

Gender Inequality and Societal Attitudes Report

This report summarises children and young people's views on gender inequality and societal attitudes.

Children and Young People's Priorities for Action:

- 1 The Education system should work alongside young people to address Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- 2 Tackle gender bias in schools, improve schools' approaches to gender norms, stereotypes, roles, attitudes and ensure equal access to subjects, sport and space.
- 3 Embed Gender Equality & Gender-Based Violence Education in PSE from age 3-18.
- 4 Train all teachers on Gender Equality & Gender-Based Violence (Nursery-University, from qualification to CPD).
- 5 Tackle gendered inequalities in gender, domestic and caring roles and relationships in homes, families and communities.
- 6 Reduce sexualization, objectification and idealised representations of people in advertising, fashion, media/ social media and increase diversity.
- 7 Reduce inequalities associated with gender and age in the workplace, and in routes to the workplace, including occupation type, pay, status and childcare.
- 8 Increase women's representation in politics and reflect diversity.
- 9 Promote engagement of a diverse range of young people in politics, including policy and legal change.
- 10 Co-develop a national Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Online Interactive Platform with children and young people and launch social media campaigns from it.
- 11 Ensure children and young people participate in Equally Safe action on gender inequality and gender-based violence and set up a National Youth Commission on Tackling Gender Inequality.

Introduction

The Everyday Heroes Participation Programme asked children and young people about their priorities for government action in relation to gender-based violence and gender inequality.

The Scottish Government established a Participation Partnership to ensure that children and young people, especially young survivors of gender-based violence, participated in their plan of action '[The Equally Safe Delivery Plan](#)'.

Young and adult experts from the University of Edinburgh IMPACT project, Barnardo's Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland and the

Scottish Youth Parliament worked together to design engagement sessions and a survey to ask children and young people across Scotland:

1. What would improve the journeys of young abuse survivors through services and the justice system?
2. What could help improve societal attitudes and people's lives in relation to gender equality?

This report focuses on children and young people's priorities for action to tackle gender inequality and societal attitudes.

The 'Gender Inequality and Societal Attitudes' Projects

Under this theme there were 2 projects: the consultation project managed by Rape Crisis Scotland and the survey project managed by the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Key areas to explore under this theme were developed by young advisors for the Everyday Heroes programme.

Consultation

Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS) managed the project's engagement sessions and designed materials alongside young advisors. Young participants were asked to explore gender inequality within their groups and to express their views on how it affects them and society more widely. Activities focussed on ways in which children and young people are aware of gender inequality and what is important/relevant to them; gender roles; inequality in different spheres e.g, home, school, work, politics and identifying their priorities for change.

Facilitators from six organisations supported children and young people to take part. Organisations were selected for their work with young people around issues of gender inequality and/or their work with young people with protected characteristics.

Four groups were from Edinburgh: Young Saheliya; Young Edinburgh Action; Deaf Express; 93rd City of Edinburgh Brownies. The other two were prevention projects at local Rape Crisis centres: RASAC Perth and Kinross Youth Ambassadors and the STAMP project, Lanarkshire.

Young participants in the consultation

54 young people age 7-20 took part: 6-8 (8); 9-11(1); 12-14 (4), 15-17 (31); 18-20 (10). There were 45 girls/young women, 7 boys/young men and 2 young people who did not specify their gender. Young participants were not necessarily survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), 8 identified that they had been, though most did not specify what nature of GBV.

In terms of additional protected characteristics, 10 people identified as black or minority ethnic, nine were deaf and two had dyslexia and/or dyspraxia.



54 children & young people aged 7-20 years



Age 6-8



Age 9-11



Age 12-14



Age 15-17



Age 18-20

Survey

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) developed the Scotland-wide survey exploring young people's understanding and opinions of gender inequality and societal attitudes. SYP Equalities Committee closely developed and co-designed the survey with members of staff (advised by RCS and Scottish Government analysts). They found data in the public sphere on young people's attitudes so decided that survey questions should be directed towards young respondents' priority action points for the plan, with attitudes and knowledge as the basis. MSYP's (Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament) were instrumental in ensuring the survey style, content and language spoke to young people. It included qualitative as well as quantitative data.

Analysis

Clear priorities for action emerged from children and young people- across both projects, different groups, ages and experiences - through thematic analysis by Rape Crisis Scotland/ the University of Edinburgh for the consultation and thematic /statistical analysis carried out by Scottish Youth Parliament/the University of Edinburgh for the survey. Cross analysis revealed that improving education was young participants' key priority in relation to gender inequality and societal

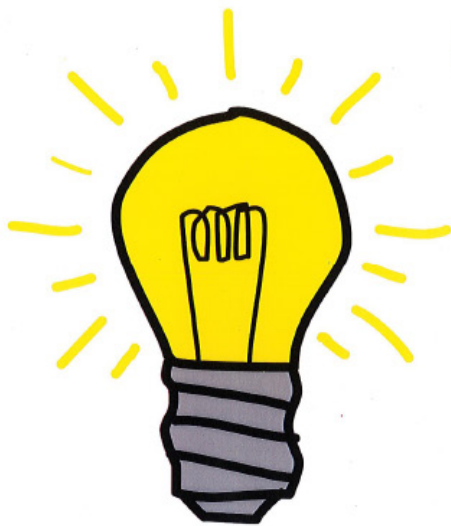
Survey participants

The survey was developed for young people aged 12 -26 years old. A total of 439 responses were received from young people across Scotland's 32 local authorities. 291 of those respondents identified as female, 110 as male, 10 identified their gender as 'other' and 5 chose not to say. Nearly half (43%) of respondents who participated in the survey were aged 15 -17 years old, 19% were aged 18-20, 16% aged 12-14, 12% aged 21-23 and 10% were aged 24-26.

