

BREAKING DOWN THE GENDER STEREOTYPES

18 January 2008

Release time: IMMEDIATE

More girls in Somerset are considering careers in the building and motor trades. And more boys say they are thinking of working in childcare or hairdressing.

A survey examining the career aspirations of young people across the Somerset area, commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), has shown a gradual breaking down of gender stereotypes when it comes to career choices.

The survey was carried out following a tour of Somerset schools in November 2006 by IMPACT, a local theatre company. The performance was seen by over 4,000 Year 9 pupils most of whom completed the survey.

IMPACT's inventive and witty productions (featuring celebrity look-alikes such as Vicky Pollard and Ozzy Osbourne) aim to show young people the learning and career options open to them.

As the survey results are announced, the group is about to embark on a new tour of schools in the county, visiting **Bruton, Bridgwater, Castle Cary, Chard, Cheddar, Frome, Huish Episcopi, Minehead, Taunton, Wellington, Wiveliscombe and Yeovil (a full list is attached with this release).**

The IMPACT survey also revealed an increase in the number of boys considering a career in hospitality and catering – compared to 2005 when the survey was last carried out.

Young people were asked how the production had influenced their decision making and what choices they were considering once they left school.

The results included:

- Three per cent more girls are now considering a career in engineering (compared to 2005)

- There has been a two per cent increase in girls thinking about construction
- And four per cent more girls are considering the motor trade

Among the boys:

- Two per cent more boys are considering health and social care as a possible career option
- There has been a two per cent increase in those thinking about childcare
- And a one per cent increase in the field of hairdressing

Most of those surveyed said they were happy with the level of careers advice they were given – although the majority still said they turned to their peers, siblings and parents for guidance.

Trish Taylor, LSC Area Director for Dorset and Somerset, said today: “Surveys like this are invaluable when it comes to matching the aspirations of young people to the opportunities that are available to them.

“It helps all of us in the field of learning to better understand what influences young people and where their interests lay. It is always interesting to see year on year how aspirations change.”

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS: THE LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers