



Building our Industrial Strategy: Girlguiding consultation response April 2017

About Girlguiding

1. Girlguiding is the leading charity for girls and young women in the UK, with over 500,000 members. Thanks to the dedication and support of 100,000 amazing volunteers, we are active in every part of the UK, giving girls and young women a space where they can be themselves, have fun, build brilliant friendships, gain valuable life skills and make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We build girls' confidence and raise their aspirations. We give them the chance to discover their full potential and encourage them to be a powerful force for good. We give them a space to have fun. We run Rainbows (5-7 years), Brownies (7-10 years), Guides (10-14 years) and The Senior Section (14-25 years). Registered Charity No 306016. www.girlguiding.org.uk

About our evidence

2. Girlguiding's submission focuses on evidence from our annual Girls' Attitudes Survey - the largest survey of girls and young women in the UK - which gathers the views and opinions of over 1,600 girls and young women throughout the country aged 7 to 21, from inside and outside guiding. For more information and data on the latest and previous reports please see www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsattitudes.

Girlguiding's response is also influenced by the Girls Matter campaign - Girlguiding's member-led campaign that profiles girls' and young women's calls for change <http://new.girlguiding.org.uk/report>

In addition, our response includes quotes from members of our Girlguiding Advocate panel - a platform for girls to use their voices and seek change at the highest levels. Our Advocates are a group of 18 Girlguiding members aged 14 to 25 who lead the direction of Girlguiding's advocacy and research.

Overview

3. Girlguiding welcomes the Government's Industrial Strategy and view it as an opportunity to build a successful and equal economy. We agree that it is vital to drive economic growth across the entire country and welcome the Strategy's emphasis on helping young people to gain the skills, appropriate qualifications and careers advice they need to prepare them for the world of work. It is also positive that the Strategy recognises the need to address societal inequalities by providing particular support to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, we see it as a missed opportunity that the Strategy does not focus on the broader inequalities that limit economic growth such as gender inequality and the challenges faced by groups who frequently face disadvantage and inequality in work and training, such as young people with disabilities and those from BAME backgrounds.

As it stands, the Strategy includes just one reference to girls (the observation that fewer girls than boys choose Maths and Physics at A level). Girlguiding believes that

the Industrial Strategy would be stronger and better able to meet its aspirations if it included an understanding of gender throughout. In doing so, the Government would be taking steps to address the current unacceptable and economically unsustainable model in which major industries are largely losing out on the talents and contributions of women. It is vital that both Government and Industry take a clear stand against sexism and work to eliminate the conscious and unconscious biases that deter and prevent many women from entering and progressing in careers in many of the industries prioritised within the Strategy, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). More broadly, equality and diversity needs to be at the heart of the Strategy if it is to be successful.

Our response

4. Throughout this response, we use our evidence to answer questions which relate to issues that girls have told us they care about. We pinpoint examples where we believe consideration of equality and diversity issues are needed and draw on lessons and expertise from our partners (including Rolls Royce and Microsoft) around improving gender equality and diversity in industries where women are underrepresented. We also highlight the need to include girls' and young women's voices throughout the implementation of the Strategy, to ensure that their concerns are addressed. It is clear that the sector has a long way to go to tackle current persisting inequalities. As our evidence shows, girls and young women do not start out being adverse to careers in STEM, but rather become disengaged at many points along the way, from becoming convinced that STEM subjects have the image of being 'more for boys' to being worried about experiencing workplace sexism. This is a huge loss for both the sector and the economy and we hope that the Government will recognise that one of the best ways to address the skills gap is to address this issue and engage the many girls and women who would be an asset within the industries it hopes to grow over the coming years.

Consultation questions

Question 1: Does this document identify the right areas of focus: extending our strengths; closing the gaps; and making the UK one of the most competitive places to start or grow a business?

5. We believe that, as it stands, improving access for girls and women as well as other groups that may face disadvantage and inequality in work and training is a gap within the Industry Strategy. Our research shows that girls and young women face a number of barriers which can deter them from choosing STEM subjects or careers.

Gender stereotyping discourages many girls from choosing STEM subjects. Our 2016 Girls' Attitudes Survey showed the following reasons as to why girls are more likely to drop STEM subjects at school compared to boys:

- 52% of 11 to 21 year olds felt these subjects seemed 'more for boys'

- 41% felt that there are too few female role-models in related careers
- 42% felt that there are too few female role-models teaching these subjects
- Just 31% agreed that they learnt about female as well as male scientists at school
- 31% did not know what jobs they could do with these subjects

Our research also shows that many girls internalise pervasive societal stereotypes about girls' and boys' abilities in this area:

- In 2015, a significant minority of nearly a third (29%) of girls aged 7 to 10 thought that boys are better at science. More than half (57%) believed that boys are better at building things.
- In 2013, 47% of girls aged 11 to 21 think there is a perception that not many women do STEM jobs
- In 2012, 62% said they regarded engineering as more for men
- In 2011, girls said they veered away from a career in engineering because of lack of interest (51%) and a lack of female role-models (60%).