439 responses from
across all 32 local
authorities

attitudes but also across the whole programme, as was improving access to services alongside young people.

Young advisers, including representatives from the consultations and MSYPs, met with the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Security and Equalities at the Scottish Parliament to discuss these priorities and advocate for their inclusion in the Equally Safe Delivery Plan.



make more girls be
scientists

MAKE MORE GIRLS
BE SINCE TESTS



PRIORITY 1

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Education system should work alongside children and young people to address gender inequality and gender-based violence.



Young participants prioritised action within the Education System to:

- Teach gender equality, in tandem with other inequalities, and promote equality and diversity.
- Develop approaches with young people to educate and campaign against gender inequality and violence.
- Recognise and respond to the effects of gender inequality on the health, safety and well-being of girls, boys and non-binary children and young people.

Evidence

Education was continually noted by young people across projects as a key tool in tackling gender equality. Increasing learning about gender equality the most important priority for many young people: “make the discussion of gender inequality more prominent in the curriculum”.

Many respondents saw school as a key place to learn (46% said their understanding of gender equality had come from school) and to take action on gender inequality. 68% of young survey respondents said that receiving education on gender equality was ‘very important’, with some young people highlighting the need for education around the meaning of gender equality – equality for all genders.

Whilst the negative, restricting, abusive and discriminatory effects of gender inequality on girls was the prominent finding across projects, young people felt it was important to recognise the effect of gender ‘norms’, prejudice and violence on all, including non-binary people, LGBT young people and boys. They felt all genders should be included in teaching, learning and action in schools/universities to promote gender equality.

“Whenever people hear the phrase ‘gender equality’ they think it’s about women’s issues.

In relation to safety and violence, it was female and non-binary survey respondents who consistently felt more unsafe than males (online, school, public) and identified the need to educate all on relationships, violence and consent. Young survivors across the whole programme agree that this would have helped them. In relation to equality, young people linked gender equality to LGBT+ issues and racism and felt that education should promote equality and diversity for all. In effect young people promoted an intersectional approach, for example suggesting cultural exchanges

to understand effects of both culture and gender on a young person’s life.

Young people suggested that there should be more inclusive and gender equal teaching across subjects, ensuring women and diverse groups were included. Some also suggested a specific subject or compulsory module on gender equality.

Others spoke about the whole school changing and all subjects promoting gender equality - in what was taught and the way it was taught. PSE was key to discussion of relationships and bodies and worthy of its own priority but only one of a range of reforms. There was negativity from a few male respondents who felt that there was too much focus on issues for girls/women or felt this wasn’t a priority: “Gender equality is important but was achieved many years ago”. This highlights a need identified by some young participants for increased learning, debate and dialogue amongst young people about these issues.

“It doesn’t delve into how issues of gender affect different people in different ways.

Young people had ideas for approaches to education and campaigning on these issues and wanted to work with education professionals to make it effective. Some had already taken action, for example, Young Edinburgh Action’s work to create primary school books promoting gender equality and influencing a new post for relationships education in Lothian and STAMP’s training of teachers based on findings of their peer survey into sexual harassment in schools in Lanarkshire. Young people spoke positively about bringing in external experts but also about teachers being trained to encourage class dialogue. Some spoke about social media and noted that schools’ messaging in relation to this often focused on risks and harms and appeared “punitive”.

PRIORITY 1 cont...

EDUCATION SYSTEM

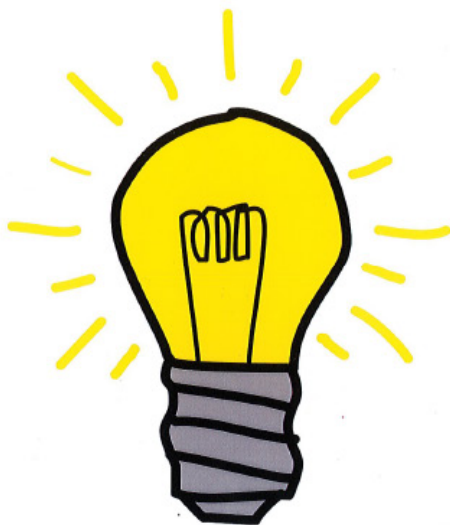
The Education system should work alongside children and young people to address gender inequality and gender-based violence.



Whilst safe and critical engagement with social media was important, they also saw social media as a positive tool to tackle inequality, GBV and sexism, through online young people-led campaigns linking to online support.

The survey and consultations contained many references to the detrimental effects of gender inequality, as well as gender-based violence: on young people's developing sense of self; comfort in their bodies; self-image; self-esteem; confidence; peer friendships; pupil dynamics; personal relationships; safety and happiness across home; school; online and community networks. Young people felt the effects of gender inequality on all young people were not taken seriously, but specifically that those experiencing

difficulties due to gender inequality were stigmatised and couldn't access support and services. One group highlighted concerns that mental health is often ignored in relation to gender inequality, and that any change couldn't happen without acknowledgement of how stigmatisation and stereotyping can result in mental health concerns. Young people felt that mental health was too often seen as a 'trend' and the real impacts on young people were ignored or overlooked. They wanted greater availability of mental health services and for there to be a far greater understanding of how gender inequality impacts on mental health, identifying consequences of gender stereotypes such as 'boys don't cry'. They recommend strongly that children and young people are involved in tackling gender equality and improving mental health services.



everyone should always
be treated the same way

every
one
should be
always
be treated the
same way

PRIORITY 2

SCHOOLS' GENDER BIAS

Tackle gender bias in schools, improve schools' approaches to gender norms, stereotypes, roles, attitudes and ensure equal access to subjects, sport and space.



