



Gender equality and representation
within and beyond the University
of the Highlands and Islands

*A book in celebration of International Women's Day
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In the Menority

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Abstract

Increasing representation of men in counter-stereotypical disciplines can advance causes of feminism by destigmatising normative gender roles. The Scottish Funding Council introduced the Gender Action Plan for higher and further education institutions (Scottish Funding Council 2016), reflecting their ambition for no subject area to have more than 75% of any gender by 2030. At the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), most of the main subject areas showing male under representation are in one of the 6 academic departments, the UHI Applied Life Studies (ALS) Subject Network (SN). The ALS Gender Action Plan shows an average female student representation of 93% over the last 5 years. Various initiatives to address this gender imbalance have included the use of promotional material using counterstereotypes, for example, photos and videos on website, creating men only classes, as well as using male role models at open days and male Personal Academic Tutors. One of these successful initiatives which has been completed, will be

presented in this chapter as a case study and describes the design of a male only Children and Men in Practice (CHAMP) further education course which could allow progression onto the Higher National Certificate Childhood Practice which meets the registration requirement with Scottish Social Services Council to be an Early Years Practitioner.

On completion of the CHAMP course, in year 2019 the whole cohort (n=12) progressed on to positive destinations of further study and saw a 75% rise in males (compared to the previous years) on varying early years courses. Throughout the course interesting observations were made, including that the male only cohort appeared more interactive, questioning, and debating in a way not previously observed from mixed gender cohorts or female only cohorts. Recruiting more men into early years practice is important to promote gender balance and equality, but the quality of the practice must promote gender flexibility, and further challenge traditional gender stereotypes. This needs to be promoted in the childhood practice courses

provided to students and the Continuous Professional Development training made available to current practitioners.

Another initiative which UHI has just recently designed, is the 'Minority Men' project which has student champions helping to promote men into courses which are stereotypically associated with women. This will only be briefly described since it is in its early stages.

Keywords: Minority men, childcare, early years, CHAMP, gender flexibility, further education, higher education

How does supporting 'minority men' further women's equality?

It may seem strange that Minority Men, feature in an e-book celebrating International Women's Day. However, increasing representation of men in counter-stereotypical disciplines can advance causes of feminism by destigmatising normative gender roles. A world which sees

nursing, childcare and teaching as 'women's work' is problematic, and as a public institution we have a duty to challenge such stereotypes where we can. To do so, visibility, and engagement with the student body and staff networks is essential, to ensure that the activities meet the needs of these groups and permeate all aspects of UHI's operations.

There appear to be two main barriers to improving gender balance in all areas of work: firstly, society's views and then secondly the pre-work education system from early years to senior phase. How does society value occupations which women usually dominate? Block et al. (2018) found that men are inclined to see healthcare, early education, and domestic roles (HEED) as less valued by society and not eligible for higher salaries, and that this is associated with having less focus on caring for others (communal values). Women account for 70% of the health and social care workforce and deliver care to around 5 billion people worldwide. Despite some progress, women remain largely segregated into lower-status and lower-paid jobs. The

World Health Organisation undertook a gender and equity analysis of the global health and social workforce (2019) and proposed that investing in the global health and social workforce could improve gender equality and empower many more women by enabling access to better education and income (WHO 2019).

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) introduced the Gender Action Plan for higher and further education institutions in 2016. Their ambition by 2030 was to ensure no more than 75% representation of one gender in any given subject. Currently the main subject areas showing male under representation include Child Care Services; Hairdressing; Beauty and Complementary Therapies; subjects allied to Medicine; Psychology; Social Studies; Nursing and Training Teachers. Many of these disciplines are in the UHI Applied Life Studies (ALS) Subject Network (SN), which is one of 6 academic departments in the university covering the Highlands and Islands and includes 9 colleges from Shetland to Perth. The ALS Gender Action Plan shows an average female student representation of 93%. Various

initiatives have included the use of promotional material using counterstereotypes, for example, photos and videos on the UHI website, creating men only classes, as well as using male role models at open days and male Personal Academic Tutors.

