



# "I ain't no tea lady"

Identifying and addressing barriers to  
non-traditional employment, training and  
education from a female perspective

by Caroline O'Keeffe and Dr Katherine Wilkinson

with Amy Christian, Kay Nixon,  
Anne Robinson and Professor Paul Senior

'I ain't no tea lady'

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# Executive Summary

In 2004 SOVA in partnership with Cambridge Training and Development Ltd (Tribal), Clean Break, Durham Business School, The Fawcett Society, Prison Service - Women's Team, Incredit Ltd, NACRO, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Sheffield Hallam University, and Stonham Housing Association were successful in securing funding from the European Social Fund **Equal** Round 2 initiative for a three year Development Partnership (DP) called Women into Work: Building Futures.

A **Research Programme** was put in place to identify the barriers to disadvantaged women of access and sustainability to non-traditional employment, training and education (ETE). This report is the culmination of this phase.

A **literature review** was conducted to contextualise the research findings and includes:

- An outline of the current UK policy agenda around employment and skills
- An analysis of occupational patterns and occupational segregation
- An examination of inequality and disadvantage in employment for specific groups of women
- A review of the attitudes and experiences of employers in relation to women working in non-traditional occupations (NTOs)

In particular the review focused on four areas: construction; transport; arts and the media and Information and Communication Technology.

The employment rate for women in the European Union (EU) is rising faster than male employment. However, in terms of the types of jobs women are taking, they remain within traditionally 'female' employment areas. Women's earnings are reported to remain less than their male counterparts. European Council meetings have produced agreements, which aim to increase the proportion of women who are economically active to 60% by 2010. In order to achieve this, the Council therefore called on Member States to reduce occupational segregation, to improve childcare and to make it easier to reconcile working and family life. The Women into Work: Building Futures programme contributes to these objectives.

## Methodology

The aim of this research was to examine perceptions and experiences of accessing non-traditional ETE from the vantage point of disadvantaged women using innovative sampling and research techniques. The research design and strategy sought to access the participant's views and valuable experience.

Many of the women whose opinions the research was trying to elicit had never considered non traditional ETE, in their own words it simply was 'not on their radar'. We decided to adopt a 'workshop' approach. A workshop format was designed which used fun and thought provoking exercises to promote discussion. These interactive and dynamic workshops proved successful in generating some excellent data. In total 80 women from a range of areas of disadvantage participated in the research.

The research demonstrated many of the attributes of a peer approach. A researcher with some shared experience with the target group was recruited and, in addition, the research team were very much participants in the workshop groups and a non hierarchical approach was adopted. The researchers also had a shared experience with participants of being women in a 'man's world'.

## Key Findings

The data analysis categorises and analyses the transcripts in relation to the four specific research focus areas:

- the definitions/ rationales of the participants about the distinction between jobs for men and jobs for women
- the perceived advantages of non-traditional jobs according to disadvantaged women
- the classification of the women's views of the barriers to women accessing non-traditional ETE
- the cataloguing of the support that women feel they would need to encourage and retain women in non-traditional ETE

## Perceived suitability of non traditional jobs for women

Key perceptions raised by participants included:

- Physical restrictions
- Dangerous and dirty nature of work
- Techno-phobia
- Huge responsibility of running own business

## Advantages of non-traditional jobs

The women described the benefits of engaging in non-traditional employment in two ways: benefits to the individual female worker and the wider advantages to employers of engaging women.

<i><b>For women</b></i>	<i><b>For employers</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased choice and availability</li><li>• Job security and increased pay</li><li>• Potential for personal growth</li><li>• Challenging the norm/ female stereotypes</li><li>• Acquisition of skills away from the domestic role</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefiting from 'female' skills (e.g. communication, listening, multi-tasking, organisation, empathy)</li><li>• Clients more trusting of women</li><li>• Improved workplace atmosphere</li></ul>

## Barriers to non-traditional employment

Participants identified the multiple disadvantage experienced in their lives as providing multiple barriers to accessing and sustaining non traditional ETE. Five key barriers were identified in the data:

- **individual perceptions**

The self-perception of women as lacking in self belief, doubting their own ability and less likely than men to 'go for it'

- **societal perceptions**

The societal perceptions of women as being solely responsible for the family and their stigmatic social conditioning containing negative female stereotypes have been shown to impact detrimentally on women's motivation to enter non-traditional employment.

- **practical issues**

The predominantly practical issues of meeting certain physical and health and safety requirements, adequate child care and the lack of appropriate clothing for women have to be addressed in order to encourage women into the non-traditional employment sector.

- **lack of knowledge and awareness**

Non-traditional career options are not promoted effectively to women, while the lack of exposure to female role models working effectively in these sectors undermines the possibilities of women's participation. A negative cycle is created whereby a lack of women working in non traditional sectors results in a lack of women wanting to work in these sectors.

- **male workplace culture**

If we are to encourage women into the non-traditional work place, the male work place culture which categorises women as 'little woman'; 'incapable woman' and 'unstable woman' needs to be addressed.

The women we spoke to had experienced various forms of disadvantage during their lives. It is therefore unsurprising that barriers specifically relating to such disadvantage were raised. In this sense, barriers for this cohort of women were complex and multilayered. In summary, some of the barriers discussed by women in this research could be equally applicable to non disadvantaged women attempting to access non traditional ETE or to disadvantaged women accessing more traditional ETE. However, the combination of having experienced disadvantage and attempting to enter the potentially hostile non traditional job market seems to create barriers which are more impenetrable for this cohort of women.

## Coping Strategies

Participants described a number of innovative coping strategies which could be employed when faced with a male dominated workplace. These reflect the difficulties for women inherent within non traditional workplaces and the extent to which women feel they have to compromise in order to 'fit in'. Women with experience of non-traditional work described how male colleagues were disdainful of stereotypically female behaviour and language. Women at times felt compromised as a result and that they were silencing their true selves. It still seems to be the case that women can't 'be themselves' and also be successful in such environments. This clearly highlights the need for changing attitudes of both men and women around gendered roles and behaviours.

## Support mechanisms

The research findings demonstrate that women need to receive support on a variety of levels in order for them to feel confident about entering non-traditional ETE. The five key areas identified were: **attitudinal change; organisational adaptability; practical assistance; awareness raising/effective marketing and empowering models of working. Support mechanisms are further explored within the recommendations below.**

## Key recommendations

### Attitudinal change

- Individual mechanisms need to be introduced to build women's confidence. Women could also benefit from increased knowledge and awareness of the impact of gender upon societal expectations
- Mentors and role models need to be positioned to inspire and provide valuable support for women accessing non-traditional ETE
- Awareness raising programmes need to be introduced in the workplace and in the community in order to generate more positive attitudes to women working in non traditional sectors

### Organisational adaptability

- Effective policies and appropriate facilities need to be provided by employers to ensure women are comfortable and feel safe in their non-traditional working environments. Policies need to be effectively promoted among the workforce.
- The introduction of more flexible working and training hours in organisations needs to be examined for both men and women in non-traditional sectors

### Practical assistance

- The introduction of adequate, affordable and most desirably on site childcare provision would provide valuable support for women accessing non-traditional sectors
- Financial support for childcare cost and re-training in non-traditional sectors and the increased availability of appropriate clothing for women would make women feel more adequately prepared to enter non-traditional ETE

### Awareness raising/Effective marketing

- The profile of non-traditional jobs for women needs to be increased through effective marketing strategies, targeted directly at women and girls
- Women and girls need to be alerted to the potential benefits of entering non-traditional ETE and careers advisors and parents need to ensure the effective promotion of opportunities in girls formative careers choices
- Employers in non-traditional sectors need to be alerted to the potential benefits of employing women
- Work tasters and voluntary work should be made available for women and girls to explore the possibilities of non-traditional employment

### Empowering models of working

- The provision of female support groups and women only training would ensure women have the networks they need to sustain non-traditional careers
- Vocationally based training needs to be provided for women, their male colleagues and employers, to ensure an awareness of the potentially negative impacts of women joining a masculine work place culture and how best to overcome these

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# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 Background to Women into Work: Building Futures Programme

In 2004 SOVA in partnership with Cambridge Training and Development Ltd (Tribal), Clean Break, Durham Business School, The Fawcett Society, Prison Service - Women's Team, Incredit Ltd, NACRO, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Sheffield Hallam University, and Stonham Housing Association along with associate partners were successful in securing funding from the European Social Fund **Equal** Round 2 initiative for a three year Development Partnership (DP) called Women into Work: Building Futures.

Under the **Equal** funding stream, there are six guiding principles. These are:

- Innovation
- Equal opportunities
- Transnational cooperation
- Mainstreaming
- Empowerment
- Partnership Working

The above principles are incorporated into all phases of the Women into Work: Building Futures (hereafter referred to as WIW: BF) programme.

The WIW:BF programme was commissioned by **Equal** under the following theme:

*'To promote gender equality, reduce gender gaps and support job de-segregation'.*

The ultimate goal of the WIW:BF programme is to ensure that disadvantaged women can access and sustain non traditional employment, training and education (hereafter referred to as ETE). This will be achieved by developing, testing and piloting integrated support services, innovative traineeships, work tasters and training to meet the actual not perceived needs of women who have experienced disadvantage. Work will also be carried out with employers to identify their needs and support them in making any necessary changes.

The above formed the basis of the Development Partnership Agreement (DPA) that was agreed by all members of the DP. The DPA outlines the WIW: BF programme aim as:

*'to contribute to equality of opportunity by testing out innovative approaches to working with employers to improve the gender balance in sectors under represented by women, particularly those with additional needs created by multiple disadvantages and to increase their participation in enterprise'' (DPA: 8).*

The proposed target group for the research was 50 women who had experienced disadvantage particularly in the following areas:

- Homeless or with inadequate housing
- Black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Health issues (mental and physical)
- Survivors of domestic abuse/violence
- Ex-offenders

The potential areas of labour market disadvantage identified in the DPA are:

- **Construction**, as according to the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), women represent just 1% of employees in the construction industry
- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**, EOC research shows that there is mounting evidence of gender segregation in this sector
- **Media and Arts**, as disadvantaged women are unlikely to access sustainable employment in what is perceived as a “middle class” industry
- **Transport**, there is a huge skills gap in the transport industry
- **Business enterprise** is also highlighted as an area where women face disadvantage

It was also proposed that the research be conducted in the following four regions:

- Yorkshire and Humberside
- North East
- London
- South East

The WIW: BF programme has three distinct phases:

<b>Phase/ Date</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Phase 1: July 2005 to February 2006	Research Programme: To identify the barriers faced by disadvantaged women in accessing and sustaining non-traditional ETE
Phase 2: January 2006 to May 2007	Traineeships / Pilot Projects: Management of traineeships in non traditional sectors led by two DP organisations. Further pilot projects will be identified based on the research findings and recommendations
Phase 3: July 2006 to December 2007	Dissemination and Mainstreaming: To contribute to the development of policies and practice for supporting women into non-traditional ETE <sup>1</sup>

This document reports on Phase One of the WIW: BF programme and is divided into five sections:

- Introduction and literature review
- Methodology
- Key findings
- Support needed
- Discussion and recommendations

The literature review contained within the first section is a summarised version of a larger document<sup>2</sup>. This document is available in full from SOVA (see contact details on the back cover of this report). The research element of this report (i.e. Sections 2-5) can also be read as a stand alone document if desired.

<sup>1</sup> Although a distinct phase of the programme is allocated to dissemination and mainstreaming, this activity is *ongoing* throughout the three phases

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, Anne. Women into Work: Building Futures Review of the literature relating to gender segregation in employment and women in non traditional occupations. May 2005.

## 1.2 Setting the scene: Literature review

This literature review is designed to contextualise the research findings of the WIW: BF DP and includes:

- *An outline of the current UK policy agenda around employment and skills*
- *An analysis of occupational patterns and occupational segregation*
- *An examination of inequality and disadvantage in employment for specific groups of women*
- *A review of the attitudes and experiences of employers in relation to women working in non-traditional occupations (NTOs)*

For the purpose of this review, and in relation to the Women into Work: Building Futures DPA this literature review will examine literature in relation to:

- Job segregation and traditional/ non-traditional occupations for men and for women
- The construction industry where women currently represent only 1% of those in skilled trades
- Transport
- Information and Communication Technology, where women are present, but predominantly in lower skilled and lower paid capacities
- Arts and the Media (although there is limited information in this area)

An examination of the employment patterns show that in the UK women are overwhelmingly concentrated in a narrow range of occupations and that this has remained stubbornly the case despite major social changes elsewhere and the greater engagement of women in the workforce. According to the Labour Force Survey in 2001, 60% of women work in only 10 out of 77 recognised occupations, with full-timers in these occupations earning 78% of the average hourly rate of male full-timers. The report of the Kingsmill Review, Women's Employment and Pay, quotes the employment rates of women as being:

Sales assistants and checkout operators	10.2%
Other sales and services	7.5%
Numerical clerks	6.8%
Secretaries, PAs, typists	6.3%
Health related occupations	6.0%
Teaching professionals	5.8%
Health associate professionals	5.4%
Clerks (other)	4.7%
Childcare and related occupations	4.2%
Catering	3.6%

*(Kingsmill, 2001)*

Whilst there is no definitive national or international agreement as to what constitutes a non-traditional occupation for either gender, government agencies and institutions have increasingly adopted a working assumption that a proportion of less than 30-33% of the under-represented gender in a given occupation would denote that occupation as an NTO (Bagilhole 2002). That said, it should be recognised that this will be both context and historically specific: whilst construction occupations are now considered non-traditional in Western Europe, women are frequently employed on building sites in the developing world (Clarke et al, 2004) and in England many women were involved in the parish apprenticeship schemes in the 16th and 17th century and established themselves in skilled trades (Clarke and Wall, 2004).

### The current skills agenda in the United Kingdom

There has been a great deal of activity in recent years in the area of employment related skills, and this section highlights the main research and policy documents driving this activity. There are current skills shortages and forecasts of future needs in specific occupations most typically associated with men, such as plumbing and construction. The gender-segregated nature of this work contributes to the growing skills shortages brought about

partly by demographic change and the greater number of young people choosing to stay in education (EOC, 2004). Whilst many of the employers interviewed for the Free To Choose document recognised the business case for change and said that taking on more women recruits could help them meet skills shortages, there has been little movement in the proportions of women entering the four male dominated sectors covered in the report (EOC, 2005 a).

Much less variation is apparent between sectors with most reporting skills gaps around the national average (11%), suggesting that skills gaps, unlike recruitment problems, are more universal. What is more interesting are the particular skills gaps identified by those employers who were contacted having reported a deficiency in skills. They indicated that technical and practical skills were lacking in 43% of the employees referred to during the follow-up, which presents a significant problem for skilled trade and associate professional occupations, many of which have had difficulty recruiting women and remain highly segregated by gender (LSC 2004). However, other skills gaps identified were, communication (61%), team-working (52%) and problem-solving (47%) (LSC, 2003). This would seem to indicate that increasing women's employability in NTOs may mean more than just equipping them with trade skills, but also appreciating that their existing skills and qualities are already lacking in terms of women's potential contribution to inter-personal and customer-related skills.

This deeply segregated picture is also identified in Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Schemes, which are a significant route into employment for many young people. In its submission to the Cassells Review of Modern Apprenticeships in 2001, the EOC noted that ten male-dominated sectors accounted for 82% of male starts, while ten female-dominated sectors accounted for 92% of female MA starts. It also noted that such "channelling" of young people into segregated sectors contributed to the continuing gender pay gap, and that there are stark differences in the pay rates offered to Modern Apprentices in male and female dominated sectors (Miller et al 2004).

Young women of school age are reported as not being given relevant information about the full range of career options, including NTOs, and the benefits of pursuing NTOs in terms of rates of pay both during and after training (Miller et al 2004). This situation is increasingly being acknowledged and the roles of the Connexions Service, Learning Skills Councils (LSCs) and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are beginning to address these issues, the mechanisms to be recommended are likely to be tackled in the forthcoming Youth Green Paper (EOC, 2005a) and the White Paper, *14-19 Education and Skills* (DfES, 2005).

As far as adult training is concerned the EOC notes that single sex courses are particularly useful and may offer unique opportunities for women from some minority ethnic communities for whom it is culturally difficult or impossible to mix with a group of men (EOC, 2005a). The EOC reports however, generally identify ad hoc initiatives but overall a lack of co-ordination in efforts to reduce women's inequality in employment and skills shortages. The National Skills Strategy published in July 2003 attempts to address this lack of co-ordination, with the development of a Skills Alliance and the delegation of responsibilities to Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs). There is also to be a specific focus on the National Offender Management Service working with LSCs and other partners to enhance the education and training opportunities for those involved in the criminal justice system (DfES 2003). Building on this, the *White Paper, Skills: Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*, released in March 2005, announced measures to advance the Skills Strategy, including the development of the 18 current Employer Training Pilots into a National Employer Training Programme.

The Women in Work Commission (part of the Department for Trade and Industry) has issued an interim statement outlining its task and its focus, referring to the persistence of the gender pay gap (as measured by comparing the average hourly earnings of men and women). Although this has reduced in the thirty years since the Equal Pay Act came into force, the interim statement cites figures from the 2005 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Office of National Statistics) showing that the full time gender pay gap was 13% as measured by the median and 17.1% as measured by the mean earnings. The pay gap for part-time workers was greater at 43.2% and 40.3% respectively (DTI 2005). The existing data indicates that the UK has one of the widest pay gaps in Western Europe and the *Equal Pay Task Force* in its report, *Just Pay*, identifies the three main contributory factors as being discrimination in pay, occupational segregation and the unequal impact of women's family responsibility (EOC 2001). The Women in Work Commission in contrast highlights women's labour market experience (both its length and number of interruptions) and part time working as critical causes, in addition to occupational segregation (DTI 2005).

The final key documents to mention are a series from the Learning Skills Council, entitled *Skills in England 2004*, which, over four volumes, examines the demand and supply of skills as well as mismatches, evidence relating to the industrial sector and regional and local trends (LSC 2004).

## Gender segregated occupations

This section will look at the available information and research about key occupational sectors where women are under-represented.

The EOC's general formal investigation and the four resulting reports covered the five occupational sectors of construction, engineering, plumbing, ICT and childcare (the latter in relation to young men's involvement). The report from Phase 1, *Occupational Segregation, Gender Gaps and Skills Gaps*, presents figures from the 2003 Labour Force Survey about employment and self-employment in these sectors:

Occupations	Females	Males
Construction	16	1,591
ICT (all occupations)	151	834
Engineering	64	731
Plumbing	*	191
Childcare	297	*

Figures are expressed in 1,000s and asterisks denote that there are fewer than 10,000 in that data set.