In addition, in 2011, a third of girls (30%) said worries about sexism in the workplace put girls off a career in science or engineering.

Girls also face many other pressures which can affect their education outcomes and life chances, such as sexism, mental health concerns and body confidence issues. We believe these should be considered in the wider context of developing a successful education and learning environment. Our 2016 Survey showed that:

- 70% of girls' aged 11 to 21 feel sexism is so widespread that it affects most areas of their lives.
- 47% aged 11 to 21 say the way they look holds them back 'most of the time'.
- 75% agree that women are judged more on their appearance than on their ability. This affects even the youngest girls, with 35% of 7 to 11 year olds agreeing.
- 42% of 11 to 21 year olds feel that, to be successful, women have to be attractive as well as good at what they do, whereas for men it doesn't matter what they look like.

As girls get older they are more likely to worry about equality at work:

- In 2016, 86% of girls' aged 7 to 10 said girls and boys have the same chance of succeeding in their future jobs, however, this compared to 54% of girls aged 11 to 16, and only 35% for girls aged 17 to 21.
- In 2016, 45% of girls aged 11 to 16 thought employers preferred to hire men over women - this increases significantly to 64% aged 17 to 21.
- In 2012, 39% of girls aged 11 to 16 were concerned about the gender pay gap compared to 60% of girls aged 16 to 21.

6. Despite these barriers, girls remain ambitious:

- In 2016, 63% of 11 to 21 year olds wanted to be a leader in their chosen fields



But the presence of female role-models in these fields makes a big difference:

- In 2016, 76% of girls aged 7 to 10 feel encouraged when they see a woman doing a job they want to do
 - When girls aged 11 to 21 hear there aren't enough women in leadership positions, 55% feel more determined to succeed but 45% feel like they have less of a chance of succeeding.
7. To support more girls into STEM, we believe that the Industrial Strategy should outline arrangements to support schools and others to provide:
- More opportunities and promotion of STEM to girls in school
 - Improved careers advice about STEM jobs
 - More high profile female role models in STEM jobs and in STEM teaching jobs
 - Less gender stereotyping in what girls and boys can do (at school, in toys, clothes)
 - Targeted programmes for girls on STEM (including developing skills and confidence)

The Government should work with Industry to:

- Address sexism and gender inequalities in the workplace through family-friendly working policies that promote shared parental leave and greater opportunities for quality part-time work. This should also include Parliament modelling equal working practices and taking steps to address the current lack of gender diversity. In 2014, 67% of girls believed that there should be more female MPs.
- Support organisations like Girlguiding that offer girls the space to safely be themselves and develop their own interests, including around STEM.

8. Girlguiding's role in promoting STEM to girls

Girlguiding offers girls opportunities to develop STEM skills through its youth programmes. These include activities and resources that challenge the gender stereotypes that our evidence shows influence girls' decisions about subject choice and career aspirations.

- a. Brownies (7 to 10 years) are introduced to STEM subjects through badges they can earn. E.g. Science Investigator (supported by Rolls Royce to help inspire future scientists and engineers), Stargazer, Number Fun and Computer.
- b. Guides (10-14 years) are encouraged to develop their interest in STEM through badges like the Science Badge and also through our *Go For It!* activity packs, which are based around themes such as *Be Constructive*, *Experiment* and *Space*.

In addition, we work with corporate partners who share our commitment to challenging stereotypes around science, technology, engineering and maths and seek to inspire a new generation of young women into these industries.

Girlguiding and Rolls Royce

Rolls Royce runs several STEM education programmes which have an emphasis on engaging underrepresented groups, including women. These include arranging work experience for 14 to 19 year olds and supporting those who influence young people's learning, including teachers, parents and youth leaders.



Together Girlguiding and Rolls-Royce have developed activities for the **Brownie Science investigator badge**. This badge helps girls discover science through fun experiments like making balloon-powered cars or their own compasses.

Rolls-Royce also attends our national events and put on activity evenings to get girls engaged with science and technology.

Girlguiding and Microsoft

In early 2016, Microsoft supported us to conduct a series of focus groups over winter 2015/16 with our young members, to discuss their attitudes on digital skills and careers. Girlguiding members aged 7 to 14 were asked about their attitudes regarding digital skills and careers.

