



Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

School of Computing,
Engineering & the
Built Environment

Gendered information landscapes and their impact on routes into and through apprenticeships

CDI Scotland Student Conference – 25th
February 2026

Maria Cecil PhD Student

Edinburgh Napier University – Merchiston Campus

maria.cecil@napier.ac.uk

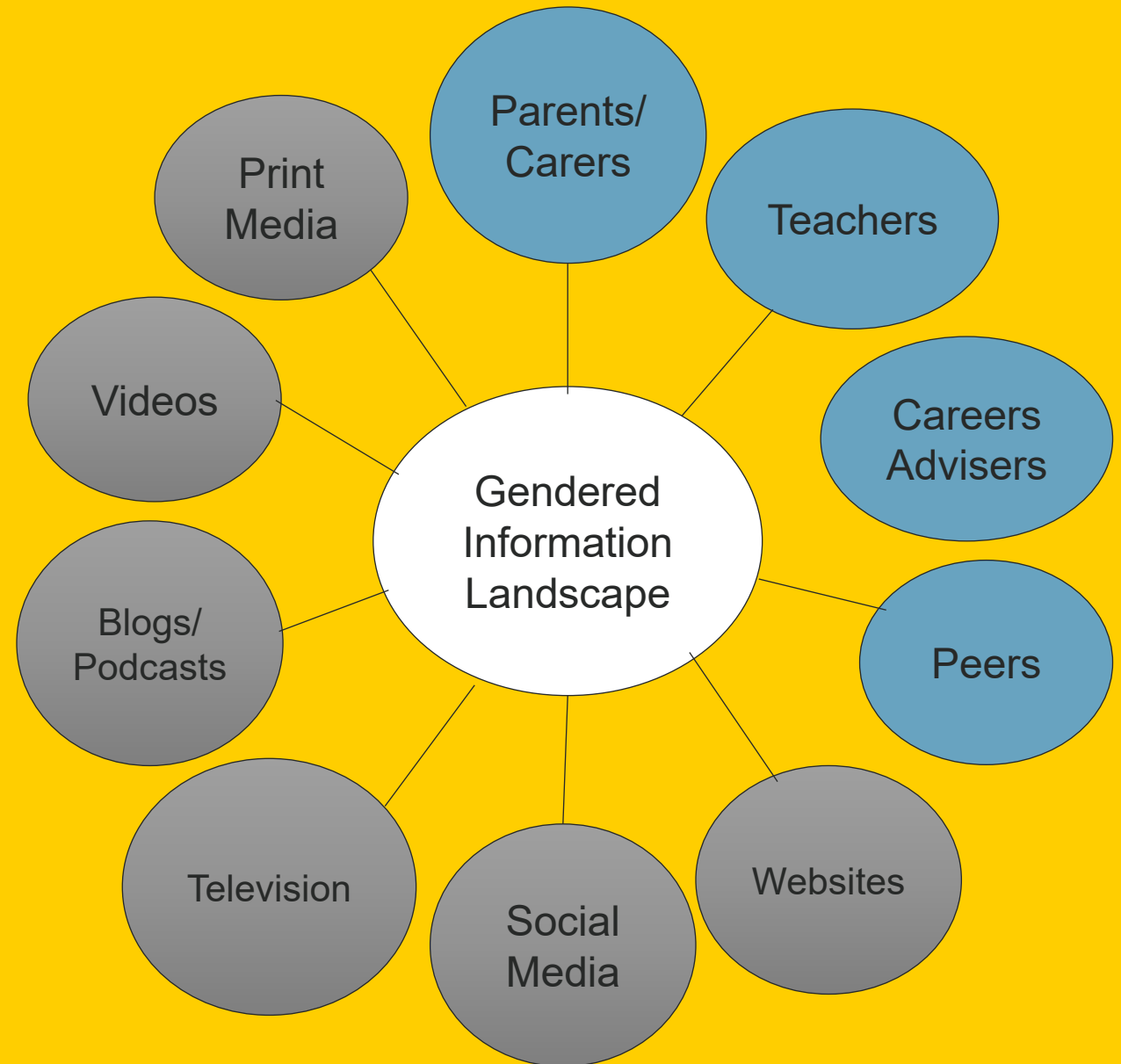


Contents

- Background
- Main Theories and Concepts
- Methods & Methodology
- Key Findings
- Conclusions
- Impact
- References

