



Women into STEM: Equate Scotland Interim Report

August 2022

West College Scotland has been working on an exciting project funded by Skills Development Scotland in partnership with Forth Valley College, Equate Scotland, and Young Enterprise Scotland to address the leaky pipeline and encourage greater female representation in STEM roles.

This report summarises findings on the areas of the project delivered by Equate Scotland:

- Establishing a baseline of information on recruitment of women into STEM roles.
- Delivery of 3 employer trainings on inclusive recruitment, and equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Delivery of 4 apprentice trainings covering confidence, managing change, setting goals, networking, communication, peer support, and reflection.

Baseline information on recruitment

Apprentice survey findings

(10 submissions)

Most were inspired to apply by:

- STEM sessions
- Or family members

The main objectives/reasons for applying:

- Enjoy STEM
- Get hands on experience
- Gain a fulfilling career

Most felt the apprenticeship will benefit their studies and future career through:

- Hands on experience
- Qualifications
- Job at the end
- Opens further opportunities

Anticipated upcoming challenges:

- Most said studying
- One apprentice mentioned being in male dominated environment

Most felt confident or very confident starting their apprenticeship.

Application process:

- Most respondents said they were attracted to apply for their specific role due to either host company, job description, or because it was paid work that was related to their degree/interest.
- Results varied across whether apprentices found it easy or difficult to apply for their apprenticeship. Further research would be required to assess why.
- The process for most included a CV, assessment centre, and some also had to present and/or do a technical test.



- Induction process was thorough for most survey respondents.

Employer survey findings

HR: 2 submissions

- Gender split favoured men in all roles.
- Neither had an equality and diversity strategy and/or had published it clearly.

Non-HR: 9 submissions

Flexible working:

- 7 stated their organisation had a flexible working policy.
- Most policies were better than statutory including flexitime and hybrid working.
- However, most felt their organisation did not actively promote flexible working arrangements to all staff.

Maternity and childcare support:

- Most had above and beyond maternity policy and shared parental leave policy.
- However, many respondents did not know if their policy was above and beyond statutory.
- Most had access to childcare support provisions.

Recruitment practice:

- Most respondents felt equality and inclusion was promoted through the organisation's recruitment practice. For example:
 - advertising in a variety of places and targeting women,
 - supporting community engagement activities,
 - reviewing gendered language,
 - running women only events.

Equality and diversity:

- Most employees have access to equality and diversity training.
- Most respondents knew that there was a reporting mechanism for inequality and discrimination, but a couple did not know.
- Most felt social/networking events were open to all.
- In-house training and education as part of an ongoing CPD programme was available for a minority of respondents.

Apprentice sessions highlights

Session	Attendance
Confidence and Managing Change	6
Goals and Objectives	9
Assertiveness	4
Networking and Reflection	2



What has improved as a result of attending the workshop(s)?



What do you wish you knew at the start of your apprenticeship?

- “I wish I could know I need time to learn as Rome wasn’t built in a day.”
- “I perhaps thought that men might not be as bitchy as women. I think I was wrong.”
- “I was nervous to ask ‘stupid questions’ but everyone has got to ask to learn.”
- “Need to focus more on your positive aspects – as women was worried [sic] I might not be strong enough but now I’m confident to ask for help. I have different skills – for example smaller hands for electrical work.”
- “Use your strengths and don’t worry about your weakness.”

What would you tell your employer to improve?

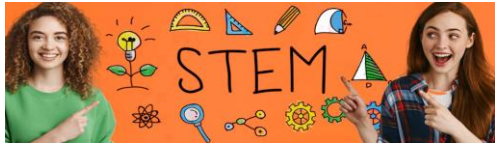
- “Have an apprentice training bay with old project that we could report and assemble as practice. Having a craftsman to buddy us so we are not moved around from person to person. Having guidelines for knowledge we are expected to gain.”
- “The option to be able to test out on products that are not for customers so we can make mistakes.”
- “Being with a mentor or one person makes a difference. Learning from different people means different styles and different levels of experience.”
- “Having a segmented list of what you will be expected to know and by when for the workshops.”

What skills or experiences have you gained in your apprenticeship?



Employer session highlights

(5 submissions)



EQUATE

Session

Supporting Women Apprentices
Inclusive Recruitment
ED&I in Leadership

Attendance

4
3
4

What has improved as a result of attending the workshop(s)?



- 100% were very likely or somewhat likely to recommend the workshop(s) to a friend/colleague and to attend a session in the future.
- Some participants commented that it is often women who come to these sessions, and this leaves it to women to shoulder the burden of future actions.
- Recommendation to record resources to disseminate to management that cannot attend.
- Many commented that recruitment has been the priority as there are still very few women, therefore they are not yet at the stage to be able to focus on retention and progression.
- Resource is limited to allow full focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion.