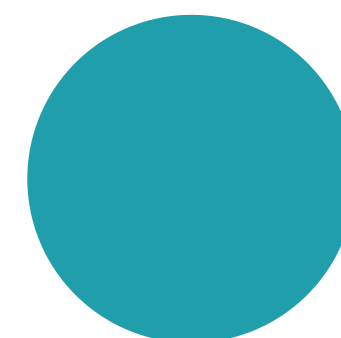# Improving Gender Balance Self-Evaluation Framework

For Early Learning and Childcare, ASN, Primary and Secondary Settings

IMPROVING GENDER BALANCE & EQUALITIES

Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Contents

Introduction

This self-evaluation framework is designed to support early learning and childcare (ELC) establishments, primary, additional support needs (ASN) and secondary schools to reflect, discuss and plan for an ongoing and sustainable approach to improving gender balance and equalities for all learners.

Why Improve Gender Balance? Children receive and absorb gender stereotyped messages about what they can and cannot do as a girl or as a boy from a very early age. Research strongly suggests that there is no inherent difference between girls and boys which should limit their interests, capabilities or ambitions. And yet, we recognise that subject choice, and many subsequent work and life choices, are highly gendered.

P7 learners' ideas of jobs for women and men

IGB PIlot

A gender stereotype is a widely held belief or generalisation about the behaviours, characteristics and roles performed by women and men

Terminology

The following terminology is used throughout this document:

The term 'practitioner' is used as a single term which encompasses all staff and adults who are qualified and/or registered to work with children and young people. This includes childminders, early learning and childcare practitioners, teachers, headteachers, setting managers, school support staff, technical support staff and community learning and development staff.

The term 'setting' is used to refer to early learning and childcare settings, primary schools, secondary schools, schools or settings which provide specialist provision for learners with additional support needs and community learning and development settings.

The term 'learning community' is used to refer to both structured and informal groups of settings where collaboration and joint working takes place. This may include school clusters, associated school groups, local management groups, joint campuses, schools under shared headship and collaboration between childminders, private nurseries and/or local authority early learning and childcare settings.

The term 'parents' is used as a single term which encompasses all parents and those responsible for the primary care of children and young people.

Education

Girls in Scotland were much more likely than the OECD average and boys in Scotland to express a fear of failure. (PISA, 2019)

Exclusion rate per 1,000 pupils is more than three times higher for male pupils (33.4) than female pupils (9.5). (Scottish Government, 2019)

Heteronormative gender roles may also have an impact on LGBT+ young people. In 2017, 71% of LGBT young people experienced bullying in school on the grounds of being LGBT. This has risen from 69% in 2012 and 60% in 2007. (LGBT Youth, 2017)

Research suggests that the intersect between gender, class and race may make it particularly difficult for a Black, working-class young woman, for example, to access and progress in science. (ASPIRES 2, 2020)

Work

72% of Modern Apprenticeship frameworks had a gender imbalance of 75:25 or worse in 2018-19. (Skills Development Scotland, 2019)
At Higher Education Institutions, males accounted for 41.4% of students in 2017/18 (Scottish Funding Council, 2019)

Women are heavily over-represented in occupations which tend to be lower paid and undervalued compared to those which are male dominated. For example, 38.5% of women in employment work in low pay occupations compared to 20.6% of men. (Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, 2019)

Scotland's overall mean gender pay gap currently sits at 13% (Close the Gap, 2020)
The gender pay gap for women with disabilities can be as high as 18.9% depending on the impairment. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018)

The employment rate for Black and Minority Ethnic groups in Scotland is 15% lower than that of the white population, and significantly worse for BAME women, whose employment rate is 20% lower than white women. (Runnymede, 2020)

Wider impact of gender roles and inequality

52% of girls say they feel ashamed about how they look because they do not look like girls or women in the media (Girls Attitude Survey, 2018)

Gender roles may also impact mental health and wellbeing. Suicide is the single most common cause of death among men under 35 (Office for National Statistics, 2001-2018), whilst amongst adolescent girls there is a higher prevalence of depression and eating disorders and they are more likely to engage in suicidal ideation and attempts (World Health Organisation, 2002)

One in five children in Scotland will have experienced domestic abuse by the time they reach 18 years old. (Education Scotland, 2020)

38% of dads lie to their boss to take time off to spend with their children, ten percentage points higher than the 28% of mums who similarly lie (The Fawcett Society, 2016)

There is, of course, nothing inherently wrong with making choices along gendered lines, but stereotypical male or female behaviour may potentially be problematic if wellbeing and opportunities in life are limited because of preconceived notions regarding gender roles.

It is also important to understand that these gender roles are not inevitable, and are a result of structural gender inequality which creates pervasive and prescriptive stereotypes within our society.

Our aim is to expand perceptions of what any individual might want to choose and to ensure that all young people have genuine opportunities to develop skills and confidence across the whole breadth of the curriculum.

Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias have an impact on the confidences and choices of children and young people from an early age and through multiple mechanisms.

An individual can be influenced by a stereotype even if they do not rationally subscribe to the stereotypical belief. These unconscious biases have an impact on our actions. Research suggests, for example, that whilst few teachers believe they treat girls and boys differently, their unconscious attitudes do lead to different expectations. The basic assumptions we make about a child or young person, often unconsciously, will affect our interactions with them.

Gendered expectations can have a negative impact on everyone. Girls can learn to avoid taking risks in their learning, and often have lower self-efficacy (belief in their own abilities), especially in science and maths. Some boys under-attain compared to girls in reading and writing, and some boys disengage from school altogether.

The work of the Improving Gender Balance & Equalities programme suggests that a whole-setting approach can help reduce gender imbalances. As gender imbalance and inequality are societal issues, there is not a quick fix. Instead, interventions should be long term, sustained and embed change into everyday practice, attitudes and environment.

Evaluating Practice

Practitioners are encouraged to evaluate their current practice under one of three headings:

- **Exploring** – Awareness is being raised about this particular area of the framework. A lead person/people have been designated and a strategy/approach has been formulated.
- **Adopting** – Work is underway in this particular area, and consideration has been taken around how this work will be made sustainable. Learning is being shared amongst all staff and learners are actively involved. Evaluations are being planned to measure effectiveness.
- **Embedding** – Significant work has been undertaken in this particular area, steps have been taken to ensure sustainability and evaluation of effectiveness has been completed. New planning is taking place on the basis of the evaluation findings.

Each area of the framework offers the chance to reflect on and evaluate practice according to the above headings. This may be used by individual practitioners or for whole setting reflection on current levels of confidence in each area and may include any actions that have already been taken. The evidence tracker (linked on page below) can be used to record current status and progress. At the end of each section challenge questions can be found to prompt self-reflection, as well as a link to our Sharing Practice resource with relevant examples for each section highlighted.

This framework focuses largely on gender equality, but it will be important when reflecting and planning approaches to bear in mind that no social identity category exists in isolation of others. Reflection and planning will need to consider how gender intersects with poverty, race and disability, for example.

Finally, it is important to consider which girls and which boys each issue will affect most pointedly through an awareness of wider inequalities, and ensuring the needs and experiences of all learners are taken into consideration. For example, whilst there is an attainment gap in literacy, not all boys under-perform compared to girls.

Please note we refer to 'girls' and 'boys' in this document in order to allow discussion of the impact of gender stereotypes on all learners. This is not to imply a fixed, binary understanding of gender. Whilst considering the impact of gender stereotypes, it is important to take into consideration the impacts on learners who identify as transgender or non-binary.

Using This Framework

The framework is designed to be used as a working document alongside the Action Plan document. It might be used in different ways, at different times – to inform overall strategic approaches, and to support focused planning in any one area. It is intended to provide stimulus for dialogue, reflection and planning whilst allowing settings to develop their own innovative approaches to meet their individual needs. It should support a long-term, sustainable and multi-faceted approach.

The framework is designed to work across the curriculum, and to weave in with other existing priority areas. The framework is linked to How good is our school? (Fourth edition) (HGIOS4) and How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC). The framework is also aligned with national priorities and policies including the STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce, Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland, Equally Safe at School and the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Evidence Tracker

The evidence tracker provides an area for monitoring the ongoing status of each subsection. It allows for individual practitioner/setting reflection on current levels of confidence in each area and any actions that might already have been taken. **Please use the duplicate button on the form to save your own version.**

[Evidence Tracker]

Action Plan

In your action plan, you may wish to focus on aspects that are currently being adopted to ensure they become fully embedded or focus on newer aspects that you are just beginning to explore. **Please use the duplicate button on the form to save your own version.**

[Action Plan]

1. Leadership of Establishment

1.A Self-evaluation

Improving gender balance work is woven into improvement planning and aligned with other setting priorities. Data is used to identify gender gaps and to ensure the work meets the needs of the setting. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is strongly encouraged to support planning for change and a sustainable approach.

[Access evidence tracker here](#)

Indicators of effectiveness

- A core team of practitioners provide effective coordination and leadership for improving gender balance and equalities. IGBE in the setting is aligned with other strategic priorities such as the National Improvement Framework, Scottish Attainment Challenge, STEM, Digital Skills and DYW.

- A range of effective approaches are being used to ensure all practitioners, learners and partners are actively involved in IGBE self-evaluation activities. Learners are at the centre of this process and have a strong voice in all developments.

- Attainment and progression data are disaggregated by gender and gaps/disparities are identified and addressed. The interconnected nature of gender with class, race and other characteristics is explored and care is taken to adopt a nuanced and intersectional approach to analysing data and planning interventions.

- Data relating to the wider culture of the setting are also monitored and disaggregated by gender. This might include data relating to behaviour, attendance and participation in wider and informal curriculum opportunities. For example, which learners are selected to speak to visitors or represent the setting, which children engage in different extra-curricular sporting activities and so on.

- Effective strategies are in place to monitor and evaluate impact of plans and actions on attitudes and outcomes for all learners.

1. Leadership of Establishment

1.B Professional Learning

There is a focus on collegiate learning and building practitioner confidence in improving gender balance. This may include increased access to professional learning, resources and opportunities for professional dialogue.

[Access evidence tracker here](#)

Indicators of effectiveness

- There is a culture of professional learning and collaborative professional enquiry in gender and equalities.

- Children and young people are taking responsibility for leading their own and others' learning around gender stereotypes and inequality. There are opportunities available for young people of all genders to engage with these issues, be involved in consultation and to help shape the setting's approach.

- All practitioners, including teaching and support staff, have opportunities to engage with new learning around gender and equalities, and plans are established to incorporate into induction for new staff.

- Engagement with research, resources and policy is helping us to lead and develop learning. Practitioners understand how addressing gender stereotypes and unconscious bias can help to raise attainment and develop employability skills.

- Professional engagement and collegiate working across the wider learning community, including between sectors, is evident. Practitioners share resources, expertise and strategies to build their mutual capacity.

- We actively look outwards beyond the setting and immediate learning community to seek good practice.

1. Leadership of Establishment

1.C Whole Setting Approach

This element is about developing a shared vision, values and aims across the whole setting amongst practitioners and learners alike. The setting works to ensure consistency of message and purpose.

Indicators of effectiveness

- There is a shared vision, values and aims for IGBE which continues to evolve through ongoing debate, dialogue and reflection across the establishment, community and wider stakeholders.

- Practitioners and wider setting community understand equity vs equality (that sometimes different groups face different barriers and treating everyone the same will not lead to equal outcomes) and all practitioners demonstrate collective responsibility to initiate and contribute to well-informed change in response to gender and wider imbalances.

- Space is regularly created in meetings at every level to discuss IGBE and to share interesting practice and innovative approaches. Good practice internally and externally is celebrated and shared and used to inspire further change.

- Where there are practitioners of different genders in the setting, care is taken to ensure that everyone is seen to be doing the same roles/jobs. Uniform, where there is one, has been carefully considered to ensure it doesn't reinforce gender roles, is practical and fit for purpose and is broadly similar for all genders. For younger learners, care is taken that clothing allows free play.

Putting into Practice

Challenge Questions

- Is a 'which boys', 'which girls' approach (as described in 'using this framework' section) taken to understand and address patterns in the data?
- To what extent are we building IGBE confidence and capacity across our setting?
- How does the setting ensure that the voices of all young people are heard and used to shape policies and the strategic plan?
- To what extent are the approaches within the establishment sustainable?
- How is improving gender balance being connected to and woven through other setting priorities?

Sharing Practice

Self Evaluation: Letham Primary School - Using the IGB Self-evaluation Framework - **Page 31**

Professional Learning: Woodlands Family Nurture centre, Paxton Nursery and Methilhaven – improving gender bias in the early years - **Page 7**

Whole Setting Approach: Dunblane learning community – a cluster approach - **Page 18**

2. Addressing Gender Stereotypes

2.A Environment and Ethos

Consideration is given to ensure that the setting environment sends positive messages about all genders and does not inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes. There is an ethos of equality across the setting and an ongoing celebration of diversity.

[Access evidence tracker here](#)

Indicators of effectiveness

- Care has been taken to ensure that the physical environment sends positive messages about all genders and avoids inadvertently reinforcing stereotypical ideas. Consideration is given to the use of colour, images and words, for example, both in wall displays and in less prominent locations.

- Teaching resources (including books, games, toys, etc.) as far as possible are inclusive, reflect the diversity of the learners and the wider community and provide insight into the lives of others.

- Where explicit gender segregation occurs (i.e. intentionally separating into groups of girls and boys), there is a clear rationale. This is likely to be for practical reasons (for example older learners changing for PE) or to ensure high levels of participation (for example where some groups are reluctant to participate in competitive sports for cultural or social reasons). Care should be taken to ensure that non-binary and transgender children and young people are allowed to make free choices that feel most appropriate and safe for them in these scenarios.

- Where implicit segregation occurs, solutions are developed. For example, can a balance be found between a group of young people wishing to play football, and those who might prefer to access the space to engage in quieter activities.

- Learners have a strong voice and take on leadership roles in considering the setting environment and future planning.

2. Addressing Gender Stereotypes

2.B Activities and Exploration

Practitioners and learners are encouraged to think critically about gender stereotyping and the impact on choices and opportunities. Examples of gender stereotyping, as they arise, are used as teaching points

Access evidence
tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- All learners have multiple, age-appropriate, opportunities to revisit and deepen understanding of gender, gender roles and implicit gender expectations through creative, motivating and relevant learning contexts. Activities fit within and extend the existing curriculum, rather than being 'extra'. Effective collegiate working enables coherent curriculum planning across the learning community.

- Learners develop the confidence to recognise and challenge stereotypes and have opportunities to lead the planning and delivery of activities and to provide feedback to practitioners.

- Stereotypical imagery, roles and storylines that appear in resources are used as teaching points. This will sometimes provide opportunities for critical thinking and exploring in depth, and at other times will be lighter touch. All practitioners take ownership of this and are confident in weaving this understanding into their day to day practice.

- Stereotypes as they apply to boys and men as well as to girls and women are understood and discussed. For example, opportunities to highlight kind, caring or creative boys/men, and linking to emotional literacy are sought, as much as opportunities to highlight brave and independent girls/women.

2. Addressing Gender Stereotypes

2.C Challenging Incidents

Unintentional gendering is increasingly recognised and addressed. Sexist language and behaviours are addressed consistently, and the wider impact of these behaviours is communicated and understood.

Access evidence tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- Practitioners are aware of their own language and there is an open and supportive ethos where all members of the learning community feel comfortable to support each other in noticing unintentionally gendered words and comments. (For example referring to a nurse as 'her' automatically.)

- Practitioners are aware of the tendency for fictional and imaginary characters to become male by default and take steps to mitigate this. (For example, a teddy bear is likely to be referred to as 'he' unless it is wearing something to explicitly signal female).

- All practitioners understand the importance of tackling everyday sexist language in part due to its underpinning of more harmful sexist behaviours including gender-based violence.

- Learners and practitioners understand how to react and feel confident speaking up when they encounter gender bias, stereotypical language or sexist behaviour.

- Practitioners and learners understand the link between gender stereotypical assumptions and some of the prejudice experienced by LGBTI+ young people

Putting into Practice

Challenge Questions

- What assumptions is the environment (unintentionally) making about gender?
- How well do we ensure consistency in the messages about gender stereotypes?
- How are implicit beliefs surfaced so they can be explored?
- How effective are protocols for responding to sexist language and behaviour?