Young people identified these specific actions for schools to tackle gender bias

→ Gender norms and stereotypes.

→ Gender norms in subject and career choices.

→ Equal treatment and access to play, space and sport for girls and boys.

Evidence

Children and young people felt that schools played a very important role in their learning, development and 'finding themselves as an individual'. They wanted schools to play an active role in challenging gender norms and stereotypes, and the role of peer pressure in enforcing these. Yet many felt schools reinforced stereotypes throughout their education, through the schools gendered structure, ethos and activities which was reinforced as they got older.

“ **Separated in shows and events - girl and boy roles**

Some discussed concerns in relation to the prevalence of sexist language and behaviour which they understood as linked to abuse/ violence. They were concerned that everyday 'micro-aggressions' were often unrecognised and unchallenged and could also be enacted by staff. Some groups also spoke about school uniforms and pointed to sexist double standards, some recommending that uniforms should be non-gendered:

“ **Uniform – no skin for girls, no make-up, length of skirt and amount of chest shown. Boys can do whatever.**

Children and young people in the consultation also identified the role of gender norms and peer pressure in determining subject choices, and ultimately the kinds of occupations girls and boys undertook, noting under-representation of girls in STEM subjects and boys in arts subjects.

Survey respondents agreed there was an 'inbuilt' assumption that certain subjects are for girls and others for boys in school. Young people across projects believed that these assumptions are developed in early education, as young as nursery and others noted they become more dominant the higher up you go: "No girls in my school took computing; no males took HE"; "Guys go to do more practical subjects - joinery". Yet it was clear from respondents that they did not passively

accept this situation and many felt confident in defying perceptions of specific genders for specific subjects: "I got told that girls shouldn't do physics or technical subjects so I took both". Equally, young people cited that going against the norm often resulted in harassment, teasing or bullying and many females said they felt uncomfortable being the only girl in a subject like physics – which was noted many times as a subject more commonly taken by boys.

“ **In my physics class I'm the only girl and it can be difficult in a class where you are the only girl but I am getting through it.**

Play, space and sport were key issues for young participants. Girls felt they had less access to sport and that boys took over the space for sport, especially in the playground. Also there were restrictions across genders in relation to what sports could be participated in, e.g. less dance for boys. Young people would like to see equal treatment in terms of which sports they are allowed to participate in e.g. boys and girls should be playing rugby.

“ **Have girls and boys doing the same subjects in PE. On Friday, only people playing football are allowed to go on the astroturf, so it's always the boys and that's not fair.**
Boys don't let the girls play on the playground.

However, several female survey respondents noted that they felt uncomfortable taking part in sports due to the 'male gaze' and this in turn has led to a lack of females participating in sports. The onset of puberty was a key time for girls' embarrassment, mainly about body changes, developing breasts and periods.

“ **I was put off PE because of the perceived way you should look... so female only PE classes can give girls an opportunity to exercise and get sweaty.**

PRIORITY 3

PSE REFORM

Embed Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Education in Personal and Social Education (PSE) including relationships, sexual health and parenthood education



Young people identified these specific actions for PSE curricula reform

- Ensure that children and young people learn about and discuss gender equality, their bodies, safety and consent from an early age and right through the education system.
- Work with young people and external experts to promote inclusive approaches to gender, sexism, sex and relationships.

Evidence

It was important to many young people that gender equality should be discussed from a young age because starting the conversation in secondary school was too late as many young people have formed opinions on gender norms and stereotypes are embedded by this time. Most younger survey respondents (12-14) did not know about different gender identities, which was a time when other children felt stigmatised and bullied if they stood out from gender norms

“**Teach about gender equality, consent, respect for others etc. from primary school.**

Early education was crucial in terms of gender-based violence also: some young people in both the consultation and survey suggested sexual violence prevention should start from childhood so that children had “control over their bodies” and understood consent from a young age, a point made strongly by young survivors of abuse in the justice/services projects.

“**I had never been told about consent or what counts as abuse.**

Education on consent, respect for others, sexism, sexual harassment and domestic violence were all cited by young female survey respondents as important issues that need to be openly spoken about. These issues were not raised by young male survey respondents but raised commonly by young survivors - female, male, LGBT and non-binary. These young people felt education would help all young people understand the issues, not just those with lived experience.

Young survey respondents recommended PSE should include sex education, be inclusive and positive about LGBT relationships. Young people's descriptions across the projects suggested gendered expectations are common, though resisted by some, suggesting gender

equal relationships and communication need to be promoted.

“**Teaching boys that girls are equal to them because I have experienced, and still am, people treating me like I am a joke for them.**

Some young people in the consultation wanted much more thorough sex and relationships education which was inclusive and promoted understanding, respect for each other and knowledge about physiological changes.

“**Girls emotional changes - guys don't get taught about theirs - hormonal.**

Young people suggested that PSE should be taught in creative ways: teachers should support group discussion, encourage debates in class and bring external experts in.

Young people felt organisations with specific expertise of gender equality and gender-based violence could work with schools to support education on issues relating to pornography, sex, consent, relationships and social media. Some also felt that a peer education programme could work, with young people exchanging information and knowledge with each other, stating that young people would listen to their peers.

PRIORITY 4

TEACHER TRAINING

Train all teachers/educators on Gender Equality & GBV (Nursery-University, from qualification to Continuing Professional Development).



Young people identified these specific actions for schools to tackle

- Nursery and primary teachers need gender equality training and to discuss these issues with children and young people from an early age.
- All teachers need trained in a gender equal attitude including consequences of stereotypes and negative attitudes; no jobs for girls and boys.
- Specific staff need to be trained to give support and advice on gender equality and gender-based violence issues and children and young people need to know who they are.
- University and college staff need training, to improve procedures and enhance support available to students improved procedures and improved support available to students.

