



## Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry into Fathers and the workplace Girlguiding evidence (February 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](http://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](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/girlsattitudes).
3. 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>
4. 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

5. Girlguiding welcomes the Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into fathers and the workplace. Girlguiding believes it is essential that the barriers both men and women face in the workplace and in sharing parental responsibilities, must be addressed if all young people are to be able fulfil their potential in the future and if issues such as the gender pay gap, gender segregation in the workplace and equality in caring is to be tackled.
6. We know that girls and young women continue to be impacted by prevailing gender stereotypes and making shared parental leave a reality would help to tackle this - for example, our 2016 Survey showed that only 39% of girls aged 11 to 21 think that having children will not affect their future career.
7. Girlguiding therefore supports the aspirations of the Government's flagship policy of Shared Parental Leave, introduced in 2015.



*“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*

### Leadership and aspirations

8. Our research shows girls and young women have high ambitions. In 2013 our Survey found 67% of girls aged 16 to 21 said ambition was important in helping them to do well and be happy in life.
9. In our latest 2016 Survey, we found that two thirds of girls aged 11 to 21 want to be leaders in their chosen job (63%) and girls have a wide range of diverse dream jobs from being a scientist, Footballer, Astronaut, car mechanic or lawyer.
10. Inequality in the workplace (such as not enough women in leadership positions) makes many girls feel they have less chance of succeeding themselves (45% aged 11 to 21)<sup>1</sup> whilst for 55%, this makes them feel more determined to succeed.

### Equality at work

11. As girls get older they are more likely to worry about equality at work:
  - a. 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.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.

### Parenting and Childcare

12. Girls expect to enjoy equal parenting responsibilities with their partners, but they worry that gender stereotypes and financial constraints reinforce inequality. 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. However 41% recognised that people may look down on ‘stay-at-home dads’ and that ideas of gendered roles can be restrictive to both men and women’s opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> 2016 Girls’ Attitudes Survey



13. Girls told us they were concerned about the cost of childcare - in 2013 65% aged 11 to 21 said this, and over half (59%) aged 7 to 21 would expect their own parents to help them with childcare.

*'Mums and dads, if they have children... it's teamwork to look after them and bring them up properly. So looking after them needs a team spirit'* (Girls' Attitudes Survey 2012 participant)

14. 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).

15. In 2016, only 39% of girls aged 11 to 21 said having children wouldn't affect their career.

16. 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.

### Gender stereotypes

17. Girls tell us that gender stereotypes can hold them back and our 2015 Survey found that for younger girls aged just 7 to 10, certain traits are already seen as belonging more to boys (such as being strong, adventurous, brave and determined); whilst they associated being caring, kind, helpful, shy and friendly, much more with girls.

18. When it comes to views on certain activities, this too was gendered - 64% of girls aged 7 to 10 said they thought girls are better at looking after children and 63% better at cooking. Whilst 57% of girls said they thought boys were better at building things, 39% said they were better at reading maps, 31% that they were better at sport and 29% better at science.

19. Gendered norms impact on girls' aspirations and when asked about their future jobs, only 15% of girls aged 7 to 10 chose more 'male dominated' jobs such as being an engineer, architect, scientist or lawyer.

20. In 2016 we found that 52% of girls aged 11 to 21 think Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects have the image of being more for boys, 41% said there are too few role models in related careers and 35% thought there were too few female role models teaching these subjects. A third didn't know what jobs they could do with these subjects (31%).



21. Girls and young women must be supported into sectors that continue to be seen as more for men. All employers, including those with a culture of being overly represented by men, must see the implementation of shared parental leave as their responsibility and tackle gender segregation across the workforce.

### Recommendations

*'If I could change one thing to make the world better for girls' and young women, I'd make men and women have equal opportunities, and make sure that everyone is paid the same for doing the same job and let women get to higher level careers' (2015 Girls' Attitudes Survey respondent)*

22. In 2016, 78% of girls aged 11 to 21 said they would like to live in a world without gender stereotypes. We support changes that would make it easier for men to have an equal share in caring for children and tackle stereotypes around what role women and men have in society.

23. Girls tell us they believe more women in leadership positions would have a positive impact on gender equality. In 2013, 66% of girls aged 11 to 21 said there aren't enough women in leadership positions and 63% said more female leaders would mean a better deal for women.

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