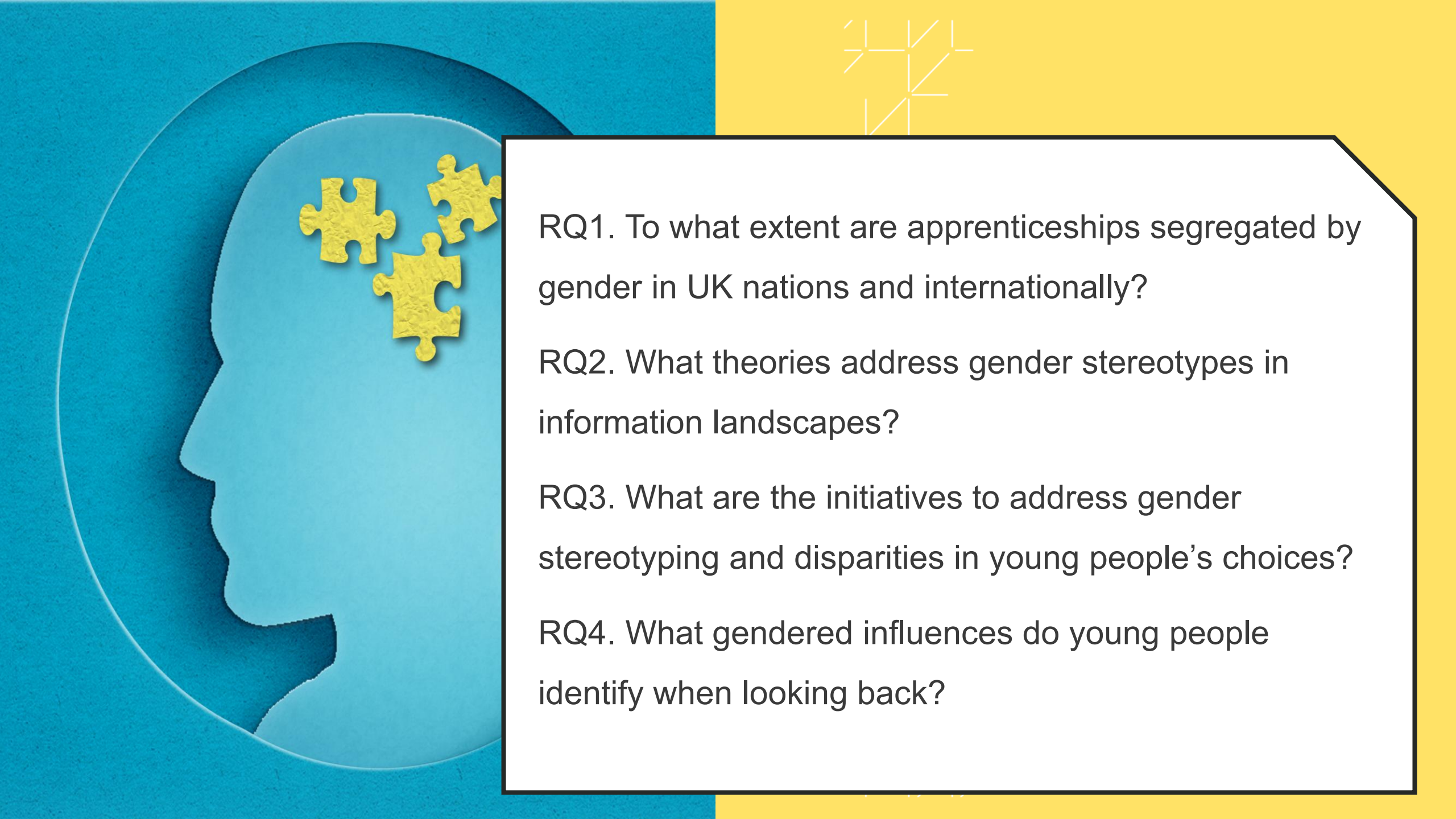
What is an Information Landscape?