Evidence

68% of survey respondents said it was 'very important' that teachers receive gender equality training, as did young people in the consultation. They felt that nursery and primary teachers need gender equality training to ensure a gender equal approach and to be able to discuss these issues with children and young people from an early age. All teachers needed training, informed by young people, to equip them to address issues such as gender, sex, consent and relationships education; addressing the harms and exploitation involved in the pornography industry; engaging constructively with social media.

'Teachers being taught how to be gender equal' was particularly important to young people, especially female respondents to the survey. Young people felt many teachers used gender stereotypical phrases and sayings and this needed to be stopped. Girls in particular felt that discussion with teachers about career choices was discriminatory:

“ **Make sure teachers don't use stereotypes towards any genders, like picking girls for a hairdressing course or talking about male and female jobs.** ”

Some also noted that within schools it was often the few men that had powerful positions:

“ **Most head-teachers are male.** ”

Several females in the survey reported incidents of sexism and sexual harassment from teachers. For example, one respondent said she was made fun of for being a 'dizzy blonde' in maths class and in 'techie' the teacher often used gender stereotypical phrases when describing the way he thought girls were behaving in class compared to boys.

Some children and young people spoke about attitudes of the whole school needing changed, for some there was a misogynistic culture which allowed regular sexual harassment of girls, some linked sexism and abuse explicitly:

“ **Girls are expected to be organised and obedient whilst guys are expected to rebel and show initiative.** ”

Young people recommended that some staff members needed to be trained specifically to be able to give support and advice on gender equality and gender-based violence issues, and children and young people needed to know who they are. 75% of females and 52% of males agreed it was 'very important' that young people have somewhere in school to raise concerns about gender equality issues, and females/those who identified as other noted concerns about reporting and being listened to in relation to sexual harassment and abuse. Many young people across the projects suggested there should be support and clubs within school.

“ **Being girly was bad even if you were a girl and if you were a boy being girly was extremely dangerous. At age 14 I ended up with a boyfriend who beat me and sexually abused me. I didn't know at the time this constituted abuse because it was fairly normal given the culture of our high school.** ”

Those who were university and college students spoke of inadequate responses from lecturers and tutors, the lack of trauma informed policies and procedures, as well as a need for specially trained, accessible support withing establishments.

PRIORITY 5

EQUAL ROLES

Tackle gendered inequalities in gender, domestic and caring roles and relationships in homes, families and communities.



Young people identified these specific actions for for homes, families and communities

- Address gendered expectations for women and men, girls and boys in the household and in communities.
- Increase men's participation in childcare, and enable women's choices around childcare and paid work.
- Promote more open, supportive and understanding families and communities where choice and diversity are welcomed and social norms do not constrain children and young people.

Evidence

Almost all consultation groups spoke about the role that home and families play in perpetuating gender roles and inequalities and almost half the survey respondents identified parents as the key place they get their information about gender equality (only social media was above this). Some spoke of the important role of their parents in actively resisting gender stereotypes and their important role in subject choices, whilst many others spoke of gender unequal roles within the home:

“ I was never brought up told that I couldn't do something because of my gender.

“ Different rules for boys and girls.

Children and young people pointed to the fact that girls are often expected to undertake more housework than boys, and that women undertook much more domestic work and childcare, with fewer such expectations, and greater freedoms, for boys and men:

“ My brother doesn't have to do anything, but I have to set the table, tidy up, help cook.

They felt homes needed to be more gender equal. Some homes were - "Mum cleans, dad cooks" and many weren't - "Mum does everything. Dad sits and does nothing". Some boys and girls mentioned the significance of their mother as a role model/ challenger of norms. Young people suggested dividing up household tasks -parents involve boys more in housework, for men to do more in the family - but also that play and relaxation were important areas too - toys, activities and stories in the home should be gender neutral.

Some children and young people were aware of the impact of women's childcare responsibilities on their choices in relation to paid work and a few mentioned discriminating attitudes against men that took more of a role:

“ If a man is a house-husband he is looked down upon

Some young people across projects advocated that both parents should take responsibility for bringing up their child. Hardly any young males in the survey felt that having a job would impact on their ability to look after their child, unlike females. Specific ideas for tackling issues relating to childcare included fully-paid paternity leave, free childcare and increased pregnancy and childcare support for women, as well as increased support for those with other caring responsibilities to access work.

Some spoke about their wish for families to be more understanding, accepting and supportive, to enable them to develop their own lifestyles and identities and make their own choices. They suggested that there should be better communication between families and that if families were supportive of the child 'being themselves' this could make a huge difference to children and young people's lives and mental health. Some suggested support and advice for parents on gender and sexuality issues:

“ ...loving us for us is more important than all the likes in the world.

PRIORITY 5 cont...

Tackle gendered inequalities in gender, domestic and caring roles and relationships in homes, families and communities.

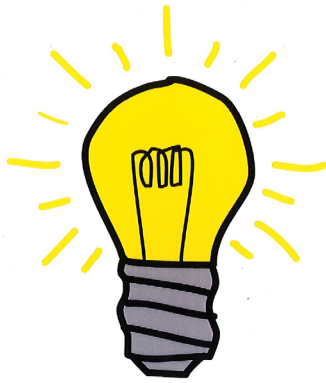
EQUAL ROLES



Some children and young people also spoke about the need to tackle gender roles and stereotypes in communities as well as homes and families. This included gender-specific clubs and sports, some felt there was more investment in 'boys' sports than girls. There were also comments about communities not accepting certain relationships, e.g same sex relationships nor encouraging different cultural groups to mix.

