

## **Briefing to the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee Evidence Session on the Gender Pay Gap – Wednesday 14 March 2017**

### **Introduction**

Ahead of the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee meeting on Tuesday 14 March 2017 regarding the gender pay gap, [Colleges Scotland](#) wishes to provide you with some information on the college sector in Scotland which we believe will be pertinent to your discussions. Colleges Scotland is a membership organisation and the representative organisation for all colleges in Scotland. As the collective voice of the sector, our role is to provide a consistent and compelling case for Scotland's colleges and to use our influence to ensure that they are in a position to provide quality education choices to Scotland's people, long into the future.

In recent years, the college sector has undergone a significant level for reform with the reclassification as public bodies by the Office for National Statistics, regionalisation and a series of mergers across the country which has led to a new landscape for post-16 learning. Post-merger colleges are delivering real benefits for society and the economy – significantly in driving positive and improved outcomes for students, integrating curriculum, working for and with the regions they serve, and providing a better landscape for the delivery of skills across Scotland.

Scotland's colleges:

- contribute positively to the delivery of sustainable vocational and higher education provision for the benefit of students in their career choices
- support Scottish Government priorities and contribute to Scotland as a nation, the economy, our communities and individuals
- widen access and achieve greater fairness and equality in the education sector
- deliver high quality education
- provide high value in return for the public investment in the sector. An independent [study](#) on the economic value of Scotland's colleges, looking at both the investment analysis and an economic impact analysis, showed that colleges reap £14.9 billion for the Scottish economy each year, representing 8.8 per cent of the total economic output of the nation.

### **Key Facts**

- Colleges deliver around 76 million hours of learning to over 227,000 students
- Just over 70% of all learning hours are delivered to 16-24 year olds
- 20% of delivery is higher education
- Women still make up the majority of college enrolments – 51% (or over 142,000 students)
- The number of women on full-time courses has increased over the past ten years
- The most popular subject area is Health Care
- 12 out of the 26 college principals are female
- 58% of college board members are male, 42% are female.

### **How Colleges are Contributing to Improving Gender Balance**

The benefits of a truly diverse workforce are increasingly recognised. The challenge is to affect changes that will result in a real shift in the balance of the talent pipeline into the country's key sectors – essentially a cultural shift is required. As a critical route for young people into the workforce, colleges have a vital role to play to help diversify the workforce and encourage young people into professions previously dominated by one gender. Colleges are keen to ensure that pupils have access to all the options available to them and that their choices are not restricted early on. For example, the Energy Skills Partnership – a collaboration of Scotland's colleges and industry partners established to increase Scotland's capability and capacity to deliver skills for the engineering,

construction and energy sectors – has been engaging with schools to inspire pupils about STEM with the [Bloodhound](#) Scotland Rocket Car Challenge. In 2016, 92 secondary schools took part in the competition with a 50/50 gender split of pupils involved. The competition is running again in 2017.

Scotland's colleges are seeking to address the gender imbalance in the workforce pipeline for industries such as construction, which is dominated by men (84.4%), and administration, healthcare and education, which are dominated by women (70.3%). Challenges still exist within the college sector to attract more women into courses such as nautical studies, construction and engineering, but progress continues to be made across the country.

The Scottish Funding Council has worked with the sector to put in place a Gender Action Plan to focus on closing the gender gap in key subjects where there is currently an imbalance. This year, there is a specific requirement for colleges to produce gender outcomes in line with the Gender Action Plan which are incorporated into the Outcome Agreements for each college. The college sector is also actively involved in programmes with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), which works to extend and support equality in colleges and universities.

Individual colleges are developing a range of initiatives to encourage men and women into sectors where one gender predominates. For example, North East Scotland College, in partnership with Shell, runs a Girls in Energy programme for 14-16 year olds, and City of Glasgow College has a Women In Engineering course which has been working to create a shift in engineering by supporting and challenging employers, developing skills and providing work placements for female engineering students. Speaking about the course, Paul Little, Principal and Chief Executive of City of Glasgow College, said:

*“The Women in Engineering project identified some of the key barriers to embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the workplace and, perhaps more importantly, provides solutions that could make a real difference to plugging leaks in the talent pipeline if applied in practice within STEM sector organisations.”*

All of these initiatives will take time to make a significant impact, but it should not detract from the central message that our colleges are open and accessible to all and are delivering high quality courses that improve employability, regardless of gender or background. Scotland's colleges will continue to work with industry sectors across Scotland to help break down gender stereotypes and increase diversity in the workplace.

### **Meet the Apprentice – Tracey Govan, GE Caledonian Ltd**

30-year-old Tracey Govan is an Apprentice Fitter with GE Caledonian Ltd which is an aeronautical engine overhaul facility, providing services for aviation engines and components as well as avionics, electrical power and mechanical systems for aircraft.