The findings of this research show a tech-savvy generation of young women who are inspired by the possibilities of technology - but who are held back by gender stereotypes. The report recommends that more needs to be done to capture girls' enthusiasm for 'hands on' technology and transform that into engagement with digital careers in the future.

Girlguiding will be using the findings from these focus groups, alongside a review of the Girlguiding programme in the STEM area and more widely, to inform the next steps in an exciting project with Microsoft. Our research programme will continue to explore the impact of gender stereotyping on girls' aspirations.

We recommend that the Government should use such examples of companies working to engage more girls in STEM to inspire improved practice across the sector.

9. Girlguiding's role in developing girls as leaders:

The Government should also work with partners to encourage girls to develop the skills they will need to become leaders. Girlguiding takes seriously its role in giving girls confidence and leadership skills to be future entrepreneurs and business leaders.

We do this by:

- a. Supporting girls to develop leadership skills across our programme, from the youngest (aged 5) to our young leadership qualification for those aged 14 plus.
- b. Running Camp CEO, a week-long residential event which allows girls and young women to spend time learning from inspiring female CEOs.

10. Girlguiding's role in building girls' confidence

To support girls to deal with the range of other pressures they face, the Government should work with organisations that promote body confidence and mental wellbeing and challenge media sexism and stereotyping.

Girlguiding can support girls' mental health by strengthening resilience and offering a safe, fun and supportive space where they can escape pressures and be themselves. Through Peer Education, Girlguiding delivers programmes that enable girls to think and talk about issues that are important to them:

- *Think Resilient* builds girls' wellbeing through resilience-building techniques and planning how to manage difficulties and recognise and apply positive coping strategies and support
- *Free Being Me* helps girls grow body confidence and self-esteem and challenges unrealistic beauty ideals
- *Healthy Relationships* helps to ensure girls can develop and identify safe and healthy relationships

After nearly a decade of listening to girls' views through our research, Girlguiding has established its position as the UK expert on girls' views. We believe that girls' voices must be more included within Government policy-making on this issue.

11. Addressing gender inequality at work

A successful Industrial Strategy must have flexible working and family-friendly policies at its heart so that women have equal access to opportunities. Our research shows that girls worry about gender stereotypes and financial constraints that reinforce inequality in the workplace and within families. In 2013, 93% of girls aged 11 to 21 thought that in relationships between a mother and father, both parents should be able to share time off after their baby is born.

In addition:

- In 2013, 70% of girls aged 7 to 21 said they wanted to combine having children and maintaining a career. However, they were also concerned that having children would negatively affect their career (46% aged 11 to 16, and 56% aged 16 to 21).
- 65% of girls aged 11 to 21 told us they were concerned about childcare costs,
- In 2016, only 39% of girls aged 11 to 21 said having children wouldn't affect their career.
- The majority of girls in 2013 agreed that it's hard to balance motherhood and a career (61% aged 11 to 21) and for 42%, there aren't enough examples of women who successfully combine the two. Over half (58%) said they didn't think there were enough work opportunities that were part-time.

"Shared parental leave needs to be encouraged more so that both parents have the opportunity to care for their children. It needs to become a reality, not just an option, so more parents can look after and bond with their child. In the future I would like to see more fathers involved in childcare to change the stereotype that mothers are the (only) ones who look after their children - and help both parents to balance caring and their careers". Adeola, 20, Girlguiding Advocate

12. Embedding equality

In order for the sector to be successful in attracting the widest talent pool, it should ensure that it is up to date with the expectations and concerns of the next generation. We know from our research that equality and diversity is important to girls and young women.

In 2016, 47% of girls aged 7 to 10 identified ‘fairness for people from different backgrounds’ as one of the most important ways to improve girls’ and women’s lives and 86% of 11 to 21 year olds agree that people should not be discriminated against because they are lesbian gay, bisexual or transgender. A successful Industrial Strategy must also seek to address young people’s fears about the potential economic impact of the UK leaving the EU.

‘It is no secret that the majority of young people voted Remain in the EU referendum. After the success of the Leave campaign, the voices of young people, particularly young women, are more important than ever. It is essential the EU regulations protecting young people - such as maximum working and minimum rest hours, equality in the workplace and maternity and parental leave - are retained despite the economic uncertainty. These EU laws are our rights, and losing them could threaten the position of young people, especially young women, in a post-Brexit workforce.’ (Emma, Girlguiding Advocate)

Question 2: Are the 10 pillars suggested the right ones to tackle low productivity and unbalanced growth? If not, which areas are missing?