They felt communities had a role in promoting gender equality, reducing stereotyping and discrimination through bringing all genders and people from different backgrounds together, providing education to groups about gender equality to change/reduce what was seen as 'norm'. There was a role for the wider community.

” ...to celebrate, accept and support difference



more girls should go to work because less girls do work.

more girls should go to work because less girls do work



Your home is where you live & your family are the people who bring you up

Its normally always the female who takes maternity leave and the male never takes paternity leave which ~~is~~ should be different as people think its a mums job to bring up the child.

PRIORITY 6

TACKLE MEDIA

Reduce sexualization, objectification and idealised representations of people in advertising, fashion, media / social media, and increase diversity.



Young people identified these specific actions for the media, advertising and fashion industry

- Reduce gender stereotyping, sexualisation, objectification of women, idealized and/or sexist portrayals of women and men.
- Increase diversity.
- Stop promoting sexist and victim-blaming attitudes.
- Increase representation of women in sport.
- Tackle gender norms in clothing.
- Regulate the porn industry and limit its reach into the mainstream.

Evidence

Children and young people felt that the media had a powerful influence on their lives, particularly in relation to appearance but also behaviour, family and relationship roles. Whilst most thought adverse effects were most keenly felt by girls and non-binary young people, the effect on boys and relationships was also highlighted strongly in relation to the media.

“ **61% of young people said their understanding of gender equality came from social media** ”

When asked to identify where their understanding of gender equality came from, social media scored most highly, ahead of parents, school, friends and TV/film. Many young people concurred with this survey respondent:

“ **I feel that every gender is boxed in by the media, saying they should act and look a certain way and the portrayals of people in these boxes are not representative of the majority of the population because everyone is so different.** ”

Across projects children and young people felt the media played a key role in perpetuating inequality - adverts, music promos and games as well as programmes and YouTube, typically:

“ **Video games are aimed at boys, they over-sexualise women and over-masculinise men** ”

They felt that stereotypes, sexist attitudes and sexualised representations in the media had a significant influence on all young people's perceptions and ideas, set expectations for how they should look, relate and behave and could adversely affect young people's mental health.

“ **I don't think the media necessarily show any gender in the best or most appropriate light ...but I feel that women are sexualised and stereotyped much more frequently** ”

Young people are very aware that the media reinforces an unrealistic and stereotypical view of how women, men and other genders should look - “skinny and pretty” “tall and muscular” with other genders as “not a real thing” - which makes young people feel bad about how they look and can cause mental health issues. They felt that when women are represented they are objectified, sexualised and overtly shown to be weaker than and counterparts to men, masculine men were usually the ideal, powerful main character. Many felt the media's ‘perfect body’ portrayal is unhealthy, decreased confidence and promoted impossible expectations for younger children as well as teenagers to meet.

“ **It's harder to be different when you have to present yourself in a certain way. Constantly being shown “flawless” women or extremely muscly men doesn't give people confidence to be themselves or to express themselves.** ”

Children and young people wanted action to ensure that people were shown as different and equal: “The media should encourage people ‘to be themselves’ and not emphasise unrealistic body types”. They wanted main characters that were different than the stereotypes (e.g. strong women, caring men, LGBT heroes), depicting respectful friendships and equal relationships, communicating their emotions:

“ **no ideals, no stereotypes; Have the media stop sexualising everything.** ”

PRIORITY 6 cont...

TACKLE MEDIA

Reduce sexualization, objectification and idealised representations of people in advertising, fashion, media / social media, and increase diversity.



Some felt that this was changing with more positive and inclusive portrayals of genders now. However, they felt that people with protected characteristics were significantly under-represented, shown in a disrespectful way or not represented at all, namely minority ethnic women and those who do not conform to a gender binary. This felt very isolating and harmed their self-esteem significantly. One group felt that:

“**Women who looked like them (BME) would not be seen as examples of the ideal**

In the vision of the ideal woman there is no place for being minority ethnic

In relation to behaviour, they felt ‘masculine’ behaviour trumped all: “women or feminine men are portrayed as less. Less than masculine men”. They felt men were most often seen processing their emotions as anger or being emotionless and ‘strong’ and were most often a rounded character. Women were hysterical or weak, their emotions irrelevant as one-dimensional, there as a counterpart, prop or/and to impress men, usually sexually. In terms of relationships, they felt boys and girls weren’t allowed to be friends: “boys can’t be interested in girls for anything other than sex” and also pressure that “men must have a big plethora of sexual knowledge”. They also discussed sexual double standards being portrayed, pressures for boys and men to be sexually active and for girls to be submissive:

“**Boys just use girls; boys must initiate sex, girls must follow.**

Many were aware that girls are at greater risk of sexual abuse and drew links to negative gender roles for men in relation to control and dominance. Some survey respondents felt things were getting better for some people but not others - moving in the right direction for women/girls but not non-binary/trans young people or black/minority ethnic women and girls who

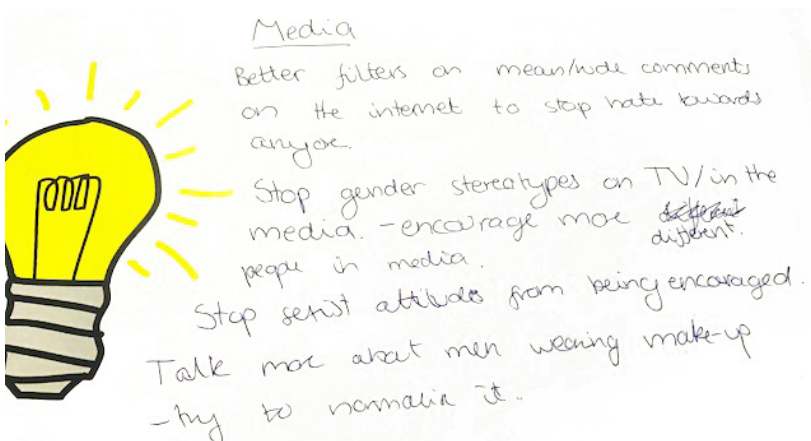
were invisible, whilst gay young men were still seen as ‘feminine’. A number of survey respondents were unaware, and a few actively resisted, the identification of ‘other’ genders.