Sharing Practice

Environment and Ethos: Cradlehall ELC – whole setting approach, beginning the journey - **Page 5**

Activities and Exploration: Bearsden Primary school – whole school STEM improvement - **Page 12**

Challenging Incidents: Denny High School - Empowering pupils to challenge casual sexist and misogynistic language/attitudes in school - **Page 52**

3. Learning and Teaching

3.A Expectations and Assumptions

The setting works to ensure that practitioners have opportunities to reflect on their own unconscious assumptions and expectations in a safe way whilst also taking steps to mitigate the impacts on the learner.

Indicators of effectiveness

- Practitioners are aware of the multiple ways in which unconscious bias can impact in the setting. For example, practitioners recognise the potential for expecting and accepting different behaviours from boys and girls; making assumptions about which areas of the setting/curriculum and types of activities learners will prefer; interacting differently with individuals; giving different advice and direction and so on.

- Practitioners understand that these unconscious ideas are communicated through micro-messages such as body language and choice of words and are confident in putting in place a range of strategies to mitigate the impacts.

- Practitioners understand the potential for unconscious bias to influence how we describe individuals, what we praise or criticise, the language we use to praise and what success is ascribed to. Care is taken to sense-check verbal interactions and written reports.

3. Learning and Teaching

3.B Classroom Practice

The setting works to ensure that practitioners are equipped to understand impacts of unconscious bias and expectations in everyday practice. Practitioners recognise how the interactions they have with learners can reinforce or dispel stereotypical patterns of behaviour.

Access evidence tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- Practitioners recognise that whole-class interactions can be dominated by a sub-group of learners (for example, a sub-group of the boys in the class), often because they are making themselves more visible. Practitioners are confident in employing a range of strategies and techniques to support learner understanding of what balanced participation looks and feels like.

- Practitioners are able to recognise, explore and challenge where necessary stereotypical gender roles in play, group work and practical work.

- Practitioners recognise that for some boys there is a tension between (masculine) self-identity and the behaviours required for academic engagement as there can be a perception that displaying effort and engagement at school is feminine. Strategies to encourage a positive ethos in relation to hard work and academic engagement across the setting are in place. Opportunities to challenge negative perceptions of stereotypically feminine behaviours are capitalised upon.

- Practitioners recognise that patterns of praise and feedback means some girls may learn to be compliant and not take risks in their learning.

Putting into Practice

Challenge Questions

- How is a shared understanding of what 'balanced participation' looks like achieved across the setting?
- Are seating plans always designed for learning and teaching, not for behaviour management?
- Are all practitioners mindful of how they use praise & compliments?
- How are practitioners supported in exploring unconscious assumptions?
- What does holding and communicating high expectations to all learners look like in the setting?

Sharing Practice

Expectations and Assumptions: Cleveden Secondary school - improving the number of girls in design technology subjects - **Page 42**

Classroom Practice: Larbert High School –STEM improvement group - **Page 38**

4. Skills and Pathways

4.A Curriculum and Skills

The setting works to ensure that practitioners are aware of the impact of expected gender roles on skill development and equality of access to all areas of the curriculum. The setting works to ensure that all learners have genuinely equal opportunities to develop confidence in different areas of the curriculum.

Access evidence tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- Practitioners understand the potential for learners to self-select out of certain activities, at every age and stage, based on their observations of what is appropriate. Preferences in areas of the setting/curriculum are observed and steps taken to ensure all learners feel all areas of the setting/curriculum are 'for them'. Care is taken to ensure that, even in a child-led context, all learners experience and develop across all areas of the curriculum.

- Practitioners understand the impacts of gendered expectations on some boys' literacy skills and on some boys' emotional literacy. A consistent learning community approach to challenging expectations, and closing these gender gaps is in place.

- The heightened fear of failure amongst some girls is recognised and a consistent, cross-sectoral approach is taken to allow all learners opportunities to 'fail' in low-stakes situations.

- The place of competition in the learning environment is carefully considered. It is recognised that not all learners may respond in the same way and an appropriate balance between co-operative and competitive behaviours is sought.

- A range of learning environments, approaches, resources and contexts are used to engage all learners and to build confidence that as an individual they are 'right' for every curricular area.

4. Skills and Pathways

4.B Career Education

The setting works to broaden knowledge and perceptions of learner pathways and jobs amongst practitioners, learners and families.

Indicators of effectiveness

- Care is taken to avoid gendered terms and assumptions when talking to learners about roles, activities and jobs.

