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## Changing discourses in women and science policy: responding to austerity in gender and SET

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# Changing discourses in women and science policy: responding to austerity in Gender and SET

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# Why women in science?



- What do we mean by science? Natural sciences, SET, STEM, all academic research?
- Science and technology as gendered (Cockburn, Wajcman, Harding, Haraway etc)
- Biological determinism
- Equal opportunities (linked to second wave feminism)
- Skills shortages and wasted talent

# 30 years of UK policy

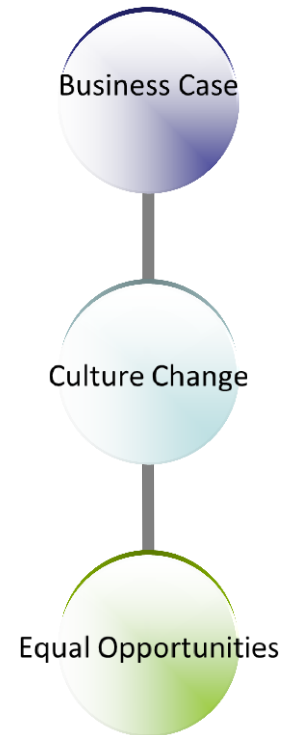
- Eighties / Nineties
  - Finniston Report / WISE
  - Women in science academia (Athena)
  - Promoting SET for Women Unit in Office of Science and Technology
  - Europe
- 2000 on
  - SET for Success and SETFair - the growth of 'STEM' and set up of UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC)

# Enduring metaphors

Leaky pipeline



Career ladders



# Measuring impact

- “Plethora of initiatives” (Bebbington 2002, Greenfield 2003, Phipps 2008)
- What does success look like?
- Individual – women returners, role models and success stories
- Institutional – CAT, SET Fair, Athena
- Societal – number crunching (eg SHE Figures)

# Responses to austerity

- Cumulative impact of cuts for women
- Turn from gender to diversity in policy/industry
- Tension between gender/equality experts and STEM professionals
- Elitism and narrowing of agenda to research scientists



<http://fawcettsociety.org.uk/>

# Futures

- Professional bodies – Royal Society & Royal Academy of Engineering
- Scottish government funding
- HE - Athena SWAN and research funding councils
- EU - [re]turn to ‘fixing the science’
- Will it be déjà vu – or is there a new vision?