



## **Careers guidance follow-up: submission by the Fatherhood Institute (8 July 2014): *Boys and girls, men and women, in non-traditional occupations***

Despite girls' and women's increasing participation and success in education in the UK, women in this country are, as a sex, still substantially disadvantaged in relation to men. Areas of inequality include women's over-representation in low and unpaid work in both public and the private spheres; inequalities in remuneration for equal work or work of equal value; the gender pay gap more widely; and under-representation of women in senior management, local government, national government and on Boards.

Occupational segregation is a substantial driver of gender inequalities. The childcare sector, in particular, is overwhelmingly staffed by women. When professional childcare is defined as 'women's work', women's identities as carers-for-children are reinforced in the private sphere, both boys and girls see caring as a role for women and both men and women internalise the notion that caring is something women 'do better' or, even, that such caring comes 'more naturally' to women. All this has direct impact on women's earnings and on national productivity, as the majority of mothers pursue the 'mummy track' of relatively low-paid part-time work. This, above all, drives the gender pay gap.

It is clear that were men more involved in the care of young children in both the private and public spheres, women's disadvantage relating to caring responsibilities would be ameliorated. It is also argued that if men were to participate professionally in substantial numbers in paid caring work in the childcare sector, the status of childcare, remuneration for it and therefore quality of provision would likely increase. Further, the caring professions, including childcare, offer substantial job and career opportunities to men in all parts of the country.

The Fatherhood Institute contends that careers guidance issued by government should require providers proactively encourage boys and girls, men and women, to pursue non-traditional occupations. We leave to others suggestions for ways in which this could be framed in encouraging girls into non-traditional employment.

Our area of expertise is the breaking down of gender-stereotypes in relation to boys' and men's participation in caring work, particularly in relation to childcare.

Strategies to encourage boys/men to undertake caring work, particularly in the childcare sector, include:

- Recognising that boys and men are actively and passively discouraged from pursuing careers in this sector, even though many would be interested in doing so (see RESEARCH EVIDENCE below) and taking steps to remedy this.
- Making the positive case for men to work more with young children. It is usually argued that most men are not risky, and that services need procedures in place to keep children safe. But there needs to be a positive case put for how young children will benefit from more men looking after them professionally. Such a case needs to be made by careers officers, teachers, employment services, employers, training bodies, family information services etc.
- Campaigning to support both boys/men and girls/women into non-traditional sectors. For example, the Apprenticeship Campaign of the "Inspiring Women" campaign, *Inspiring Futures*, could include non-traditional apprenticeships for men; and an "Inspiring Men" campaign could introduce male volunteers into schools to talk about non-traditional job roles, balancing work with childcare / caring, and being an involved father.

Requiring careers advice services, in the proposed guidance, to understand this issue, examine their own prejudices and knowledge gaps, equip themselves to acknowledge, support and promote the interests of boys and men in pursuing childcare and other caring work, and to monitor outcomes, would be of huge value in improving the gender balance in employment in this sector

#### **RESEARCH EVIDENCE:**

- One in four 14-15 year old boys surveyed agrees that a career in caring 'sounds interesting' (Fuller et al, 2005).
- One in eight 14-15 year old boys would be interested in working with children (Cook, 2005).
- These percentages are considerably higher than the percentages of males currently employed in childcare (2%) and other caring professions (Rolfe, 2005).
- Men's enthusiasm for careers in these areas increases with age, and is particularly noticeable among males who retrain (Rolfe, 2005).
- However, careers advice does not usually support boys/men into caring professions and males can face discrimination and marginalisation in these areas, which is rarely addressed (Kouta & Kaite, 2011; Cameron, 2006; Cameron et al, 1999).
- There is an urgent need to review childcare training curricula and delivery of training to support men into childcare (Vandenbroeck & Peeters, 2008).
- Social attitudes are an issue. 50% of male childcare workers are worried about what others might think - peer pressure, false accusations, parental negativity about male intimate care (London Early Years Foundation, 2013)

- BUT there is room for optimism: 98% of female nursery workers want male colleagues (Major Provider Group Survey, 2011), and 77% of the public are in favour of male early years workers (Ipsos MORI, 2003)
- The Fatherhood Institute is working in 2014-5 to support 8 local authorities to be strategic - systematic, co-ordinated (multi-agency), sustained - in their efforts to enhance the gender balance of the early years workforce.
  - This work involves helping LAs and settings understand **why** it is important, and **how** to take the first steps
  - A critical mass of around 20% is needed to create sustained change.

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