- Career related learning including work placements, work-based learning, employer visits etc. actively challenges gender stereotyping and preconceptions about roles and learner pathways. Practitioners, including career advisors, encourage diverse thinking in children and young people to consider a broader view of subject choices, career options and job opportunities.

- Post-school opportunities and various entry points are regularly referred to as part of learning and teaching. Practitioners relate relevant learning experiences and skills development to the labour market and employment opportunities.

- Role models and external visits are carefully planned and it is recognised that they are more likely to have an impact if longer-term relationships establish. Care is taken to present 'attainable' characters or role-models and the use of 'genius' or exceptional role-models is avoided.

- Where possible, a wide range of parents and visitors come into the school/setting to talk about their jobs and pathways and to support wider discussions about gender, roles and activities. Former learners are used as one strand of this.

4. Skills and Pathways

4.C Choice

The setting uses data to inform work to ensure that the root causes of these gender imbalances in curricular preferences and subject choices are challenged.

Access evidence tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- All practitioners recognise the potential for inadvertently reinforcing the idea that certain subjects/curricular areas are harder than others and understand the importance of taking care to avoid this.

- Gender differences in confidence within particular curricular areas are explored and practitioners work to understand the root causes and to build self-efficacy in the context of the curricular area.

- Practitioners praise learners for their effort (i.e. promote growth mindset) and encourage belief that success comes through hard work, not through innate talent.

- Subject choice booklets or equivalent have been reviewed to ensure they link qualifications to skill development and a range of pathways. Care is taken to give equal weight to all pathways.

- Care is taken with how topics and subjects are presented and 'branded'. Practitioners understand the power of language to appear 'masculine' and 'feminine' and are mindful of the wording used to name a topic/theme.

Putting into Practice

Challenge Questions

- To what extent can our learners relate their learning and skills to the world of work, free of pre-conceptions?
- How well is learner perception of different subjects/topics monitored?
- How well is self-efficacy across different curricular areas understood and actively developed?
- How well are parents and practitioners supported to give advice on pathways including apprenticeships?

Sharing Practice

Curriculum and Skills: Linlithgow Academy – gender imbalance in computing science - **Page 44**
Career Education: Anonymous Setting – Gendered Play in P1 - **Page 16**
Choice: Perth High School - Gender aware approach to the secondary curriculum - **Page 54**

5. Family and Community Learning

5.A Meaningful Involvement

The setting works to ensure that all members of the wider setting community are meaningfully involved in improving gender balance initiatives. The needs and context of the setting community are explored and communicated.

Access evidence tracker here

Indicators of effectiveness

- The wider setting community is involved in the design and delivery of our improving gender balance and equalities initiatives. We consult with parents and carers regularly to ensure that we are meeting the needs and ambitions of all families within the learning community.

- A range of mechanisms including social media and digital technologies are used effectively to engage parents and families and to support increased understanding of the impacts of gendered thinking and the limitations it can place on learners' aspirations . Learner voice is at the heart of this.

- The gender balance within parent committees, parent helpers, trip volunteers, etc. is monitored. Consideration is given to how meeting times and role descriptions might unwittingly introduce barriers to engaging.

- Practitioners understand that dads in Scotland are significantly less likely than mums to form positive partnerships with their setting and actively plan to ensure fathers and male carers feel included and involved.

- Community groups are invited to join professional learning offers to encourage partnership working and planning.

- Settings are aware of additional barriers and inequalities within the setting's community, and use this information to inform their engagement to reduce these barriers.

5. Family and Community Learning

5.B Communication

The setting works to ensure that all communication to the setting community exemplifies good practice, and is inclusive and accessible.

Indicators of effectiveness

- All communications from the setting exemplify good practice in terms of inclusion and representation.

- Practitioners are aware of the different family structures in modern Scotland and all families feel included and represented.

- All the setting's publications, formal and informal, internal and external (e.g. website, prospectus, letters home, information for parents, social media posts) are sense-checked for unintended bias including in language, images etc.

- Care is taken to sense-check for assumptions and pre-conceptions when talking to different audiences. This might include considerations around gender, race, class and so on.

- Different pathways, including Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, are being promoted enthusiastically to parents and care is taken to address misconceptions about who is 'right' for which roles.