Children and young people identified the media’s perpetuation of stereotypes and harmful myths, such as victim-blaming. Some spoke about how this can play out on the internet and social media and wanted better filters on the internet to prevent hate. Adverts and video games were a key area to target, condemned for their ‘sex sells’ pitches: “girls in bikinis eating foot-long sandwiches seductively; men in wife-beater shirts flexing their muscles”. One group wanted the pornography industry to be regulated and its reach into the mainstream to be limited, in a way that safeguarded young people and performers but avoided stigmatising them.

Other key points focused on media and fashion, media and sport. Girls especially felt that the marketing of clothes and fashion portrayed on thin, clear-skinned, white models was portrayed as the ideal and younger girls felt “it’s not fair that girls get told they can only wear pink”. Some felt clothes should be non-gendered. Children and young people also observed the lack of representation of women in sport and wanted this to be addressed, including celebrating women’s sporting achievements.

Children and young people wanted action from government and media - they wanted to work with adults to actively use the media to tackle gender inequality:

“**Discussions with politicians, having media campaigns highlighting the issues and how they propose we tackle it.**



Media:

Better filters on mean / rude comments on the internet to stop hate towards anyone.
Stop gender stereotypes on TV / in the media.
Encourage more different people in media.
Stop sexist attitudes from being encouraged.
Talk more about men wearing make-up - try to normalise it.

PRIORITY 7

TACKLE WORKPLACE INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequalities associated with gender and age in the workplace, and in routes to the workplace, including occupation type, pay, status and childcare.



Young people identified these specific actions reduce inequalities in the workplace

- Enable access to all kinds of occupation for girls and boys, women and men and increase women's access to senior positions.
- Close the gender pay gap.
- Ensure equal rights for women, carers and young people in the workplace and redress where rights have not been upheld.
- Support and encourage shared parental leave and caring responsibilities.

Evidence

Children and young people perceived that jobs are still largely gendered, boys encouraged to do trades (building, plumbing) or achieve STEM success and get paid well: "scientists are men" whilst girls taught, did low-paid caring jobs or trades to do with 'beauty'. There was strong support for routes into the workplace to be free of gendered expectations, and for more girls and boys to be supported to enter jobs and sectors not traditionally occupied by their gender. One group suggested.

“ **More funding for women into male dominated areas of work and sports** ”

They wanted more girls and women entering STEM subjects and sport, and more boys and men entering the arts and caring roles.

Once in jobs, they wanted more women in senior and leadership positions: "bosses are boys". They felt strongly that job titles should be non-gender-specific:

“ **Lollipop man, fire man - why do we never say people or woman?** ”

"Most teachers are girls – you always refer to teachers as 'she". They also felt that dress codes were discriminatory, examples included requirements for some women to wear heels, makeup, a certain skirt length and worksites not having smaller safety clothes for women.

91% of young survey respondents and most consultation groups viewed equal pay as important

Most felt the pay gap was discriminatory and felt that people in power should do more to tackle this. There was support across projects for publishing pay information: "Force employers to publish salaries -

basically 'name and shame' those with a gender pay gap". Others noted it reflected societal attitudes which undervalued women's work. There was some negativity from some male survey respondents who suggest that the gender pay gap exists because women choose to stay at home and look after children: "The pay gap is a myth". All genders however cited that more should be done in terms of who takes on the caring role and there was a strong consensus that parental leave should be shared equally, which in turn could help reduce the gender pay gap.

Children and young people also spoke about workplace rights and the issue of discrimination due to both gender and age. In the survey:

24% of males said that they felt their gender would 'definitely' make a difference to the way they were viewed or spoken to at work and this rose to 43% for females and 80% for those who identified as 'other'

Some young people across the projects spoke about the sexism and sexual harassment faced by young women at work and the need for workplaces to tackle this, focus on equal opportunities and reduce gender discrimination: 84% of survey respondents said it was extremely important to make sure attitudes towards all genders in the workplace are the same. Young people said gender equality education and training for all employers and employees was important.

Another issue was how young people are sometimes exploited because it is assumed they have less knowledge of their rights. Suggestions for action included: more information for young people on equality/discrimination, rights, contracts and union membership, preferably through campaigns and peer education; as well as robust procedures for cases of harassment and exploitation. Some noted that zero-

PRIORITY 7 cont...
**TACKLE WORKPLACE
INEQUALITIES**

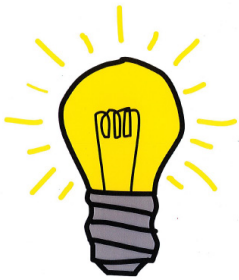
Reduce inequalities associated with gender and age in the workplace, and in routes to the workplace, including occupation type, pay, status and childcare.



hours contracts disproportionately affect women, young people and those with fewer educational advantages and wanted them to be eradicated. Increased support for families with caring responsibilities, including for disabled people, was needed.

