over half of all new students admitted to first-degree courses. However, they tend to study subjects such as social studies, humanities, languages and business studies (EOC, 2002).

Technical disciplines continue to attract many more men than women. Biology is a notable exception and more than half of all admissions to first degree courses in this subject are female. Women constitute around one-third of admissions to chemistry and about one-fifth of admissions to physics and engineering and technology.

Despite the rapid growth in computer science student numbers, women students are in the minority. There is evidence that some students - particularly women - reject computer science/IT because it is seen as desk-bound and 'anti-social' in some way. However, many young people are drawn to this subject due to the perceived high rewards in terms of career and salary prospects (EOC, 2002).

Again it is important to disaggregate the statistics by socio-economic class and ethnicity. For example, research also shows that at present less than 20% of young people under 21 from the lower socio-economic groups go to university compared with over 70% from the highest (DfES, 2002). In

1997/98, ethnic groups comprised nearly 13% of students at first degree level in UK universities - considerably higher than the minority ethnic share of the population of young people. However, they tended to be concentrated in post-92 universities and are more likely to be mature students (DfEE, 2000).

While it is important to consider statistics about employment, education and training, it is also imperative to consider young people not in education, employment or training. The Social Exclusion Unit's Report (DfEE, 2000), *Bridging the Gap*, explored the problems faced by young people between the ages of 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). They found that females spent more time NEET in total than males and were more likely than males to be economically inactive rather than unemployed. However, males were slightly more likely than females to have more than one NEET spell. The *Young People and Gender* report states, 'Though official figures for unemployment suggest that this affects more young men, a large group of young women who are outside education and training, remain hidden. Many of these are young women with caring responsibilities ... The negative impact on long-term educational and employment involvement of being a young mother has been identified.' (Women's Unit, 2000).