(Miller et al 2004:2)

### Construction

The construction industry is one of the largest sectors in Britain, employing almost 2 million people in all in 2002, but characterised by a high level of self-employment (an estimated 39%) and small and medium sized firms, which is increasing in the current sub-contracting culture (Miller et al 2004). Whilst approximately 9% of industry employees are female, they are largely concentrated in clerical and administrative roles (these are excluded from the figures cited above).

The main construction occupations are:

- Managers
- Skilled constructions and building trades
- Semi-skilled trades and operatives
- Elementary occupations

The wider literature confirms that the image of the construction is white, male and able-bodied. The Labour Force Survey 2003 indicates that fewer than 2% of workers in construction come from minority ethnic groups, whilst there is a slightly higher proportion of disabled workers at 12% (Miller et al 2004). The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) has taken a lead in trying to encourage a more diverse workforce in the industry, with the publication of *Creating a Diverse Workforce – the Way Forward*, (Miller et al, 2004) but progress is slow in what has been described as an extremely fragmented industry, with 93% of workers employed by firms with eight or fewer employees (Rooke et al, unpublished).

Representation of women is low across all these occupations, indicating both horizontal segregation in terms of the range of occupations where women are present and vertical segregation in terms of access to management positions and higher status occupations (Bagilhole, 2002). *Jobs for the Girls*, a report submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry in April 2005, noted that the lack of women in senior positions (not just in construction) deprived young women of role models that might give them confidence to try non-traditional work and sectors concerned with innovation, creativity and intellect (HMSO 2005). Where women are present in larger numbers it is often in occupations related to design: 19% of architects are women, for instance (National Association for Women in Construction website).

### Plumbing

Plumbing is a small but skilled industry, covering plumbers, heating and ventilation engineers and pipe-fitters. Responsibility for training rests with a new SSC, Summitskills. Most employment is in small firms and the sector is heavily male-dominated with significant under-representation of female, ethnic minority and disabled people. Until

recently NVQs were the preferred training option, but increasingly Modern Apprenticeships are becoming an entry route. However, the numbers of women taking plumbing apprenticeships are extremely low – in 2003 there were only 4 women starting apprenticeships in Scotland (0.4% of the total) (EOC Scotland, 2004) and only 22 in England during 2004 (EOC, 2005a). This is regrettable given that it is anticipated that around 5,700 new plumbers are needed each year, amounting to approximately 29,000 by 2007 (Institute of Plumbing Website, 2003). Compared to the construction industry as a whole, there have been relatively few initiatives aimed at attracting women into plumbing (Miller et al, 2004) but there is a woman's network under the umbrella of the Institute of Plumbing.

## Information and Communication Technology

This is the least gendered of the GFI (General Formal Investigation<sup>3</sup>) sectors, but women are more strongly represented in lower level ICT occupations, reflecting the extent of vertical segregation in the sector and the “feminisation” of less skilled jobs (Griffiths et al, 2004a): for example, in 2003 they accounted for 30% of IT operations technicians, but only 15% of ICT managers and 11% of strategy and planning professionals (Miller et al, 2004). 10% of ICT employees were from minority ethnic groups in Spring 2003, over half of these being Asian or Asian British, whilst a higher proportion of women (13%) had disabilities than men (9%).

Entry into ICT is more diverse than the two previous sectors discussed and graduate level entry is complicated because not all graduate entrants have ICT-related degrees and only 40% of ICT graduates choose to go into the industry (Miller et al, 2004). It is noteworthy that women are better represented at higher qualification levels (NVQ 4 and above) and that the gender pay gap is less for these ICT professionals at only 7.5% (Miller et al 2004). Modern Apprenticeships also make an increasingly significant contribution and the new SSC for the sector, e Skills UK, has continued promoting work to encourage young women to enter the industry, including the Computer Clubs for Girls Scheme (Miller et al, 2004). Nevertheless, research by the Women in IT project (WINIT) at Salford University indicates that women as a whole lag behind their male colleagues in training and qualifications, and that this restricts their movement in the ICT job market. WINIT suggests that the exclusion of women from technology in general relates to the historical and socio-cultural construction of technology as a “masculine domain” (Griffiths et al 2004).

Compared to the other GFI sectors ICT is not anticipating a shortage in numbers of workers, although the SSC has stressed the importance of developing the skills of existing staff. There are issues, however, for women in ICT around the general long hours culture of the sector and the negative attitudes towards making use of flexible working practices even where these do exist (Moore et al, 2005).

## Engineering

The final area of interest covered by the GFI is engineering, which is considered as part of the manufacturing sector and comprises 3% of employment in England (LSC, 2003). This is an industry where the pattern is for full-time employment, rather than self-employment, where women represent only 8% of the workforce as a whole but 17% at technician grade. Minority ethnic groups form 4% of the workforce and disabled people 11%. This is a relatively highly qualified occupational sector, with 49% of employees possessing NVQ Level 4 or above. Entry to this sector through Modern Apprenticeships, as opposed to Higher Education routes, remains extremely gender segregated and this has been the focus of attention by the SSC for this area (Miller et al 2004). Such routes are important because skills deficits are apparent at intermediate (level 3) rather than higher levels.

In January 2002, the Department of Trade and Industry initiated a review of women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) headed by Baroness Greenfield, which published a report, SET Fair, later that year. This strongly makes the business case for encouraging women into SET occupations and highlights the shortages caused by a high rate of leakage of skilled professionals to other sectors such as finance and management consultancy (Greenfield, 2002). The report goes on to list the issues and problems identified by women working in SET including the following:

- Stereotyping of careers advice
- A lack of knowledge and experience for girls and young women in NTOs
- Issues around flexibility and mobility that affect promotion

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<sup>3</sup> In June 2003 the EOC launched a General Formal Investigation (GFI) into gender segregation in 5 occupational areas. They identified 5 areas as being the most strongly segregated: construction, engineering, plumbing, information and communication technology (all male dominated), and childcare (female dominated).

- Women having to over prove themselves in order to gain equivalent opportunities and experience to men
- Having to work against the perceptions of what women want and what women can do.

The list concludes with a telling quote about the difficulties of women entering a male work place culture and having to deal with:

Informal practices including rumour, gossip, sarcasm, humour, throw-away remarks, and alliance-building, encoded in the organisational culture as images, metaphors, artefacts, beliefs, values, norms, rituals, language, legends, myths and other symbolic gestures (Greenfield 2002: 31).

These informal practices operate throughout all the occupations covered in the GFI and form a significant barrier to women's recruitment and retention in these areas.

## Transport

There certainly is not the same quantity of information about the transport industry that exists around construction, ICT and the SET occupations, although there is a useful report by the Fuirich Transport Development Partnership, which reveals the following:

- 80% of employees in the motor trade are male with the differential even more marked in the sub-sectors of vehicle maintenance, repair and sales
- 19% of employees in the road haulage business are female, mainly employed in clerical roles
- in 2001, 11% of the rail sector workforce were female, but again overwhelmingly employed in administrative roles, with only 2% of train drivers being women
- Although there are more women being recruited to the aviation industry, the majority are cabin crew and very few are airline pilots

*(Fuirich Transport Development Partnership, 2002)*

This is a large industry with an estimated 1.7 million employees, which is expected to grow by another 0.5 million over the next decade (DfEE, 2001). The image of the constituent parts of the industry are largely negative and the information that women have on which they base choices can be outdated. The research undertaken on behalf of the Fuirich Transport Development Partnership in relation to the motor trade showed that young women face negative attitudes and discrimination from peers, teachers, careers advisors, parents, personnel managers, potential employers, garages and crucially other women (Fuirich Transport Development Partnership, 2002). However, there is some evidence of efforts being made by the larger dealerships to change organisational cultures and norms and London Transport have been proactive in trying to attract women train drivers.

## Arts and media

Metier Creative Solutions in 2004 conducted an audit of available research and identified altogether 32 reports containing Labour Market Information about the arts and media, focusing specifically on training and development issues relating to disabled, culturally diverse or female practitioners, managers or technicians. However, most of this research is small-scale in nature and has been conducted at a local or regional level. Furthermore most of the initiatives from national or regional bodies identified are aimed at increasing the participation of minority ethnic groups, with fewer schemes targeting disabled workers and little evidence of schemes tackling gender inequalities in the arts labour market (Metier, 2004). The North West Arts project, Employing Creativity (Heeley, 2002), is one exception addressing diversity, linked to the No Difference, No Future report, as is the work in the West Midlands outlined in their Shifting Perspectives Action Plan.

Creative and Cultural Skills, the new SSC for arts, media and related occupations, has published a Strategic Plan, Creating Skills for Success (Creative and Cultural Skills, 2005) which declares an intention to establish a workforce survey to identify the skills needs of both employers and individuals. It also critically makes an explicit commitment to equality and diversity across the sector as a means of extending opportunity and delivering success (Creative and Cultural Skills, 2005)

## Career choices

The literature constantly refers to the importance of careers advice in encouraging young women to choose from the widest range of options yet there seems to be very little research around this area outside of the EOC investigation, and what does exist pre-dates the current Connexions Service. Heather Rolfe, in a study of gender equality and the Careers Service in 1999 found a lack of systems to support young people in entering NTOs, and hesitation on behalf of some advisors to promote NTOs knowing that this is the case (Rolfe, 1999). Nevertheless, Rolfe identifies some examples of good practice in partnerships with schools and sensitivity to diversity and demonstrated that a proactive approach can influence choices.

Further research on black and minority ethnic young people (aged 16-25) and parents in Glasgow found that very few were opting for NTOs and that this was particularly marked for young women. Significantly, approximately a third of respondents were aspiring to self-employment, which the study notes was often linked to the experience of working in a family business but was also motivated by a wish to escape from the low paid routine jobs they had experienced (Rutherford et al 2004).

What comes over strongly from the EOC's GFI is that there is interest from young people in pursuing NTOs if they are provided with the right information and support, and there is a consensus amongst all those involved that better information is needed from a much earlier stage on a wider range of choices and opportunities (EOC, 2005a). The investigation found that there was a real appetite for change and that 80% of girls and 76% of boys said they wanted to try non-traditional work before making their job choices (EOC, 2005b).

## A European comparison

The proportion of women in construction is roughly similar throughout Europe, despite some differences in social systems and better childcare, for instance, in Scandinavian countries. However, there is one example that does stand out, and that is the position of women in the Danish painting and decorating trade, where in 2001 they numbered 2,875 compared to 11,123 men (Pedersen 2004). The reasons that Pedersen identifies for this are:

- Proactive social policy in the 60s and 70s that encouraged women into work and provided improved childcare, as well as specifically promoting women's entry into NTOs
- Painting and decorating is at the more creative end of the skilled trades, and has managed to maintain a high proportion of women unlike other trades which also saw expansion in the 60s and 70s
- Painting and decorating is relatively simple technologically
- The presence of a "critical mass" of women, which means they are visible and attract other women into the trade

The notion of a "critical mass" is extremely important and is worth further consideration in terms of how to move towards achieving change.

## The diverse needs of diverse women

Barbara Bagilhole introduces her examination of women in non-traditional occupations by saying, '*Women are not a homogenous group*' (Bagilhole, 2002 :10) This literature search has not, however, uncovered any significant information about diverse women in NTOs, apart from the basic quantitative information relating to the numbers of women, minority ethnic groups and disabled people featured in the previous section. There is nevertheless some Labour Market Information on the employment position of women facing particular disadvantages, which this section will briefly present.

## Ethnicity

Unemployment rates for people from black and minority ethnic groups are higher for both men and women than for their white counterparts. Bangladeshi women have the highest unemployment rate at 24%, whilst for Indian women in contrast the rate is 7%, much closer to the White British or White Irish rate of 4% (PRIAE, 2004). In line with lower employment rates, women from ethnic minorities are more likely to be economically inactive than white women are, and this is particularly so for Pakistani/Bangladeshi (70% inactive) and Caribbean women (31%) (Women And Equality Unit, 2002).

A high proportion of Bangladeshi and Chinese women (40%) are concentrated in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industries, whilst over half (51%) of Black Caribbean women work in the public administration, education

or health sectors. Indian women are five times more likely to be working as sewing machinists and as packers, bottlers, canners and fillers than their white equivalents (PRIAE, 2004).

A short article entitled the *Labour Market Prospects for Pakistani and Bangladeshi Women* identifies some important issues in relation to these women. The proportions of single women who are economically active are similar to single white women at 90%, but the differential becomes greater following marriage (66% compared to 83%) and even greater for those with children over five years (a very low 10% in contrast to 72% of white women). Younger women involved in this study – all of whom were Muslim - tended to see education and work as giving them independence; traditional views about not working outside the home were markedly more likely to be held by those with lower levels of education (Dale et al, 2002).

## Disability

The Department of Work and Pensions Research Report 173, *Disabled for Life?*, aims to provide a picture of the work and daily activities of disabled people, compared to non-disabled people, and to examine general attitudes to disability. The definition of disability used in the study was consistent with that used in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. 44% of disabled people are economically active compared to 79% of non-disabled, and proportions increase with age and for those from minority ethnic groups. 55% of disabled women worked part-time, whereas only 40% of non-disabled women did. For those working, there were no differences in terms of industrial sector, but disabled people were less likely to be in professional occupations and more likely to be in skilled or non-skilled occupations (Grewel et al, 2002). This reflects a lower level of qualification and educational achievement (Meager et al, 1998). Further issues highlighted by the Disability Rights Commission include a perception that disclosure of a hidden disability or mental health condition can have a negative effect on the attitudes of colleagues, and a generalised view that colleagues have a limited awareness of disability and its effect at work (Hirst et al, 2004).

## Homelessness

There is a real absence of information in relation to homeless women and employment. The Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) report, *More than a Roof* (2002) makes reference to the potential involvement of LSCs in local homelessness strategies and the role of employment, training and education (ETE) in helping people out of homelessness, including volunteering and other work-related opportunities. A subsequent RSU report, *Improving Employment Options for Homeless People* (2003) presents information about a range of initiatives for homeless people, but none specifically address the ETE needs of homeless women.

A report commissioned for the LSC in North Yorkshire (2004) highlights a number of potential barriers for homeless people in accessing or pursuing education, vocational or otherwise:

- Other issues, such as drug dependency, may take precedence
- Homeless people may not be in control of their own timetables, having appointments, for instance, with a range of support services
- Low esteem and high levels of anxiety, perhaps related to previous experiences
- Many will be easily deterred by bureaucracy and form filling

These barriers are also pertinent to employment, as well as the potential “no home – no job” cycle, the welfare trap associated with high rents in hostels and the problems that might be associated with not having a secure contact address. The report goes on to stress the potential benefits of outreach work in engaging homeless people and the tailoring of support. Significantly, this research also looked at all the local homelessness strategies and found that, contrary to *More Than A Roof*, few strategies specifically addressed the need to improve ETE provision for homeless people.

## Involvement with the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

Whilst more literature exists in this area, little of this was identified specifically looking at women's access to NTOs as opposed to more generalised ETE provision. An interesting evaluation of the Sobriety Project's work in *Spring to Release* is available and another study with the LSC in North Yorkshire (North Yorkshire LSC, 2003). This project uses the waterways as a resettlement resource for women leaving HMP Askham Grange, through which they can

gain a variety of training and qualifications, including Certificates in Community Boat Management, Engine Maintenance and Marine Radio. This represents a successful prison/project partnership, with positive engagement from employers, although at times they were working counter to the resettlement regime in the prison. The report highlights the marginal position of women prisoners and their resettlement needs amongst the prison population, as well as the difficulties associated with disclosure of criminal records and past drug use, and the general issues for women who may not have had a stable employment pattern before imprisonment.

A further report for North Yorkshire LSC, *Unlocking Opportunities* (2004) discusses the barriers for women in the CJS in more detail, specifically women serving less than 12 months in prison who have little access to either resettlement support or substantial courses in the prison. In general the report identifies that ETE provision is poorer than in men's open prisons and tends to be stereotyped.

Carlen (1988) describes women as undergoing a process of being "outlawed" from conventional experiences and progress in ETE, a process which for the 39 women in her study had routinely started at an early age before the onset of their offending, and largely through the care and education systems. Many of these issues are identified in the peer research conducted under **Equal** Round 1 (Women into Work), resulting in the *Moving Mountains* report (O'Keeffe 2003). Whilst this is not generally new learning about women in the CJS, it is a powerful evocation of the many barriers that women face on leaving custody, finding an authentic voice for a group of women who hitherto have not been heard.

Finally, the NACRO guide, *Recruiting Ex-offenders: the Employers Perspective* (NACRO 2003) indicates that the attitudes of employers are similar to that of the public in general, in feeling fear and suspicion about offenders, and that this frequently is based on assumptions rather than real knowledge. In these circumstances, mediating organisations, such as NACRO can play a significant role.

## Substance misuse

In 2002, DPAS (Drug Prevention Advisory Service) produced a paper about women drug users and drug service provision (Becker and Duffy 2002), discussing a range of issues for this group of women who have multiple and complex needs. The report largely deals with treatment services for women and gaps, for instance in services for young women, minority ethnic women and those experiencing mental ill health. However, it also raises critical points about providing new opportunities and skills for women, and developing multi-agency work which is women-centred, needs-led and predicated on an understanding that women's drug use cannot be tackled in isolation from other needs. Since this report, the Home Office has allocated significant money via the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) to develop work with substance misusers in the CJS and, although small in number, this may have impacted positively for services for women in contact with the probation service.

## Employers' views

Research studies involving employers of women in NTOs are not plentiful, but there are three substantial studies:

- Two linked reports commissioned for the LSC in Gloucestershire in 2002 which looked at construction and engineering in relation to young women and the care sector in relation to young men (9 employing companies)
- *Widening Horizons*, a report of the Lets TWIST initiative in West Yorkshire (part of the Equal-funded JIVE Consortium) covering the areas of engineering, construction and technology (12 employing companies)
- *We Build the Road as We Go*, an unpublished report from the Women in Construction research project produced by Goldsmith College, London (various employing companies of differing sizes in the private and public sectors).

These reports highlight the difficulties of challenging employer's views about the positive aspects of employing women in non-traditional jobs. By way of contrast, it is interesting to look briefly at a survey of 42 employers in the ICT sector. This research was focusing on graduate employment and a third of employers reported taking initiatives to attract more women, a higher proportion in larger rather than smaller firms. 48% said that their companies offered part-time working and 33% career breaks. Asked if they were taking additional measures, others indicated that they could offer flexible working hours, more than minimum maternity leave and one firm said they would consider job-share, although this had never as yet been requested.