Gender stereotypes in the early years

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is a discipline in its own right and prepares practitioners in terms of employment and professional roles. The Early Learning and Childcare sector is one of the main aims for the Scottish Government to improve and develop, where they are striving for Scotland to be the best place to grow and learn. The care for children in Scotland is from Pre-Birth through to 18 years, however the workforce for this particular study was aimed at the Pre-Birth to 12 years age range and is largely dominated by a 97% female workforce (Scottish Funding Council, 2018). Although children arrive at Early Learning and Childcare settings with gender stereotypes already formed, more will be imprinted upon them while in these settings (Bennet et al. 2020). However, the importance of Early Learning and

Childcare was evident in Scotland in the publication of 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland'. As well as increasing opportunities for more pre-school children to access free Early Learning and Childcare, the vision was also to recruit and retain highly qualified staff and to help improve gender balance across the sector, which in turn could help shift gender stereotypes. This included an aggressive marketing campaign using social media.

Children arrive at an ELC setting with gender stereotypes already formed. The advent of ultrasound scans seems to have brought the unintended consequence of bringing a gendered world to our children even sooner. In the 1970's, for example, a parent would not have known the sex of their child and in turn children were generally dressed according to age and not sex (Davis 2020). Now, in many cases, around 58% of parents choose to find out (Barnes 2013) the sex before birth. Children are surrounded by gendered colours, clothing, furniture, and toys from birth. Not only that, but the parent has also created a gendered

relationship with the child (Barnes 2013). The recent trend in gender reveal parties is just one example of how the stereotyping process begins. This is at a time when a child makes the most neural connections, over a million a second between birth and 3 years old (Harvard University 2021). As Rippon (2019) suggests, the evidence that the male and female brains are different in these early years is barely apparent. It is the social world around the child that is gendered, therefore influencing boys and girls to replicate that difference. The fact that boys and girls are treated so differently in the early years has multiple consequences. Self-perception, career choices, exam results, mental health and relationships are all affected in some way.

The progress being made pushes back against a rising tide of gender stereotyping and gendered practice in education, family, and wider society. Although we currently live in what could be described as a more equal or fairer society than ever before, gender stereotyping continues to be pervasive. According to a recent study by the Fawcett Society, gender stereotyping can severely limit a child's potential and cause

lifelong harm, such as women having a negative impact on their own parents' skills and males viewing women in 'stereotypical' roles (The Fawcett Society 2020). You need only go into your local supermarket clothing section to see the pink and blue divide as well as the messages that are sent to our children about their capabilities based on gender. Some extreme examples being, 'I'm too pretty to do math' and 'Future Boss'. Over 70% of parents in the Fawcett Society study had observed similar differences in the way their children were treated based on gender.

It is whether this is recognised and if something can be done about this in these vital early years that is the question. The same study also concluded that almost half of the early years work force had not had any type of training in recognising and challenging stereotypes (The Fawcett Society 2020). Creating a more equal, flexible and appropriately trained early years workforce could go a long way in reversing the harm.

Warin (2019) discusses the importance of having a gender balance in all sectors, however, notes it is imperative that we (academics) don't attract men into the workforce to take on the 'male roles' such as rough and tumble activities but to demonstrate a gender flexible society where all genders can undertake all roles. This is further explored by Spence and Clapton (2018) who discuss that although men and woman may be different in gender that everyone has complimentary qualities and talents. They go on to further explore the importance of having that positive male role model in a child's life to show a positive caring role in a child's early life.

Brody, et al (2021) noted the misconceptions from others when viewing the workforce can impact on male and females entering the profession, as the sector can be viewed as 'babysitters' and unprofessional. Xu, et al (2020) went on further to discuss the cultural differences of the male role that can be seen within Scotland society. They noted the importance of respecting the culture patterns and

to consider this when challenging that proposed gender sensitive changes within the workforce.

Undoubtedly, a period of great change in ELC in Scotland is being witnessed. The Scottish Government's implementation of 1140 hours of funded childcare in year will see children attending ELC settings for longer than ever before. How those children are exposed to gender, the experiences available to them and what they witness in terms of gender roles will play an important part in the trajectory of their lives, and the future Scottish workforce. It has been suggested that the earlier a child enters ELC the more chance that gender stereotypes are imprinted upon them, further limiting their potential (Bennet et al. 2020). Children can become more quickly inducted into same gender play as well as avoiding other gender play. Furthermore, if this is not challenged children can continue the cycle by policing non-stereotypical behaviour (Skočajić et al. 2020). Challenging gendered practice, however, appears to be problematic. Simply introducing more men into the early years workforces is only part of the answer.