The spaces which incorporate the information sources which are most relevant to people in their own context e.g., their gender/gender identity (Savolainen, 2020).



Key Concepts

Gender Stereotypes	Children are consistently exposed to “gendered” content which embodies or reinforces gender stereotypes, e.g., in picture books.	(The Children's Society, 2021)
	Sexism and discrimination are present throughout young people’s childhood which impacts on their information landscapes.	(Siyanova-Chanturia, Warren, Pesciarelli, & Cacciari, 2015)
Self-Efficacy	Young people make choices about careers based on prior experiences of success. If they (or their family/peers) have achieved something before they are more likely to feel confident in achieving again.	(Moya-Guijarro & Ventola, 2022)



RQ1. To what extent are apprenticeships segregated by gender in UK nations and internationally?

RQ2. What theories address gender stereotypes in information landscapes?

RQ3. What are the initiatives to address gender stereotyping and disparities in young people's choices?

RQ4. What gendered influences do young people identify when looking back?

Methodology

1. Define the research problem

Gender imbalance in apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes in crucial STEM and HEED sectors

2. Explore existing research on occupational segregation

Secondary data collection through literature and policy reviews

3. Understand the situated experience of apprentices in Scotland in relation to information and gender

Primary data collection using a mixed methods approach (survey, interviews and focus groups incorporating a visual method)

4. Inform future policy around apprenticeships

Disseminate findings through infographics, conference presentations and journal articles

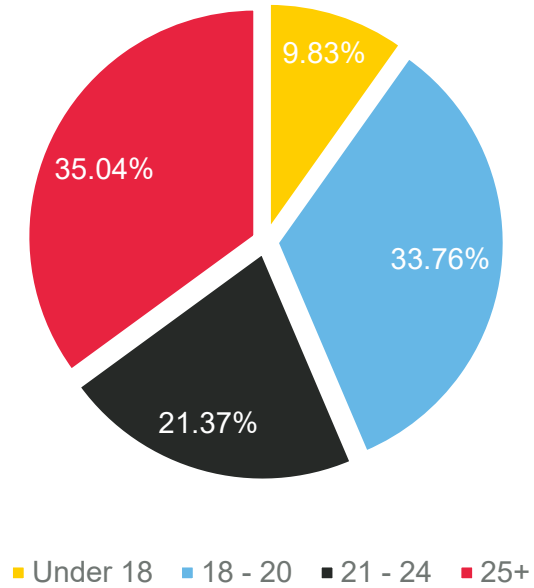




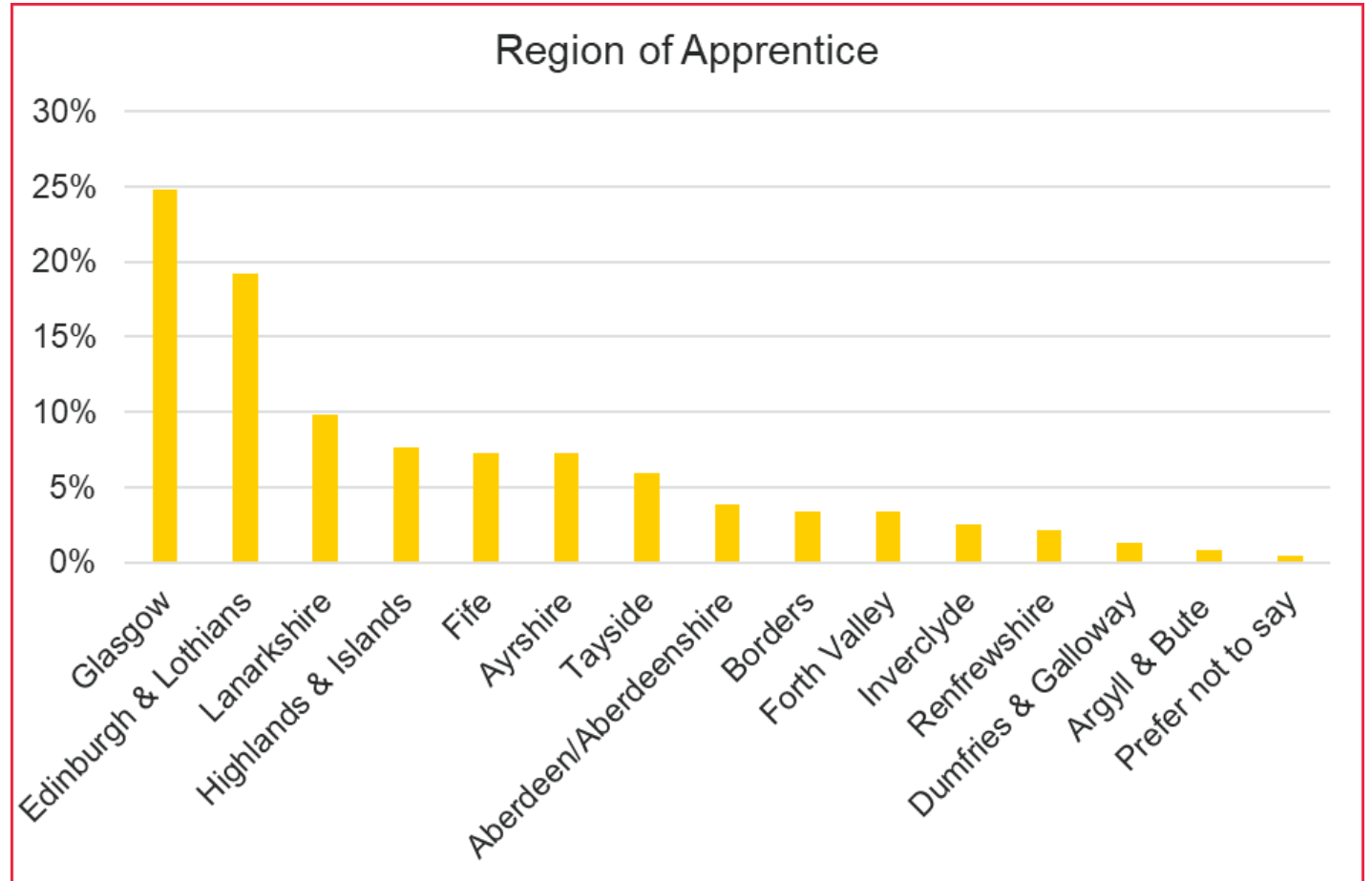
Research Findings

Survey Results - Demographics

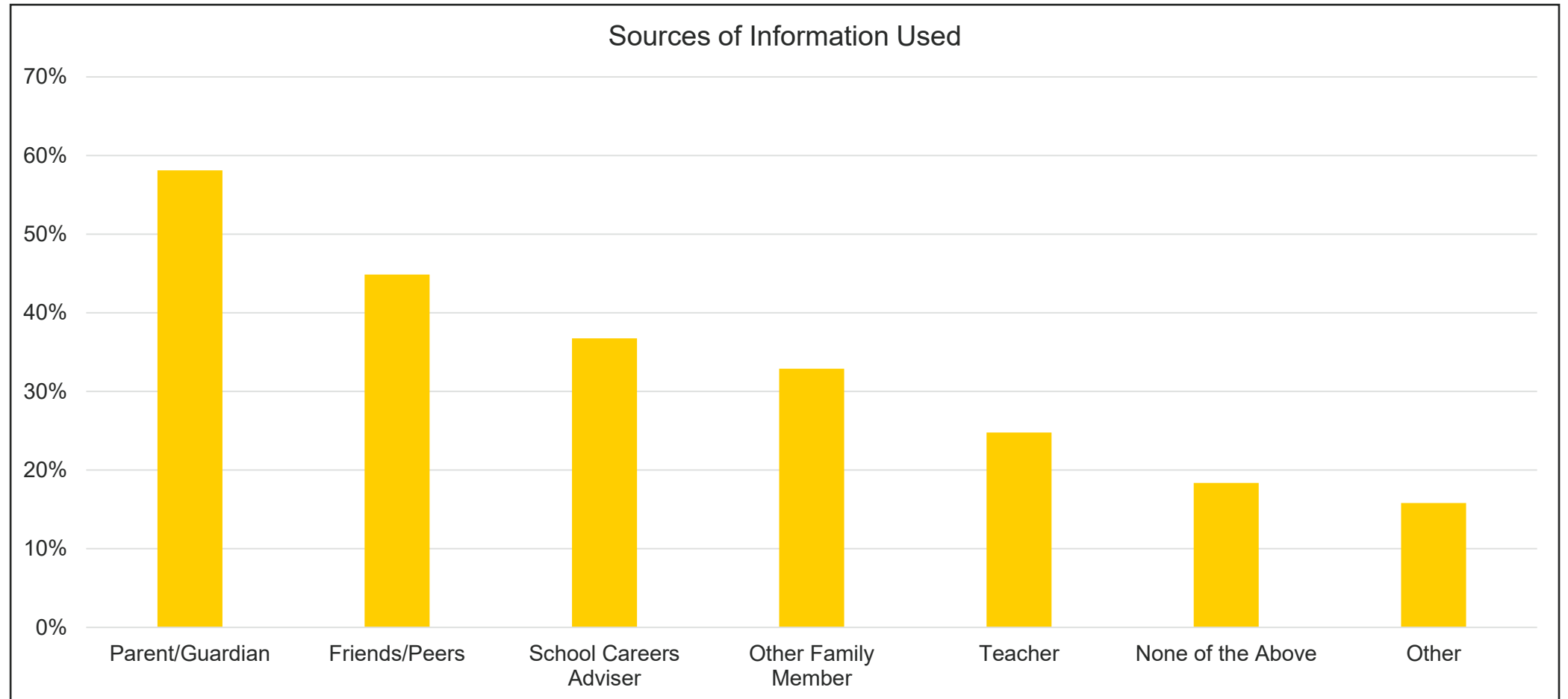
Apprentice's Age Group



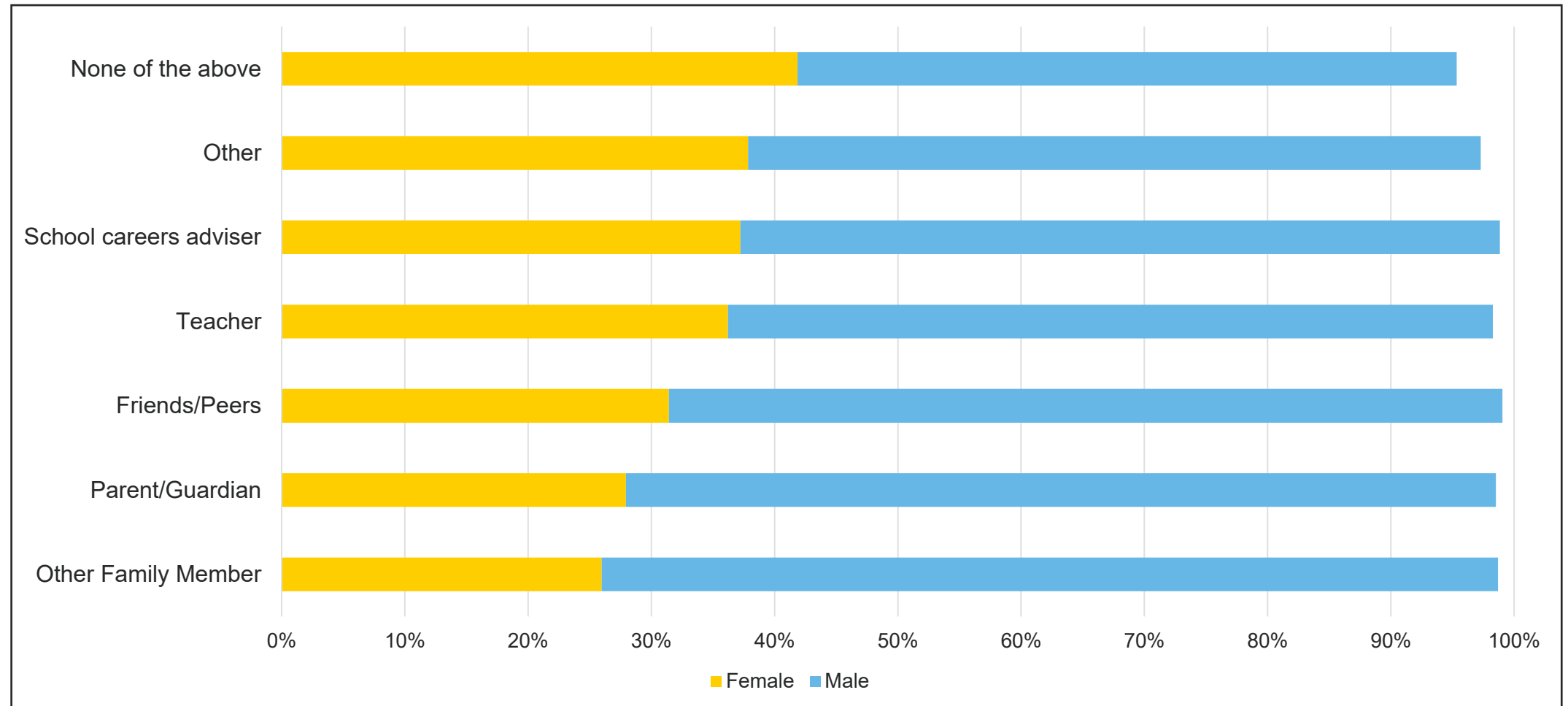