This is a small employer sample and may not be indicative of the ICT sector as a whole – it does contrast with some of the research amongst ICT employees carried out by WINIT (Griffiths et al 2004) – but it is useful to use to provide a comparison both in terms of the nature of the sector and the relative paucity of research with employers in that sector, compared to construction which has attracted academic interest.

## Summary

The employment rate for women in the European Union (EU) is rising faster than male employment (54% in 2001 compared to 56.1% in 2003 across the then 15 member states). However, in terms of the types of jobs women are taking, they remain within traditionally 'female' employment areas. Women's earnings are reported to remain less than their male counterparts. It is estimated that women constitute 77% of all low paid employees in the EU (Equal Support Unit/ Ecotec 2004:1)

European Council meetings in Lisbon (2000) and Stockholm (2001) have produced agreements, which aim to increase the proportion of women who are economically active to 60% by 2010. In order to achieve this, the Council therefore called on Member States to reduce occupational segregation, to improve childcare and to make it easier to reconcile working and family life. The work that takes place under the WIW:BF programme contributes to these objectives.

# SECTION TWO

## METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims and objectives of WiW: Building Futures research

The aim of this research project was to examine perceptions and experiences of accessing non-traditional ETE from the vantage point of disadvantaged women using innovative sampling and research techniques. In this way it was intended that participants would be afforded a unique opportunity to be involved in the identification of support mechanisms and thereby directly influencing policy and practice encouraging women to access non-traditional ETE. As a direct result of these aims, the following research objectives were identified:

- *Adopting research methodologies which view participants as an active resource rather than passive*
- *To utilise data collection tools which are 'user friendly' and take into account the differing capacities of participants*
- *A commitment to the integration of equal opportunities, empowerment and innovation as vital to social research design, delivery and research report writing*
- *A commitment to working in the spirit of collaboration and co-operation with research participants and conducting all work in a transparent way which is both understandable and accessible to all stakeholders*

In view of this the research design required that along with meeting the objectives outlined above, the strategy needed to access the participants views and valuable experience. The data collection stages therefore aimed to shed light on the following question areas:

- How do participants define/describe/ make the distinction between jobs for men and jobs for women?
- Are participants interested in undertaking non-traditional ETE?
- What do participants see as the advantages of working in a non-traditional environment?
- What do participants see as the barriers to women entering non-traditional ETE?
- What do the participants think they would need in terms of support to both encourage women into and retain them in non-traditional ETE?

These aims and objectives impacted directly upon the choice of research design.

### 2.2 Research design: from focus groups to 'interactive workshops'

A focus group approach is a research strategy that involves intense discussion and interviewing of small groups of people, on any given focus or issue (Morgan, 1988: Krvegan, 1988). This allows the researcher to observe how participants make sense of the barriers to non-traditional ETE through conversation and interaction with each other. This approach was therefore considered the most appropriate to examine the dynamics of what experiential knowledge women bring to bear in relation to non-traditional working environments.

A focus group interview schedule was developed and piloted with a group of 6 women. The pilot focus group proved problematic. Many of the women whose opinions we were trying to elicit had never considered non-traditional ETE, in their own words it simply was 'not on their radar' so it proved difficult to develop a meaningful discussion with them. As a result of this and after discussions with Durham Business School (a member of the DP) we decided to adopt a 'workshop' approach. A workshop format was designed which used fun and thought provoking exercises to promote discussion (see Appendix 1). These interactive and dynamic workshops proved successful in generating some excellent data. Also such methodology created a non intimidating environment for participants and therefore ensured inclusivity.

Individual one-to-one telephone/face to face interviews were also conducted to supplement where workshops could not be organised (despite the research teams best efforts). Individual interviews were structured with similar topics as the workshops.

## 2.3 Equality of Access

We wanted to ensure equality of access to workshops for all women who wanted to participate and therefore all childcare and travel costs were reimbursed and interpreters were used where necessary (in one group women spoke two different languages, thus two interpreters were used simultaneously). Workshops were always arranged at the most convenient location for participants and lunch was provided. We also ensured that venues had full disabled access where necessary.

Participants received a gift voucher and a box of chocolates as a token of our appreciation. It was not possible to offer this incentive to women in custody. However, when workshops were held in prisons, we negotiated with prison staff to add the equivalent amount to the weekly wage packets of the participants. This is in itself an innovative outcome of the research. Also, as already mentioned, women who wanted to take part in workshops but were unable to for whatever reason, were offered the opportunity of a telephone interview.

## 2.4 Proposed sample: Accessing disadvantaged women

As already discussed, it was outlined in the original Development Partnership Agreement that disadvantaged women should be involved in all stages of the programme (DPA: 34). Targeted recruitment of women from the following disadvantaged groups to participate in the research took place. In total 80 women participated from the four designated locations already outlined (far exceeding our original target of 50 participants). The table below outlines the particular areas of disadvantage on which we focussed and also the proportion of our sample who had experience of such disadvantage:

Homeless or with inadequate housing	<b>(8%)</b>
Black and minority ethnic backgrounds	<b>(33%)</b>
Health issues (mental and physical)	<b>(22%)</b> with a further <b>12%</b> having drug and alcohol misuse issues
Survivors of domestic abuse/violence	<b>(5%)</b>
Ex-offenders	<b>(27%)</b>

As already mentioned participants were recruited from the areas listed below:

- Yorkshire and Humberside
- North East
- London
- South East

Most of the women in our sample had not previously been involved in non traditional ETE but some did have experience in such fields (approximately 20). This enabled us to gain useful data on *actual experiences* in addition to *expectations* of women.

Members of the WiW: BF research team took responsibility for participant recruitment. An information sheet was designed (see Appendix 2) detailing the aims of the research and what involvement would entail. Members of the team contacted Women's Centres detailed in the 'National Directory of Women's Centres' in all four regions. Two women's prisons with which Women into Work had a close working relationship were also contacted as well as some personal contacts of the research team. In total 9 workshops were held and 4 one to one interviews (3 via telephone and 1 face to face) were undertaken. The process of recruitment proved to be a very labour intensive and time consuming element of the work.

At all times the research process was guided by the Women into Work: Building Futures Ethical Guidelines (see Appendix 3) and participants were asked to sign a consent form prior to participation (see Appendix 4).

## 2.5 Putting the 'Peer' into Research

Building on the success of the Women into Work programme (funded under Equal Round One and written up in the Moving Mountains report, O'Keeffe 2003), a peer approach was also adopted for WIW: BF. Peer research may usefully be described as **'the ultimate in participatory research'**. The methodology has developed out of the traditions of 'participatory', 'action' and 'empowerment' research and places members of the research target group in the role of active researchers, interviewing their peer group about their experiences. It therefore:

- Adopts a 'bottom up' approach where those individuals who are going to be directly affected by the outcomes of research play an active role in the research process
- Adopts the standpoint that peers are 'experts' within their field of experience
- Shifts the power base and ownership of the research process to 'non experts' thus reduces the 'academicism' of research
- Uses research as a tool of empowerment

In the Women into Work programme the peer research element was fairly straightforward. There was only one target group (women ex-offenders) and therefore women ex-offenders were recruited to conduct research on our behalf. In WIW: BF there are multiple target groups, SOVA only recruited one researcher and there was a smaller sample. This was as a result of lessons learnt from the previous programme. It would have proven very difficult to recruit a researcher who had experienced all the areas of disadvantage outlined in the DPA. However, SOVA did recruit a researcher with some shared experience with the majority of target groups and she played a key role in developing and conducting the workshops. In addition, the research team were very much participants (and not just facilitators) in the workshop and a non hierarchical approach was adopted. The researchers also had a shared experience with participants of being women in a 'man's world'. In these respects, the research demonstrated many of the attributes of a peer approach.

## 2.6 Data analysis

The data analysis categorised and analysed the transcripts in relation to the four specific research focus areas:

- 1) The identification of the definitions/ rationales of the participants about the distinction between jobs for men and jobs for women
- 2) The detection of the perceived advantages of non-traditional ETE according to disadvantaged women
- 3) The classification of participant's views of the barriers to women accessing non-traditional ETE
- 4) The cataloguing of the support needed to encourage and retain women in non-traditional ETE

A more detailed breakdown of the themes identified can be found in Appendix 5. A thematic framework analysis was conducted according to themes.

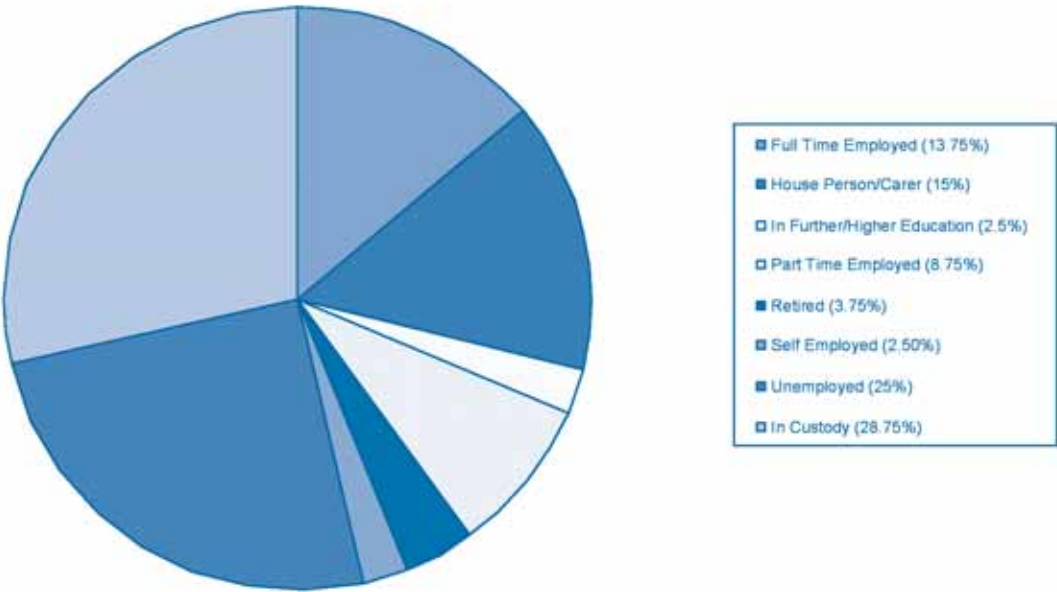
# SECTION 3

## KEY FINDINGS

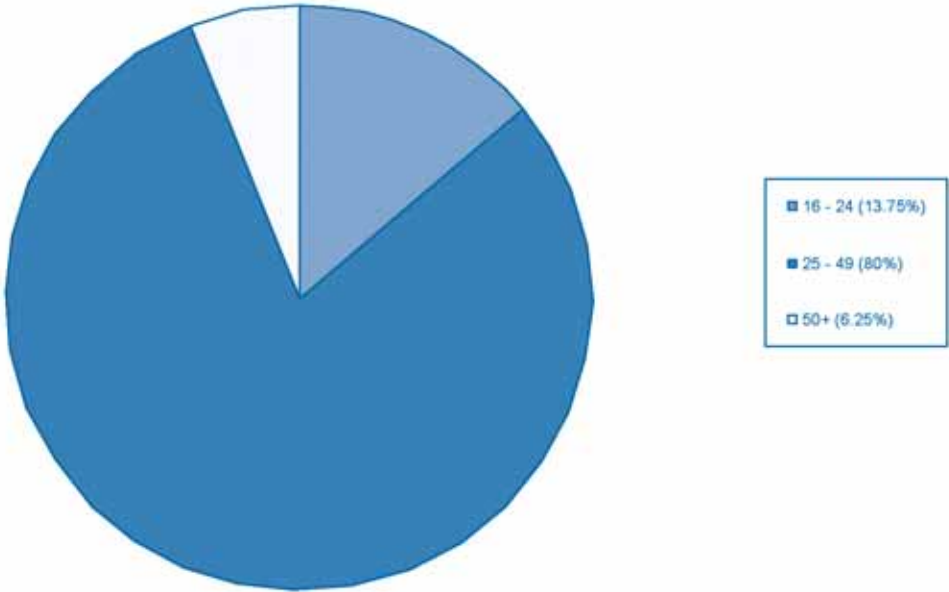
### 3.1 Characteristics of the Sample

The following section provides the demographic data of the participants in the research. This information was obtained via an 'Enrolment Form' which women were asked to complete (see Appendix 6). This information should assist the reader when considering the transferability of the findings to other comparable populations.

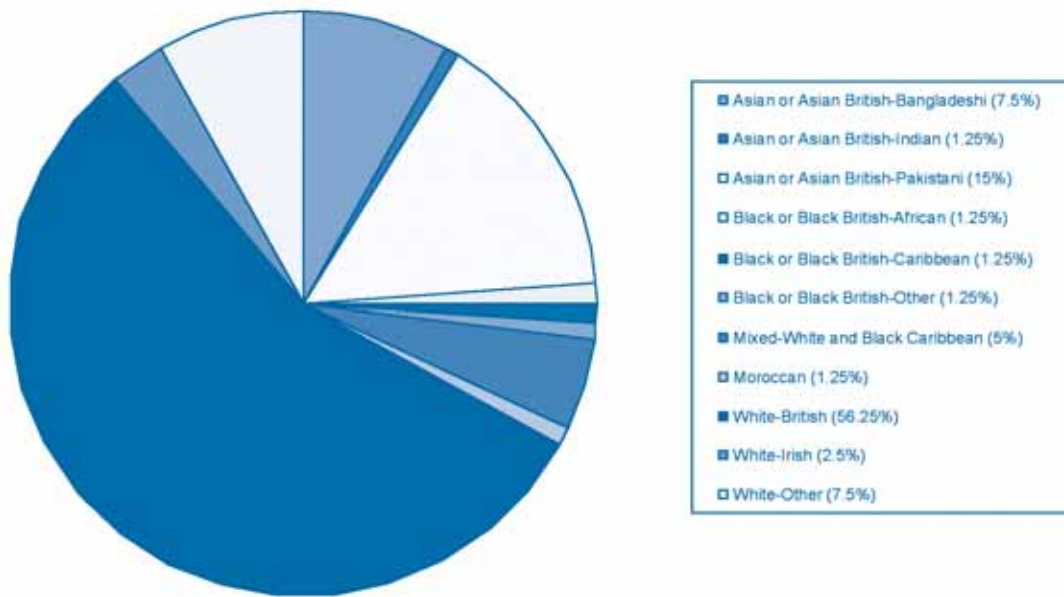
#### Employment Status (n=80)



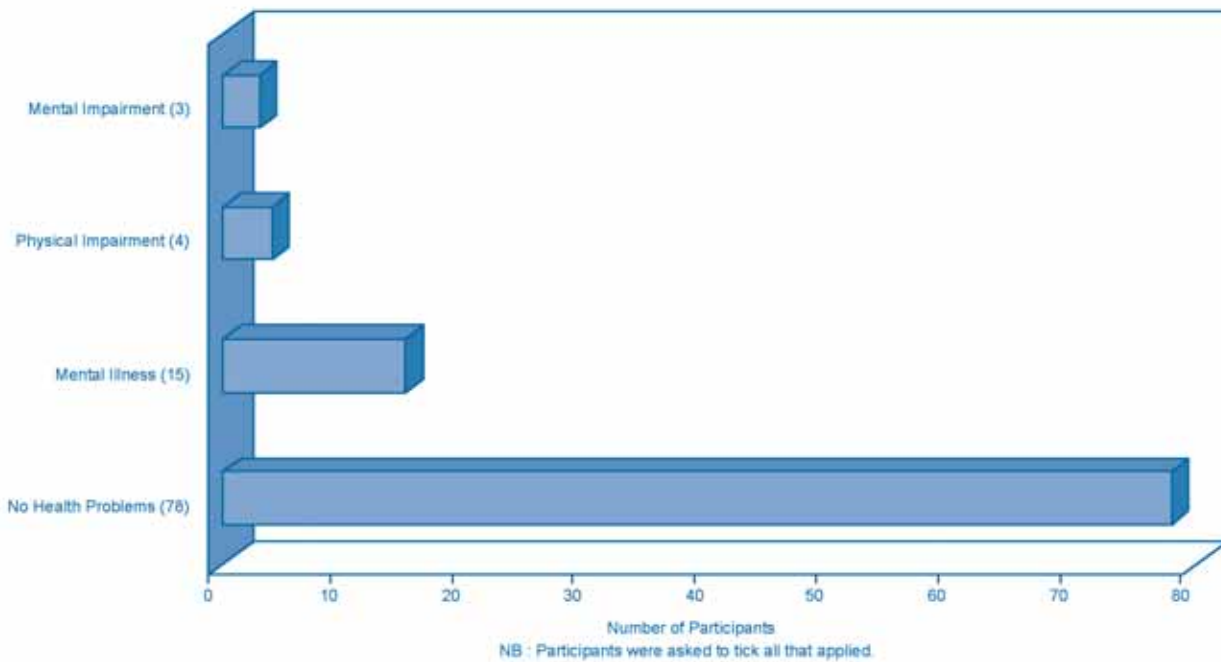
#### Age Range (n=80)



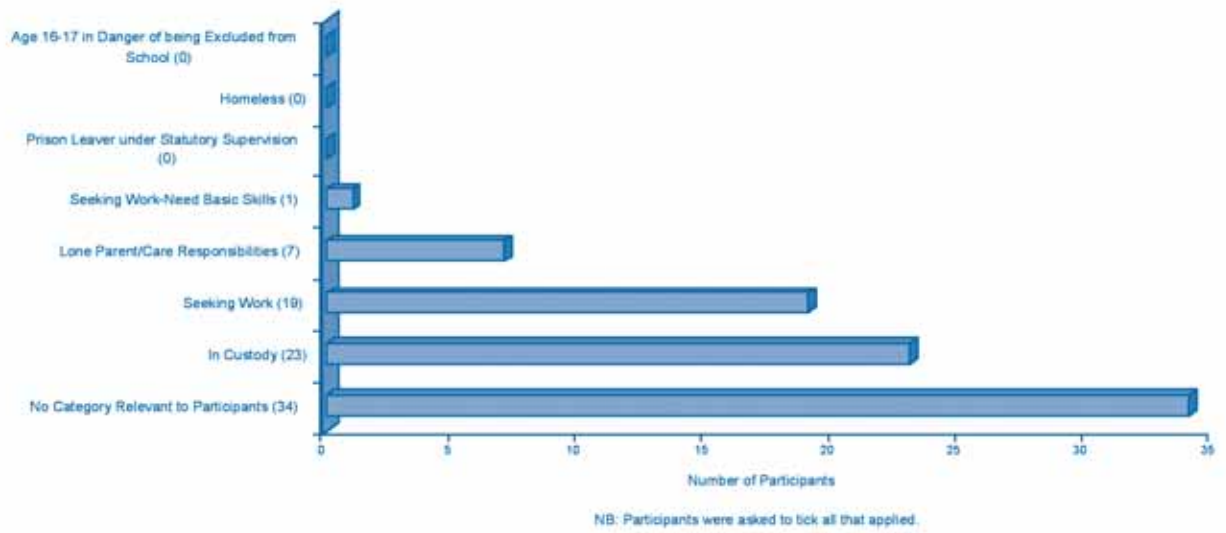
## Ethnic Background (n=80)