Holland (2003) discovered that practices in ELC across England designed to promote gender equity, a zero-tolerance approach to war, weapon and superhero play may have been entirely counterproductive, producing poor outcomes for both boys and girls. As the gender dominance in the workforce is addressed, it appears that the dominance of gendered practice also needs addressed.

The rise in children attending ELC settings is coupled with another development in Scotland, the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scottish law. Equality of opportunity for all is at the heart of this document, yet our gendered approach to the early years does not produce equality of opportunity. It limits the outcomes available to our children, causing long term harm to both boys and girls. Could what has become the norm become unlawful? Addressing the gender dominance in the ELC sector is, therefore, a crucial element in producing better outcomes and opportunities for our children.

As a result of the imbalance in gender across varying sectors of the workforce in Scotland, The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) developed the Gender Action Plan (Scottish Funding Council 2016) to address gender imbalance across subject levels at Universities and Colleges. The Men in Early Years Challenge fund was initiated to combat imbalance within the early years' workforce. The main aim of the fund was to combat the imbalance of men applying for and completing childcare courses, and for colleges to look at new and innovative ways of challenging this throughout Scotland (Scottish Funding Council 2018).

The fund based this on results of the European Commission's data (2014), which found only 2% of the early years workforce in the United Kingdom were men (Scottish Funding Council 2018). Further data of British statistics in 2019 noted although there was an imbalance of gender in the teaching workforce (94% female to 6% male); this was fewer in the ELC workforce which consisted of 96% female to only 4% male. Although this data demonstrates a rise in the percentage of males, there is still a large imbalance

across the sector which needs to continually be addressed and the reasons for this to be examined.

Case study: gender dominance in childhood practice

The case study: *Gender Dominance in Childhood Practice* aims to explore why early years and childhood practice is largely dominated by a 97% female workforce (Scottish Funding Council, 2018). Despite positive promotion to encourage women into STEM subjects, the progress in attracting men into early years practice is slower paced. Denmark currently has much higher numbers of men working in the early years (Scottish Funding Council, 2018). Much of this practice is focused on outdoor play and learning which may explain the above average percentage of men working in ELC compared to the UK. If equality and diversity in early learning and childcare are valued, then the flexibility of practitioners' skills and qualities rather than the division of practice due to persistent stereotypical gender roles and attitudes should be focused on.

The case study highlights the action taken by the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) to promote men in childhood practice, through the delivery of a men-only, Children and Men in Practice (CHAMP) course, and will outline some of the considerations in initial planning of the programme, interesting observations and findings relating to the progression of male students to further study in childhood practice within UHI.

The case study also discusses the impact of gender dominance and resulting traditional stereotypes on children and young people, and the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) workforce. It will provide an insight into how UHI will continue to further promote gender balance and flexibility in early years, through the suite of Childhood Practice courses which are provided by UHI academic partners.

How is gender dominance being addressed at UHI?

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) undertook a small-scale primary research project to

consider how they could develop a programme to encourage men into the childcare sector. The project was undertaken towards the end of 2018. The initial data was collected through survey methodology. The survey was carried out during varying open days within UHI, where males from a range of ages were asked for their thoughts on males working within the ELC sector and was this something that interested them. The questions aimed to gather qualitative information to gain insight to the opinions of a variety of males and how the CHAMP programme could be taken forward. The analysis of the data found key aspects deterring men from joining the sector. Some factors included '*intimidation of joining a female dominated workforce,*' '*fear of ridicule from family and friends*' and other negative connotations associated with men in childcare. Bartlett (2015) similarly identified factors that may explain low participation by men in fields related to early years and childhood practice. These factors included concerns over negative attitudes by parents/carers, colleagues, and peers; a lack of information about careers

in childcare and few training courses marketed to attract men into the sector.

As a university, staff at Inverness College UHI considered how some of these stigmas and concerns could start to be addressed and it was decided to design a male only Children and Men in Practice (CHAMP) course. The aim of the CHAMP course was to attract male applicants, marketed to a wide age-range, for those interested in a second career and/or a career change. A balanced workforce that is diverse in age as well as gender would benefit children and young people (Bartlett 2015). The delivery model followed a series of twilight sessions to cater for applicants that were in current employment with the aim of emphasising transferrable skills (Bartlett 2015).

