

Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative

Consultation

Policy Research Institute

Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative Consultation

For:

UK Commission for Employment and Skills

By:

David Devins

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Policy Research Institute

Faculty of Business and Law
Leeds Metropolitan University
22 Queen Square
Leeds LS2 8AJ

☎ (00) 44 (0)113 283 1960

📠 (00) 44 (0)113 283 1961

🌐 www.lmu.ac.uk/lbs/pri

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report has been commissioned by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills ('the Commission') to underpin the development of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative (WWSPI). It draws on a rapid review of the literature and semi-structured interviews with twenty one key stakeholders with an interest in the programme. The aim of this study is outlined in the Invitation to tender (p2) as being

'to take the main recommendations from the evaluations and subsequent feedback from key stakeholders and provide a balanced report for the UK commission which gives the pros and cons for potential routes the future strategy might take for the programme beyond its current funding expiry in March 2011'.

Background

2. In 2006, the Women and Work Commission published their review which examined the causes of the gender pay gap and made forty recommendations aimed at bringing about culture change and maximising the potential of women in the workforce.
3. Responding to these recommendations, the government put forward a range of proposals one of which was for the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative (WWSPI) in England. The WWSPI pilot sought to develop projects providing women with the skills, confidence and mentoring support to progress or move into male dominated occupations.
4. The WWSPI pilot was completed in March 2008 and due to the success of the programme, further funding was made available for subsequent phases to 2011.
5. A review of the Women and Work Commission published earlier this year highlights the contribution of a £40m package of measures to support women in raising their skills including WWSPI, adult apprenticeship and Train to Gain. It highlights the success of WWSPI and recommends that these programmes continue to gain support from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills.
6. This WWSPI consultation is based on a rapid review of relevant literature and interviews with twenty one stakeholders drawn from a range of government Departments and the Sector Skills Councils implementing the initiative.

Study Findings

7. The vast majority of stakeholders contributing to the consultation recognise WWSPI as a policy instrument with a focus on realising the potential of women in the labour market with particular reference to addressing employer skills shortages and skills gaps which affect productivity and competitiveness.
8. Equality and diversity is embedded in the human resources (HR) and procurement practices of the organisations which make up the employment and skills infrastructure delivering this and other active labour market interventions.
9. WWSPI sits within a framework where a range of policies and regulatory developments seek to further the equality agenda. These include for example: several measures to support better work life balance; improved affordable quality and access to childcare services; equal pay legislation and training and awareness raising campaigns.
10. There are a range of existing policy interventions (often seeking to attract women into sectors where they are under-represented) however WWSPI is differentiated in terms of a combination of (i) the extent to which it focuses on the progression of women already in work (ii) the nature of the activities funded (e.g. personal development programmes, coaching and mentoring).
11. Whilst there is considerable analysis of the causes of the gender pay gap, research into the impact of policies is scarce.

Strengths and weaknesses of WWSPI

12. The vast majority of stakeholders identify WWSPI as an important vehicle to take forward the equalities agenda in the UK in a practical way. However a small minority of stakeholders draw attention to the limitations of WWSPI when faced with the size of the challenge associated with closing the gender-pay gap and encouraging cultural change.
13. All the SSC stakeholders report the important role WWSPI plays in employer engagement. Its strength comes from combining the needs of the sector (as articulated in the Sector Skills Agreement), with the specific needs of the employer and the individual employee (i.e. woman beneficiary). However stakeholders express mixed views of the extent to which WWSPI engages employers more generally with some projects focussing on larger employers and

others seeking to engage small and micro enterprises (organisations often neglected by mainstream policy and delivery)

14. Many stakeholders identify the extent to which WWSPI seeks to support the improvement of performance of both individual women and organisations. The majority of stakeholders recognise the difficulties associated with attributing improved competitiveness to skills related interventions but many of them draw attention to the human capital developed at the individual and organisational level through participation in WWSPI.
15. WWSPI was established as a pilot to test out new approaches to removing the barriers women face in getting into or on in the workplace whilst at the same time maximising their contribution to reducing skills gaps and shortages in the workforce. The target driven nature of the WWSPI is seen by several stakeholders as a strength in terms of focussing on delivery but also as a weakness in terms of limiting risk taking and further innovation.
16. The programme affords considerable flexibility and is able to accommodate both those disadvantaged in the labour market (e.g. with no or low qualifications) employed in relatively poorly paid occupations as well as those well qualified and in relatively well paid occupations.

Threats and opportunities

17. The most prominent threat to the WWSPI identified by stakeholders is the withdrawal of funding.
18. A majority of stakeholders identify the performance of the programme as either a threat or an opportunity. A couple of strategic stakeholders noted 'underperformance' in terms of (i) meeting programme targets (ii) its limited impact on the 'big issues' in terms of closing the gender pay gap and encouraging women into sectors where they are underrepresented. In contrast to these views, the vast majority of stakeholders viewed WWSPI as a considerable success and an opportunity to be built on in the future. For example, they point to reductions in cost/outcome achieved over time, value for money in terms of the nature of the intervention and increasing employer investment in training through employer match contributions
19. The vast majority of stakeholders draw attention to the positive impact of WWSPI on the equalities agenda and the unique, practical and positive contribution it can

make through its connection and 'hands on support' for both employer and individual women.

20. Several stakeholders outline an uncertain policy environment where agencies and roles are emerging and sectoral and regional interests continue to be played out.
21. A couple of strategic stakeholders identified an opportunity to change the orientation of the programme from one which seeks to train women for work in sectors where they are currently under-represented to one which seeks to train women for the jobs of the future.
22. State Aid has re-emerged as an issue which contributes to the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of WWSPI. The collection of beneficiary information required by some interpretations of State Aid could act as a major disincentive to employer and employee participation.

Policy Options

23. A key element of the WWSPI consultation is to explore the preferred policy option for the future development of the programme. Three options were envisaged (i) continuation (ii) expansion (iii) decommissioning.
24. The majority of stakeholders expressed a strong preference for continuation and expansion of WWSPI largely based on the views that concluded (i) an effective infrastructure exists for the continued delivery of a successful intervention (ii) WWSPI acts as a 'beacon' for equal opportunities and provides a forum for policy development and practice (iii) a lot of work is still required to embed the concept of positive action amongst employers.
25. All the stakeholders recognised that it might be difficult to argue for the expansion of the programme given the prevailing public spending climate. A minority of stakeholders argued for expansion on the basis of employer and individual demand for the services supported by WWSPI. More generally there was considerable appetite for expansion amongst SSC stakeholders.
26. Two options for expansion were specifically explored with stakeholders (i) expansion within the SSC network (ii) expansion amongst the Devolved Administrations.

27. The majority of stakeholders favoured the current approach to the programme based on offering an opportunity to bid for WWSPI funds across the network on an annual basis (whilst providing some certainty surrounding continuity funding for those projects that were performing well and seeking continuation).
28. The vast majority of the stakeholders in favour of continuation and expansion expressed a preference for expansion beyond England to involve the Devolved Administrations. Research in the Devolved Administrations identifies a gender pay gap which largely mirrors the situation in England and provides a rationale for policy intervention. Stakeholders in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales suggest that there is room in the national landscape for an intervention like WWSPI and that it would complement rather than duplicate existing activity and be welcomed as a means of giving the equality agenda fresh impetus.
29. Three strategic stakeholders were in favour of discontinuing the programme. These stakeholders generally recognised the benefit of the programme in terms of individual and organisational impact but were unconvinced that the programme was achieving what it set out to do in terms of narrowing the gender pay gap or achieving wider cultural change.

Funding options

30. All the stakeholders contributing to the consultation recognised the difficult funding context that currently exists.
31. The majority of stakeholders favouring continuation and expansion of the programme favoured mainstreaming to put the programme on a firmer policy and financial footing. The majority of stakeholders suggested that a similar level of funding would be required with a pro rata addition to include coverage of the Devolved Administrations.
32. Train to Gain was the favoured option of a small minority of stakeholders. The Women and Work funding could be used to provide a 10-15% premium for providers to recruit women in sectors where it will make a difference and in this way the comparably large resources associated with Train to Gain could be used to scale up provision. However the vast majority of stakeholders were not in favour of placing WWSPI within Train to Gain for a range of reasons including (i) loss of programme identity and focus (ii) limited eligibility (iii) no coverage in the Devolved Administrations.

33. The European Social Fund was identified as a potential avenue for funding however the process appears far from straightforward and requires further investigation.
34. A couple of stakeholders suggested that increased private sector funding through greater matched contribution from employers - particularly large employers who have benefited from the programme in previous years - may be an avenue worthy of further consideration.

Governance

35. The vast majority of stakeholders wishing to continue or expand the programme suggested that the current governance arrangements should remain in place with the programme overseen through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and administered and coordinated by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
36. If the WWSPI is to be expanded in the Devolved Administrations, further investigation is required to ensure that expansion is sensitive to the context of each nation.

Towards the future

37. The policy context is seen to be relatively favourable with the Equality Agenda currently championed by the Women and Work Commission and at the highest levels of government (e.g. Minister for Women and Equality). WWSPI provides a unique intervention which positively supports elements of the employment and skills infrastructure, employers and individual women to engage with the agenda. However, further consideration needs to be given to the strategic linkages between WWSPI and the other skills related interventions associated with the Women and Work Commission agenda.
38. The majority of stakeholders directly involved in the development and implementation of the WWSPI continue to talk enthusiastically about the programme and its benefits and wish to see it continue. However some strategic stakeholders remain unconvinced and the evidence base underpinning the programme requires review. Several stakeholders express the desire for greater promotion of the programme amongst a wider stakeholder group.

39. The research and analysis underpinning understanding of the gender pay continues to develop and this should be used to inform the development of the WWSPI in the future.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills ('the Commission') to underpin the development of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative (WWSPI). It draws on a rapid review of the literature and semi-structured interviews with twenty one key stakeholders with an interest in the programme. The aim of this study is outlined in the Invitation to tender (p2) as being

'to take the main recommendations from the evaluations and subsequent feedback from key stakeholders and provide a balanced report for the UK commission which gives the pros and cons for potential routes the future strategy might take for the programme beyond its current funding expiry in March 2011'.

1.1 Background

In the summer of 2004 Baroness Prosser was asked to Chair an independent review (the Women and Work Commission) to examine the causes of the gender pay and opportunities gap and to find practical ideas to close it within a generation. At the same time skills policy, identified as a central element to the government's strategy to meet the twin policy priorities associated with social justice and improving competitiveness, was under review by Lord Sandy Leitch. The influential Leitch Review (HMT 2006) published in December set a challenging agenda and an ambition for the UK to be a world leader in skills by 2020.

Earlier in the year (February 2006) the Women and Work Commission published their review and made recommendations in the report 'Shaping a Fairer Future'. The review drew attention to the many advances in women's position in society and at work made in the thirty years since the Equal Pay Act, with more women in employment and occupying senior positions than ever before. However in spite of recent progress a pay and opportunity gap for women remain and the review highlighted the need for a change in culture to maximise the potential contribution of women. Many girls and young women are still following traditional routes in education and training into occupations and sectors which pay less than other (more male dominated) occupations. It is argued that a fundamental change is needed in order to challenge assumptions about the types of jobs women and men can do. The Commission set out a wide-ranging and challenging agenda, making forty

recommendations aimed at bringing about culture change and maximising the potential of Women in the Workforce.

Responding to these recommendations, the Government Action Plan, published in September 2006 put forward a range of proposals, one of which was for the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative (WWSPI). This led to the development of a £10m (matched by employers) pilot project to support Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to develop projects providing women with the skills, confidence and mentoring support to progress or move into male-dominated occupations. The Commission coordinated and administered WWSPI on behalf of the Department of Innovation Universities and Skills.

The WWSPI pilot was completed in March 2008 and due to the success of the programme, further funding was made available for subsequent phases to 2011. The initial pilot programme (to 2008) was subject to two accompanying evaluations, one a qualitative evaluation undertaken by ourselves to inform the development of the programme (PRI 2009) and another to explore beneficiary (employer and individual) experiences and outcomes (IFF 2009).

A review of the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission published earlier this year (WWC 2009) highlights the contribution of a £40m package of measures to support women in raising their skills including WWSPI, adult apprenticeships and Train to Gain. It highlights the success of WWSPI and the large numbers of women (almost 12,000) that have benefited from the support of this initiative and have either got into or had support to progress in sectors and occupations where they are under-represented and where specific skills shortages and gaps exist. The Women and Work Commission review continues 'we want to encourage the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to continue to support these programmes and all stakeholders involved (p 19).

2 STUDY FINDINGS

The WWSPI consultation is based on a rapid, targeted review of literature (Appendix 1) and interviews with twenty one stakeholders identified by the Commission (see Appendix 2). The stakeholders are drawn from a variety of organisations and Government Departments and the vast majority have some connection with the WWSPI either through delivery by their organisation (referred to as ‘SSC stakeholders’) or contribution to the Steering Group overseeing the development and delivery of the programme (Strategic Stakeholders). Where there are differences apparent in the views of these stakeholder groups, they are highlighted in the text.

A semi-structured discussion guide was designed to capture the views of stakeholders contributing to the consultation (Appendix 3). A summary of the key findings of the evaluations of Phase 1 of the WWSPI was provided to stakeholders as contextual information prior to consultation (Appendix 4). For the purposes of the analysis underpinning this report the ‘vast majority’ of stakeholders refers to eighteen or more of the twenty one contributors, the majority refers to between eleven and seventeen, a minority (between three and nine) and a small minority (less than three of the stakeholders).

2.1 Context

The rationale for public sector intervention is often couched in economic terms with a primary focus on overcoming market failure or social justice and the uneven distribution of economic benefits. The WWSPI seeks to address labour market failure in terms of skills gaps and skills shortages identified through research with employers undertaken by SSCs to inform their Sector Skills Agreements whilst at the same time addressing social justice issues in terms of the variation in pay as evidenced by the gender pay gap.

2.1.1 Rationale

The WWSPI policy measure is widely recognised as an instrument to take forward the Women and Work Commission agenda with a focus on realising the potential of women in the labour market with particular reference to addressing employer skills shortages and skills gaps which affect productivity and competitiveness. The majority of stakeholders contributing to this consultation articulate the rationale underpinning WWSPI in terms of gender segregation and its impact on the gender

related pay gap. The majority of stakeholders also highlight the contribution WWSPI has to play in both the equality and competitiveness agendas as well as an employer-led approach to skills policy.

Stakeholders generally identify the focus of WWSPI as based on attracting women into sectors or occupations where they are under-represented and the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring to an organisation. Some stakeholders identify sectors where women are widely recognised to be under-represented (such as construction or engineering for example) and the need to encourage women to enter these sectors. However the vast majority of stakeholders draw attention to occupational segregation and the need for women to attain greater representation in a range of roles often connected with supervision, management and leadership. For several stakeholders, WWSPI is about encouraging women to look at their careers through a wider lens as opposed to being limited by their current jobs. It is an initiative which is seen to provide support to realise the potential of women in the labour market whilst at the same time meeting both specific employer needs and wider sectoral interests.

2.1.2 Nature of intervention under WWSPI

The WWSPI funded a range of projects which sought to support (i) the recruitment and retention of women, (ii) career progression of women and/or (iii) culture change amongst employers. The Qualitative Evaluation (PRI 2009) identified two broad types of projects funded through WWSPI as 'fixed' or 'flexible' approaches to intervention. The majority of WWSPI interventions were 'fixed' in nature where the intervention was prescriptive and the content clearly defined (e.g. Basic Skills embedded in infection control, LGV Driving Licence, Personal Development Programme). However several interventions were based on more open or flexible offerings which provided the employer with considerable control over the nature, supply and training funded under WWSPI. The majority of the interventions focussed on overcoming vertical segregation through encouraging the career progression of women. A smaller number (in terms of both projects and participants) sought to address horizontal segregation through the recruitment and retention of women into sectors where they were underrepresented.

2.1.3 Alternative or complementary policy measures

A range of policies and legislative developments seek to further the equality agenda. These include for example several measures to support better work-life balance;

improved affordable, quality and access to childcare services; equal pay legislation and training and awareness raising campaigns to inform companies of the benefits of tackling gender stereotyping.

Within the employment and skills infrastructure, equality and diversity is embedded in the Human Resources and procurement practices of key organisations developing and delivering these measures. For example organisations such as DWP/Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council seek to embrace equality (and diversity) by targeting resources on specific groups (e.g. women returning to the labour market, those with low or no qualifications). A key mechanism for this is through the terms and conditions of contracts with providers required to ensure that they and their subcontractors promote equality of opportunity for all persons irrespective of their race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Commissioning organisations often have an Equality Policy or objectives which providers are required to comply with and providers are expected to promote equality in a proactive way by integrating gender equality and equal opportunities into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of delivery.

In addition to the embedding of equal opportunities within the HR practices of key organisations, the need to overcome gender segregation in the labour market continues to influence the design of mainstream provision. For example, Adult Apprenticeships are an important route for women to enter the labour market or change direction of their career and the proposed pilots to address under-representation of women (along with other groups at risk of disadvantage) are a key emerging development.

A recent review of pay gaps by Hillary Metcalf (2009) suggested that research into the impact of policies and the gender pay gap is scarce, with most research focusing on analysis of economic activity by gender. An illustration of this is provided by the European Commission which set targets associated with the Lisbon Objective of 2010 associated with female employment. In the UK it has increased has increased to 65.2% in 2007 with the UK ranked 5th out of 27 countries (EC 2009). Metcalf did find that two legislative developments - Equal Pay legislation and the introduction of the minimum wage - have played a key role in closing the gender pay gap. However research has tended to discuss the causes of the gender pay gap rather than evaluate the impact of interventions themselves.

Stakeholders contributing to the consultation drew attention to a wide range of policy approaches which have been introduced to address the gender pay gap and equality and diversity more generally. For example, the Government Equalities Office has a PSA target associated with reducing the gender pay gap and a remit which covers a range of measures including the Equalities Bill (which encourages organisations to be open and transparent about a range of employment issues (e.g. process of recruitment, grades and rewards) and BIS funded initiatives such as SET (Women in Science, Engineering and Technology) and STEM (Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Ambassadors to encourage school age children and young women to consider alternative non-traditional career paths. The Careers Advice Service is identified as having a key role to play in challenging stereotypes associated with occupations and the world of work. Other stakeholders drew attention to initiatives such as Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) which seek to attract women into sectors where they are underrepresented. Several SSCs (including for example SEMTA and Construction Skills) support projects and initiatives to encourage women to work in sectors where they are underrepresented and there are a range of networks some of which are, for example sector based e.g. Women and Property, Science Engineering, Technology (SET) and some of which are large organisation based (SEMTA report two emerging through WWSPI). There are several centres (e.g. UK Resource Centre for Women in Science Engineering and Technology, Training for Women Network in Northern Ireland) which support women to enter and progress in various sectors and occupations.

Equality is a key cross cutting theme associated with European Funding and structural funds such as the European Social Fund (ESF) embrace regulatory compliance, targeting of beneficiaries, championing and funding of a small number of specific projects to take the agenda forward (ESF 2009) . A number of small scale (e.g. LSC/ESF) funded projects to support women in specific sectors and locations have been funded in the past and the European Commission has recently published some cases of good practice in a range of European countries (EC 2009a). However the overall scale and scope of current activity in England is unclear although none of the stakeholders participating in the consultation identified any initiatives currently running that duplicated the WWSPI programme.

The key differentiating factors of the WWSPI are identified by stakeholders as twofold. Firstly, the extent to which WWSPI supports progression as opposed to entry into sectors or occupations where women are under-represented. In this way

the opportunity for overlap with the range of initiatives targeting women returning to work or leaving education is minimised. Secondly the nature of the activities supported through WWSPI is different to those available through the publicly funded employment and skills system elsewhere. Some stakeholders recognise a potential overlap with mainstream initiatives such as Train to Gain and Skills for Life. However the nature of the WWSPI intervention (e.g. career development, coaching, mentoring) is often very different to that provided through these mainstream initiatives and so actual duplication of activity is assessed by stakeholders close to delivery as being negligible. It would appear that considerable effort is taken at the operational level to ensure that this is the case particularly given the increased flexibilities given to mainstream initiatives such as Train to Gain over the past year. In cases where WWSPI activity (e.g. career planning, acquisition of soft skills) and Train to Gain activity connect, WWSPI is assessed by SSC stakeholders to complement the training provided through Train to Gain and other initiatives such as Skills for Life adding to the range of solutions available to employers rather than duplicating mainstream activity.

A further area of potential duplication/cross-over given the nature and focus of several WWSPI interventions relates to leadership and management. However an initial search for information relating to relevant policy interventions (beyond mainstream offerings through Further and Higher Education) and stakeholder consultation did not reveal specific interventions in England. This may require further investigation in order to assess the connections (or otherwise) between WWSPI and policy measures associated with leadership and management.

2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the WWSPI

Stakeholders identify a range of strengths and weaknesses associated with the WWSPI. The responses have been analysed in relation to key policy challenges associated with the equality and skills agenda.

2.2.1 The Equality Agenda

The majority of stakeholders identify WWSPI as an important vehicle to take the equalities agenda forward in the UK. The Women and Work Commission review of progress three years on highlights its important role and recognises its relative success in comparison with the other Women and Work skills related interventions (WWC 2009). The equalities bill continues to give prominence to the agenda and

WWSPI is seen by several stakeholders as the key means of taking the agenda forward in a practical way. In the eyes of one strategic stakeholder it is seen as a refreshing change from the normative approach often adopted in this agenda based on 'telling businesses that they should be doing something different'. Several stakeholders noted that it provides an approach which 'allows us to work with employers directly and help to take the agenda forward in a practical way'. The majority of stakeholders view it as a 'flagship' or 'beacon' and an important reference point in moving the equality agenda forward. Most of the SSCs contributing to the consultation express 'pleasant surprise' associated with the commitment of employers towards this agenda as taken forward through the WWSPI.

However a small minority of stakeholders draw attention to the limitations of WWSPI when faced with the size of the task in overcoming the gender-pay gap and wider cultural change. They point to the small scale of the intervention (£5m per annum compared with a skills and education budget of £billions) and limited sectoral coverage. They also express some doubt as to the connection between the development of skills, progression and pay drawing attention to the many other factors which may come into play when employers recruit or promote staff.

2.2.2 Employer engagement

All the SSC representatives contributing to the consultation report the important role WWSPI plays in employer engagement. It is variously recognised as a 'tool', 'service' or 'solution' which employers can access through the SSC. It combines the needs of the sector (articulated in the SSA) with the specific needs of the employer (through interaction with the intermediary) and the individual (through the WWSPI intervention). It provides the opportunity to fund specific interventions which are not part of mainstream provision which are directly related to taking the organisation forward and meeting the interests of both the employer and the individual.

By working closely with individual employers, WWSPI is able to address immediate issues and provide a financial incentive to support changed approaches to a variety of employer HR practices and in this way start to advance organisational (and potentially cultural) change. Whilst several stakeholders overseeing delivery of the programme draw attention to the challenge associated with engaging employers and individuals and delivering training within the funding period (up to twelve months but often shorter due to contracting delays), the flexibility of the initiative provides the basis to develop a relationship with an employer and many SSCs view it as an

important 'door-opener' to begin a skills related dialogue with employers. It can provide an initial foundation upon which many SSCs appear to have been able to build a relationship which leads to greater employer engagement in a range of subsequent skills related activities.

Stakeholders express mixed views of the extent to which WWSPI engages employers more generally. In some instances the interventions are focussed on larger companies who have a high profile in the sector and who are seen to be able to influence the supply chain. In other cases the programme seeks to engage a greater number of small and micro enterprises - organisations which are often neglected by mainstream policy and delivery.

2.2.3 Competitiveness

A key strength identified by the majority of stakeholders is the degree to which WWSPI links to the performance of individuals and organisations. The programme is founded upon addressing sectoral skills gaps and skills shortages which adversely impact on productivity and competitiveness. Several stakeholders draw attention to the grounded nature of the WWSPI and the closeness of the link between organisational and individual (women's) interests. The majority of stakeholders recognise the difficulties associated with attributing improved competitiveness to skilled related interventions but many of them draw attention to the close fit between the human capital developed at the individual and organisational level through participation in WWSPI. Many highlight the connection between WWSPI and the utilisation of skills in the workplace and contrast it favourably with alternative, qualifications based approaches to skills development.

2.2.4 Innovation

The WWSPI was established as a pilot programme to test out new approaches to removing the barriers women face in getting into or on in the workplace whilst at the same time maximising their contribution to reducing skills gaps in the workforce. However the programme framework is seen to be a source of strength and as a weakness. The target driven nature of the WWSPI is seen by several stakeholders as a strength in terms of focussing delivery to 'get things done' (within a year) but also as a weakness in terms of limiting risk taking and further innovation. The targets have made the initiative in the words of one strategic stakeholder 'more measurable than most' and a minority of other stakeholders suggest that the WWSPI

has led to the development of interventions (e.g. 'bite size learning' and coaching and mentoring) in tune with the trajectory of policy in terms of for example qualifications reform, approaches to delivery and skills utilisation.

The targets for the programme are identified by a minority as a limited and unsatisfactory measure (as they fall some way from assessing impact on culture and the gender pay gap). However at the same time a minority of participants in the consultation suggest that WWSPI has helped to encourage the employment and skills infrastructure to look beyond outputs associated with a job outcome or a qualification. One strategic stakeholder noted 'it has encouraged people to look beyond ticking a box where it does not really matter what happens next to consider the longer term development of women and particularly longer term support for employers in terms of how to approach diversity'.

2.2.5 Target groups

The WWSPI programme has afforded considerable flexibility in terms of the target groups often associated with labour market intervention. Several stakeholders report that WWSPI is different in the degree to which it focuses on a range of occupations and those already in work, some of whom may have low or no qualifications and be employed in relatively poorly paid occupations and some of whom may be well qualified and in relatively well paid occupations. The intervention is influenced by the sectoral interests at the strategic level and employer interests at the delivery level and this is seen by stakeholders offering a flexible offering as a major strength of the programme. Several WWSPI projects support different groups within the workforce (e.g. operatives, supervisors, craft workers, managers) and consequently the employer-supply side interface is afforded considerable flexibility in order to address occupational segregation.

2.3 Threats and opportunities

The stakeholders identified a number of threats and opportunities facing the WWSPI. The most prominent of these threats relate to the current economic pressures and the anticipated squeeze on public funding. WWSPI, as a relatively small scale pilot programme, is seen as a potential target for those making strategic choices associated with funding. Four general threats or opportunities were identified by stakeholders participating in the consultation. These are programme performance;

the equalities agenda; the governance of the employment and skills systems and State Aid.

2.3.1 Programme performance

A majority of stakeholders identify the performance of the programme either as a threat or an opportunity. A couple of strategic stakeholders noted the 'underperformance' of the programme and illustrated this in a couple of ways. Firstly, its shortfall in achieving the headline targets (10,000 women beneficiaries in Phase 1 and 5,000 in subsequent phases). It was argued that this leaves the impression that it has struggled to engage women and that the programme has not been able to address achieving the target over the years. This was perceived to leave it vulnerable to decision-makers looking to 'cut' policy interventions which were not 'hitting targets' and which might be viewed in these terms as 'unsuccessful'. Secondly, in terms of its limited impact on the 'big issues' underpinning the rationale for the policy intervention namely horizontal segregation and the gender pay gap. Whilst its impact on individual women and to a lesser extent participating organisations is recognised by all stakeholders contributing to the consultation, a small minority of stakeholders (all strategic) remain to be convinced that the programme is achieving what it set out to do. They recognise that it has very ambitious aims and objectives associated with individual opportunity, organisational and cultural change however they remain unconvinced by the evidence emerging from the programme in terms of its impact on the issues at the core of the Women and Work Commission Agenda such as gender pay and wider cultural perspectives for example.