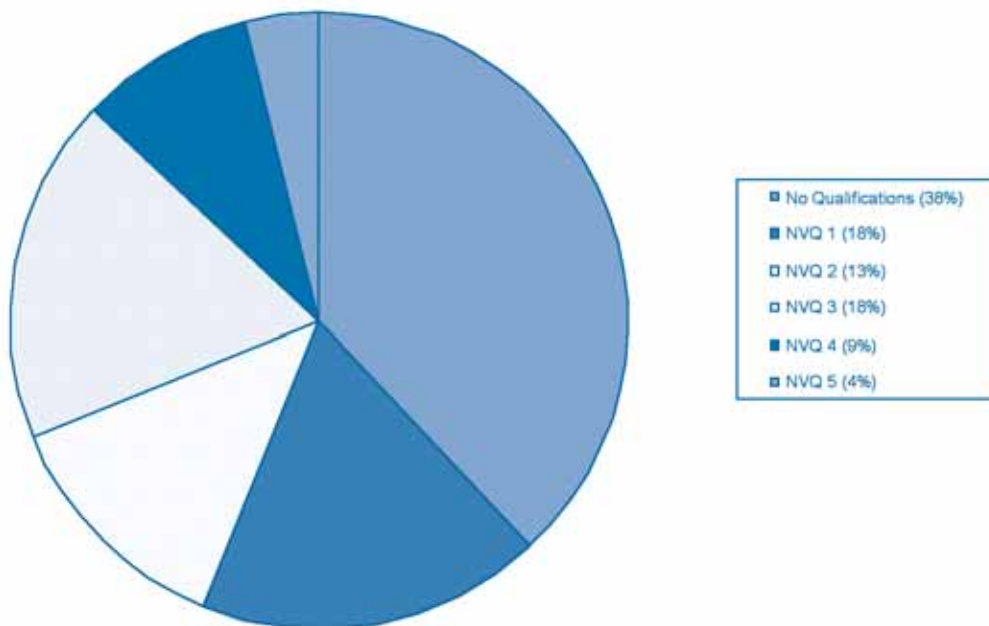
## Health Background (n=80)



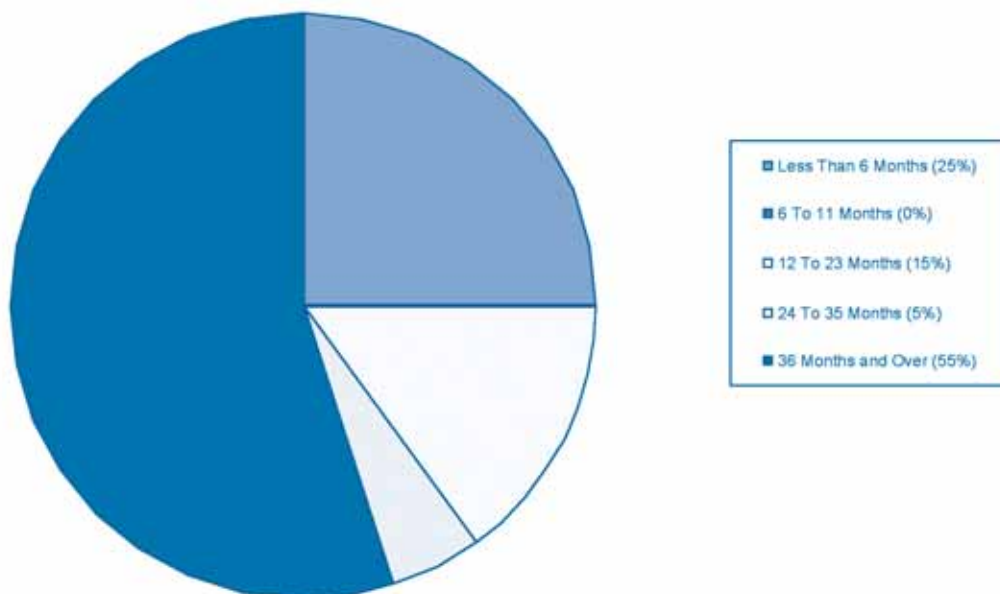
## Current Situation (n=80)



## Qualifications (n=80)



## Length of Unemployment (n=19)



### 3.1.2 Findings of the research

The research findings are organised according to the themes identified. During the writing stages, a distinct concern with retaining the research participant's voices in the production of research accounts was maintained as their own words are included throughout the report wherever appropriate to highlight the main issues being discussed (Ribbens and Edwards, 1988).

## 3.2 Perceived suitability of non-traditional ETE for women<sup>4</sup>

The participants reflected that men and women do different jobs for a variety of reasons, which are influenced by socially accepted gendered expectations. These different expectations were described as stemming from distinct male and female characteristics, which contribute to the perception of explicitly sex-specific preferences, skills and abilities that are then transferred into the different types of jobs men and women do. Four main rationales for this were identified as follows:

### 3.2.1 Physical restrictions

The physical demands of non-traditional jobs were cited as a significant factor to explain the differences between jobs for men and women.

*How could women lift what men do?*

*Fire-fighters must be men, the women can't lift the people*

<sup>4</sup> Despite the research being about non traditional employment, training and education participants mainly talked about non traditional jobs and employment but recognised training and education to be the necessary means by which to ultimately achieve employment

The physical differences between men and women were cited as both natural and as something that women could do nothing about.

*It's a natural thing that a man is stronger than a woman. That's our disadvantage from nature*

### 3.2.2 Dangerous and dirty

It was felt that some non-traditional jobs were inappropriate for women as they are too dangerous to be considered.

*Taxi drivers- it's too dangerous. If anyone is going to attack they are going to attack the lady (...) girls are more vulnerable*

*I don't want to electrocute myself, let men do that!*

Some employers were also reported to hold the same views about 'appropriately safe' jobs for women as one respondent reported attempting to work for a haulage delivery company.

*The company won't employ me even though I have my lorry licence because the work's too long hours and you know, women driving on their own. They said it's a safety factor*

Women also spoke about rejecting non-traditional jobs that involved working outside in cold and wet weather, while entering employment that involved coming into contact with dirt were also identified as both undesirable to women and the traditional domain of men.

*Plumbing, plastering is a bit muddy, I mean not very clean work (...) dirty jobs are men's jobs*

However this view was not held as universal in the sample of women spoken to, some relished the prospect of working in a challenging, outdoors environment.

*I've always wanted to be in a man's job. I'd love to work on a building site. I like working in the outside doing something constructive I like to be out in the thick of it, getting my hands dirty*

*I like getting all mucky, there's just something about it, it's satisfying*

It is clear from the above that participants identify differing levels of acceptability for men's and women's jobs which may ultimately impact upon their career choices.

### 3.2.3 Techno-phobia

Women spoke about being reluctant to enter the traditionally male dominated world of information technology jobs.

*I had never even touched a computer before I started college*

*I have done a call centre course. It was boring. And computers do not interest me at all*

The women spoke about not knowing how to work their video recorder let alone switch a computer on. Their perception of these kinds of jobs was that they would require reaching a technical level of skill they had neither been exposed to nor held much interest in.

### 3.2.4 Huge responsibility of running own business

Other alternatives, such as owning your own business were acknowledged as being an employment choice taken traditionally by men. Although as a practical and rewarding option, women considered that it might be appropriate for them.

*It'd be good being your own boss, earning your own money and being able to employ people*

*I think that's a good thing. But it's hard graft*

However, women identified that where women do own their own business, it is often in traditionally female areas.

*Women do things like hairdressing and beauty, but that's still divided. Brothels!  
Yes, it's still the women who make the money but the man who owns it*

Participants also suggested that there would be huge problems to overcome in terms of employing and managing male staff if they owned their own business.

*I don't think a man would take orders from a women*

*I'd like to do that (...), but, only with women! (...) only women*

On the whole, most women rejected the option of owning their own business, as they perceived it would be impossible to combine these responsibilities with their existing family/home commitments.

*Having your own business would be too much responsibility*

Participants clearly felt that a significant reason for male predominance in owning one's own business was due to the woman of the house taking primary responsibility for running the home and looking after the children, regardless of whether or not she was in employment herself. This frees up the time and energy of the male household member to focus upon the labour/responsibility intensive endeavour of self employment.

### 3.2.5 Particular sectors of interest

The non traditional work areas in which women showed most interest during workshops are as follows:

- Construction/building work
- Painting and decorating
- Plumber
- Electrician
- Other manual jobs involving working in people's homes (i.e. general maintenance work)
- Gardening
- Mechanic

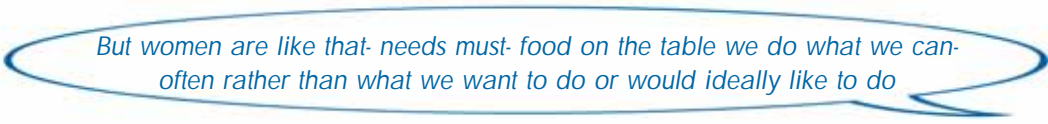
Based on all participants these areas of work are in order of popularity. However it is important to note that participants indicated a willingness to engage with the whole spectrum of non traditional sectors provided they could be supported to obtain the relevant training and skills and appropriate health and safety mechanisms are in place.

## 3.3 Advantages of non-traditional jobs for women


Although many of the women in the sample had little experience of non-traditional employment, there was a lot of positive discussion regarding the perceived benefits of the opportunity to engage in non-traditional employment. Women described the benefits of engaging in non-traditional ETE in two ways: benefits to the individual female worker and benefits to employers of engaging women.

### 3.3.1 Increased choice and availability

The women reported that they often felt they had fewer choices in the work they undertook largely due to their role as primary child carer/housekeeper in the family.



*But women are like that- needs must- food on the table we do what we can- often rather than what we want to do or would ideally like to do*



*[We do] rubbish jobs but you're doing it for a reason- usually for your dependents*

Women reported an awareness of certain skill choices in the UK labour market (mainly in semi-skilled, plumbing, electricians). In terms of their participation in these areas women perceived this shift as ensuring an increase in both the variety, accessibility and demand of non-traditional jobs for women.



*Wider scope for work - more opportunities than traditional jobs*

It was also reported that in terms of promotion, non-traditional jobs could provide women with increasing opportunities to develop their careers.



*Good prospects for moving up in a non traditional job*

Many described working in a non-traditional sector as the 'best of both worlds', as:

*You can do a man's job but then come home and still be a mother and do the housework and stuff. It's a nice balance.*

### 3.3.2 Job security and increased pay

In terms of job security and financial gain, it was reported that the women felt that traditional female roles provided access to neither of these advantages.

*At home you're a slave and then you go into cooking and cleaning jobs – you're a servant*

*Women don't get good wages*

*Men get all the jobs with good wages – even refugee collectors get a good wage. I think women are exploited in every way – at home, everywhere*

Entering non-traditional employment was associated with jobs that were in demand, thereby providing women with more secure employment and higher salaries.

*As long as you're good then the work will be there*

*It's not like MacDonalds, earning £4.00 an hour (...). You have that control*

*I want nice things and nice things for my child*

Providing oneself and one's family with a secure, relatively high income was discussed as an ideal that reflects on women's self confidence and self-esteem.

*I want to be someone*

*What we do for a living actually says something about you*

### 3.3.3 Potential for personal growth

Linked to the above, participants described the advantages of working in the non-traditional sector as providing them with 'something to be proud of', which could make 'life more fulfilling'. Increasing one's self confidence was raised as an advantage or as illustrating individual women could 'conquer something'. Securing a position in this sector was described as positive as it would show how women could manage and adapt to 'something different'.

*Would give you confidence to train for something else or go for the Manager's job!!*

Furthermore, many women identified individual achievements in being able to choose a non-traditional job as having a huge impact on inspiring more women to enter employment areas traditionally excluded to them.

*There would be satisfaction in knowing you're setting a good example for other women to do it as well. Spurring others on.*

### 3.3.4 Challenging the norm/ female stereotype

Women reported that another benefit of entering non-traditional employment would be the opportunity to confront the stereotypes of appropriate female behaviour. As one respondent commented, 'We just follow this pattern that's set out for most women without question'. Most women agreed that doing a non-traditional job would cause debate in their own families and communities.

*There's a stigma to it, the neighbours will talk, the curtains will twitch!!*

*There is a stigma with different jobs. If a man becomes a nurse it's assumed they're gay, if a woman becomes a mechanic, it's assumed they're gay*

These women saw entering the non-traditional job market as positively influencing their personal relationships as well as providing increased equality.

*Would give you the ability to deal with men better, in life. A better insight. And then when they come home and say 'I've been on a building site all day' you can say 'well so have f\*\*\*ing !!'*

Clearly women perceive that a further advantage to entering non-traditional employment would be the provision of a basis from which to begin to renegotiate both their own intimate relationships (including that with themselves) and those with their wider community.

### 3.3.5 Acquisition of skills away from the domestic role

Many of the women saw their lives as monotonous, tedious and hard work with no or little reward.

*Wives-they are to clean the house, look after the kids, service you and expect no pay*

By accessing the non-traditional job market women saw an exciting opportunity to engage in work that was very different from the work they are used to.

*It's always better to have a multitude of skills rather than just a few*

Women also saw the non-traditional job market as a way of providing them with additional skills that they could put to good use in terms of improving and developing their own 'skill portfolio'. In this way, the women reflected a positive view of gaining skills and know-how that they could use in their day-to-day lives to enhance their own independence (from men!).

*In the home when the plasterer comes out or the electrician comes out, she wants to learn and do it herself*

*You wouldn't have to pay people to come to your house and pay people to do building and painting and decorating. You can do it yourself, so you're more independent*

*Means you can be independent and do those things for yourselves*

### 3.4 Advantages of women in non-traditional ETE for employers

Participants usefully identified the advantages for employers of employing women in non traditional areas. Such advantages included enhanced output and improved working environments.

#### 3.4.1 Valuing traditionally 'female' skills

The emotional strength and communication skills which women feel they have was regarded a positive skill, which could enhance the workplace, as one respondent noted, 'with women it's the use of language that's important'.

*You know there are some jobs out there that women ought to be welcomed into, you know*

*I think women make better doctors. They can be very sympathetic but tell you that you're going to die!! Women would warm the stethoscope anyway!!*

*Women wouldn't talk down to you*

In terms of skills applicable to the non-traditional job market many women felt they had extremely good listening skills and therefore 'might listen to instructions better and not have to keep having them repeated'.

Participants also identified the positive impact women's organisational and multi-tasking skills could have on a non-traditional working environment.

*Multi-tasking and organisation – a lot goes on in a day for a woman (at home) and you just do it without thinking about it whereas a man just goes to work and comes back.*

*Patience, definitely, and time management, we can have children and keep house and cook and work*

*I could have fed the cats and my daughter, made a cup of tea and had a cigarette while I was on the phone to you*

It was also suggested that women in non-traditional jobs could bring a 'sense of humour, honesty, diplomacy and a bit of fun' to male dominated working environments.

Indeed, women reflected that when it came to working in people's homes, (such as plumbers and electricians) employing women would reduce customers concerns and enhance customer care.

*A female plumber would make more money especially with the old people. Men can be a bit daunting coming into your home so they would like a woman*


*People trust women to do a good job and also to be tidier. I wouldn't accept mess in my home so I won't leave it in someone else's – more considerate I guess*

*I've found that loads of people prefer to have a woman in their house. For some reason they trust you a lot more than men. I'm going round with two lots of people's house keys. I don't think they would do that with men*

### **3.4.2 Improved workplace atmosphere**

Participants reflected that employers would benefit from employing women in non-traditional environments as their characteristic approach to people could enhance employee morale as, 'We are supportive of each other'.

*And we would listen to them more as well, whereas another man may not want to listen to them. A woman might come in and say 'what's wrong with you today' and he'd start telling you, and she wouldn't tell his mates*



*Calming – a lot of arguments happen with men, [if there] is a lot of testosterone and if there's someone there trying to keep the peace then that's good*



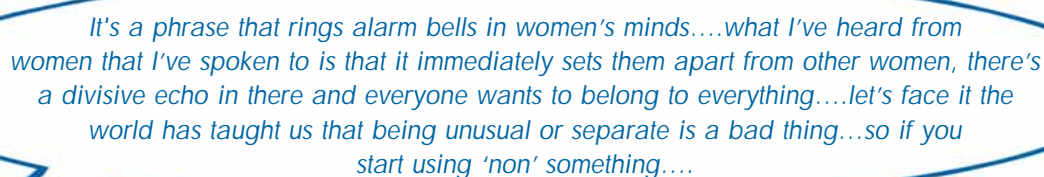
*Men might behave themselves more if there's a woman there*

So, this research usefully demonstrates the range of skills and attributes which women feel they could offer non traditional employers which may complement stereotypically 'male' skills. Indeed, in the words of one participant *'it's better to have a multitude of skills, not just masculine skills'*. This data may usefully inform how women employees may be sold to employers.

However, it is interesting that women have very clear and fixed ideas about 'masculine' and 'feminine skills' and consider themselves to have the very strengths which are often devalued in society. Their discourse largely conforms to stereotypical ideas about what women can and can't do thus perpetuating gendered divisions. This underlines the need for enabling women to recognise skills they may have outside of those associated with their role as carers.

### **3.5 Barriers to non-traditional ETE**

One participant usefully pointed out that the term 'non-traditional' may provide a barrier in itself and may serve to divide rather than unite women:



*It's a phrase that rings alarm bells in women's minds....what I've heard from women that I've spoken to is that it immediately sets them apart from other women, there's a divisive echo in there and everyone wants to belong to everything....let's face it the world has taught us that being unusual or separate is a bad thing...so if you start using 'non' something....*

Having outlined the many positive aspects of being employed in non-traditional sectors, both for women and employers, attention is now turned towards identifying perceived barriers to non-traditional employment for women. Five key barriers were identified in the data:

- individual perceptions
- societal perceptions
- practical issues
- lack of knowledge and awareness
- male workplace culture

In addition to the above, participants identified the multiple disadvantage experienced in their lives as providing multiple barriers to accessing and sustaining non-traditional employment, training and education. This will be addressed at the end of this section.

### **3.6 Individual perceptions**

Participants discussed how they often felt that society viewed them as inferior to men and had difficulty seeing themselves as valued members of society in relation to their male counterparts. This impacted on the way they saw themselves and led to a degree of 'self stereotyping'.