Much thought took place prior to delivering the CHAMP course on whether a men-only course would further promote division based on gender. However, it was agreed that this would provide the support required for men as a minority group, considering a career-change. Research

carried out by Del Pinal, et al, in 2017, found that to progress in a non-gender stereotypical role, the non-dominant often feel they have to work harder to prove their abilities within the sector. Therefore, it was felt that having a male specific introductory class would allow confidence within a female dominated sector to be built. This approach was also supported by Burn (2016) who set up a male-only support group for BA Primary Teaching students as a minority group and, EECERA that further promoted the importance of single-sex groups co-existing alongside mixed-sex groups for training on gender sensitivity (cited by Warin 2019).

Furthermore, Brody, et al. (2021), noted it is imperative to have gender sensitive approaches to encourage men into the workforce to develop their understanding of the role. It was felt that through having a men only class this would allow for the flexibility and sensitivity without the fear of judgement or having to try and prove their abilities within the workforce. However, it was important to be mindful of how this was being delivered as, at the time, the lecturing

team were female dominant. Del Pinal et al. (2017), note how academics often unconsciously deliver with gender bias in gender dominated sectors and a thoughtful pedagogical approach had to be considered by all.

Being a minority group in a female-dominated field it was important to provide a safe learning environment for male students keen to move into childhood practice. By providing a men-only course a 'critical mass' would be created, which may reduce the sense of identity threat experienced by minority groups, making participants feel more accepted. This sense of belonging would prepare them for taking the next step in enrolling onto a Childhood Practice course which is traditionally female dominated.

The next step was to market the course. Having secured over £20,000 the SFC, the Men in Early Years Challenge Fund was made available for the delivery of the CHAMP programme across the UHI network, with the university's marketing team moving into action to promote this across Scotland. It should be noted that the geographical spread

of the 14 partner colleges which sit within the UHI was instrumental in the securing of funding from the Scottish Funding Council, as all the most remote and rural areas have access to a campus to support their learning. However, the biggest concentration of applicants was in one of the largest conurbations, with several single figure applications across the rest of the college network. The staff experience in delivering remotely became critical to ensure equality of access for all, and virtual classes were used in support of a blended learning approach.

The promotion of the course initially started in local newspapers, which was felt as the most appropriate and had the widest distribution in the Highlands and Islands area. This led to approaches from BBC Radio Scotland, and a live piece on Good Morning Scotland in January 2019. In the interview there was also discussion with a male early years' worker from Edinburgh who shared his positive experience in becoming qualified. Shortly after that, there were follow up sessions with BBC Scotland and Talk Radio in London. These were valuable experiences for the

promotion, but were, in retrospect, simply promoting what was being delivered, and did not start to dig enough into why we needed to deliver it all. There were some useful discussion topics that could have been further explored, for example that only men will provide 'rough and tumble play', identified as something that 'boys need' to do. That was alongside the comment that women provide the gentler, nurturing development required. It needs to be noted that these comments were from women, tapping into men's assumptions, so perhaps future questions should be redirected on barriers towards women.

Recruitment of 12 males for the first cohort, although low in number, was a 100% increase from usual enquiries. A gender diverse delivery model of the CHAMP course was supported, whereby the male-only group were able to participate in joint-sessions alongside the female-dominated Higher National Certificate in Childhood Practice group. This was a group of students undertaking the relevant qualification to work at practitioner level within the ELC sector. One of the joint sessions was based on training

for STEM subjects within the ELC sector. This led to valuable discussion on gender roles, which initially was observed to reinforce gender differences however, this gave tutors ample opportunity to raise awareness of gender sensitivity and to discourage re-gendering attitudes with students.

In the attempt to promote gender balance of male and female practitioners in the early years' workforce, we need to ensure that heteronormative assumptions on skills and qualities are not reinforced through a gendered division in practice. Tembo (2021) explains that we need to move beyond the complementary gendered approach to meeting children's needs. Early years practice requires a versatility of skills and qualities, regardless of male or female. However, research has shown that limiting gender stereotypical attitudes can still exist in both male and female practitioners, even in early years settings with an above average representation of men in practice (Warin 2019). This emphasises the requirement of specific gender-sensitive training to counteract gender-blindness and

encourage more reflexive approach with childhood practice students, as well as the existing early years workforce.