Region of Apprentice



Survey Results - Parental Influence

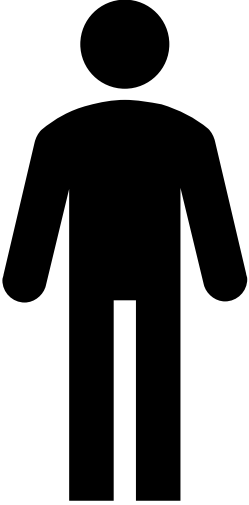


Survey Results - Parental Influence by Gender



Interview Results – Parental Influence

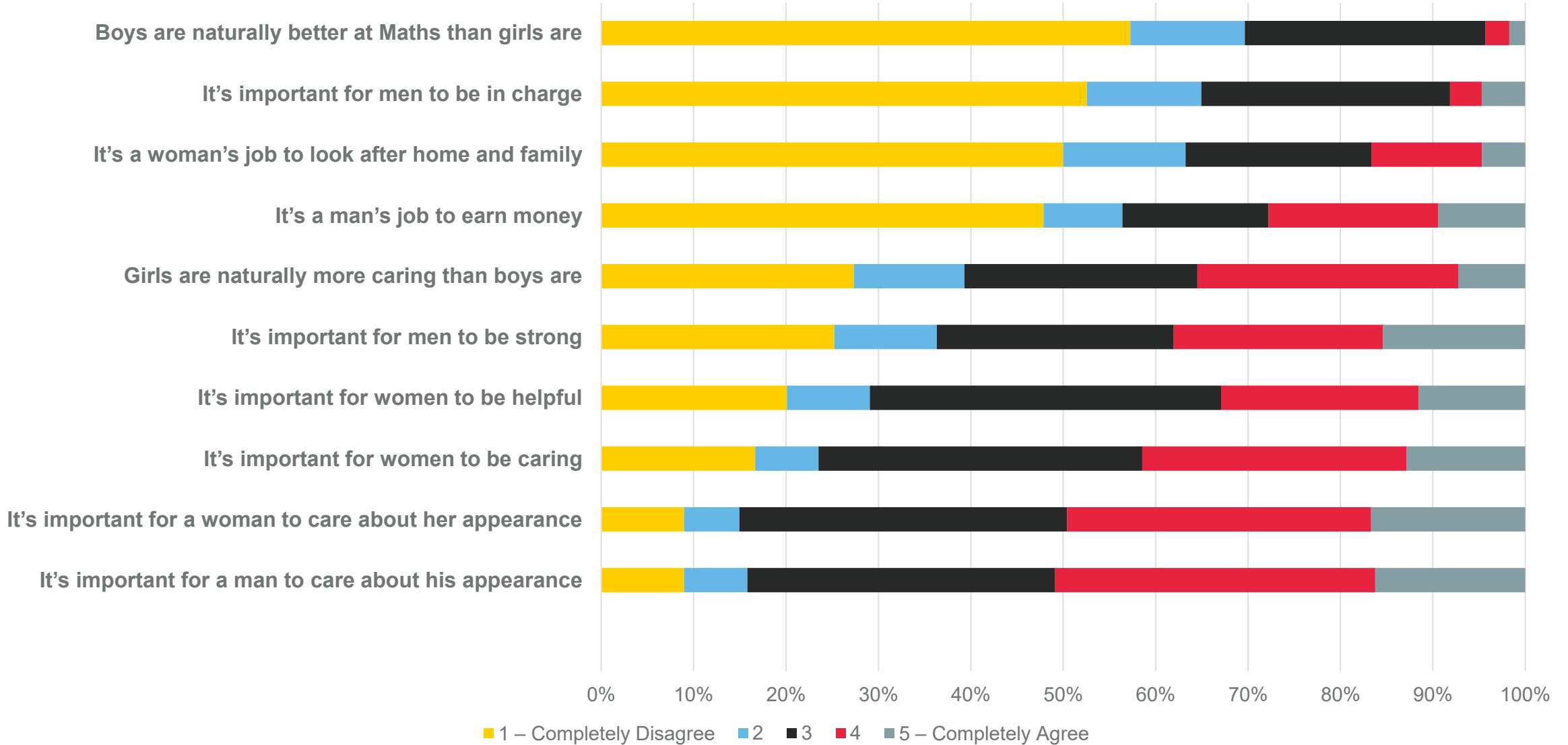
- Many participants gained entry to their apprenticeship programme through parents or other family connections - these were mostly males which suggests that parents were more likely to talk to their sons about apprenticeships.



“A lot of my family are electricians, so I decided to go down that route and I ended up really enjoying it”.

“Yeah, my dad was a bus driver. That was how I actually got started. So, he got me a job. He got me a job when I was 17 early on a (bus) when I was at college and stuff just for a bit extra money”.

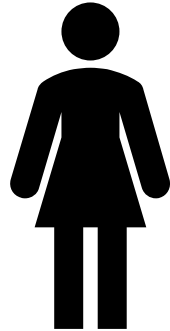
Survey Results – Gender Stereotypes





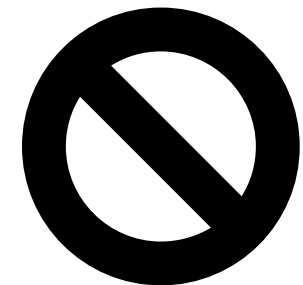
Interview Results – Gender Stereotypes

- Female participants had some lived experiences of being exposed to gender stereotypes e.g., being told that a specific work-based learning programme wasn't for girls.



“I remember when I was in high school, it was the boys who like either left in fourth or fifth year would go into like, you know, like builder apprenticeships or roofing or electricians but I don't remember any of the girls doing it”.

“It was basically just right out of school, and we were all talking about apprenticeships and going to uni, going to college, and one of the guys said he's going to do this apprenticeship. And it's only guys that do it.



Conclusions

- Parents (as an information source) have a significant influence on the career choices of their children
- Exposure to gender stereotypes is prevalent from a young age. Females appear more sensitive to gender stereotypes than males.
- Occupational segregation has roots in wider societal, cultural and institutional issues.

Impact

This research:

- Explores the situated experience of Scottish apprentices.
- Facilitates a deeper understanding of how different information sources influence aspirations, beliefs, levels of self-efficacy and choices.
- Provides rich qualitative data which complements and expands on work already carried out by Skills Development Scotland.

Recommendations

- Multi stakeholder collaboration.
- Work with parents who are an influential source.
- Work with employers to facilitate a more inclusive organisational culture.
- Continue with initiatives such as “Try Something Different” over a wider area and longer timeframe.

References & Further Reading

- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. W. H. Freeman.
- Careers.govt.NZ. (2022, 12 14). Apprenticeships. Retrieved from Careers NZ: https://www.careers.govt.nz/courses/find-out-about-study-and-training-options/apprenticeships/#cID_7457
- Chen, X. (2021). The Impact of Child-Parent Relationship on Young Adults' Career Choice. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://nrs.harvard.edu/URN-3:HUL.INSTREPOS:37370040>
- Halder, S., Ray, A., & Chakrabarty, P. K. (2010). Gender differences in information seeking behaviour in three universities in West Bengal, India. *International Information & Library Review*, 42(4), 242-251. doi:<https://doi-org.napier.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10572317.2010.10762869>
- Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. (2022, 12 14). What We Do . Retrieved from Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education: <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/our-work/what-we-do/>
- Lievrouw, L. A. (2001). New Media and the 'Pluralization of Life-Worlds': A Role for Information in Social Differentiation. *New Media & Society*, 3(1), 7-28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444801003001002>
- Lloyd, A., & Wilkinson, J. (2019). Tapping into the information landscape: Refugee youth enactment of information literacy in everyday spaces. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 51(1), 252-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000617709058>
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible Selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954-969. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954>
- OECD. (2019). *Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age*. Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.
- Ruthven, I. (2022). An information behaviour theory of transitions. *Journal of the Association of Information Science & Technology*, 73(4), 579-593. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24588>
- Savolainen. (1995). Everyday life information seeking: Approaching information seeking in the context of "way of life". *Library and Information Science Research*, 17(3), 259-294. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-8188\(95\)90048-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0740-8188(95)90048-9)
- Savolainen, R. (2020). Information landscapes as contexts of information practices. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 53(4), 655-667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000620982359>
- Wilson, T. (1997). Information Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. *Information Processing and Management*, 33(4), 551-572. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4573\(97\)00028-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4573(97)00028-9)

Maria Cecil – PhD Student

Email: maria.cecil@napier.ac.uk

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/maria-c-2893a9175](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maria-c-2893a9175)



**Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY**

School of Computing,
Engineering & the
Built Environment

Thank you!



DoS: Dr Ella Taylor-Smith

Supervisors: Prof. Sally Smith & Dr Colin Smith