### 3.6.1 Lack of self-belief

Participants reported a distinct lack of self-belief as being a significant barrier to entering non-traditional jobs. This was particularly significant when the women talked about the higher salaries they could access in this sector, but wondered if their particular skills could ever be recognised financially.

*In asking for the right money....you are so happy to be working that you don't negotiate your pay...we avoid confrontation and don't want to look greedy....all of us do it, you know it's like, am I really worth that? It's really hard to ask for money, maybe it's about this nurturing thing.*

Other women reported that they were aware of the negative impact that these self-beliefs had on their taking up wider employment opportunities, as one participant commented:

*The main bar to any women doing anything that she wants to do is the mindset of the women involved. Some women are still in the mindset that they are second best*

Some women attempted to explain their lack of self-belief as an extension of how they believe men see them. This was manifest in the way that women talked about men conspiring against them, even if they got to be interviewed for a non-traditional job.

*They'd set you up to fail whatever you were wearing they'd ask you tricky questions*

*If you did get the job people would say that you did sexual favours to get it! That's a risk. They wouldn't think you'd got a brain and you'd got there on your own.*

Others self-identified their own skills as wholly inadequate, yet as the following excerpt illustrates, these negative feelings were often brought on by lack of exposure to and practice in non-traditional sectors.

*I didn't like it at first 'cos I couldn't do it*

Participants reflected that they also experienced these feelings of negative self-belief outside the working environment. The impact of this individually internalised self-belief however was identified as having significant effects on individual women's employment expectations.

### 3.6.2 Questioning own ability

The reported lack of self belief above was also manifest as impacting on women's self confidence. Although women identified that they made a valuable contribution to the needs of others, in terms of their own individual development, they acknowledged a level of guilt for wanting to achieve something for themselves.

*We are happy to do things for others but not us, we feel guilty asking for ourselves*

Women reported that employers often reinforced these individualised feelings of guilt, as some women reported feeling judged as less-than-feminine for wanting to work as well as look after a young family. Even here participants reported individualising these judgements, rather than seeing them as structural.

*In your mind you're thinking 'are they going to be judgemental' so that fear is a barrier*

In terms of confidence in their own ability, women reported 'feeling inadequate as characteristic of being a woman.

*Also confidence and self belief, that's a woman's thing, not believing in yourself*

The impact of women's individualised lack of self-belief in their own ability was identified as reducing their chances of taking new opportunities, particularly in relation to 'male' opportunities. Despite women describing the opportunity to engage in non-traditional employment as positive and exciting, they reflected that individual women were less likely to succeed due to their lack of assertiveness, a characteristic the women attributed to 'maleness'.

*Even in asking for the right money, normally you are so happy to be working you don't negotiate your pay. Men don't have that problem...*

*Easily led-women, the men are a bit more strong*

*I think the biggest weakness women have is that they question themselves whereas men just think 'I can do it'*

The self-perception of women as lacking in self belief, doubting their own ability and less likely than men to 'go for it' needs to be challenged if women are to believe they can succeed in the non-traditional working environment.

## 3.7 Societal perceptions

The individual perceptions reported by the women above were described as being reinforced in the perceptions of wider society. Socially accepted expectations of 'being a woman' were identified as impacting negatively upon their ability to make real choices about non-traditional ETE.

### 3.7.1 Perceived responsibility for family life

The most powerful societal expectation identified was that of woman as mother, rather than worker, which was contrasted with social expectations of men's responsibility for the family.

*If she's a female and she has young children (...). Men, I mean freely they can do whatever they like, I mean they can go for whatever job they like, full day 24 hours 7 days, but women they have to think about their children*

*Women have to do more, they do housework; look after the children*

Where many women do work full time, it was reported that there is no removal of the expectation that they will also take care of the family.

*It's seen as our job to look after them. (...) Even if you have a full time job it's seen as your responsibility to come back and sort the house out*

The impact of the expectation that women will have ultimate responsibility for the family restricts women's choices and their ability to be as flexible as men who are perceived to not have to consider the impact of their movements on others.

*If a man wants to do a job straight away they'll go, they don't have to think about the kids or home but if women going to do the job they have to think of this*

### **3.7.2 Role models in the home/ social conditioning**

Few of the women in this study reported having contact with female role models pursuing non-traditional activities in the early stages of their lives. The impact of this on appropriate female employment possibilities was identified as significant.

*[My parents] talked about me maybe becoming an air hostess, becoming a teacher, working at the council*

*When you're growing up it's like – your dad's at work, your mum's at home – cooking, cleaning. It's just like the thing that you're reared with*

*It all starts at birth. Boys get given lego and girls get given dolls. Women don't play with cars as children*

When describing the societal expectations of women that participants had been exposed to, terms like 'historically second class citizens' and the 'weaker sex' were used frequently. The impact of this lack of non-traditional role models was reported as having ramifications for women who do work in the non-traditional sector, as 'people think I want a man, a woman can't do this or that'.

*They think that a man could do it better. They think you are weak – don't have the physical strength. Their idea of a woman is to be at home – barefoot and pregnant really*

When asked about where ideas about men and women's roles come from a few women place their arguments in a societal and historical context rather than adopting an individualistic viewpoint.

*I think these ideas come from men 'cos if you go far back, even though we know it to be wrong now, man has always been the ruler and tradition stems from years and years ago so the man will have said 'right, women can't do this'. So I think it stems from that'.*

*It's coming from ancient times, going back to cavemen. We still have those traditions.*

However, many participants seemed to have internalised a whole host of 'unwritten rules' around expectations of women's roles to such an extent that they went largely unquestioned. 'That's just the way it is' was a typical assessment of the position of men and women in society.

### **3.7.3 Stigma and negative stereotyping**

When considering the above issue, it is not surprising that women felt social stigma and negative stereotyping provided a major disincentive to exploring non traditional avenues of work. Participants saw these negative perceptions as negating any potential successes in women gaining non-traditional employment.

*You could be the most qualified plumber but could knock on the door of a 55 year old bloke who says 'I don't want no bird changing my boiler' so it's not just about getting women skilled it's about changing attitudes.*

*It's like 'I'm not having a woman telling me what to do'. It's seen as a weakness. They think that women should be in the home behind the kitchen sink. It comes down to women are the ones that have the children so it's like 'stay at home and clean the house'*

Interestingly, the above issues were found to be particularly pertinent in certain cultures. The sample contained a group of Bengali women who expressed the view that the social perceptions from their community would, as they saw it, always hinder their opportunity to work in a non-traditional sector.

The societal perceptions of women as being solely responsible for the family and their stigmatic social conditioning containing negative female stereotypes have been shown to impact detrimentally on women's motivation to enter non-traditional employment.

### 3.8 Practical issues

In addition to the attitudinal issues outlined above, practical hurdles also posed a barrier to women entering non-traditional employment.

#### 3.8.1 Meeting physical requirements and Health and Safety

As mentioned in a previous section (3.2.2) many women perceive their lack of strength in comparison with men as a barrier to entering non-traditional employment. This was raised by some participants as being a significant health and safety issue.

*Most non traditional jobs involve heavy lifting and stuff so it's a big barrier.  
You've got to be strong to be a plumber or an electrician*

A lack of health and safety provision, in some non-traditional jobs (i.e. the media) was identified as a further barrier. Women who had experience of working in the film and media industry told some horror stories concerning the lack of health and safety for staff when filming in dangerous places.

*The only job that I would have an issue with women doing is fire fighter.  
I think it's a question of whether they can meet the same physical requirements....some of my friends are really little and wouldn't be able to lift me or anything....saying they have to have a certain quota of women, I'd rather they had a load of men that could do the job rather than 20 women who can't but are there because they are women*

*We were shooting near a cliff edge- there was no security or anything  
and they put a prop boy at the edge to make sure the actors didn't fall off. It  
just makes you feel worthless because safety is not an issue  
[for employers]*

In this way, practical issues have an impact on the desirability and accessibility of non-traditional jobs for women.

#### 3.8.2 Difficulties with child care/ reduced career choices

As previously mentioned, women identified their socially perceived roles as mothers as a barrier to entering non-traditional employment. However, in terms of more practical, day-to-day barriers, women identified difficulties with finding appropriate and flexible child care as significant.

*You also have that great disadvantage- you've got kids- you plan stuff  
and they are ill- what do you do, but my mum's away soon- what the hell  
will I do then?*

*Creches are being provided, but they are so expensive*

Participants acknowledged that their career choices suffered detrimentally because of this barrier. Responses also reflected a view that this situation is 'unchangeable' and has to be accepted as a result of gendered expectations.

*Well there are certain jobs you can't do in life because you're a mum...you have to accept that...there's nothing you can do, you have to learn to lump it*

*I wouldn't even apply for the job if it was a driving or travelling job, there is no point...*

*Flexible workings a hard one because until there's more women in the job, there's not such a demand for it so nothing changes*

In terms of women accessing non-traditional employment, which often includes unsociable hours or travelling away from home, the lack of adequate and affordable childcare is a practical barrier reducing women's career options.

### **3.8.3 Lack of appropriate clothing available for women**

An unanticipated barrier to non-traditional employment was identified in one workshop:

*I was trying to get steel toe capped boots for my shoe size and I couldn't get them anywhere. And I really struggled to get a hard hat in my size*

*Not having the shoes and stuff immediately says 'this is not a job for a woman'*

As the excerpt above illustrates, the non existence of appropriate clothing speaks volumes about women feeling welcomed in the non-traditional sector.

The predominantly practical issues of meeting certain physical and health and safety requirements, lack of adequate child care and the lack of appropriate clothing for women have to be addressed in order to encourage women into the non-traditional employment sector.

## **3.9 Lack of knowledge and awareness**

A further barrier to women accessing non-traditional employment was identified as a lack of information, advertising and promotion of non-traditional jobs targeted at women.

### **3.9.1 Inadequate promotion of opportunity**

Women reported that their awareness of the types of non-traditional ETE available was limited. Many reflected that when looking at job adverts, they felt the jobs advertised were not aimed at them so they would inevitably turn to the more 'women friendly' opportunities.

When talking about the possibility of raising the profile of non-traditional jobs through careers advice, women reported being made aware of only a limited range of jobs in their experience of this service at secondary school. Some women reported explicitly asking to examine the option of non-traditional careers with their careers advisors. The responses they received are detailed below:

*I walked into my careers advisor and said I want to drive a lorry, I was told that wasn't an appropriate job for a girl*

*I was advised to look at other more appropriate choices for a girl, like staying at home and looking after the children, office work or nursing*

*I don't think people push it. I don't think they advertise and push it for women. Those who own all the businesses, it's man oriented*

The lack of profiling of non-traditional jobs at women is a significant barrier in terms of raising women's awareness of their realistic career possibilities.

### **3.9.2 Little exposure to role models**

Women reported they had little exposure to role models in terms of women working in non-traditional jobs from their most formative years. They felt that had they been exposed to more positive role models, their feelings about non traditional employment would be different.

*I weren't exposed to women in these kind of jobs when I were young so I've never really thought about it since'*

*Look at all the cartoons - Bob the Builder, Fireman Sam, Postman Pat. That's all you see. You don't see Brenda the Builder*

In terms of employment role models, the women reported that female Members of Parliament (MPs) were the only examples they could think of. Yet, even here participants focussed on the barriers these MPs faced when entering this non-traditional service.

*Men are making decisions for us 'cos only about 5% of MPs are women. We should be able to get these jobs. You need input from women. We're the best ones at making decisions!*

The lack of knowledge and awareness of non-traditional employment is a barrier to women that needs to be addressed. Non-traditional career options are not promoted effectively to women, while the lack of exposure to female role models working effectively in these sectors undermines the possibilities of women's participation. A negative cycle is created whereby a lack of women working in non-traditional sectors results in a lack of women wanting to work in these sectors.

## 3.10 Male workplace culture (negative categorisation of women)

The prospect of working within a predominately male workplace culture also curtails the potential attraction to women to participate in non-traditional employment. Participants held firm expectations that they would be negatively stereotyped by their male colleagues. Such expectations are borne out by the experience of women who had worked in non-traditional jobs.

### 3.10.1 'Little woman'

Such stereotyping may be viewed as an extension of societal perceptions and stereotypes discussed previously. When working with a predominantly male work force, women reported that they were categorised as the 'little woman' that would look after the men.

*They think you're there just to make their cups of tea and 'joey' about after them*

*If a woman was around they would expect you to clean up after them*

*I was a builders labourer for five years (...) at first they were like 'she'll clean up, she'll make drinks' (...). Even cleaning the portaloos out, that was expected*

*The first thing I would say when I walk through the door in a man's world is 'I ain't no tea lady' if you want tea make it yourself. 'Cos that's what they think you're there for, to make the tea. It's important for them to know right from the start that you're not a pushover. They'll have more respect for you that way*

The 'little woman' categorisation was also reported as stretching to the expectation that women would serve their male colleagues in some extreme ways and women frequently found themselves to be the butt of unwelcome sexual innuendo.

### 3.10.2 'Incapable woman'

The categorisation of women as 'incapable' was reported as involving the assumption that women could not perform as well or work as hard as their male colleagues. As a result women felt they had to work far harder and be far better than men just to get the same level of approval and acknowledgement.

*If you're in with all these butch men they'll be thinking 'she's not going to be able to do this' so it's stacked against you, that kind of job. You've got to be 100% to get anywhere*

*You need to be really strong, work twice as hard as any man doing that job, so you're taken seriously*

*[You need] tough skin, to be able to give two, no three times  
as much as a man*

The impact of this categorisation was considerable as:

*You feel like you've got something to prove before you even start*

### **3.10.3 'Unstable woman'**

The final male workplace culture categorisation identified was that of the emotional, hormonal and therefore unstable woman. That is, that male colleagues may view women's ability to do the job as being hampered not only by their lack of physical strength but also their unpredictable bodily functions!

*Women are judged by the fact that we have periods and we cry –  
that's seen as a weakness*

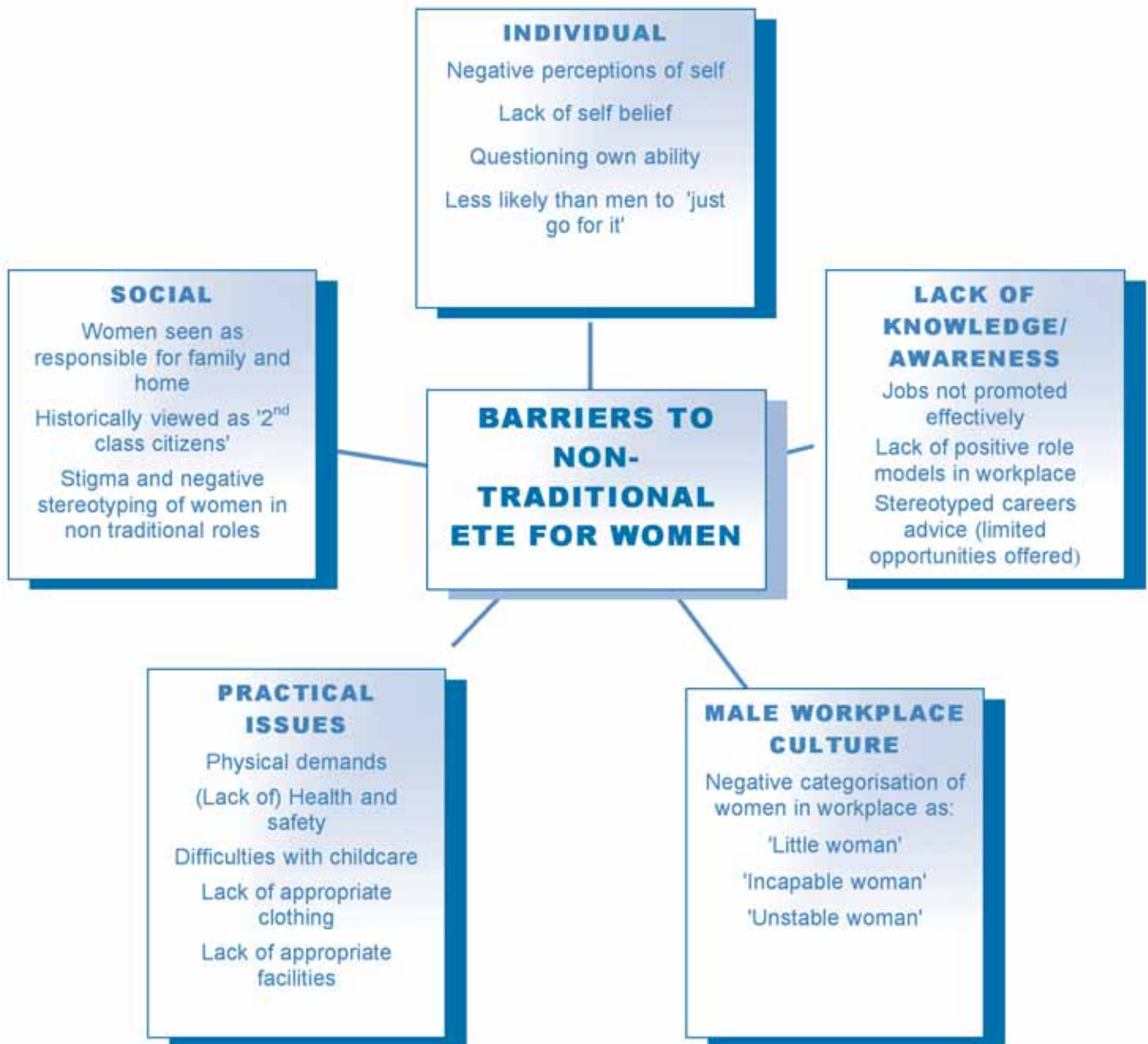
*If you were on a building site and you shouted at someone or something it  
would always come back to like 'oh, are you on your period?'. That's really  
annoying*

It was further reported that when women were assertive in the workplace, male colleagues would label them as unfeminine and aggressive.

*If you're a woman an aggressive woman- they all think its hysterical  
anyway- you're hysterical or on a period*

If we are to encourage women into the non-traditional work place, the male work place culture which categorises women as 'little woman'; incapable woman and unstable woman needs to be addressed.

Figure 1 Barriers to Non Traditional ETE for Women



### 3.11 Barriers as incentive

It is important to note that although considerable barriers were identified to non-traditional ETE within this research, much positivity was expressed around an ability to overcome these barriers with the appropriate help and support. Indeed some participants reported the barriers identified as being an incentive to become involved in this type of work and there was also acknowledgement of the innate strength of women in overcoming hurdles which added an empowering dimension to the workshops.