Scotland's national practice guidance 'Realising the Ambition; Being Me' (Education Scotland 2020) promotes the importance of the interactions, experiences, and spaces which are created for children. It emphasises a child-centred approach to meeting children's needs. By creating a workforce that is aware of unconscious bias gender stereotypes can be challenged, promote gender flexibility in practice and ensure that the practitioner is the type of role model that a child needs at that time in their life, regardless of the gender. This approach supports the wider issues relating to LGBT+ equality. Tembo states that 'holding onto the promise of heterosexual childhood is a normatively problematic desire when we recognise the consequences for many children of *not* fulfilling the lives that are, whether consciously or not, assumed of them' (2021: 191).

Upon reflection

Throughout the course interesting observations were made, including that the male only cohort appeared more interactive, questioning, and debating in a way not previously observed from mixed gender cohorts or female only cohorts. This is an area that has been identified to explore through further research as there were too many variables to validate the findings. On reflection of the overall programme, it became important that Inverness College UHI incorporate a focus on gender flexibility within the CHAMP course delivery, as part of the wider emphasis on promoting equality and diversity in childhood practice. In the action to promote gender balance it is important that 'quality over quantity' is emphasised. Recruiting more men into early years practice is important to promote gender balance but the quality of the practice must promote gender flexibility, to promote equality and further challenge traditional gender stereotypes. This needs to be promoted in the childhood practice courses provided to students at

UHI and the Continuous Professional Development training made available to current practitioners.

On completion of the course, the whole cohort progressed on to positive destinations of further study and a 75% rise in males (compared to the previous years) on varying early years courses, which included the Higher National Certificate in Childhood Practice, enabling practitioner level qualification. Bartlett (2015) suggested a range of ways to address the lack of demand of men in early learning and childcare. Some of these included the promotion of Schools courses as pathways into early learning and childcare and utilising positive images of both women and men in promotional materials, with messages targeted towards men. Inverness College UHI are currently working towards promoting the Foundation Apprenticeship in Children and Young People with a focus on attracting more male school pupils from the senior phase. International links have been forged between Inverness College UHI and Woods and Waves Outdoor Nursery based in Vancouver.

However, this needs to be an ongoing research process as current research from Brody et al (2021) looked at the high dropout rate of both male students and males within the workforce. They noted within the sector males can often move on to further career progression such as teaching due to being valued in the workforce (as previously noted) or a higher paid job. Although Gender Equal pay is continually being challenged within mixed gender workforces, the caring sector (which around 75% of the workforce is female) is still one of the lowest paid workforces (Devin and Foley 2020). Although Brody et al. (2021) note this is not the only aspect that challenges men remaining in the sector it can contribute to the lack of value within the sector and not being viewed as professionals, despite occupying a highly professional role.

The Gender Action Plan: annual progress report from the Scottish Funding Council (2019) showed through their latest data review: since 2012 there has been a 1.5% overall increase in males entering the early years workforce, with 6.1% of the early years workforce in

Scotland being male. Although this demonstrates there is a long way to go with challenging the status quo within the workforce, with continued development within today's society, it is hoped to see the positive changes for our youngest children and our future generations. The aim is to work in collaboration to promote the diversity of opportunity that exists in a career in early learning and childcare, but also to champion the skills and qualities of the versatile practitioner regardless of gender.

How can UHI Minority Men programme help embed gender equality across the university partnership?

Given some of the difficulties described above in relation to attracting and retaining men into counter-stereotypical disciplines, it is apparent that we need to draw on the experiences of UHI's own male students within the Applied Life Studies (ALS) Subject Network (SN) who are in the minority, to find out what we are doing well and where we can improve. As such, the university has just designed another initiative, the 'Minority Men' programme, to help

provide relatable role models for men and boys across the region, and to develop relationships that allow the sharing of this mission with employers and the wider sector.

UHI have recruited seven Minority Men Student Champions positions to follow in the footsteps of award-winning 'UHI STEM Femmes', who were student champions and encouraged and supported women into STEM related courses thus raising aspirations and visibility of students in counter-stereotypical subject areas. UHI Minority Men represent subjects including childcare, nursing and psychology. The group will work with staff champions, looking to communicate with staff, students and employers to build a remit which challenges societal norms and under-representation at all levels, from pre-school to employment. Key goals are to increase visibility, confidence and engagement among students, staff, schools and employers, raising the profile of counter-stereotypical disciplines across the region and ultimately increasing applications from men to study in these areas. The university intends to scale up the champions programmes

by visibly engaging with other colleges, universities and organisations to collaborate on communications, events and projects to further gender equality across society.