13. Girlguiding believes that there should be an equality and diversity perspective and gendered analysis within each pillar. This analysis should focus not only on how to encourage more girls to take up STEM subjects at school, but also how to bring women into sectors in which they are currently underrepresented. It should also focus on how to enable them to stay and progress, as opposed to disengaging and dropping out (through increasing uptake of training, increasing family-friendly policies and tackling sexism and gender bias in the workplace etc.) In particular:

Pillar 1: Investing in Science, research and innovation - The proposed research and investment in STEM is welcome but, in order to avoid reinforcing gender inequalities, must be undertaken alongside efforts to encourage and support more girls into these subjects and women into STEM careers. The consequence of not doing this will mean huge funding to a predominantly male industry will only serve to increase the gender pay gap and segregation. Our evidence shows that more needs to be done to inform girls about STEM to encourage them to pursue STEM subjects. In 2016, 31% of 11 to 21 year olds did not know what jobs they could do with these subjects and 41% felt there were too few female role-models in related careers.

Pillar 2: Developing skills - This pillar must also address the barriers and inequalities that currently exist for girls and young women from a young age into adulthood in developing skills. In order to boost skill levels, the Strategy *must* consider gender. As the Industrial Strategy highlights, jobs will increasingly require digital skills and so it is vital that girls and young women are encouraged to learn all they need to gain access to these.

Pillar 3: Upgrading infrastructure - In order to ensure that girls and women play a role in upgrading infrastructure, it is important that they are supported to complete

meaningful apprenticeships which lead to jobs in fields that are currently dominated by men.

Young Women's Trust undertook research highlighting the poor pay, underrepresentation, lack of flexibility and limited long term prospects experienced by young women who have undertaken apprenticeships¹. Their report emphasised the increased financial returns that businesses can experience as a result of growing diversity in the workplace. We support their recommendation that employers need to actively address the barriers to women applying for jobs in male-dominated sectors - for example, by considering the language used in job adverts to ensure that it is not deterring female applicants.

Pillar 4: Supporting businesses to start and grow - In addition to creating the right conditions for companies to access the finance and management skills they need to grow, it must be ensured that access to these skills is available to all equally.

Question 4: Are there important lessons we can learn from the industrial policies of other countries which are not reflected in these ten pillars?

14. The low numbers of women in STEM occupations is not inevitable. Research undertaken by the Women's Engineering Society² shows that the UK is seriously lagging behind other nations in this area:

- The UK has the lowest percentage of female engineering professionals in Europe at under 10%, while Latvia, Bulgaria and Cyprus lead with nearly 30%
- 15.8% of engineering and technology graduates in the UK are female, compared with over 30% in India.

Question 6: Which challenge areas should the Industrial Challenge Strategy Fund focus on to drive maximum economic impact?

15. Addressing gender inequality from girls in primary school to women throughout their careers. Alongside gender pay gap reporting, we believe that supporting more women to gain and maintain high-level employment will both increase equality and drive maximum economic impact.

Question 10: What more can we do to improve basic skills? How can we make a success of the new transition year? Should we change the way that those resitting basic qualifications study, to focus on basic skills excellence?

¹ Young Women's Trust, *Making Apprenticeships Work for Young Women*, 2016

² Women's Engineering Society, *Statistics on Women in Engineering*, 2016
<http://www.wes.org.uk/statistics>

16. In relation to the proposal that anyone gaining less than a C in English or Maths GCSE must retake these exams, we are unclear how this relates to young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), for whom it may not be realistic to achieve a C, and would welcome clarification. We also feel that this proposal may not adequately reflect the needs of those young people who wish to take apprenticeships that do not have an academic focus.

We are also keen to emphasise that young people - particularly those of high school age - are already facing an enormous amount of academic pressure. For example, in 2016, 65% of girls aged 11 to 16 named 'not doing well at school' as their biggest fear (compared to 40% of 7 to 10 year olds and 44% of 17 to 21 year olds) and 69% of those aged 7 to 21 said they felt like they're 'not good enough'. We believe it is important for a balance to be struck between pursuing basic skills excellence and promoting young people's emotional wellbeing.

Question 13: What skills shortages do we have or expect to have, in particular sectors or local areas and how can we link the skills needs of industry to skills provision by educational institutions in local areas?

17. Please refer to other answers regarding helping to close the skills gap by promoting girls' and women's access to STEM and other industries in which they are under-represented.

Question 14: How can we enable and encourage people to retrain and up-skill throughout their working lives, particularly in places where industries are changing or declining? Are there particular sectors where this could be appropriate?

18. As we mention above, it is vital that women are supported throughout their careers through family-friendly policies and that fathers are supported through Government policies to take an active role in their children's lives to dispel the outdated idea that care is just, or primarily, for women.

For more information please contact Alex Webber, Policy and Public Affairs Officer, Alex.Webber@girlguiding.org.uk