*I'd go out of my way to put half of them to shame me. I'd make a point of 'I can do it'*

*You have to make a stand and have determination.*

*How brave are women when we've got all that to confront and then if we get on it shows we're a lot more strong and capable than men doesn't it?*

### 3.12 Multiple Disadvantage = Multiple Barriers

Considering that the women we spoke to had experienced various forms of disadvantage during their lives it is unsurprising that barriers specifically relating to such disadvantage were raised. In this sense, barriers for this cohort of women were complex and multilayered. The below excerpts give a flavour of specific issues raised:

*Being an ex-prisoner is also a big barrier. It could be an excuse like 'sorry we don't employ ex-prisoners' when really it's because you're a woman.*

*Need to get someone to take us on having just come out of prison – there's a lot of responsibility involved with the tagging etc. Plus I'm going to be fighting for my kids and I'd need time off for that so there's not a lot of people who would employ me. I'd be willing to be flexible.*

*People who take you on are going to have to accept the whole package in the short term till you get yourself sorted out. But a lot don't want people with problems. They would benefit in the long term.*

*No wheelchair access [in non-traditional work environments] is a big barrier for me. When you're trying to promote these opportunities, it's important to invite people who are disabled, so you don't feel left out, so you feel like a person who can fit in and earn the same money*

One participant reflected that the double disadvantage of the societal expectations of being a 'woman in a wheel chair' severely limited her choices of employment from her most formative years.

*I was just told what I couldn't do (..) I was told that my options were limited further because of my disability*

In addition participants also pointed out that women who had experienced abuse at the hands of men/worked within the sex industry may be doubly disadvantaged when entering a male dominated work environment where innuendo and sexual banter may be viewed as 'the norm'.

*'If you were in the sex industry before and trying to get into a building site -can you imagine!! It would be 'how much, love'*

Issues around societal expectations of women posing a barrier to non-traditional work resonated particularly strongly for some women, for example when we conducted a workshop at an Asian Women's Group these themes emerged particularly strongly.

*In our religion, it's not the right thing we're supposed to do.... to mix people. I'd prefer it with just women*

*I think we feel a bit more embarrassed in an all male dominated situation...the dirty jobs, the men's jobs. I don't think I would go for that*

*She [friend of participant] has a negative influence from her husband, she has to look after him, get his permission*

In general, participants showed an acute awareness of the multiple barriers which they may experience as a result of different types of disadvantage:

*'What if you're an ex-offender, an ex prostitute, drug user, you've got kids and you're in a wheelchair, with size three feet! You're going to be a bit disadvantaged then!'*

In summary, some of the barriers discussed by women in this research could be equally applicable to non disadvantaged women attempting to access non-traditional ETE or to disadvantaged women accessing more traditional ETE. However, the combination of having experienced disadvantage and attempting to enter the potentially hostile non-traditional job market seems to create barriers which are more impenetrable for this cohort of women.

### 3.13 Coping Strategies

Participants described a number of innovative coping strategies which could be employed when faced with a male dominated workplace. The discussions clearly illustrate the potential problems women may face when entering male dominated ETE. Women's approach to coping can be categorised in three different ways, as detailed below.

#### 3.13.1 Becoming 'masculinised'

Some of the women described how they adapted to a male working environment by becoming 'one of the boys'.

*You are expected to become more male, like going to the pub and drinking pints and stuff and have to join in the jokes and messing about- become one of the boys*

However, some women noted that this approach had its own draw backs with regard to the effects on their self-concept and personality development.

*It makes me more aggressive, and over the years I have got more and more aggressive and I know I come across as aggressive some times, because I've been in a very male dominated everything, all my life*

The rationale behind adopting this strategy was described in terms of other successful women and how they have had to 'let go' of many of their traditionally feminine attributes in order to succeed in these environments.

*Looking on women who are in a high position, (...) they can't be warm, they can't be tender, they have to be tough, they have to become tough, (...) you can't be girlie, although you are smart and full of intelligence you will still not succeed*

These comments appear to reflect the social perceptions of women mentioned earlier.

*You can't be...sort of a bit of a butterfly about it, especially in an industry where its go, go, go and you are working under pressure*

Although 'becoming masculinised' was considered a necessary and effective coping mechanism, it was not necessarily viewed as desirable.

*We don't necessarily want this - I think women shouldn't lose their femininity, I actually enjoy the attributes of being feminine and wearing a skirt and doing my nails'*

Women also spoke of adapting their personalities in order to ensure they were heard in male dominated environments.

*You've got to have a big personality, you have to sound louder and bigger- if you're all whispery and girlie they can't even see you, they will not see you, let alone talk to you*

### 3.13.2 Laugh it off

The second strategy adopted was to join in and laugh along with their male colleagues' workplace banter, regardless of whether or not women found it to be offensive.

*I'd laugh it off and they'd get a smack on the nose as well!*

*You've got to hold your own you know- give as good as you get sort of thing*

One respondent of German descent, however provided a disturbing example of how this strategy could be seen as effectively legitimising the banter women are subjected to.

*The director did a Hitler salute and marched up and down. I was most offended. (...) Well now, I tell the Nazi jokes first*

### 3.13.3 Taking the good with the bad

The final approach to working in a male dominated environment was identified as 'taking it on the chin', here women described how it was unrealistic to expect men to consider adapting or changing their behaviour in the workplace.

*You have to take the good with the bad. If the best you can get is them still being a bit patronising then just go with it*

*Whatever you do, there is always men there teasing you and not wanting to listen to you.*

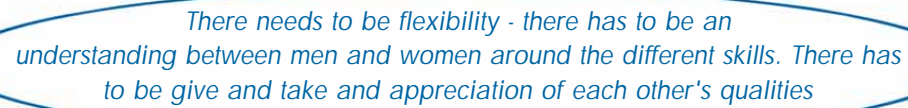
*I'd just make a joke of it but I can see some people would find it intimidating. You know what men are all about when you go work with them*

*You can't expect men to change their behaviour and to get special treatment, you have to face things the way they are*

Women described this approach as a way of coping with the inevitability of being the target of male domination.

*You've got to be resilient if you're a woman in a man's world – a man's always got something to say to a woman. (...) If you got offended by everything that someone said then you may as well just lock yourself up and stay at home. (...) It's give and take really*

The coping strategies outlined above clearly reflect the difficulties for women inherent within non traditional workplaces and the extent to which women feel they have to compromise in order to 'fit in'. Women with experience of non traditional work described how male colleagues were disdainful of stereotypically female behaviour and language. Women at times felt compromised as a result and that they were silencing their true selves. It still seems to be the case that women can't 'be themselves' or indeed be assertive and also be successful in such environments. This clearly highlights the need for changing attitudes of both men and women around gendered roles and behaviours. In the words of one participant:



*There needs to be flexibility - there has to be an understanding between men and women around the different skills. There has to be give and take and appreciation of each other's qualities*

# SECTION 4

## SUPPORT MECHANISMS

The research findings demonstrate that women need to receive support on a variety of levels in order for them to feel confident about entering non-traditional ETE. The following section presents the five areas in which support would be most appropriate, according to the women involved:

- attitudinal change
- organisational adaptability
- practical assistance
- awareness raising/effective marketing
- empowering models of working

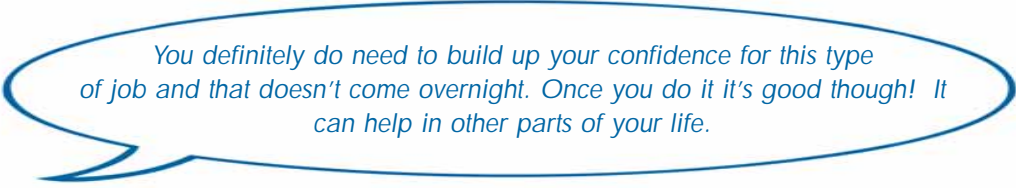
### 4.1 Attitudinal Change

As has already been discussed women in our sample reported not believing in their own abilities, as being less likely than their male counterparts to just 'go for it'. They also feel that both societal and organisational expectations of male and female roles reduces the acceptability of women working/training in non-traditional sectors. Thus a central support mechanism in reducing the gender divide in employment, training and education is that of attitudinal change on a number of different levels:

- individual
- societal
- organisational

#### 4.1.1 Confidence building through networking

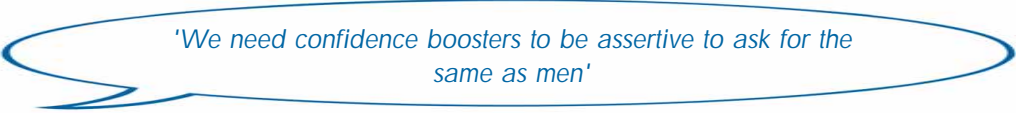
Lack of confidence is a huge disincentive for women in terms of engaging with non-traditional employment. And thus they feel that they need formalised support in order to change their attitudes towards themselves and to realise their potential.



*You definitely do need to build up your confidence for this type of job and that doesn't come overnight. Once you do it it's good though! It can help in other parts of your life.*



*'We need positive thinking – I can and I will'*



*'We need confidence boosters to be assertive to ask for the same as men'*

It is clear from the data that women need to build up their confidence to a point that they feel ready to engage with new and unknown types of employment. Women suggested that their confidence might be enhanced by the implementation of peer support (either individual or group) where they would be provided with the opportunity to network and share experiences with women in similar situations to themselves.

Participants suggested that provision of mentors and role models would provide an effective support mechanism in confidence building. Women described how reassuring they would find it to have regular access to women who have succeeded in the areas they wish to attempt.

*To influence young women you need them to see examples of other women who have done well then they might think 'I wouldn't mind being like that'. When I was young there wasn't any female role models it was all men. They would say 'they won't employ women, you must be mad'*

In terms of empowerment, inspiration and support women felt that relating to other women would enhance their sense of self-esteem and self-confidence and increase the likelihood of them staying in non traditional ETE in the long term.

#### **4.1.2 Awareness raising in workplace and community**

Women spoke of being intimidated by the wider societal responses to them accessing non-traditional ETE. Many women felt that interventions could be most helpfully positioned in both work places and the wider community to raise awareness and generate more positive attitudes towards women stepping out of their role as primary carer and moving away from career choices which don't necessarily reflect their role in the home.

*I think employers and bosses should go on courses to teach them about the barriers which women actually face. So they can then help to break them down or stop any more from building up. It needs to start from the top*

In addition pro active exercises to aid understanding between colleagues could usefully be employed to improve working relationships between men and women.

*Team building is good. It's amazing how a group can come together. It gives more of an insight into how the other ticks and guys then see that you're not some useless thing*

Participants also felt that female qualities and abilities are undervalued in the workplace and that this should be challenged.

*Women sometimes come in here and say I don't want to be successful or assertive, I want to just look after everybody and they actively enjoy showing their female side...(..) and I think they are really good qualities*

In relation to this women acknowledged that the issue of actually 'getting' a non-traditional job is only half the battle. In order to maintain and retain women in non-traditional areas, it was felt that significant shifts in employee and employer attitudes need to occur.

*We need a real 'sea change' of attitudes from men, employers and wider society before it becomes acceptable and common and ok for women to do these kinds of jobs*

Participants felt that this positive 'sea change' should be supported throughout the formal education system and eventually beyond.

*If you are a trainer, you'd have to try not to be gender specific – using appropriate language etc*

Raising the profile of the benefits of female skills and strengths to employers, colleagues and training staff was, it was felt an essential support mechanism that would encourage women to enter alternative types of employment.

In terms of more personal relationships, some women believed it would be productive for men and women to swap roles for the day 'cos men tend to take women for granted'. In this way, women felt that they could re-educate people into seeing the hardships women face in every day life, while attempting to work and look after the family.

## 4.2 Organisational Adaptability

Affecting changes in organisational practice was identified by women as important in supporting their access to non-traditional ETE.

### 4.2.1 Effective policies

Participants felt it crucial that organisations have effective policies in place to facilitate equal opportunities for women in non-traditional workplaces. Also highlighted was the importance of the visibility of such policies to women to ensure they are aware of their rights in relation to potential sexual discrimination. It was considered vital that male colleagues are informed around acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

*They have to follow equal opportunities policies that are in place, but people need to be aware of their policies*

Women acknowledged they were anxious about a lack of policy adherence in work places.

*There should be no 'isms'! Or if there is, keep it to yourself. They don't seem to take sexism as seriously as racism but they should.*

Women need to feel confident that they will be treated fairly in the work place and organisations can take responsibility for this by re-examining their working practices and policies and ensuring all members of staff have been on training courses to ensure they are aware of and adhere to these policies.

### 4.2.2 Appropriate facilities

Women suggest that organisations should be made accountable for ensuring the appropriate facilities are in place in order for women to work in a comfortable and welcoming environment.

*Small things can mean a lot, you know like sanitary towel disposal – if they would just give you that, it's a sign that they are willing to go that bit further*

*When I was working on the building site there was nothing like that and I had to use the men's toilet – a portalo, there wasn't even toilet roll either. Gives a clear message that you're not wanted*

*Some places there's not even women's toilets, so what is that saying to women!*

Women clearly feel that organisations should be made to provide the basic facilities for women, before they can feel comfortable and welcomed in non traditional environments.

### 4.2.3 Flexible working/training hours

The potential for flexible working and training hours was reported as a key factor in making non-traditional employment more attractive to women. However, it was felt that both women and men should be encouraged to take advantage of flexible working in order to promote gender equality both at home and in the workplace and an improved work/life balance for both genders.

*They should do the flexi working 'cos a lot more women would go into it. It's a major thing that's putting them off if they've got children*

*So we are talking about flexi time, job shares maybe*

Other women suggested that businesses could examine whether certain jobs could be partly conducted at home.

*As technology is advancing maybe there will be more opportunities to work from home you know laptops and the internet*

Organisations could consider reviewing their working practices regarding working and training hours, although participants accepted that in some non-traditional jobs this would be difficult, but all agreed that they would feel more accepted if organisations showed a willingness to contemplate such shifts in working practices.

## 4.3 Practical Assistance

Participants suggested that the Government alongside Training and Enterprise Associations could play a key role in reducing the practical barriers outlined in a previous section. This would involve giving their financial and political support to both individual women and businesses to encourage women into non-traditional employment.

### 4.3.1 Childcare with flexible hours/ in work place

Women suggested that providing flexible childcare facilities in or very near large work places/training environments would certainly support their attempts to access non-traditional ETE.

*If you're tied to certain hours because of the kids then there's certain jobs you can't do. If you're a builder you have to do evenings, weekends.*

*No crèches available in the evening so childcare can be a real barrier if you're wanting to retrain. A lot of the courses are at night*

Women feel that many employers are not taking their specific needs regarding childcare responsibilities seriously. This attitude needs to be challenged if women are to be encouraged to access non-traditional ETE.

### 4.3.2 Financial support for re-training and childcare

The issues above were also identified by women in terms of the additional financial support that could be provided to enable women to access non-traditional ETE.

*Sixth formers are paid £30 a week to stay at school- so why aren't women encouraged to go into non-traditional jobs in the same way?*

*Government have to be able to support us financially to do training and to bring up a family*

When made aware of the national skill shortages in certain trades (e.g. plumbers and electricians) participants suggested paying a little extra to women to attend these types of re-training could 'benefit everyone'. In addition, 'offering financial breaks to employers to encourage them to employ women' was also offered as a realistic way of encouraging employment of women.

### 4.3.3 Increased availability of clothing

Participants reported that:

*Manufacturers need to make stuff in women's sizes*

and felt that if potential employers of women in non-traditional jobs put pressure on manufacturers to provide smaller sized clothing; this potential barrier could be quickly removed.

Women also said they would appreciate:

*Advice on how to approach interviews – dress codes, whether to be 'masculine' or 'feminine'*

So in summary, participants have offered a range of suggestions for providing practical support, including the provision of childcare, flexible hours in the work place, providing financial support for women and ensuring the availability of appropriate clothing, all of which they assert would reduce the barriers to accessing non-traditional ETE.

## 4.4 Awareness Raising/Effective Marketing

### 4.4.1 Effective promotion of opportunities

Women felt that non-traditional ETE did not receive the high profile it deserves. In order to support awareness raising of these issues, women felt that certain promotional mechanisms could be introduced.

*You need more advertising and promotion for these jobs*

*Need to make people aware that women are able to do these non traditional jobs. Say in the adverts – male and female applicants welcome (...). They could just target women*

Many women felt that their strengths should be pro-actively marketed to employers in order to encourage a positive attitude towards their applications.

*Should get a half decent advertising company to go in and say 'look, this is what women can offer you'. These are the qualities that the average man may not have*

In addition those organisations successfully employing women in non-traditional roles could contribute to promotion work with a focus on the potential business case for employing women.

*Maybe finding an organisation or employers who do employ women in non traditional jobs and getting them to advertise and promote for you – 'this is how it works for us'*

Some women suggested that women employed in non-traditional ETE could play an active role in the design of promotional materials.

*It would be good if women could design the adverts, women in their overalls and stuff. It's the Government, they're not giving us the chance*

Furthermore, women thought that by advertising in specific areas, women could be targeted more effectively.

*Needs to be on TV, radio, at bus stops, flyers, billboards. All round the country. Places where women might go – shopping centres, schools, hairdressers, hospitals*

#### **4.4.2 Giving non-traditional ETE the 'wow factor'**

Women in our sample have clearly highlighted the positive aspects of engaging with non traditional ETE. Participants have also suggested that the benefits (e.g. good rates of pay, learning new skills) of these work areas need to be highlighted in more detail to potential employees, thus serving as a real selling point. This type of promotion work could be targeted at girls and women of all ages.

*Attracting women into wanting to work in something different, well these days everything's got to be you know, everything's got to have a real wow factor*

*If they knew about the benefits they might... like the money...you can be out earning good money by the time you're 18*

*These menial jobs (women's), you probably get the minimum wage. If you've got a skill like the men's job, you're going to double or treble that wage*

*Emphasise the economic results not just the actual work involved. It's about selling the benefits. People's stereotype of a plumber is that they live in a council house and they don't earn a lot of money. That needs to change. If you see someone pulling up to a school in a BMW...kids at 16 are very materialistic*

#### 4.4.3 Working with young women

A significant support mechanism for raising the profile of women into non-traditional ETE was identified as providing a system of early intervention to work with school age girls.