Way forward

Despite various initiatives to help promote female-dominated careers to men, the challenges of society's views and a pre-work education system which perpetuates gender stereotypes may render Scottish Funding Council's aspiration to eliminate serious gender imbalance in all subject areas by 2030 over-optimistic. Often staff have not had any training in recognising and challenging stereotypes, so it is vital that higher and further education institutions promote this in their courses, both to prepare students for the modern workplace, and produce more male graduates, helping create a more equal and flexible workforce.

By working together across the UHI partnership, and collaboratively with schools, employers and the wider sector, it is believed that programmes and initiatives can be

designed that can achieve meaningful change, not only at UHI, but across the region and society.

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Author bios

Emma Sinclair, Lecturer Childhood Practice, Inverness College UHI, has worked as an Early Years Practitioner, Manager and Trainer prior to taking up a position as Lecturer in Childhood Practice at Inverness College UHI in 2018. Emma embeds her knowledge of Early Years practice into supporting students moving into the field of childhood practice. Emma has a particular professional interest in outdoor play and learning for children and young people and in promoting gender equality, balance, and flexibility in Early Years.

Julie Jones, Lecturer Childhood Practice, Inverness College UHI, has worked in the Early Years sector since the late 1990s and throughout this time has seen a continued drive to see a balance in gender in the workforce. Since starting with UHI as a lecturer in 2016, she has continued to strive to see a positive change in the gender of the trainee Early Years workforce to ensure we portray a gender diverse society for those in their earliest years of life. Julie is hoping to bring about positive change that people are not defined by their gender but the amazing skills and attributes they can share with others.

Alastair Davidson, Lecturer Childhood Practice, Inverness College UHI has worked in the outdoor education sector for almost 20 years, focussing on early education and outdoor nurseries latterly. Joining UHI in 2019 as, coincidentally, the first male to lecture in Early Years at Inverness College UHI, he specialises in outdoor learning and promoting a child-led, play based approach. With a background in education for sustainable development, he attempts to bring together these themes.

Stuart Hall, Equality and Diversity Advisor, Executive Office UHI, joined UHI in early 2019 as Equality and Diversity Advisor, after previously working at Perth College UHI, University of Exeter and Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, as well as 8 years with NHS Scotland. He established and leads on UHI Minority Men and UHI STEM Femmes student champions programmes.

Stuart's role at UHI involves ensuring the university meets Equality Law and Scottish Funding Council requirements in respect of equality and diversity. To ensure UHI's requirements are met, he consults with individuals and groups of staff and students who face particular barriers, in order to help build opportunities for under-represented groups and contribute to a friendly and inclusive learning and research environment.

Stuart would welcome contact from anyone who would like to discuss equality and diversity at UHI and is always looking for opportunities to collaborate.

Heather Keyes, Head of School, Care, Health and Wellbeing, Inverness College UHI has been with Inverness College UHI since 1999, working initially as a lecturer in early years and currently Head of School for Care, Health and Wellbeing. Heather's previous roles include working in NHS boards across the UK.

Heading a curriculum which includes studying for roles that are often imbalanced in gender, the need to create study situations for under-represented groups has always been a focus for the school. The team successfully led a bid with academic partners to secure SFC funding specifically to address enhancing the number of men working in early years settings. Work continues on this project and has also led to links with the other successful bidders from West Lothian College.

Fiona Skinner, Subject Network Leader Applied Life Studies Executive Office, UHI has worked for UHI for over 20 years, starting as a lecturer in psychology and then as a senior lecturer health for Inverness College UHI before

becoming Subject Network Leader 10 years ago. Fiona worked in mental health research before then. Men have always been in the minority in her work both in health research and education. The Subject Network has over 90% female students and similar percentage for staff so increasing the number of male students and staff has been a focus of the Subject Network through the SFC Gender Action Plan. Various initiatives include the use of promotional material, for example, photos and videos on website, offering counterstereotypes, men only classes as well as male role models at open days and as Personal Academic Tutors.

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