In contrast to these views the vast majority of stakeholders viewed the intervention as a considerable success and an opportunity to be further developed. For example stakeholders drew attention to a range of issues including the following

- efficiencies gained over time and the reduction in cost per output/outcome achieved in subsequent phases of the programme
- perceptions that it represented good value for money both in terms of the intervention itself and in terms of the cost per beneficiary
- increasing employer investment in training through matched contributions

Several stakeholders suggested that the argument could be made to increase investment in the programme given its impact on women beneficiaries and employer engagement. The argument was made by one strategic stakeholder that ‘it takes a lot of little things to start to change the culture and WWSPI is an important aspect of this – it punches above its weight – a much bigger pot of money would mean that we could influence many more organisations and individual women’. However expectations were tinged with pragmatic realism given the current state of the public finances.

2.3.2 The Equality agenda

The vast majority of stakeholders draw attention to the positive impact of WWSPI on the equalities agenda. At a strategic level, the agenda carries substantial weight at the European, national and local level and this is seen by several strategic and SSC Stakeholders to afford an opportunity for the WWSPI to make a unique, practical and positive contribution to the agenda through its connection with and ‘hands on support’ for both employers and individual women.

2.3.3 The governance of the employment and skills system

The employment and skills infrastructure remains in a constant state of flux and there are some concerns that changes may impact on the programme. For example, the role of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) was identified by a couple of stakeholders as an example of the uncertain context. On the one hand recent policy direction appears to suggest that RDAs will have greater role in the development of the skills agenda at the regional level and wield considerable influence over the emergent Skills Funding Agency. On the other hand elements of skills policy is devolving to Local Authorities who are expected to provide strategic direction and connect skills with local economic development. Local Employment and Skills Boards are seeking to engage employers and articulate their needs at the local level whilst SSCs are undertaking this on a sectoral basis. Several stakeholders noted that it remains difficult to see how the various elements of the systems fit together. These stakeholders identify a ‘constant struggle between sectoral and regional interests’ which continues to play out and result in an uncertain policy environment.

2.3.4 The changing economic context in the future

The WWSPI was developed and first implemented at a time of relative prosperity and full employment and with a view to addressing horizontal and vertical segregation in the current labour market. A couple of stakeholders contributing to the consultation identified the opportunity to train women for the jobs of the future (as opposed to work in more traditional sectors where they are currently underrepresented) as an opportunity for future development of WWSPI.

2.3.5 State Aid

State Aid relates to EC rules about government funding for commercial enterprises which may lead to giving those enterprises a competitive advantage over their peers in other countries. State Aid issues were given considerable attention during the pilot phase of the programme and resolved to the satisfaction of all parties at that time. However further uncertainties surrounding State Aid in relation to WWSPI have arisen during the transition of the programme from DIUS to BIS as a result of the government reorganisation in June 2009. The requirements of State Aid remain under discussion and several stakeholders draw attention to the resulting complex and uncertain environment for WWSPI. Several SSC stakeholders reported that some of the information which might be required to satisfy some interpretations of State Aid may act as a major disincentive to employer and employee engagement.

2.4 Policy options

A key element of the WWSPI consultation is to explore the preferred policy option for the future development of the WWSPI. Three options were envisaged for the programme (i) continuation of the programme (ii) continuation and expansion of the programme or (iii) decommissioning of the programme. Stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to identify policy options outside these three alternatives but none were forthcoming. Stakeholder responses to the consultation are summarised below in table 2.1

Table 2.1

	Continuation*	Expansion	Decommissioning
Strategic Stakeholders	1	5	3
SSC stakeholders		10	
All stakeholders	1	15	3

* one stakeholder favoured continuation but expressed no preference for expansion

2.4.1 Continuation

The vast majority of stakeholders expressed a strong preference for the continuation and expansion of the WWSPI. Several suggested that the initial pilot had developed and was now successfully established and that it would be a 'waste' of resources to get rid of it now. Several stakeholders suggested that the continuation of the programme could be justified as it 'acts as a beacon' for the equality agenda and provides a learning environment to inform policy development and practice. The operations group overseeing programme implementation is well regarded by stakeholders involved in implementing WWSPI and seen as an effective means of sharing good practice and problem solving associated with delivery. Those closest to the delivery of the programme talk enthusiastically about the programme and its impact on individual women and employers however several noted that there was 'still a lot of work to do to embed the concept of positive action' and continued investment in training amongst employers wider HR practices.

2.4.2 Continuation and expansion

All the stakeholders recognised that it might be difficult to argue for expansion of the programme given the current public spending climate. Several recognised that it would need to provide a convincing case that what is happening is having the desired impact.

A minority of stakeholders argued for continuation and expansion on the basis of employer and individual demand for the programme. A couple of SSC stakeholders cited the existence of a pool of employers and individual women currently wanting to access the programme but unable to do so as the funding for the year could not accommodate them. A couple of SSC stakeholders reported scope to expand the programme at the sector level through the development of further offerings and/or targeting of the programme within their sector. More generally, there was considerable appetite for expansion within SSCs with one SSC stakeholder suggesting that they could both double the amount of women beneficiaries and achieve some efficiency savings as a result of a larger funding allocation.

Two options for expansion were specifically explored with stakeholders. Firstly, expansion to cover the whole of the SSC network. Stakeholders views on this vary in terms of the extent to which this expansion may be compulsory or voluntary. The

vast majority of stakeholders did not favour a compulsory approach although one strategic stakeholder did suggest that equality and diversity could be part of the SSC re-licensing process and WWSPI could provide some funding to help to take the agenda forward in a practical way, at least in the short term. It was argued that if this was compulsory then the sectoral coverage of the initiative would clearly be much wider and impact on a larger part of the economy.

However the majority of stakeholders favoured the current approach to the programme based on offering an opportunity to bid for WWSPI funds across the network on an annual basis (whilst providing some certainty surrounding continuity funding for those projects that were performing well and seeking continuation).

The vast majority of the stakeholders in favour of continuation and expansion expressed a preference for expansion beyond England to involve the Devolved Administrations. Recent research for the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland (McPherson and Bond 2009) and Wales (Bevan Foundation 2009) identifies a gender pay gap which largely mirrors the situation in England. The relevant Skills Strategies for Northern Ireland (DELNI 2006) and Scotland (Scottish Government 2007) report that each component of the strategy will undertake a preliminary Equality Impact Assessment, with full Equality Impact Assessments being carried out where necessary. However, stakeholders in the Devolved Administrations suggest that there is room in the Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales landscape for an initiative like WWSPI and that it would complement rather than duplicate existing activity. In Scotland for example there have been a number of attempts in the past looking at gender segregation but the stakeholder contributing to the consultation suggested that there has not been much development in terms of specific programmes, particularly programmes aimed at developing the human capital of women in the workplace. If WWSPI was to be implemented, it may be limited to sectors deemed to be a priority in Scotland. In Wales, an ESF project supports leadership and management however the added focus on the equalities agenda and the greater flexibility in terms of target groups brought by WWSPI was assessed by the stakeholder to be welcomed in Wales.

The vast majority of SSC stakeholders suggest that it is both logical and desirable to extend WWSPI coverage to the UK as a whole and that this development would be welcomed by large employers operating across nations. The clarity that this would bring for individuals who live in one nation but work in another was also identified and welcomed by one strategic stakeholder. A couple of SSC stakeholders report that

the programme had already been extended into the Devolved Administrations through direct bidding for funding through the relevant government departments. Some strategic stakeholders draw attention to the (increasing) importance placed on the Equal Opportunities agenda in the Devolved Administrations and the role that WWSPI could play in taking this agenda forward. Similarly, the majority of strategic stakeholders recognise the value of extending the coverage of a successful intervention in the Devolved Administrations.

2.4.3 Discontinue

Three strategic stakeholders were in favour of discontinuing the programme. The argument underpinning this choice was based largely on the perception of a lack of impact of the programme on the 'big picture'. These stakeholders generally recognised the benefit of the programme in terms of individual and organisational impact but were unconvinced that the programme was achieving what it set out to do in terms of narrowing the gender-pay gap or achieving wider cultural change in terms of horizontal or vertical segregation in the labour market. One of the stakeholders suggested that WWSPI is 'a victim of over ambitious aims and inadequate resourcing' (this stakeholder went on to say that perhaps this was an argument for increased funding rather than discontinuation of funding).

All three of these stakeholders were unconvinced by the evidence-base surrounding the impact of the programme and its effect on for example improved pay for women, impact on other women in the workforce, impact on employers attitudes towards equality and impact on horizontal or vertical segregation at the organisational and sector level.

2.5 Funding options

All the stakeholders contributing to the consultation recognised the difficult funding context and the review currently underway. The consultation discussed a range of funding options with stakeholders as illustrated below.

2.5.1 Mainstreaming

The majority of stakeholders favouring continuation and expansion of the programme favoured mainstreaming to put the programme on a firmer policy and financial footing. The vast majority of stakeholders suggested that a similar level of funding

would enable the intervention to continue to test out new approaches and deliver on a similar scale (5000 women beneficiaries per annum).

If the initiative was extended to cover the four nations additional funds on a pro rata basis may be required. The situation in the Devolved Administrations requires further investigation as the national context and structures in the nations need to inform further WWSPI policy development and implementation. In Scotland for example, attitudes towards funding training not related to a qualification and an emphasis on skills utilisation would appear to provide a positive context for an initiative of this type although it would need to be sympathetic to the cohesive structures (known as 'simplification' in England) agenda currently underway.

2.5.2 Train to Gain

Train to Gain, as the flagship intervention aimed at employers and the employed workforce is an option favoured by a small minority of stakeholders. One strategic stakeholder in favour of decommissioning suggested WWSPI could be placed within Train to Gain and the sector compact used to focus activity on the sectors it can make a difference in. For example, the funding could be used to provide a 10-15% premium for providers to recruit women at risk of occupational or sectoral segregation onto a relevant course or apprenticeship. It is argued that in this way a proportion of the comparably large resources associated with Train to Gain would be applied to scale up provision so that it becomes sustainable at the level of the sector and furthers the Women and Work Agenda more effectively.

However the vast majority of stakeholders were not in favour of placing WWSPI within Train to Gain for a range of reasons. Most commonly, concerns were expressed by stakeholders that it would rapidly lose its identity as a beacon for the equalities agenda and that it would lose its focus on occupational segregation or making the connection with the sectoral skills gap, thus weakening its contribution to improving competitiveness. Several stakeholders expressed concern that it would also become subject to the eligibility criteria associated with Train to Gain which has in the recent past limited offerings to specific socio-economic groups or training associated with level 2 qualifications only. This was of particular concern to, for example, those with an interest in encouraging the development of women to attain more senior management and leadership positions. The recent flexibilities afforded to Train to Gain are recognised as providing greater scope of activity however it is reported that Train to Gain remains limited to training associated with qualifications

and much current employer-led WWSPI activity would not be eligible for funding. The geographical coverage of Train to Gain also raises questions in terms of the expansion of the WWSPI to the Devolved Administrations as Train to Gain is not available in Scotland or Northern Ireland for example. Furthermore, the budget pressures associated with Train to Gain more recently are also recognised as limiting its ability to improve the scalability of WWSPI in the short term.

More generally, several SSC stakeholders remain unconvinced of mechanisms to connect LSC provision with employer needs. For example several SSC stakeholders, whilst recognising the contribution of Sector Compacts in theory, report 'lots of practical problems' and a lack of funding for employer training available through this mechanism.

2.5.3 European Social Fund

The equality agenda is a regulatory cross-cutting theme for all European structural fund programmes in 2007-2013. The European Social Fund (ESF) may provide an avenue for matched funding for the initiative however the process appears to be far from straightforward. In England, ESF funds are distributed through 'Co-financing Organisations' (CFOs). CFOs are public bodies which bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements national programmes. The Learning and Skills Council and the Department for Work and Pensions Delivery Directorate are CFOs in every region of England. In some regions, Regional Development Agencies and some local authorities are also CFOs. CFOs contract with the providers that deliver ESF projects on the ground. Providers can be from the public, private or third sectors. CFOs make ESF available through a process of open and competitive tendering. SSCs would need to work with CFOs to access ESF resources however they would not need to find their own 'match funding', as CFOs are responsible for both the ESF money and match funding. SSCs would need to work closely with a CFO to attract ESF funding and whilst several SSCs have considered ESF to varying degrees, for one reason or another they have not taken it forward to date. In practice SSCs would need to work closely with the LSC (or successor body) if they were to access ESF funding to support those in work and with DWP/Jobcentre Plus if they were to access ESF to support recruitment.

The Devolved Administrations have separate and different governance arrangements for ESF and further investigation is required to determine the feasibility and practicality of connecting WWSPI with ESF in the Devolved Administrations.

2.5.4 Private sector funding

A couple of stakeholders suggested that increased private sector funding may be a potential source of funding through increased employer contribution associated with WWSPI investment. This may particularly apply to large employers who have benefited from the programme in the past and have come to recognise the value of it. However other stakeholders suggest that the current economic circumstances are causing employers to focus on mandatory training at the expense of 'development' training. This is seen to limit the funds available for the type of training encouraged by WWSPI at this time. Further investigation of this avenue to funding of the programme is required to test its feasibility and consequences.

2.6 Governance

The vast majority of stakeholders wishing to continue or expand the programme suggested that the current governance arrangements should remain in place. The UK CES is viewed by the majority of stakeholders to have developed a strong network to support delivery and is generally seen to have 'done a good job' in developing and implementing the programme. The UK CES team have developed considerable knowledge and expertise over the pilot programme and harnessing this resource to the benefit of the programme in the future is deemed by many to be both logical and desirable.

A couple of stakeholders suggested that WWSPI could reside in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills if for some reason the development and co-ordination of the WWSPI is no longer seen to be part of the UK CES remit. If the WWSPI was to focus more on recruitment rather than progression of women then DWP may be an appropriate 'home' for the intervention.

A couple of stakeholders were unfavourably disposed to the Alliance taking on the development and implementation of WWSPI as it was reported to be 'unclear what value they would add'. A couple of SSC stakeholders favoured direct allocation of funds to individual SSCs with BIS undertaking the role of monitoring and review (although this could be problematic if the WWSPI operated on a UK basis).

If the WWSPI is to be expanded on a UK basis further investigation is required to ensure that expansion is sensitive to the context in each nation. Some stakeholders suggest that as SSCs generally cover the four nations it could be extended by simply relaxing the eligibility criteria associated with the programme. Stakeholders generally

suggest that further consultation is necessary with the relevant departments and stakeholders in each nation; The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland and potentially the Department of Social Development in Northern Ireland. In Scotland the views of a variety of organisations including the Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority, Scottish Funding Council and Scottish TUC would need to be sought. In Wales the Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills would be the first port of call.

3 TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The consultation has provided an insight into the views of twenty one stakeholders, many of whom are directly involved with WWSPI at a strategic level through the WWSPI Steering Group and/or the implementation of the initiative as part of a wider portfolio of services provided through SSCs. It has also drawn on a rapid and selective review of the literature to provide further contextualisation of the findings.

3.1 Programme context

All the stakeholders contributing to the consultation are aware of the potential threat to the programme posed by the current review of government funding and several draw attention to the strong leadership and commitment required to secure the continuation of WWSPI. The policy context is seen to be relatively favourable with the Equality Agenda currently championed by the Women and Work Commission and at the highest levels of government through for example the Minister for Women and Equality and by organisations such as the Trades Union Congress (TUC 2008). Recent research suggests that the challenges faced by women in the world of work require intervention tailored to specific needs (ILO 2007). With further legislation currently in development, WWSPI provides a unique intervention which positively supports elements of the employment and skills infrastructure, employers and individual women to engage with this agenda and take it forward whilst at the same time contributing to improvements in competitiveness.

Several stakeholders draw attention to the lack of connection between WWSPI and the other projects funded through the £40m investment in skills related projects to further the Women and Work Commission Agenda. The need to establish strategic links is important however several stakeholders suggest that the logic of joining them up is not clear. This is clearly an issue that the Women and Work Commission and relevant stakeholders should consider to ensure that the potential of the skills related interventions are fully realised.

3.2 Policy Options and evidence

The majority of stakeholders directly involved in the development and implementation of the WWSPI continue to talk enthusiastically about the programme and its benefits and wish to see it continue. Three strategic stakeholders remain unconvinced by the

evidence of impact of the programme and prefer the option of decommissioning of WWSPI. A couple of further stakeholders in favour of continuation of the programme also draw attention to concerns associated with the evidence base. These concerns appear to relate to three key issues:

- (i) the scale of the programme – there is no evidence that it makes a difference at the sectoral level
- (ii) the impact of the programme on organisations – there is little evidence on the effect of the programme on organisational culture
- (iii) there is little evidence of the impact (and attribution) of the programme on key issues such as women's pay (and the gender pay gap)

3.3 Promotion and communication

Several stakeholders suggest the need to communicate and promote the programme and its impacts more openly within the employment and skills infrastructure with a view to facilitating sustainability in the future. Several stakeholders point to the need for case studies of individuals and organisations to illustrate the impact of the programme. Other suggestions include a showcase event (jointly with Government Equalities Office) with the Government Sponsorship Team playing a key role in the communication of the WWSPI. Three stakeholders noted the connection between WWSPI and the Lifelong Learning Agenda and the benefits that may be realised from connecting these agendas. A couple of strategic stakeholders suggested the need to establish a group to determine 'direction of travel' to meet once or twice year (to complement the Operational Group) and to discuss policy and strategic issues.

3.4 The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap has received substantial research attention over several years and it is clear from the most recent research that the household division of labour and occupational concentration have major impacts on it (Metcalf 2009). However the gender pay gap has narrowed in recent years and this has led some to suggest that, given further demographic trends and changes in women's qualification the gap will narrow further in subsequent years with minimal policy intervention (Shackleton 2008). In terms of employment and skills, the decline in the full-time gender pay gap is almost wholly due to improvements in women's education and work experience (i.e. shorter career breaks) and the recent research suggests that education now

explains little of the difference in the full time gender pay gap. However it continues to explain a substantial proportion of the part-time pay gap where most work is in low-paid occupations (Metcalf 2009). Recent research also continues to draw attention to the under-representation of women at the highest levels of business (e.g. McKinsey 2007, EC 2009b) and to differences between the salaries and bonuses paid to men and women in key sectors of the economy (EHRC 2009) which suggests that there remains much to do to narrow the gaps that exist within occupations and specific sectors. As the analysis continues to develop and become more sophisticated, policy needs to unpick further the nature and extent of the gender pay gap and determine appropriate responses. Gender differences in receipt of on-the-job training continue to be identified as an important contributor to the gender pay gap (Manning and Swaffield 2005) although policy measures to encourage women to undertake training in the workplace tend to be rare and in this way WWSPI can be seen to make a unique contribution to both encouraging learning and narrowing the pay gap in a way which supports improved business performance.

APPENDIX 1 REFERENCES



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APPENDIX 2 STAKEHOLDERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE WWSPI CONSULTATION



INTERVIEWEE	ORGANISATION	TYPE OF STAKEHOLDER
Baroness Prosser	Chair, Women and Work Commission	Strategic
Michael Bentley	Bentley Associates Europe	SSC
Richard Beamish	Asset Skills	SSC
Tracey Bostock	Government Equalities Office	Strategic
Lawrence Downey	Alliance (NI)	Strategic
Mick Downing	Jobcentreplus	Strategic
Sue Green	Skillfast-UK	SSC
Jacqui Hepburn	Alliance (Scotland)	Strategic
Chris Humphries	UKCES	Strategic
Ann Joss	TUC	Strategic
John McNamara	Alliance	Strategic
Elaine Moore	Alliance (Wales)	Strategic
Madge Moore	LANTRA	SSC
Malcolm Naylor	EU Skills	SSC
David Oatley	DWP (ESF)	Strategic
John Sharman	Equality Human Rights Office	Strategic
Angela Sharp	Skills for Justice	SSC
Angella Stancill	BIS	Strategic
Paul Sykes	Construction Skills	SSC
Lyn Tomkins	SEMTA	SSC
Sharon Glancy	People 1 st	SSC

APPENDIX 3 STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION GUIDE



Discussion guide

Consultation on the development of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative

Name of interviewee

Organisation

Date and time of interview

This interview is intended to collect information to inform the development of the Women and Work Sector Pathways Initiative.