*You really need to get into schools – get girls young. Let them see good role models and that there are options open to them*

*Women believe what they see and are told by parents and teachers and significant others- as we were not exposed to women in these kinds of jobs when we are young- we've never really thought about it since*

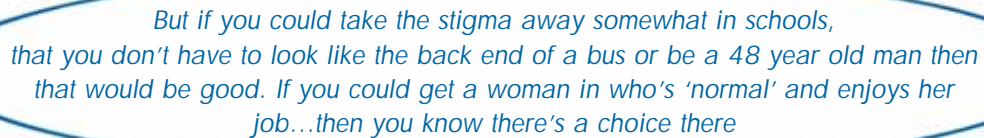
*In schools, afternoons where they can go out with workers, that would raise awareness*

Women identified this responsibility as being integral to the work of school careers advisors and stated that 'careers advice is important' despite the less-than-helpful experiences most of the women had at school.

*Careers advisors – they came into school once. They put me off going into the army. They told us to fill in these forms and then I didn't hear anything else*

*I went to my careers advisor and said I wanted to work in the music industry and he said 'we don't encourage things like that because it's not attainable, have you ever thought about becoming a clarinet teacher*

Women identified positive early careers advice as essential to beginning to remove the social stigma of women entering non-traditional ETE.



*But if you could take the stigma away somewhat in schools, that you don't have to look like the back end of a bus or be a 48 year old man then that would be good. If you could get a woman in who's 'normal' and enjoys her job...then you know there's a choice there*


Women felt that these interventions would go a long way to making women entering non-traditional ETE 'not seem weird', whilst also supporting a social wide shift in negative social stereotyping of the abilities of women.

#### **4.4.4 Work tasters/ voluntary work**

Women suggested that in order to combat the feelings of anxiety when considering employment in areas previously unknown, the provision of work tasters or offers of voluntary work in these areas would be welcome.

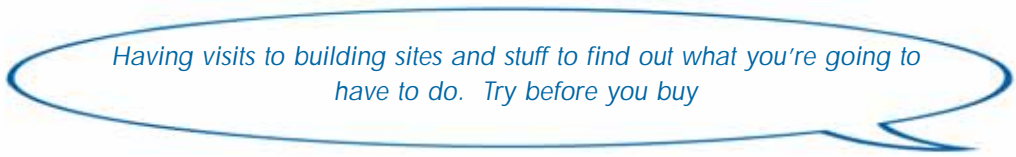


*Work tasters are definitely a good idea- like a stepping-stone*

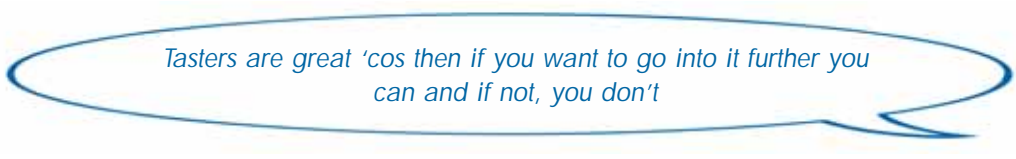


*Being given the opportunity to try something different may point you in a different direction*

Women in the sample suggest that work tasters would also give them the opportunity to 'try out' new jobs, to see if they enjoy the experience and to discover if they have an aptitude for things they have never thought to try before.



*Having visits to building sites and stuff to find out what you're going to have to do. Try before you buy*



*Tasters are great 'cos then if you want to go into it further you can and if not, you don't*

Voluntary work was also suggested as a good way of enabling women to show employers their skills and enthusiasm. Many women felt that voluntary work would also help combat the feeling that they are 'never given the chance to shine' .

#### **4.5 Empowering models of working**

The final support mechanism identified is empowering models of working. 'All women' networking and support groups were perceived as vital in increasing women's personal power which could ultimately lead to them feeling more empowered in the workplace. A collective approach could also help to reduce the stigma of non traditional work and enhance the 'feel good factor' for women.

*You need friends, you need people around you that like you, because that gives me power and allows me to show who I am*

*Networking is really important. It can be quite isolating work but getting together and sharing experiences that feels really good. You can learn loads from each other and it's an important thing to do. You're more powerful as a collective*

Women only training environments were discussed and it was felt that gaining relevant skills and qualifications in a safe and encouraging environment would enable women to 'build themselves up' to face the potential challenge of a non traditional work environment.

*All the obstacles, we've talked about, one of them is prejudice so the training you might need could come in the form of women only training groups and then you would be able to train with women and get the confidence to get your qualifications and such. It might help you a bit*

*The emotional support which you can get from that [women only training] can be brilliant – that's really important to help you on your way. It gives you the chance to build up your confidence a bit in a safe environment before going out there and facing the real world. Means you're better equipped to deal with the barriers*

The provision of women only training would enable women to gain qualifications and experience without being intimidated by being 'sat next to a bloke who'd be teasing and commenting about how rubbish I was doing all the time'.

Women felt that being provided with the opportunity to train along side other women would also 'give you the edge' by gaining a level of proficiency in certain skills before entering non-traditional jobs alongside many men, who it was felt, would be 'watching for you to fail'.

Training should not only incorporate skill and knowledge acquisition but also an examination of the cultural issues around gender which women may face in their careers, and how to best deal with these.

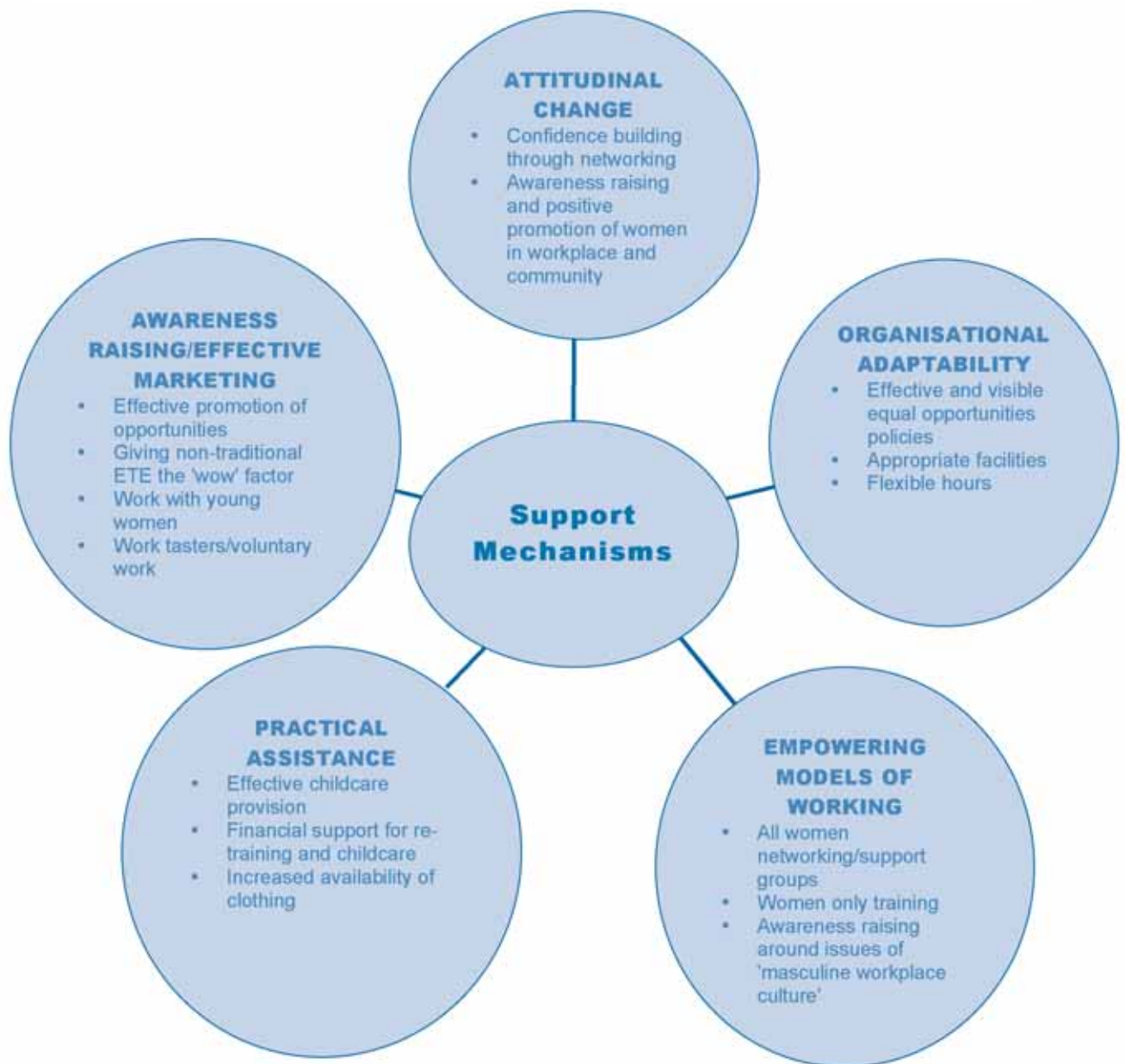
*Training should include the issues that you are going to come up against in non traditional work and show you ways to overcome this*

In order to create an empowering environment, participants felt that training should be approached in a 'two-pronged manner: with women and with organisations'. As women identified that while they can be prepared to compromise, their potential male colleagues should be prepared to do the same.

*Education of male employers (...) Need training for men to be more adaptable. Employers and men you're going to be working with*

*People need to be made aware of what to expect – there may be issues on both sides (men and women) –just be clear about the realities*

Figure 2. Support model for accessing and sustaining non-traditional ETE



## 4.6 Women's experiences of the research process

### 4.6.1 An empowering research environment

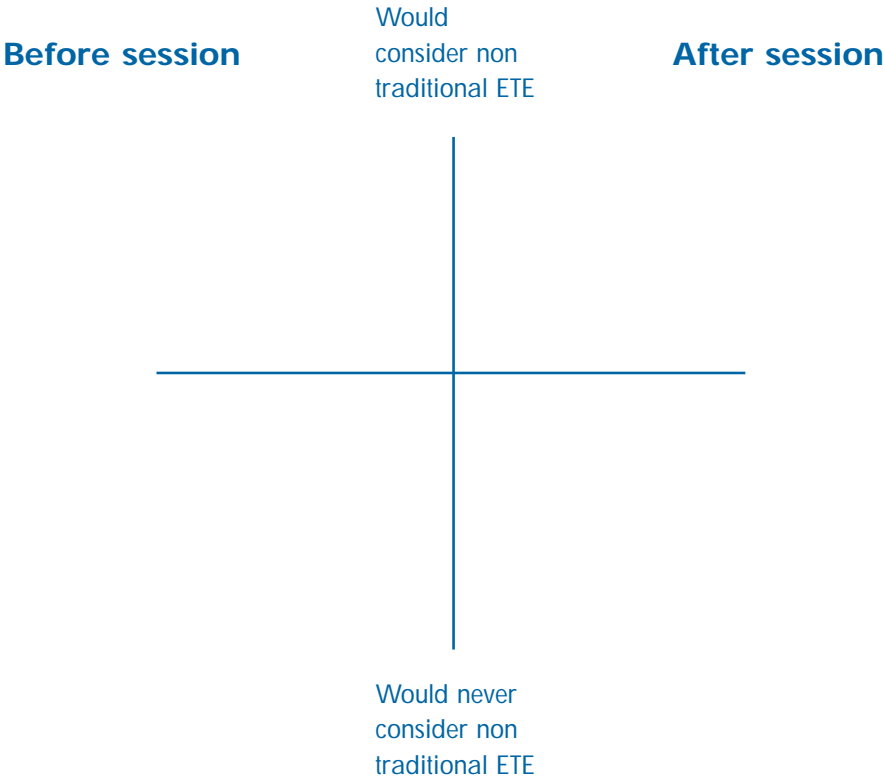
As previously stated we aimed to create an empowering research environment for participants. At the end of workshops women were asked to give feedback about their experience of the workshops on a 'thoughts and reflections' sheet. This enabled women to feed back on their feelings about the session and also to write down anything they had wanted to contribute but didn't feel able to in front of the group. The diagram below contains quotes which give a flavour of the extent to which we were able to succeed in this.

Figure 3



### 4.6.2 Raising awareness

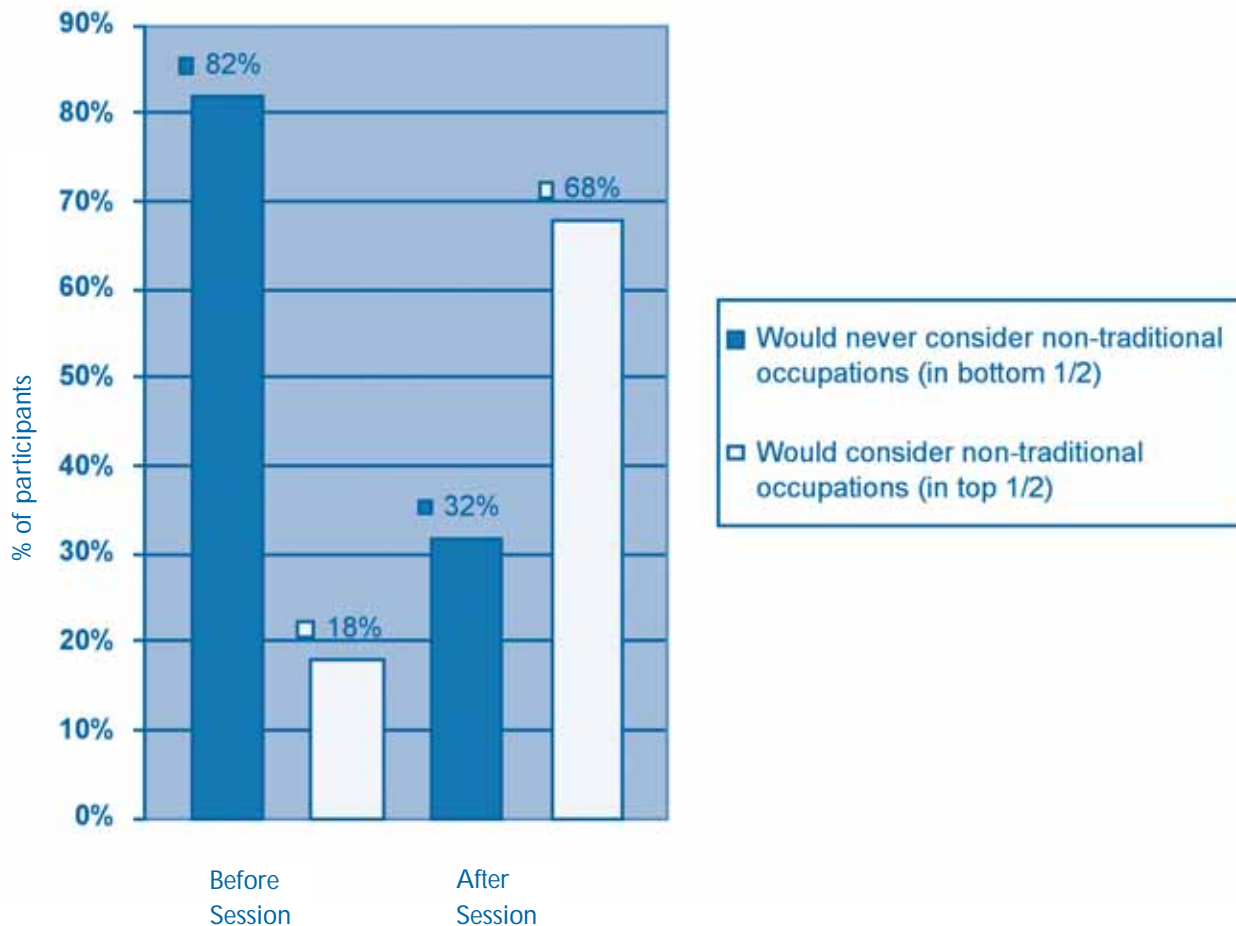
In terms of the process of conducting the research, an additional aim was to take a first step towards raising awareness and creating positive thinking around non-traditional ETE amongst those women who participated in the research. In order to facilitate this we produced and distributed an information pack to all participants which contained extensive information about ways of accessing non-traditional work and training in their local areas. In order to gain a sense of whether we achieved in changing attitudes, participants were asked to take part in a simple exercise as follows. At the start of the session women were asked to place themselves on the scale below to indicate their thoughts around non-traditional ETE. At the end of the session they were asked to repeat the exercise.



### 4.6.3 Changing attitudes

The bar chart below illustrates the way in which participants attitudes altered as a result of participation in the workshop. Just 18% of participants initially placed themselves in the top half of the scale (i.e. close to 'would consider non traditional ETE). However by the end of the sessions this number had risen to 68%.

Figure 4. Participants' Attitudes to Non-Traditional Work



# SECTION 5

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Discussion

This research study aimed to increase understanding of the barriers to women entering non-traditional ETE. The research was undertaken in order to inform Phase Two of the WIW: BF programme, that is the development of innovative pilot projects designed to address the needs identified by women in the research project. By adopting a qualitative workshop approach to data collection, the research team have been able to illuminate the experiences and perceived barriers of women considering non-traditional ETE.

This research has found that disadvantaged women would, given the appropriate support, like to engage in non-traditional ETE in certain fields. In particular it was found that women viewed entering non-traditional ETE as a mechanism to self-improvement and enhanced self-concept. However, it was also apparent that women face numerous barriers to non-traditional ETE in terms of combating negative individual and social perceptions and practical difficulties. These barriers are exacerbated by a general lack of knowledge and awareness of non-traditional careers and women's anxieties are intensified by the existence of a predominantly male work place culture in non-traditional jobs.

The women in our sample perceive that ETE in non-traditional areas was a challenge. Although such a challenge is welcomed on the whole, a demotivating factor in accessing these ETE sectors was reported as appropriate support not being currently in place. However women offered us a clear and concise vision of the support which they require in order to overcome the barriers to non-traditional ETE. They identified the need for developing attitudinal change at individual, social and organisational levels in preparation for accessing non-traditional ETE. Women also identified the crucial support that role models and mentors could provide in terms of both confidence building and awareness raising.

In addition, participants identified the necessity of support from organisations in beginning to adapt to welcoming women as workers. Organisational support was envisioned as enforcing effective and specific working practices, providing appropriate facilities and evaluating the appropriateness of more flexible training and working hours for all employees. Support to overcome practical barriers to women entering non-traditional ETE were envisioned as effective practices regarding the provision of more flexible child care arrangements, providing financial support and ensuring the increased availability of appropriate work clothes for women.

Women suggested an awareness raising approach to promoting non-traditional ETE to women and identified working with school-aged girls, providing work tasters and promoting female skills as constructive support mechanisms.

It is particularly encouraging that participants identified the need for continuing support and guidance from adopting empowering models of working once in the non-traditional job market. The provision of female support groups and women only training was seen as promoting effective and long standing networking between women operating in the non-traditional employment sector.