Tracey worked in a large supermarket for eleven years, before a change in company structure made her consider her future. Tracey left the supermarket to pursue her dream career. Now she's in the second year of an apprenticeship following a year studying Performing Engineering Operations (PEO) course Ayrshire College. Tracey said:

*“I wanted to completely change my career and do something different. I'd always liked being hands-on, doing anything that involved a bit of skill, and I like learning new things. I decided to go back to college, which to be honest, is the best thing I could have done.*

*“The job is very hands-on, working to manuals – whatever repairs that the customer requires with their particular engine, I work alongside a mechanic and do what's required. I go to college 2 days a week, and next year it'll be 1 day a week. I'll get a recognised qualification as well as trade papers.”*

## 1st Year Apprentice Electrical Engineering Apprentice

When Chloe Main left school after completing fourth year in the summer of 2013 she knew she wanted to pursue a career in Engineering but she hadn't settled on a particular field. Chloe enrolled in the National Certificate Level 5 in service and manufacturing engineering allowing her to get an overview of the field before deciding on a specialism.

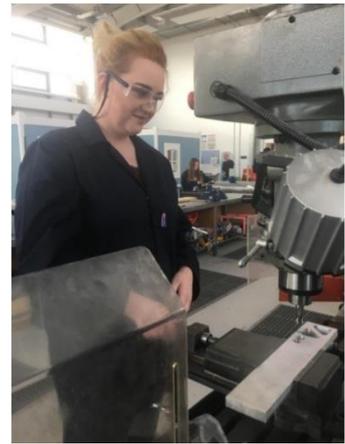
Chloe commented: *"The course had lots of benefits that allowed me to try; mechanical, civil and electrical engineering. I found a real passion in electrical engineering."*

From there Chloe went on to complete an HNC in Electrical Engineering and is currently working towards an HND. Upon completion of the HNC Chloe spoke with her lecturer regarding the possibility of undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship with Shin Etsu.

Having worked part time for the family business and in the hospitality industry during her time at college, Chloe was no stranger to earning while learning and was keen to put her knowledge to use so she applied for the MA. Upon acceptance Chloe quickly realised she had made the right move. She said:

*"I have found since starting my modern apprenticeship it has furthered my knowledge and understanding of both practical and theory work. It is a fantastic opportunity to be able to study and gain experience at the same time. I am very grateful for this opportunity. I enjoy learning and bettering myself, I also enjoy that you can be learning theory work and then go to work and see it in practice, this really helps me understand."*

*"My future plans are to complete my studying with my honours degree and progress within the company, allowing me to better myself at any opportunity possible."*



## Mechanical Engineering Student Wins in Europe

New College Lanarkshire's HNC Mechanical Engineering student Betsy Crosbie won the Medallion of Excellence at EuroSkills Gothenburg 2016. The 20-year-old, who lives in East Kilbride, was the only female to compete in her category of Mechanical Engineering Design CAD (Computer Aided Design) at the competition, which brought together almost 500 of the most talented young people from 28 countries to compete in 35 different skills areas. She said:



*"It was a great experience to be part of a team of people who are all there for the same reasons as you are. I'm really happy with how I did and winning the Medallion of Excellence; it's great to know that I've reached international standards."*

*"I got quite a lot of attention for being the only female in my category, but hopefully in the coming years there will be more females in that part of the competition."*

*"Having completed her HND Computer Aided Draughting and Design (CADD) earlier this year and worked for a time in industry, she recently returned to New College Lanarkshire to study HNC Mechanical Engineering to widen her career options."*

Betsy was selected to represent Team UK after winning a silver medal at the national finals of WorldSkills UK in Birmingham in November 2015. She is in the running to represent the UK at global contest WorldSkills Abu Dhabi in 2017.

## Amy hopes more women will step up to construction career

Painting and decorating Modern Apprentice (MA) Amy Whatley hopes more females will climb the ladder to a career in construction. Amy (24) from Linlithgow – who works for West Lothian Council but studies one day a week at Forth Valley College in Falkirk. Amy said:

*“I started my MA in Painting and Decorating in June and I am really enjoying it. I had previously worked for five years as an administrator in a local authority and I quickly realised I didn’t like working in an office and this is the best move I have ever made.*



*“I would encourage other young women who think they might like a career in construction to find out more and really go for it. The world is changing and women are at the forefront of many industries now that were traditionally male dominated such as construction or engineering. Women can do anything men can do and certainly the majority of my class who are male, have been brilliant and treat me no differently from themselves.*

*“When I left school at 15 I didn’t know what I wanted to do and ended up doing something which really wasn’t a good choice. I would encourage young women to work towards what they really want to do, never give up and keep trying as they will get there in the end.”*

## Male Care students encourage more men to follow in their footsteps

Three male students on Ayrshire College’s Early Education and Childcare course are encouraging more men to get involved in the predominantly female career. Lee Coates, John Hamilton and David McKenna are all in the same class, which is dominated by women, and have just finished work placements where they were the only men in their respective nurseries.



They believe the work they do is so rewarding and they now want to see more men look into following in their footsteps.

David said: *“It is a very female dominated industry, but that’s not to say men can’t make a big difference to education and early years. The women I’ve worked with are all extremely helpful and they want to see me progress. My friend’s daughter has additional support needs, and I just found it incredibly rewarding to work with her so I wanted to further that and do it as a vocation.”*

John joined the Care sector after working in a factory for all of his working life. He began by working with the elderly but now wants to work with younger people.

He said: *“There’s often stigma you hear from friends when they find out what you do. But I don’t let it bother me – if you enjoy it, why not? I think I take to it quite well as I’ve always been around nieces and nephews, I know what the children at that age like, what games to play.*

*“I just think more guys should go into early education. The difference you see in children when you go into a placement and they see it’s a guy, they think it’s amazing!”*