

Response to Tapping All Our Talents 2018 Call for Evidence questions

Section 1: *In brief*

1. **Q1** Do you believe progress has been made towards achieving gender equality in the STEM workplace in Scotland since 2012? (Yes/no).

I only moved to Scotland recently so can't comment on this

2. **Q2** If yes, what action(s) do you believe have had the greatest impact on improving gender equality in STEM in Scotland? (List maximum of 3).
3. **Q3** Where you do not believe progress has been made, or could be improved upon, what do you believe have been the key limiting factors? (List maximum of 3).
4. **Q4** Which of the recommendations made in the 2012 *Tapping All Our Talents* report do you believe should be prioritised going forward? (List maximum of 3).

1A: A National Strategy for Scotland to tackle inequalities in the workplace for women in STEM.

1C: Improve provision of high quality, accessible childcare.

3D: Promote culture change to enhance diversity.

5. **Q5** What further recommendations (if any) would you make to policy-makers, educators or employers to tackle gender inequality in STEM in Scotland? (List maximum of 3).

You should ignore or reform the Athena SWAN accreditation system at universities – they are only focusing on achieving silver status (or higher), i.e. making sure they have the right documents and reports in place, and in my experience doing very little to actually help women in science. I was shocked and appalled by the way it is being done.

You should invest more in women specific training and networking initiatives – they can make a massive difference.

You should study and promote team-based research models for academia and other STEM roles – the current academic system really only works for alpha-male-type personalities.

Section 2: *In detail*

Women in STEM in Scotland 2018

6. **Q6** What lessons do you believe have been learned from initiatives undertaken since 2012 to tackle gender inequality in the STEM workforce across the public, academic and/or industry sectors? Examples of good practice would be useful.
7. **Q7** In 2018's economic, political and social context, what do you consider to be the key influencers (positive and negative) on gender equality in STEM in Scotland?
8. **Q8** To what extent do you believe that the issue of gender inequality in STEM is being recognised as a priority and to what extent do you believe that rhetoric is being met with action?

It is difficult to say – I am fairly happy that it is being discussed and addressed in a number of ways, but I am also aware that there is a long way to go to achieve equality in expectations and deep-rooted gender bias.

Education

9. **Q9** What do you believe should be done to encourage more girls and young women to engage with STEM subjects in early years, primary and secondary education?

As a child I was never made to feel that STEM was a male-only area, so I have difficulty identifying what the issue is here – educators in contact with young people at these stages would be in a far better position to comment on this.

10. **Q10** What innovative or impactful practice do you know of or believe should be taking place in universities and colleges to tackle issues of gender disparities in STEM subjects?
What do you think can be done to embed STEM gender equality thinking across universities and colleges?

Cultural Change

11. **Q11** In what ways do you believe industry can lead by example to tackle inequality within workplace culture?
12. **Q12** What do you believe are the most effective ways to challenge and change deep-rooted attitudes and institutional culture in order to improve gender equality in STEM?

Personally, I think women specific training and networking can have a huge influence in this area if it is done well.

13. **Q13** How do you suggest culture change can be measured in a meaningful way?

Ask women how they feel about themselves, their aspirations and their views on gender equality. But using proven qualitative research methods - not surveys! Especially not surveys that are badly designed and require respondents to copy-paste from PDF documents...