The findings of this research corroborate other findings examining the multitude of barriers women face when entering non-traditional ETE (for example see, Whittock, 2000). However, the WIW: BF programme has offered the opportunity to use innovative sampling techniques to examine these areas from the vantage point of disadvantaged women. Further, with the adoption of the workshop data collection, the women themselves have been afforded the unique opportunity to not only relate their experiences, but also be involved in the identification of support mechanisms, thereby directly influencing policy and practice.

The benefits of using the interactive workshop approach for the women involved are considerable. The feedback, which the research team have had, indicates the participants enjoyment of the whole process, as well as coming away feeling they have learned or reflected on something new. The women involved expressed their gratification at being 'given some time' to think about the issues discussed and significantly the women reported feeling

empowered as their views have been listened to, reflected back, on occasions challenged, but always validated. Women were excited that their views had been sought in terms of having an influence on the development of support mechanisms, which would be piloted in the traineeships and other projects in the next phase of the WIW: BF programme.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations will be of use to both employment related practitioners and policy makers whose work involves addressing the employment needs of women wanting to access non-traditional ETE. The views expressed in this study and the recommendations for support provided here come directly from the voices of women who participated in the research. The research team, as well as the women participating in the study however understand that the desirable outcome of women entering non-traditional ETE with ease is no small task. We hope that the following recommendations will assist in identifying priorities for the long-term commitment that is needed to support women into non-traditional employment:

### Attitudinal change

- Individual mechanisms need to be introduced to build women's confidence. Women could also benefit from increased knowledge and awareness of the impact of gender upon societal expectations
- Mentors and role models need to be positioned to inspire and provide valuable support for women accessing non-traditional ETE
- Awareness raising programmes need to be introduced in the workplace and in the community in order to generate more positive attitudes to women working in non-traditional sectors

### Organisational adaptability

- Effective policies and appropriate facilities need to be provided by employers to ensure women are comfortable and feel safe in their non-traditional working environments. Policies need to be effectively promoted among the workforce
- The introduction of more flexible working and training hours in organisations needs to be examined for both men and women in non-traditional sectors

### Practical assistance

- The introduction of adequate, affordable and most desirably on site childcare provision would provide valuable support for women accessing non-traditional sectors
- Financial support for childcare cost and re-training in non-traditional sectors and the increased availability of appropriate clothing for women would make women feel more adequately prepared to enter non-traditional ETE

### Awareness raising/Effective marketing

- The profile of non-traditional jobs for women needs to be increased through effective marketing strategies, targeted directly at women and girls
- Women and girls need to be alerted to the potential benefits of entering non-traditional ETE and careers advisors and parents need to ensure the effective promotion of opportunities in girls formative career choices
- Employers in non-traditional sectors need to be alerted to the potential benefits of employing women
- Work tasters and voluntary work should be made available for women and girls to explore the possibilities of non-traditional employment

## Empowering models of working

- The provision of female support groups and women only training would ensure women have the networks they need to sustain non-traditional careers
- Vocationally based training needs to be provided for women, their male colleagues and employers, to ensure an awareness of the potentially negative impacts of women joining a masculine work place culture and how best to overcome these

# Appendices

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# Appendix 1: Workshop Schedule

## Transparency

Introduction to team

Outline of research aims/ ways the data will be used/ confidentiality

Outline ground rules (respect for others views/ use of non-discriminatory language)

Flag up 'flow chart' on wall (break down of the day)

Explain 'thoughts and reflections' box

Fill in forms 'with' participants

## WARM UP

### Perceptions/ stereotypes

(focus on challenging stereotypes and raising awareness- definition of stereotype)

- **Has anyone ever done a non-traditional job?**
- Using flipchart paper (graph) self identify who has ever considered a non-traditional job
- Why? Why not? Reasons
- **Which jobs stereotypically done by men and/ or women?**
- Cards with different job titles (some blank to fill in too) place on flip chart paper: men/ women columns (putting 'both' on middle line). Give small number to each participant to 'place'
- Do the rest of the group agree- Why? Why not?
- Focus on which jobs could be done by either men and women- Why?
- **Advantages/ disadvantages of non-traditional jobs**
- Encourage women to examine the perceived advantages and disadvantages to working in a non-traditional job

## COFFEE BREAK

**Quiz:** Participants given three answer choices to statement (A, B, C):

- 1) 79% of adult men under 65 work. What is the percentage for women?  
a) 37%                      b) 52%                      c) 67% (EG)
- 2) What percentage of people employed as taxi/cab drivers are women?
- 3) What percentage of people employed as nurses are men?
- 4) In Britain we have a law requiring equal pay for men and women doing the same job. Based on an hourly rate, how much does a woman working full-time earn on average for every £10 that a man earns?
- 5) What percentage of people enrolled on construction courses in Further Education Colleges are women?
- 6) What percentage of women and men have flexible working arrangements with their employer?

Encourage discussion of these 'facts'

## Own experiences of ETE

- Influences on work decisions (friends, family, career advisors, teachers etc)
- Examine and explore any feelings of stigma attached to participants choices
- Own strengths/ skills/ qualities
- Encourage women to write their skills/ strengths on post it notes and put up on wall (organised/ time management/ thoughtful/ happy etc)
- Ask the group to go through each example and see if these qualities would be useful/ transferable into a non-traditional job?
- Do the women feel they would require any additional skills to enter non-traditional employment

## LUNCH

Over lunch highlight the adverts on the walls for jobs. Post-lunch ask them to discuss/ write down what is 'good' and 'bad' about the adverts in terms of encouraging women to apply. How could they be improved to encourage women to apply?

## WAKE UP EXERCISE:

### Barriers

- **What do you need to be happy in a work environment?**
- Encourage women to write/ draw a picture of what they value in a work place
- Imagine you were going to work as (construction/ bus driver/computer engineer/ own business) for the first time. Do you think you'd get the things you've highlighted as making you happy and comfortable at work?
- Why? And if not- why not?
- Are there any other things you think you'd need?
- **Personal and organisational barriers**
- What personal barriers do you see as problematic in entering non-traditional employment?
- What social and organisational barriers do you see as problematic in entering non-traditional employment?
- Write these barriers on post it notes, put on wall
- Encourage the women to organise these barriers according to significance
- Encourage discussion and working as a team

## COFFEE BREAK

### Support and Action

- Ladder of support on wall- at the bottom of the ladder is 'where we are now'- at the top is 'my ideal non-traditional job'
- Encourage the women to work together to fill in the various 'rungs' they feel they would need in order to climb to the 'ideal non-traditional job'
- Discussion- ensuring all participants are drawn into the discussion/ have expressed their views
- Reflecting back
- Would any of you now be interested in non-traditional jobs?

- Return to original flip chart and gauge any shifts in attitudes
- Referring back to the stereotypical male/ female differentiated jobs we divided in the original exercise- would any of you be interested in finding out more about ETE in these areas?

Encourage women to use the thoughts, reflections and recommendations box about the whole research/ workshop experience

Encourage women to fill out their address if they wish to be sent any further details and provide participants with SOVA support worker number to discuss training/ employment options

Hand out folder with contact details for advice and support

Hand out high street vouchers and chocolates

Thank the women for attending

# Appendix 2: Recruitment of participants



## RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WANTED: WOMEN INTO WORK: BUILDING FUTURES

### Who is doing the research?

The research is part of a national project called Women into Work: Building Futures and is funded by the European Social Fund. The project is being led by SOVA, a voluntary organisation. Women into Work: Building Futures is an exciting new initiative. We are working to promote opportunities in traditionally male dominated jobs (i.e building work) for women who have faced disadvantage. The research team is Caroline O’Keeffe from Sheffield Hallam University and Kay Nixon and Amy Christian from SOVA.

### Aim of the research:

The aim of the research is to identify the barriers faced by disadvantaged women in accessing and sustaining employment, training or education in non traditional jobs. We also want to highlight the action that needs to be taken to enable this to happen.

If you are a woman interested in taking part in this research, whether you have an interest in non traditional work or not, then we would like to hear from you.

So how will your experiences affect you when it comes to wanting to access employment, training, or education? Your views are important so let your voice be heard!

### What will it involve?

We will be using discussion groups to talk to around 60 women. There will be approximately 10 women in each group. This will be a very informal session using a variety of fun methods to gain your opinions. Involvement in the study is completely voluntary. Discussion groups will be arranged at a location near you and will take approximately 3.5 hours. This includes a break for lunch, which will be provided. As a sign of our appreciation each participant will receive a high street voucher and a box of chocolates. Any travel expenses or childcare costs incurred on the day will be refunded. You will also be provided with information about accessing non traditional training and work in your area and on going support can be offered if required.

These workshops will be taking place between now and the middle of November 2005.

### Confidentiality:

After the research has been completed, a report based on your comments and suggestions will be written. However, no names, addresses, or any other identifying features about you will be used in this report.

### What will it be used for?

As a result of your input into the research, projects will be set up around the country, designed to help and support women in overcoming the barriers they may face in accessing employment, training and education in non traditional areas.

For more information please contact Kay Nixon on 0114 270 3741

# Appendix 3: WiW: BF Ethical guidelines

## ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN INTO WORK: BUILDING FUTURES WORK SHOPS

### 1. Ethical Principles - General

1.1 In all circumstances, researchers must consider the ethical implications and consequences for the participants in their research. The essential principle is that the research should be considered from the standpoint of all participants; foreseeable threats to their safety, psychological well-being, health, values or dignity should be eliminated. Researchers should recognise that, in our multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society and where research involves individuals of different ages, gender and social background, researchers may not have sufficient knowledge of the implications of any investigation for the participants. It should be borne in mind that the best judge of whether research practice will cause offence may be members of the population from which the participants in the research are to be drawn.

### 2. Consent

2.1 Researchers shall carry out research only with the informed consent of participants, having taken all reasonable steps to ensure that they have adequately understood the nature of the research and its anticipated consequences. Prior to the workshops, women will be provided with comprehensive information about the Women into Work study, what to expect from the workshop and the ways in which the data arising from the workshops will be used.

2.2 At the onset of the research researchers will make plain to participants their right to withdraw from the research at any time, irrespective of whether or not reimbursement has been offered. It will also be made plain that women may take a break from the workshop at any point, if necessary.

2.3 Researchers will make audio recordings of participants only with the expressed agreement of those being recorded both to the recording being made and to the subsequent conditions of access to it.

### 3. Confidentiality

3.1 Researchers shall take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality of information acquired through their research as well as the total anonymity of participants. If it is thought the participant may be identifiable by the details of the information given during the research, researchers will change identifying details of that information in order to preserve the anonymity of the participant. Information which is given about an individual from a third party will not be disclosed when writing up the results, or at any time.

3.2 Researchers will take all reasonable steps to ensure that fellow colleagues with whom they work understand and respect the need for confidentiality regarding any information obtained. The following people only will be allowed access to the transcripts: Support Worker (Peer Research/Empowerment), Research Manager, Programme Manager, transcribers, women who participate in workshops.

3.3 In exceptional circumstances where there is sufficient evidence to raise serious concern about the safety of participants or about others who may be threatened by the participants, researchers will refer to their line manager and a decision will be taken regarding the appropriate course of action to be taken. The normal procedure would be to inform the Head (or other appropriate worker) of the agency from which the participant was referred.

### 4. Professional Role and Conduct of Researchers

4.1 Researchers do not have a therapeutic function in relation to participants. She will respond to issues raised by the participant which relate to her personal concerns and needs in a sensitive way. Researchers will use their discretion in identifying individuals who may need additional support following the workshop and will seek to provide, where possible, information about appropriate channels of support.

## **5. Personal Safety of Researchers**

- 5.1 During the course of conducting the research, researchers should not be expected to remain in any situation where there is a [potential] threat to their personal safety. Researchers reserve the right to withdraw from a workshop if they perceive their safety to be compromised. Researchers should inform their line manager if their personal safety has been compromised.
- 5.2 Researchers will carry mobile phones when travelling in case of emergencies.
- 5.3 Researchers will inform their line manager of the location and the time of the workshop being undertaken and report to their line manager when the task has been completed.
- 5.4 Suitable travel (and accommodation if overnight stay is necessary) arrangements should be made in advance of travel.
- 5.5 Researchers will endeavour to find a venue to conduct the workshops that is as relaxed and as private as possible. Where appropriate, individual agencies will be approached to seek accommodation for interviews.
- 5.6 Researchers shall not disclose any personal details about themselves (i.e. home address or telephone numbers).

## **6. Security of Records**

- 6.1 Researchers shall take all reasonable steps to safeguard the security of any records they make. Audio tapes/mini discs will be kept in a locked filing cabinet which may only be accessed by the research team and the tapes/mini discs will be destroyed once the research is complete.

## **7. Professional Integrity**

- 7.1 Researchers will endeavour to report the findings of the research truthfully and to represent women's views accurately.
- 7.2 Researchers will endeavour to conduct the research in a way which empowers women and validates their experiences.

# Appendix 4: Consent Form

## SOVA's Women Into Work: Building Futures Research Project

### Consent for Workshop

I agree to participate in the Women into Work: Building Futures workshop.

I have read and understood the information sheet which has been given to me regarding the 'Women Into Work: Building Futures' study.

I understand that my conversation will be confidential and my name or any identifying characteristics will not be used in any discussion or report unless I request otherwise. I understand that I can refuse to answer a question or take part in an exercise whenever I wish.

I agree to the material that is produced during the workshop being used in discussions and in reports published by Women into Work: Building Futures.

This confidentiality applies throughout the workshop run by the 'Women Into Work: Building Futures' researchers. The only exception to this would be in the unlikely event that I inform them of any activity which may be harmful to myself or others.

I agree to my details being kept on a computerised or manual database as stated under The Data Protection Act 1998, and upon request I can access these records at any time.

**Signature:** .....

**Name in Full:** .....

**Date:** .....

### Consent for Tape Recording

I agree for a tape recorder to be used during the workshop.

**Signature:** .....

**Name in Full:** .....

**Date:** .....

# Appendix 5: Data analysis themes

## Themes

- Perceived suitability of non traditional jobs for women
- Advantages of non traditional jobs for women/for employers
- Barriers to non traditional jobs
  - Individual perceptions
  - Societal perceptions
  - Practical issues (inc Health & Safety)
  - Lack of knowledge/awareness
  - Masculine workplace culture (categorisation of women)

## Coping Strategies

## Support Needed

- Attitudinal Change (individual, societal, organisational)
- Organisational Adaptability
- Practical Assistance
- Awareness Raising/Effective Marketing
- Empowering models of working

# Appendix 6: Enrolment Form



## Women Into Work: Building Futures ESF Beneficiary Enrolment Form

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Women into Work: Building Futures research. The form you are about to complete will be kept strictly confidential and as soon as an Identity code has been assigned to your individual form, **the front sheet containing your personal details will be removed and kept separate from the other information.** This is a unique piece of research to gather **your** opinions and experiences therefore please answer as honestly as possible.

<b>Research Code:</b> _____	<b>ID Code:</b> _____ For Office Use Only
<b>General Details</b>	
Name: _____	
Age: _____	
Number of children under 18: _____	
National Insurance No: _____	
Address: _____ _____ _____	
Post Code: _____	
Telephone No: _____	

## Employment Details

Research Code:

ID Code:

Are you currently: (Please tick one box only)

- Self-employed
- Full Time employed
- Company size (no. of employees)**
- more than 250
- less than 250

If employed please state job title \_\_\_\_\_

**If unemployed, please state how long you have been out of work before becoming involved in the Women Into Work programme.**

- Unemployed →
- House person / carer
- Retired
- In further/higher education
- Voluntary Work
- Other please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- Less than six months
- Six to 11 months
- 12 to 23 months
- 24 to 35 months
- 36 months and over

## Qualifications

Please state your highest qualification (if any)  
(eg. NVQ, A Levels etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Health

Please indicate if any of the following apply:

- Physical disability
- Mental disability
- Learning difficulties eg. Dyslexia etc.
- Currently or in the past received any professional support or medication for your emotional well being eg. Depression, stress etc.

## Ethnic Group

To which of the following ethnic groups do you belong?

- White – British
- White – Irish
- White – Other
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Mixed – White and Asian
- Mixed – Other
- Asian or Asian British – Indian
- Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British – Other
- Black or Black British – Caribbean
- Black or Black British – African
- Black or Black British – Other
- Chinese
- Other (please state)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Background

Please tick all boxes which appropriately describe your background and / or current situation:

- Ex-offender
- Homeless
- Refugee
- Asylum Seeker
- Drug / Alcohol Misuser
- Roma / Traveller
- From Disadvantaged Area (10% most deprived wards)
- Domestic Abuse (physical or mental)
- Other please state

\_\_\_\_\_

### Current Situation

Please tick all boxes which appropriately describe your current situation:

- In custody
- Prison leaver under statutory supervision
- Homeless
- Currently looking for work
- Seeking employment – need basic skills support
- Lone parent / care responsibilities
- 16-17 year old in danger of being excluded from school
- Other(please state)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Please describe your current accommodation?

- Hostel
- Council House
- Housing Association
- Private Rent
- Owner Occupier
- Living with Friends/Family
- Bed and Breakfast
- Temporary/transient accommodation
- Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you think your accommodation is adequate/suitable for your needs?**

- Yes
- No

### In Custody

If in custody, please complete the following:

Earliest release date: \_\_\_\_\_ FLED Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be living in a country within Europe on release?  YES  NO

### Optional Questions

How would you describe your sexuality/sexual orientation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Faith/Religion/Beliefs

How would you describe your religious beliefs or beliefs that you hold (if any)?

\_\_\_\_\_

### European Social Fund

This project is being part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Have you been a beneficiary of any other ESF funded programmes in the last three years?  YES  NO

### Data Protection Act

The information contained on this form will be stored in electronic and paper format and will be used for the purpose of the Women Into Work project only. The information will be destroyed once it is no longer required for the purpose of the project, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### Beneficiary Declaration

I declare that the details given on this form are true to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### For Office Use Only

ESF Eligibility Criteria Satisfied:  YES  NO

Beneficiary Reference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Project Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected End Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Actual End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

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'I ain't no tea lady'

by Caroline O'Keefe and Dr Katherine Wilkinson

**Women into Work is managed by SOVA in partnership with the following agencies**

Cambridge Training and Development Ltd (Tribal), Clean Break, Durham Business School, The Fawcett Society, Prison Service - Women's Team, Incredit Ltd, NACRO, National Offenders Management Service (NOMS), Sheffield Hallam University, Stonham Housing Association.

For further information about Women into Work: Building Futures and the partnership please contact: Women into Work: Building Futures, Floor 3, St Silas House, 18 Moore Street, Sheffield, S3 7UW

Telephone: 0114 270 3727

Or visit: [www.wiw.org.uk](http://www.wiw.org.uk)



Hallam Centre for Community Justice