5. Family and Community Learning

5.C Supporting Wider Change

The setting supports work with the wider school community to challenge gender stereotypes, gender inequality and unconscious bias.

Indicators of effectiveness

- Parents are supported in avoiding passing on any anxieties (that are influenced by gender (or wider) stereotypes) they themselves may have about certain subjects.

- Parents have multiple opportunities to learn about different employment sectors, prospects and routes.

- Practitioners feel confident to discuss gender, inequalities, and stereotyping with parents of all backgrounds and are able to present alternative viewpoints as appropriate.

- All practitioners have a good understanding of gender based violence and domestic abuse, the indicators of domestic abuse and of the challenges faced by children and young people living with domestic abuse. All practitioners understand their role in challenging gender based violence through promoting an ethos and culture of equality throughout the curriculum and the whole setting experience.

Putting into Practice

Challenge Questions

- How is a shared vision and aims for equity of opportunity for all learners established with the wider setting community?
- How does the setting challenge traditional gendered perceptions with the wider community about learner pathways?
- How does the setting explore barriers to balanced parent/carer involvement?
- How does the setting ensure parents/carers are aware of the breadth of opportunities available to their children?

Sharing Practice

Meaningful Involvement: Forres Academy – Male carers group - **Page 46**
Communication: Mosshead primary school - STEM improvement - **Page 14**
Supporting Wider Change: NHS, sexual violence prevention and ES – springing the gender trap - **Page 59**

Element	Themes in the Improving Gender Balance Framework	HGIOS4 and HGIOELC Quality Indicators
1. Leadership of Establishment	1.A Self Evaluation: Planning for change 1.B Professional Learning: Collegiate learning and building practitioner confidence 1.C Whole Setting Approach: Shared vision and responsibility	QI 1.1 QI 1.2 QI 1.3
2. Addressing Gender Stereotypes	2.A Environment and ethos: What does the environment say about gender? 2.B Activities and exploration: Thinking critically about gender stereotyping 2.C Challenging incidents: Sexist language and behaviours are tackled consistently	QI 2.2 QI 2.7 QI 3.1
3. Learning and Teaching	3.A Expectations and assumptions: Mitigating the impacts of unconscious bias 3.B Classroom practice: Further reflections on unconscious bias	QI 2.3 QI 3.1 QI 3.2
4. Skills and Pathways	4.A Curriculum and skills: Countering self-selection and skill gaps 4.B Career education: Broadening perceptions of opportunity 4.C Choice: Enabling genuinely free choice	QI 2.2 QI 2.7 QI 3.2 QI 3.3
5. Family and Community Learning	5.A Meaningful involvement: The whole community has a voice and a role 5.B Communication: Communications exemplify good practice 5.C Supporting wider change: Working together for change	QI 2.5 QI 2.7 QI 3.1 QI 3.3

Supporting Resources

In all of the above, it will be important that practitioners have strategies to ensure discussions around gender stereotypes and inequality are safe for all learners, particularly those most negatively impacted by them. Settings should ensure young people have access to designated safe spaces to access support, should they need it, and aim to become a safe space for all learners where discrimination and inequality are actively challenged.

Links to additional support and resources
Improving Gender Balance and Equalities – http://bit/ly/nihigb
Twitter: @EdScotIGBE

Gender Equality Resources for ELCs/schools
Gender Equal Play - https://bit.ly/3AI5Gnv
Zero Tolerance - https://www.zerotolerance.org.uk/
Gender Friendly Nurseries - https://bit.ly/3lxVtG1
Let Toys Be Toys - www.lettoysbetoys.org.uk
Gender Action - https://bit.ly/3lJAGQ9
Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy - https://bit.ly/3AE93fa

Wider equalities support & resources
Rights Respecting Schools - https://bit.ly/3mTeKBa
Rape Crisis Scotland Sexual Violence Prevention Work - https://bit.ly/3BIVOeI
Mentors in Violence Prevention - https://bit.ly/3mREb6k
LGBT Youth Scotland Charter Mark - https://bit.ly/3vfIbRN
The Black Curriculum – www.theblackcurriculum.com
Skills Development Scotland Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report, 2021-2025 - https://bit.ly/3v8RsLh
Supporting Transgender Young People Guidance - https://bit.ly/3DE6ITG
A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: employment action plan - https://bit.ly/3mNhal2

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