

20th March 2023

Dear Claire Baker MSP,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2023, regarding evidence given by myself and Gordon McGuinness on behalf of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to the Economy and Fair Work Committee.

The work you reference in your letter with regard to analysing the changing demand for green jobs and skills in the short, medium, and long-term, is due to be presented to the Grangemouth Future Industry Board (GFIB) on the 21st March, with the final report due to be available by the end of March. We will therefore share this with the Committee in due course.

While the issue of gender is a consideration in this work, the report is looking at industry demand for skills rather than making recommendations on how to meet this demand.

Women's access to training, upskilling, and reskilling in STEM fields is a key concern for SDS, particularly in increasing the number of women taking up apprenticeships in STEM sectors. Crucial to this work is a partnership approach, as SDS does not hold all the levers necessary to ensure women's participation in STEM sectors.

For example, in September 2020, SDS procured three projects, with Napier University and Stirling University, West College and Forth Valley College, and UHI Inverness, to develop sustainable local pipelines to recruit, prepare and progress women aged 16-24 into STEM careers, including progression into Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships. Although impacted by the pandemic, the three projects have undertaken a variety of activity and are now developing their recommendations and making available the resources developed.

On a national level, SDS also commissioned Equate Scotland to conduct research into recruitment practices within construction, and to develop recommendations to support the sector to encourage more women entrants. We are working closely with the construction sector to respond to these recommendations.

SDS will continue to work with partners to support women into STEM learning and careers.

I hope this information is helpful.

Kind regards

Ronnie Palin

Regional Skills Planning Lead for Central Scotland
Skills Development Scotland