Children and young people across projects agreed that “Equal caring responsibility is very important” but felt this was not attained. Some felt women’s caregiving role was key to the gender pay gap and lack of women in senior positions: “Women are seen as incapable to take on massive responsibilities because of childcare”. They suggested that childcare should be made easier for working parents, including workplace care. In the survey, 19% of males thought that being able to look after children while having a job would impact them, but, this increased to 40% for female respondents:

“ Making family life and work life more compatible will help so much – as a girl who wants to go into medicine and have kids, it is frustrating to think that this could be very difficult.

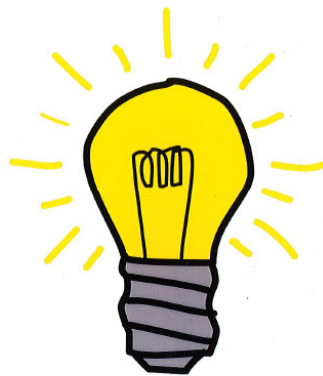


Girls and Boys
need The Same
OPportunities



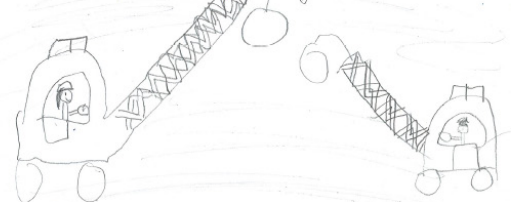
Girls and boys need the same opportunities. They get the same jobs.

They get the same JOBS



Let more girls get employed to do the jobs that men mostly get employed for.

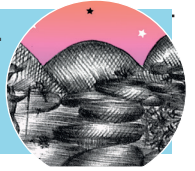
let more girls get employed to do the jobs that men mostly get employed for.



PRIORITY 8

TACKLE INEQUALITY IN POLITICS

Increase women's representation in politics and reflect diversity.



Evidence

Young participants across projects felt strongly that women's access to and representation in politics needed increased. They were aware of the under-representation of women in politics and lack of diversity, the tick box efforts some felt were "to ease big companies conscience". Many noted the positive effect of having women in power and many survey respondents identified women in power as role models. They felt it was hard for women to go into politics because of the long hours and lack of childcare. Some children and young people wanted positive discrimination and most wanted 50:50 representation of men and women in politics. They felt that action to increase diversity and non-tokenistic political representation of black and minority ethnic girls and women was particularly important:

“There has to be a real effort to represent black and minority ethnic women in all areas of life. By just having one person of colour... does not mean people feel represented. There are many types of BME people.

For women who became politicians, some children and young people felt they should have more positions of leadership in all areas and specifically lead committees addressing issues most affecting women. Many were aware of the sexism faced by women politicians, in terms of ageism, patronising treatment and the focus on appearance: "Women in power get judged on what they wear". Some commented on the derogatory portrayal of current female leaders in the media.

“Young women in politics seen as inexperienced – middle aged women in politics seen as pushy – old women in politics seen as outdated.

Young men in politics seen as ambitious – middle aged men in politics seen as hard-working – old men in politics seen as experienced.

PRIORITY 9

INCLUDE US

Promote engagement of a diverse range of young people in politics, including policy and legal change.



Evidence

Across projects children and young people indicated the need for increased engagement of young people in politics in general, and their involvement in all policy areas relevant to them (not only in relation to Equally Safe):

“Young people are not second class citizens. They should be involved in all decisions that impact them.

Young people were very keen to vote from 16 and wanted MSPs and MPs to engage more with all ages of young people from a wide range of backgrounds. Some felt their voice was missing in the national conversation on gender inequality and felt strongly they had a right to take part: "We have a right to say what happens to our future, our bodies". Many young people were already active in their lives/groups in changing things: "we are the ones forcing and pushing for social equality". They felt they could "pave the way forward"

and that adults/government and young people should exchange ideas. Some young people in particular felt excluded, such as Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) and LGBT+ young people and felt efforts should be made to include all young voices.

Some said young people were not respected politically and called for their opinions to 'count'. Many young people talked about how schools, youth and community groups should aim to engage young people in politics: "Have more youth groups branching into politics in schools and community centres". They wanted education on avenues through which they might become more involved and have greater power and influence in shaping political change and legislation. They suggested they could co-develop campaigns and peer education to make young people more aware of rights and legislation relevant to them, including ways they could engage in politics.

PRIORITY 10

CREATE A PLATFORM

Co-develop a national Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence Online Interactive Platform with children and young people and launch social media campaigns from it.



A clear priority across the Gender Equality, Justice and Services projects was to work with young people to develop online resources and campaigns. These should include:

- Clear information on services, rights, justice system.
- Developing/promoting peer education models.
- Interactive support; signposting to specialist support.
- Creating empowering social media campaigns.

Evidence

Young survivors of GBV spoke powerfully about the difficulties in accessing support, as did young people experiencing difficulties relating to gender and sexuality, all spoke about resultant mental health and other issues. They wanted clear information about what services offered and to whom, and the type of service. They wanted clearer information on their rights, advocacy services, legal representation and the justice system. Both young people and adults needed access to information so they could signpost services to those asking for help.

“ ... it would help battle the issue of mental health, and help feel comfortable in their mind and body, creating a much better society for us all to live in

Young people recommended interactive support using different media (online, private forums, text, phone) that could also link to specialist support in their area. Specialist support included GBV services and mental health services, all needed to be more accessible.

The online platform should also be educational, young people felt they could develop and promote peer education and models young people and teachers/ others could use to promote gender equality and tackle gender-based violence.

They felt children and young people and adults) needed education and tools on how to respond to discrimination, sexism and abuse:

“ ...so girls are not cat called or made to do things.

Many children and young people talked about using the power of social media to actively tackle the issues: encourage equality, promote role models, reduce stereotypes/stigma, encourage debate amongst young people, listen to young people about the issues and ideas for tackling them. This resource could empower all children and young people to act.