All information collected as part of this research will be anonymous and all possible steps will be taken to ensure that the identity of individuals will not be revealed in the outputs from the research.

Do I have your permission to record the interview and quote (anonymously) from the study (please circle as appropriate)?

Permission to record Yes / no

Permission to quote Yes / no

1. Context	
1.1	What in your view is the rationale for the WWSPI?
1.2	What other policy instruments seek to achieve similar goals?
1.2.1	How effective do you think WWSPI is in achieving these goals?
1.2.2	Are there better ways of achieving these goals?
1.3	What (if any) are the issues associated with duplication with other policy measures in the UK?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of WWSPI?	
2.1	Programme framework? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives of the programme? • Enablers (e.g. programme design/management) /constraints (e.g. timeframe, eligible activity, output measures?)
2.2	Design features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer-led (explore role within demand-led agenda) • Project flexibility • Focus on skills (explore not qualifications) • Delivery process? (Tangible product for SSCs)
2.3	Outputs and outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme indicators for Individual/employer? • Progression? • Unintended consequences • Deadweight / additionality
2.4	What could be done to improve the programme?

3. Threats and opportunities	
3.1	<p>What are the key trends and potential future developments which could impact on WWSPI?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State Aid ○ PSA targets ○ Change in government? • Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender gap closes (eradicated) • Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public sector funding squeezed ○ Employer contribution ○ Spend within 1 year? • Other (Organisational? e.g. 'importance' of WWSPI in a strategic context)
4. Policy options	
4.1	<p>What is your preferred policy option for the future of WWSPI?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation at current funding level beyond 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Similar model (bidding process) • Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to cover all 25 SSCs ○ to cover 4 nations • Decommissioning of the programme • Other?
4.2	Why? (Pros and cons of each option)
4.3	<p>(If appropriate) How should expansion be funded?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased funding from BIS • ESF • Links to T2G <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sector Compacts • Other
4.3.1	What level of funding is required for each option in 4.1?

5. Stakeholders	
5.1	Who are the key stakeholders involved in taking WWSPI forward
5.1.1	What are their roles
6. Other	
6.1	Any other comments (sustainability) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Success Factors (What is necessary to ensure it's continued success)?

APPENDIX 4: BACKGROUND INFORMATION SENT TO STAKEHOLDERS

Key characteristics of the programme

- WWSPI is a pilot programme which seeks to take forward the Women and Work Commission and the demand-led skills agendas by working through Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to engage employers and provide women with the skills, confidence and mentoring support to progress or move into male dominated occupations.
- WWSPI has been developed and implemented in three phases (2006-08, 2008-09, 2009-10).
- In the first phase £10m (matched by employers) was used to support the development of appropriate interventions by SSCs. 9 SSCs were involved in the delivery of WWSPI projects (Construction Skills, Lantra, Skillfast-UK, Skills for logistics, Asset Skills, IMI Automotive skills, EU Skills, Improve Ltd, SEMTA).
- All the projects sought to address vertical segregation (career progression), with a small number seeking to address horizontal segregation (recruitment into male dominated sectors)
- The majority of the interventions were based on a fixed offer where the intervention was prescriptive and the content clearly defined (e.g. embedded basic skills, Chartered Institute of Management Qualification, LGV Driving Licence, Personal Development Programme). A smaller number of projects were based on more open or flexible offerings, providing the employer with considerable control over the nature, supply and delivery of training funded under WWSPI
- In the subsequent phases a further £5m per annum (matched by employers) has led to 10 SSCs delivering WWSPI (Asset Skills, IMI Automotive Skills, Construction Skills, EU Skills, Go Skills, LANTRA, SEMTA, Skillfast –UK, Skills Active and Skills for Justice)

Outcomes and emerging impact

The first phase evaluation reports (IFF 2008¹, PRI 2009²) provide an indication of the outcomes associated with WWSPI

¹ Based on telephone surveys of 817 women and 357 employers participating in the programme

² Based on 138 qualitative interviews with stakeholders in government departments, SSCs, delivery agencies and participating employers

- The first phase of the programme achieved its targets (almost 8000 women beneficiaries) by March 2008. The majority of stakeholders in the skills and training infrastructure contributing to the qualitative evaluation research talked enthusiastically about WWSPI as an exceedingly valuable demand-led intervention
- 96% of employers and 90% of individual beneficiaries were 'quite' or 'very' satisfied with their involvement in WWSPI.
- 79% of the women participating in the initiative obtained a positive outcome in terms of changes in job role, increased pay or gaining a qualification
- Access to free/subsidised training helped to overcome a key barrier to training faced by many women in the workforce
- There was some evidence of additionality in terms of for example reaching women who would not normally receive training (only 30% of beneficiaries had received training in the last 12 months compared with 63% on average across the country as a whole) and encouraging employers to provide training for women in their workforce (55% of employers reported that the WWSPI training and development activity represented something that they had never thought of doing for their female employees or had considered in the past and decided against).

The second phase of the programme (2008-09) engaged almost 5,000 women and the third phase of the programme (to March 2010) is forecast to engage a similar number of women beneficiaries each year

The survey evidence provides an indication of the performance of the first phase of the WWSPI. Headline indicators in terms of the medium-term objectives of the programme include:

(Objective A) Increasing the number of women entering and remaining with sectors and occupations where they are currently under-represented (and where skills shortages exist)

- 70% of participants stated that they are more likely to remain with the employer as a result of having taken part in WWSPI
- 62% of employers report that WWSPI has been very successful in meeting previously identified skills gaps

(Objective B) Enabling women to progress in sectors and occupations where they are underrepresented in higher ranking positions

- 15% had received a promotion (and a further 23% felt that this was more likely to happen as a result of their involvement) and 13% had secured a job that they wanted in another organisation

(Objective C) Increasing the earning potential of women in sectors and occupations where they are under-represented (and where skills shortages exist)

- 17% had achieved a pay increase (and a further 21% felt that this was more likely to happen in the future)

(Objective D) Raising the awareness of employers in these sectors of the challenges that women employees and potential employees face and encouraging them to take action

- 49% of employers reported that their involvement has had a longer term impact on attitudes towards the employment and progression of women in their organisation
- 24% of employers reported that they are much more likely to take action to ensure that a greater proportion of women reach management positions

Some policy challenges

- Engaging employers – the first phase of WWSPI tended to engage with larger employers (not smaller employers where market failure is most pronounced) although three quarters of employers had not received funding from other external sources in the past 2 years
- ‘Lifelong learning’ – the qualitative research highlights the potential for progression in terms of individual learning engendered by WWSPI and the funding flexibilities required to support this
- In common with subsidised training interventions more generally, there is an element of deadweight associated with WWSPI interventions