They specifically recommended young people-led social media campaigns as part of Equally Safe action, backed by this online resource. Though they identified online safety issues (across genders but particularly girls and non-binary) they felt this platform could help inform young people about it and raised concerns that adults were too focused on social media as an 'ill' rather than a force for good. They felt it was important to include male and female voices in this priority to ensure the message received from such a campaign is that gender equality means equality for all genders – including boys.

PRIORITY 11

PARTICIPATION

Ensure children and young people participate in Equally Safe action on gender inequality and gender-based violence and set up a National Youth Commission on Tackling Gender Inequality



Priority actions for Equally Safe participation were to:

- Involve a diverse range of children and young people in local and national research and action to tackle gender inequality.
- Increase dialogue between young people and people in power and representation of young people in Equally Safe actions.
- Set up a National Youth Commission on Gender Equality linked and equal to other national [adult] groups advising on the subject.

Evidence

Children and young people were clear that they should be involved in deciding how to tackle gender equality, with 74% of survey respondents saying this was 'extremely important'. They felt strongly that it was their lives and their future that was being debated and that debate should include them. They also felt young people were generally more open, innovative, gender equal than adults, more accepting of all genders and sexualities, with a lot to contribute. Furthermore, involving children and young people was an opportunity to educate early, prevent/challenge prejudice: "to ask them and educate them". Young people felt it was vital to involve boys/men in tackling gender inequality, to be inclusive of all genders and diversity within young people: "Young men need to be encouraged to engage with gender activism". It was also important to ensure young people who have specific experiences of gender inequalities and violence participate. They felt that there should be regular and ongoing inclusion of young people in conversations and that local action on gender inequality in schools, youth, religious organisations should connect to national action:

“ **Set up groups to tackle gender-based violence in schools and in universities with a youth-led approach. Train young people on how to deliver training/education on gender biases**

They felt that young people generally could add depth to evidence on gender inequality and how it affects young people of all genders, and work together to identify current issues and how to tackle them:

“ **More in-depth research with young people to find out where they are receiving messages and what attitudes they have already formed...to understand their feelings and how they feel it [gender inequality] should be addressed.**

They were positive that young people were crucial to finding effective approaches to addressing gender inequality, using media they were comfortable with to research, educate and campaign:

“ **Use more social media based platforms that allow young people to stand up against things or get involved in discussions**

Young people had creative ideas for regular involvement of a wide range of children and young people ("not one-offs such as this"), through specific local action - groups in schools and universities, linked to national youth groups and government action on the subject.

“ **Young people could be invited to share their views on the subject at meetings in government and a yearly national competition among Scottish schools for a group of students to come up with a new initiative.**

Survey and consultation participants felt that young people should be given more opportunities to work directly with the people in power to make changes and have political input.

“ **Panels of young people working alongside those in the roles of making big decisions. Simply giving young people a voice in this [gender equality] discussion would be a huge step in the right direction.**

PRIORITY 11 cont...

PARTICIPATION

Ensure children and young people participate in Equally Safe action on gender inequality and gender-based violence and set up a National Youth Commission on Tackling Gender Inequality



Specific areas identified for young people's participation were improving education, informing young people about justice and services, changing laws/systems and political debates on issues affecting them.

They are clear that adults and young people needed to work together to tackle gender and other inequalities. Many felt that young people will listen to other young people, so they had a specific role in educating and campaigning.

They recommended greater inclusion of children and young people on relevant government and parliament committees: "respecting young voices and treating them equally".

A suggestion was for setting up of a specific gender equality committee/national group of young people:

“Panels of young people working alongside those in the roles of making big decisions. Simply giving young people a voice in this [gender equality] discussion would be a huge step in the right direction.

They recommended an independent youth commission, equal but connected to a wider commission/group that included adults.

Conclusion

Children and young people involved in the projects were very aware of gender inequality, particularly in relation to homes, school and the media.

They made very clear links between gender inequality and gender-based violence and the importance of our response to both eradicate discrimination and abuse. They also made very clear links between gender and other forms of inequality and suggested responses should do the same. Key to inclusion and representation were sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. They felt that people, media and organisations should be held more accountable for sexism, abuse and discrimination - there should be consequences.

Education was the key tool in tackling Gender Equality and Gender-Based violence. This was not only about children learning - many pointed out that, generally, young people were more advanced than adults on being gender equal and accepting 'difference' - but about improving the whole school/university ethos and approach to gender equality, as well as their response to young survivors which was woefully inadequate.

Children and young people report their mental health is being adversely affected by gender inequality and that there is a lack of willingness amongst adults and peers to empower children to "be who they want to be" or take their suffering seriously. This requires urgent action alongside improved responses to all those that are experiencing abuse, harassment and discrimination due to gender inequality.

Children and young people indicated clearly that they wanted to be part of social and political change, many are already actively involved in promoting gender equality. They assert their right to be involved in policy, service and political change - in national debate and decision-making on this issue. They want to be engaged as equals, as political subjects/actors with clear ideas about how their own knowledge, skills and expertise could join with adults to co-produce more effective approaches to education and policy.

They demonstrate a range of realistic and creative ways they could help shape change. Furthermore, a National Youth Commission could link with children, young people, young survivors nationwide, as well as adults involved, to make a real impact on society.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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More information

For further information on Everyday Heroes including further reports on services and justice see everydayheroes.sps.ed.ac.uk.

More about the eca students and their work can be found at: www.illustration.eca.ed.ac.uk and if you would like details of particular illustrators contact Illustration Lecturer Harvey Dingwall h.dingwall@ed.ac.uk.

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